The Experience of Soldiering: Civil-Military Relations and Popular Protest in England, 1790-1805.

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Abstract

Over the past three decades, historians of the long eighteenth century have emphasized both the stability of the British state and the progressive growth of national sentiment over the period. The enormous mobilization of manpower during the French Wars is often characterized as the culmination of this evolution. Arming to fight the French, it is argued, was a formative process, which encouraged greater social cohesion, and forged an overarching sense of national identity.

This thesis will contend that the 'Nation-in-Arms' interpretation has been constructed at a considerable remove from the culture and lives of common people. Adopting a 'history from below' approach, it will re-evaluate the popular experience of mass arming, by focusing upon two relatively neglected branches of the armed forces, the army and militia. Three central themes have been selected for investigation: The recruitment process, the experience of soldiering in the home garrison, and the role of armed force in maintaining public order.

It will be shown that, between 1790 and 1805, the government was faced by a mixture of popular ambivalence and hostility towards the raising of the army and militia. It will be demonstrated that economic privation was the preeminent cause of enlistment and that, once recruited, soldiers and militiamen retained their working-class attitudes, and viewed their service primarily as a contractual form of labour. The extent to which armed service was viewed as conditional and negotiable will be emphasized through an examination of the military crimes of mutiny and desertion. Finally, an analysis of military deployments during industrial protests and food riots will demonstrate that, during the French Wars, the state became much more reliant upon armed force for maintaining public order. By adopting a 'history from below' approach, the limits of social stability and social cohesion will be tested, and a richer, more variegated, understanding of the popular experience of mass-arming will be offered.

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Abbreviations

APLPRL	Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers.
BL Add. MS	British Library Additional Manuscripts
BMSat	British Museum Satires.
BUMC	Brown University Library, Prints, Drawings, and Watercolours from the Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection (available online).
BMP&D	British Museum Prints and Drawings.
CBS	Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies.
ERO	Essex Records Office.
GCM	General Court Martial.
GGA	Grenadier Guards Archives.
HRO	Hampshire Records Office.
JSAHR	Journal for the Society of Army Historical Research.
LCL	Lincoln Central Library.
LCS	London Corresponding Society.
LRO	Lincolnshire Records Office.
NRO	Norfolk Records Office.
OBP	*Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 7.2).
O.D.N.B.	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (www.oxforddnb.com).
RCM	Regimental Court Martial.
SCA	Sheffield City Archives.
TNA	The National Archives.
UNotts	University of Nottingham Manuscripts and Special Collections.
WSA	Wiltshire and Swindon Archives.

Introduction: War, Nation, Class, and the Common Soldier

> *[W]hat is it but distress and poverty which can prevail upon the lower classes of the people to encounter all the horrors which await them on the tempestuous ocean, or in the field of battle? Men who are easy in their circumstances are not, among the foremost to engage in a seafaring or military life. There must be a degree of* pressure*, and that which is attended with the least violence will be the best. When hunger is either felt or feared, the desire of obtaining bread will quietly dispose the mind to undergo the greatest hardships, and will sweeten the severest labours.*
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> Reverend Joseph Townsend, *A Dissertation on the Poor Laws* 2nd ed., (London, 1787), p. 35-6.

Over the past three decades, historians working on the theme of 'war and society' have repeatedly emphasized the essential stability of the British state and the growth of national identity in response to the armed conflicts of the eighteenth century. In particular, the enormous mobilization of manpower, witnessed during the French Wars, has been interpreted as a process which encouraged social cohesion. The volunteer movement has notably been given fulsome treatment by historians seeking to sustain this argument and is seen as formative of a growing sense of national identity. Moreover, within the historical literature, the meta-narrative of the 'forging of the nation', has come to supersede historical formulations of class conflict emanating from the Industrial Revolution.

Undoubtedly, the case for a growth in nationalistic sentiment holds good for Britain's elites and, perhaps, for many of the middle classes as well. However, the narrative of the 'Nation-in-Arms' has been conducted at a considerable remove from the culture and lives of working people. A number of social, military, and naval historians have recently argued that the analytical framework adopted by many 'war and society' studies is inappropriate when applied to the many thousands of ordinary men enlisted, balloted, or impressed, into the armed forces. As a contribution to this debate, this thesis seeks to re-evaluate the popular experience of mass-arming in England, from the perspective of two relatively neglected branches of the armed forces, the army and militia.

The thesis will focus upon the recruitment process, the experience of soldiering in the home garrison, and the role of armed force in maintaining public order. It will be argued that, between 1790 and 1805, the government was faced by a mixture of popular ambivalence and hostility towards the raising of the army and militia. It will be demonstrated that economic privation was the preeminent cause of enlistment and that, once recruited, soldiers and militiamen retained their working-class attitudes and viewed their service primarily as a contractual form of labour. Through an examination of the military crimes of mutiny and desertion, the extent to which armed service was viewed, from below, as conditional and negotiable, will be emphasized. Finally, an examination of military deployments during industrial protests and food riots will demonstrate that, during the French Wars, the state became much more reliant upon armed force for maintaining public order. By adopting a 'history from below' approach, the limits of social stability and social cohesion will be tested, and a richer, more variegated, understanding of the popular experience of mass-arming will be offered.

This chapter functions as a detailed introduction to the literature summarised above. It will set out some of the most influential historical interpretations of warfare and its impact upon eighteenth-century society. Particular emphasis will be placed upon historical interpretations of the French Wars. Secondly, recent developments within the specific field of military history will be traced, and the debates surrounding the 'forging of the nation' thesis highlighted. A case will be made for the current need for a 'history from below' approach to the period, in order to excavate the experiences of common soldiers, and to challenge prevailing narratives. Finally the structure of the thesis and an outline of the chapters to follow will be set out.

Historiography of the French Wars

Since the Second World War, a literature has developed around the notion that histories of war should encompass more than military commanders and battlefields. The establishment in 1962 of the department of 'War Studies', under the direction of Michael Howard, at King's College London, was instrumental in broadening the field of military history to include the way in which strategy is related to social and political context.[1] However, by the mid-1960s, 'war

[1] For a distillation of 'strategy studies' as pioneered by Howard see M. Howard, *Studies in War and Peace* (New York: Viking Press, 1971) and D. Chandler, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough* (New York: Spellmount, 1976). Professor Sir Michael Howard, 'Interview Transcript', *Making History Website*, 5 June

studies' had diversified further to consider many aspects of the interaction between war and society.[2] Considering that Britain was at war one in every two years, in the period 1690-1815, the development of 'war and society' studies has had a particular resonance for scholars of the long eighteenth century.[3] Both crime and economic historians, for example, have recognized the central importance of eighteenth-century cycles of war and peace to a comprehensive understanding of change over time, within their sub-disciplines.[4] Moreoever, the influential work of John Brewer has established the importance of 'war and society' studies for an understanding of British history as a whole. In *Sinews of Power*, Brewer demonstrates that Britain's mounting military mobilizations, over the course of the eighteenth century, fostered an increasingly centralized 'fiscal-military state'. Brewer has therefore placed the demands of warfare as a central driving force behind the modernization of the British state.[5]

In line with the developing interest in 'war and society' studies, historians have been particularly drawn to the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, which were both the longest and most exacting of Britain's eighteenth-century conflicts. Economic historians have focused on the vast cost of financing the French Wars.[6] While military historians have attended to the unprecedented mobilization of armed force, which the British government required, in order to confront France's conscripted forces.[7] A range of studies have documented the sheer scale of this military effort. We now know that, between the outset of the French Wars (1793) and the battle of Trafalgar (1805), the British Navy multiplied 7.5 times to 120,000 men, the army quadrupled to 160,000 men, and the militia in Britain trebled in size to 90,000 effectives. In

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2008 [http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/interviews/Howard_Michael.html#resources, accessed 13 September 2015].

[2] For a examples of the diversification of military histories to include an engagement with broader society see, for example, J.W. Shy, *Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965); J.R. Western, *The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century: The Story of a Political Issue, 1660-1802* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965).

[3] J. Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (London: Unwin, 1989)., Table 2.1, p. 30.

[4] P. Deane, 'War and Industrialisation', in J. M. Winter (ed.), *War and Economic Development: Essays in Memory of David Joslin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 90-102; D. Hay, 'War, Dearth and Theft in the Eighteenth Century: The Record of the English Courts', *Past & Present*, 95 (1982), pp. 117-60.

[5] Brewer, *Sinews of Power*.

[6] P.K. O'Brien, 'Public Finance in the Wars with France, 1793-1815', in H. T. Dickinson (ed.), *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp.165-87; J.G. Williamson, 'Why was British Growth so Slow during the Industrial Revolution?', *Journal of Economic History*, 44 (1984), pp. 687-712.

[7] G. Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1770-1870* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1982).

addition, a massive volunteer force of 310,000 men was raised. One in five men of serviceable age were reckoned to have been in arms by 1805.[8] According to Conway, such a high level of popular involvement in warfare was not seen again until the First World War.[9] Clive Emsley has produced perhaps the most penetrating 'war and society' study of this period. In *British Society and the French Wars,* Emsley argues that the demands which the wars placed upon the government, the economy, and the people, were at least as momentous as those of the Industrial Revolution. So pervasive were the effects of this late eighteenth-century war effort that, for Emsley, they represented a 'common experience shared by all Britons'.[10]

Linda Colley has subsequently enlarged upon, and popularized, this notion of a 'shared experience' through warfare. Whereas Brewer saw warfare as crucial to the growth of the modern central state, Colley argues for a parallel development in national culture, through war with the French 'other'. The Napoleonic Wars are seen as a culminating episode, in which the scale of popular engagement in the war effort demonstrates that, 'the unreformed British state rested upon the active consent of substantial numbers of its inhabitants'.[11] Above all, the volunteer movement is seen by Colley as a genuine expression of popular loyalism and is manoeuvred into position to counter older and more 'pessimistic' interpretations of class conflict emerging from the Industrial Revolution.[12] In an extension of Emsley's argument, Colley claims that patriotic martial endeavour was the most characteristic working-class experience in the late eighteenth century, 'not labour in a factory, or membership of a radical political organisation, or an illegal trade union'. Moreover, it is argued that the British experience of 'training in arms', was crucial to the growth of national identity.[13]

A number of historians have supported Colley's interpretation of the British war effort and its 'galvanising' effects. Frank O'Gorman, for example, has seen mass volunteering as powerful evidence of 'national enthusiasm' and reminds his readers that this was a 'war of nations not

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[8] J.E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation: 1795-1815* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 95; L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* 4th ed. (London: Yale University Press, 2009, first published 1992), p. 293; Western, *The English Militia*, p. 222; *Commons Journals*, Vol. 69 (1813-4), p. 638.
[9] S. Conway, *The British Isles and the American War of Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 28-9.
[10] C. Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars, 1793-1815* (London: Macmillan, 1979). p. 4.
[11] Colley, *Britons*, pp. 316-7
[12] The classic articulation of this argument is, of course, E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* 14th ed. (London: Penguin, 1991, first published 1963).
[13] Colley, *Britons*, pp. 312, 243.

classes'.[14] In line with this view, J.R. Western's interpretation of the volunteer movement as an elitist, establishment-backed, and anti-revolutionary force, has been entirely overhauled.[15] For Austin Gee, the volunteers were not a reactionary and counterrevolutionary force. In accordance with Colley, Gee suggests that this was a 'spontaneous popular movement' one which was 'loyal' in a general sense, but not stridently 'loyalist'. Further, Gee argues that the existence of volunteer units had the effect of 'strengthening the ties of social allegiance' and assisted in creating a sense of national unity.[16]

Implicit in what we might call the 'Nation-in-Arms' thesis, popularized by Colley, is a double-pronged attack upon Edward Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class.* Firstly, the experiences of English workers in the Industrial Revolution, as described by Thompson – 'the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the 'obsolete' handloom weaver' – are disregarded as unrepresentative.[17] Such a reading has been given credence by the recent agnosticism, evident in the work of a number of economic historians, regarding the changes brought about by the Industrial 'Revolution'. It is now commonplace for a more gradualist perspective to be adopted, and for the long-term benefits of industrialisation to be espoused, in order to challenge, or at least moderate, the 'pessimist' reading of the Industrial Revolution.[18] Secondly, in place of the Thompsonian picture, of exploitation and class conflict arising from rapid industrialisation, the 'galvanising' effects of the 'common experience' of armed service during an era of warfare, is put forward. Thus, for the period under investigation, the 'war and society' approach has been used to supplant the narrative of class-formation with the story of growing national identity.

However, in the last two decades, three main criticisms of the 'Nation-in-Arms' interpretation have emerged. The first argues that it is reductionist to talk of a conservative anti-French patriotic 'consensus' in this period. Political historians note that the French Revolution

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[14] F. O'Gorman, 'English Loyalism Revisited', in A. Blackstock and E. Magennis (eds.*), Politics and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Essays in Tribute to Peter Jupp* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2007), p. 233.

[15] J.R. Western, 'The Volunteer Movement as an Anti-Revolutionary Force, 1793-1801.' *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 71 Issue 281 (1956), pp.603-14.

[16] A. Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement, 1794-1814* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003)., pp. 1, 8, 74, 268.

[17] Thompson, *Making*, p. 12.

[18] N. F. R. Crafts, *British Economic Growth during the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); G. Clark, *A Farewell to Alms: A Brief Economic History of the World* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007); J. De Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); E. Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (London: Yale University Press, 2013).

unleashed a multiplicity of ideological positions which are reflected in the British responses to the wars.[19] Working-class radicals, middle-class religious dissenters, and elite Whigs each critiqued the war effort in their own way and for their own ends.[20] In addition, from the mid-1790s, economic downturns and wartime inflation considerably dampened popular enthusiasm for the war effort.[21] Harling has argued that although there was a groundswell of anti-French sentiment, when Emperor Napoleon threatened to invade in 1803-5, there was 'no lasting patriotic consensus'.[22] Indeed, it has long been understood that 'patriotism', throughout the period under investigation, was contested political terrain.[23] Painite republicans associated 'patriotism' with a universalist sense of 'human fellowship'. While radical reformers adopted the moniker of 'patriot' as part of their campaign to restore the lost 'rights' of the people, which were said to be enshrined in the 'British constitution'.[24] The language of eighteenth-century 'patriotism' thus had an essentially confrontational quality.[25] This fragmented political picture challenges Colley's portrayal of widespread nationalism developing in response to war.

The second critique arises from doubts about the revisionist interpretation of the volunteer movement. J.E. Cookson, for example, while taking a broadly similar approach to Colley, has played down the case for burgeoning loyalty and nationalism. For Cookson, the wartime experiences of the lower orders did not make them more loyal to existing institutions nor more nationalistic 'in any firm ideological sense'.[26] The 'national defence patriotism' exhibited by the poor majority of Britons, Cookson argues, was atavistic in its origins, and was 'opportunistic, interested, and conditional' in nature.[27] This interpretation chimes with the work of Rogers and Emsley on the volunteer movement. Both historians have argued that service in the volunteers

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[19] For an excellent recent survey of British political responses to the French War see P. Harling, 'A Tale of Two Conflicts: Critiques of the British War Effort, 1793–1815', in M. Philp (ed.), *Resisting Napoleon: The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp.19-40.
[20] *Ibid.*; E.V. Macleod, *A War of Ideas: British Attitudes to the Wars Against Revolutionary France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998); J. E. Cookson, *The Friends of Peace: Anti-War Liberalism in England, 1793-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Thompson *Making*, Part 1.
[21] Macleod, *War of Ideas*, p. 189.
[22] Harling, 'A Tale of Two Conflicts', p. 34.
[23] H. Cunningham, 'The Language of Patriotism, 1750-1914' *History Workshop Journal*, 12 (1981), pp. 9-16.
[24] J. Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political Language, Ritual and Symbol in England, 1790-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 26.
[25] J. Belchem, 'Republicanism, Popular Constitutionalism and the Radical Platform in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *Social History*, 6 (1981), p. 31.
[26] Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 244.
[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 244

was seen by many contemporaries as a means of escaping more exacting forms of military service.[28] Likewise, Kevin Linch has questioned the extent to which the scale of volunteering can be used as a means of 'gauging' the loyalty of the nation. As Linch points out, the threat of a conscriptive levy, which was held out by the government from 1803, was extremely important in mobilizing communities to find a sufficient number of 'volunteers'.[29] These lines of argument therefore suggest the volunteer movement was heavily orchestrated from above and was met from below by a form of 'loyalty' that was, at best, highly conditional.

However, the 'Nation-in-Arms' thesis has been constructed to withstand both of these scholarly attacks. To the first criticism, Colley readily admits that this period was punctuated with 'massive, though uneven, [popular] discontent', and accepts that the meaning of both 'patriotism' and 'nationalism' was highly contested. Nevertheless, it is maintained that political dissonance was isolated to a few select groups and that the loyalty of Britain's 'conventional patriots' was of far greater moment.[30] To the second critique, revisionist histories of the volunteer movement, tend to acknowledge a degree of compulsion and self-interest present within the mass mobilizations of the period. However, regardless of how they came to join the volunteer movement, it is argued that the active involvement of thousands of men in the war effort, bred a sense of conservative national feeling which overarched pre-existing political and social divisions.[31]

One final area of debate focuses upon the evidential basis on which the 'Nation-in-Arms' thesis rests. In a little-known review of *Britons*, Edward Thompson argues, contrary to Colley, that the majority of Britons probably looked upon the war with France with ambivalence. Thompson is sceptical of the case for a 'loyal patriotic consensus' as it relies almost exclusively upon evidence

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[28] N. Rogers, 'The Sea Fencibles, Loyalism and the Reach of the State', in M. Philp (ed.), *Resisting Napoleon: The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 45; Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars*, pp. 73, 102-3.

[29] K. Linch, 'A Geography of Loyalism? the Local Military Forces of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1794-1814', *War & Society*, 19 (2001), pp. 1-21.

[30] Colley, *Britons*, pp. 317, xvi, 260; 'Whose Nation? Class and National Consciousness in Britain 1750-1830', *Past & Present*, (1986), p. 116. For the same argument see also J.R. Dinwiddy, 'England', in O. Dann and J. R. Dinwiddy (eds.), *Nationalism in the Age of the French Revolution* (London: Hambledon, 1988), p. 66.

[31] Colley, *Britons*, p. 307; Gee, *British Volunteer Movement*, p. 5; F. O'Gorman, 'English Loyalism Revisited', p. 233.

gleaned from the papers of the volunteer movement.[32] Both Rogers and Cookson have recently extended this critique further by arguing that the experiences of men recruited to the regular armed forces have been only loosely fitted into the 'Nation-in-Arms' narrative.[33] Considering that in 1805, at the height of the volunteer movement, the combined strength of the official armed forces rivalled the volunteers in point of numbers, this is a considerable omission.[34] If we are to talk of a 'common experience' within Britain's war effort then the army, navy, and militia must surely be brought into the equation.

Nicholas Rogers has argued at length that naval personnel fit awkwardly into Colley's schema. In particular, Rogers highlights the intense popular resistance to impressment, evident throughout our period, and to the social divisions which naval recruitment generated.[35] Additionally, the work of N.A.M. Rodger, suggests that social relations in the navy deteriorated dramatically in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Rodger posits that there was a growing gulf between naval officers and their men which was symptomatic of declining real wages, intensified working conditions, harsher discipline, and exacerbated class-tensions following the French Revolution.[36] The authors of a recent edited collection confirm that all these factors were present during the dramatic naval mutinies of 1797.[37] Such findings raise serious questions about the unconditional loyalty of the British people and about the presumed unifying effects of the French Wars. The distinct perspective which the naval experience gives us also suggests that historians should look more carefully at the different branches of the armed forces during this period. This thesis wishes to extend and deepen this analysis by examining the experiences of common soldiers in the army and the militia.

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[32] E.P. Thompson, 'The Making of a Ruling Class' *Dissent* (Summer, 1993), p. 378.
[33] J.E. Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds: Interpreting the Experience of British Soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars', in A. I. Forrest, K. Hagemann, and J. Rendall (eds.), *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 23.
[34] See figures quoted in text above.
[35] N. Rogers, *The Press Gang: Naval Impressment and its Opponents in Georgian Britain* (London: Continuum, 2007), pp. 37-58.
[36] N.A.M. Rodger, 'Shipboard Life in the Georgian Navy, 1759-1800: The Decline of the Old Order?', in L. R. Fischer, et al (eds.), *The North Sea: Twelve Essays on Social History of Maritime Labour* (Stavanger: Stavanger Maritime Museum, 1992), pp. 29-40.
[37] A. V. Coats, and P. MacDougall (eds.), *The Naval Mutinies of 1797: Unity and Perseverance* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011).

Developments in the Field of Military History

It would be fair to say that the Royal Navy occupies something of a privileged position within the historical literature. From the 1960s there has been a flood of studies detailing the social conditions of shipboard life and the manning of the navy.[38] Similar histories of the army and militia have, by contrast, been much slower in appearing. Traditional military histories, produced in the first half of the twentieth century, tend to be unashamedly top-down and institutional affairs. Sir John Fortescue's meticulous *History of the British Army*, for example, deals with the issues of pay and recruitment. However, these considerations are tangential to the main thrust of the argument, which chronicles the development of British military strategy, and the obstruction of this evolution by 'meddling politicians', for whom, Fortescue held a life-long disdain.[39] Similarly, Western's *English Militia* includes some fascinating insights into the social life of the militiaman, and documents the intensity of popular resistance to the introduction of the Militia Acts (1757, 1796-7). However, the work is largely a treatment of 'high' politics.[40] This conservative strain of military history is, of course, alive and well today. Several recent studies demonstrate the continued attachment of military history to 'high' politics and to heroic military personalities.[41]

Despite this seeming continuity, from the 1970s, the hugely influential work of British Marxist historians, notably Hobsbawm, Rudé, and Thompson, has challenged military historians to consider new perspectives.[42] The influence of 'new' social history, or 'history from below', is particularly evident in Tony Hayter's *The Army and the Crowd*, which borrows explicitly from

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[38] In addition to the work by Rogers and Rodger see M. Lewis, *A Social History of the Navy, 1793-1815* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1960); J.D. Byrn, *Crime and Punishment in the Royal Navy: Discipline on the Leewards Islands Station*, 1784-1812 (Aldershot: Scolar, 1989); K.D. McCranie, 'The Recruitment of Seamen for the British Navy, 1793-1815: "Why Don't You Raise More Men?"', in H. Blanton and D. J. Stoker (eds.), *Conscription in the Napoleonic Era : A Revolution in Military Affairs* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 84-101; J. Neale, *The Cutlass and the Lash: Mutiny and Discipline in Nelson's Navy* (London: Pluto Press, 1985).

[39] J.W. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army* Vols. 1-14 (London: Macmillan, 1899-1930); B. Bond, 'Fortescue, Sir John William (1859–1933)', *O.D.N.B*, 2007 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33213, accessed 12 Sept 2015].

[40] Western, *English Militia*.

[41] H. Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); J.L. Moon, *Wellington's Two-Front War: The Peninsular Campaigns, at Home and Abroad, 1808-1814* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011).

[42] For the most pioneering works by these authors see G. Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (London: Wiley, 1964); E. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men, Studies in the History of Labour* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964); E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1963); 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', *Past & Present*, 50 (1971), pp. 76-136.

Rudé's terminology, and adopts civil-military relations as a serious arena of study. Yet, while we learn something of the trials of the common soldier during riot-duty, Hayter's work maintains the traditional institutional perspective, and is essentially an administrative history of War Office procedure.[43] Glen Steppler, has however, delved more deeply, and outlines the many ways in which military records might be used for reconstructing the lived-experiences of soldiers 'from below'.[44] One of the most fruitful areas of research has been found to be General Courts Martial and Regimental Courts Martial (hereafter GCM and RCM) records. We now have several sensitive reconstructions of the military justice system which bring us much closer to understanding the world of regular soldier.[45] Sylvia Frey's pioneering study of the 'redcoat' in America, for example, represents the first systematic attempt to reconstruct the social profile of the rank and file from regimental records, and to consider, in comparison with plebeian civilian life, the standard-of-living among soldiers.[46] 'History from below' has thus exerted a powerful influence upon historical approaches, even within the heavily-fortified realm of military history, and is a key inspiration for this thesis.[47]

However, it is testament to the scholarship of Linda Colley, that all studies of the eighteenth-century military, published after 1992, have had to grapple, first and foremost, with her 'forging of the nation' argument. Most eighteenth-century studies of 'war and society', have adopted Colley's analysis, albeit with a degree of qualification. Bowen's wide-ranging work of synthesis, for example, accepts a trend of rising nationalism, while giving more space than Colley, to the massive social and political divisions which eighteenth-century warfare generated at home.[48] Similarly, Conway's local study of military encampments in the American War of Independence, has reconstructed the hardship of camp life for common soldiers, and the disruption which the arrival of troops entailed for host communities. Camps such as Warley

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[43] T. Hayter, *The Army and the Crowd in Mid-Georgian England* (London: Macmillan, 1978).
[44] G.A. Steppler, 'Regimental Records in the Late Eighteenth Century and the Social History of the British Soldier', *Archivaria*, 26 (1988), pp. 7-17.
[45] G.A. Steppler, 'British Military Law, Discipline, and the Conduct of Regimental Courts Martial in the Later Eighteenth Century', *English Historical Review*, 102 (1987), pp. 859-86; A.N. Gilbert, 'Military and Civilian Justice in Eighteenth-Century England: An Assessment', *The Journal of British Studies*, 17 (1978), pp. 41-65; A.N. Gilbert, 'The Changing Face of Military Justice, 1757-1783', *Military Affairs*, 49 (1985), pp. 80-4.
[46] S.R. Frey, *The British Soldier in America: A Social History of Military Life in the Revolutionary Period* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).
[47] For a broader view of the influence of this historical approach see J. Sharpe, 'History from Below', in P. Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), pp. 25-42.
[48] H. V. Bowen, *War and British Society 1688-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

(Essex) and Coxheath (Kent) were vast, dirty, and rife with both disease and crime. However, for elite and middle-class newspaper readers, at least, Conway is at pains to stress that encampments represented '*loci* for Britishness'.[49] Elsewhere, Conway has developed this theme, by suggesting that camps and garrisons were 'military melting pots', which threw together ordinary men from different backgrounds, and dissolved subnational identities in the process.[50] The same endorsement of Colley's thesis can be found in Brumwell's account of the British soldier in the Seven Years' War. In terms of methodology, *Redcoats* bears a great similarity to Sylvia Frey's work on the American War of Independence. Yet Brumwell parts company with Frey in two respects: firstly, in terms of his relatively optimistic account of the social conditions of soldiering in America, and secondly, in his conclusion, which suggests that the army was an 'incubator for shared Britishness'.[51]

In recent years, within the field of military history, the pendulum has swung back against the 'Nation-at-Arms' thesis. Reviewers have questioned, for example, whether Brumwell has provided sufficient evidence to substantiate his claims of a growing national identity amongst the rank and file in the army of America.[52] Similar doubts could also be raised about Conway's concept of a 'military melting pot'. As John Cookson has pointed out, rank and file soldiers 'are rarely heard with their own voices fighting for a larger cause'. In a brief but succinct essay, Cookson foregrounds the 'reciprocity' of the 'officer-soldier relationship', and the importance of a soldier's 'regimental identity', over and above a sense of nationalism.[53] A similar conclusion is reached by Edward Coss, who argues that soldiers were motivated primarily by the camaraderie engender by 'campfire community', and not by loftier ideals. Coss also strikingly evokes the soldier's marginal existence in the Iberian Peninsula, where Wellington's men were consistently terribly underfed.[54] While Norman Buckley's statistics, of military mortality,

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[49] S. Conway, 'Locality, Metropolis and Nation : The Impact of the Military Camps in England during the American War', *History*, 82 (1997), pp. 560-62.
[50] Conway, *The British Isles and the American War of Independence*, p. 196.
[51] S. Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 309-10.
[52] J. Black, 'Review: S. Brumwell, Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763', *Albion*, 35 (2003), pp. 134-5.
[53] Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', pp. 23-4.
[54] E. J. Coss, *All for the King's Shilling: The British Soldier Under Wellington, 1808-1814* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010).

demonstrate that over half the British soldiers sent to the West Indies died of disease.[55] This research helps to contextualise the recent findings of Kevin Linch, who shows that, during the later Napoleonic Wars, the British government experienced serious difficulties in raising men for the army, and was confronted by considerable popular hostility.[56] Together these works on the Napoleonic period, demonstrate that the empirical evidence exists to sustain analyses of both the common soldier and the process of recruitment. They highlight the need to re-evaluate the crucial period of 1793-1805 and, what is more, they demonstrate a growing dissatisfaction with the narrative of nationalism, as applied to the British army.

A 'History from Below' Approach

In line with this historiographical dissonance, a powerful case has recently been made for bringing together the disparate worlds of labour and military history, in order to better understand the common soldier. Both Mansfield and Way have suggested historians should approach the military through the theoretical framework of class analysis.[57] The strict hierarchy adopted by the British army, they argue is, is a close fit for the social structure of industrialising Britain, with plebeian rankers led (and governed) by patrician officers.[58] Furthermore, a strong argument can be made that the lived-experience of common soldiers is broadly analogous to that of other wage-labourers. After all, much of the 'military task' lay beyond the battlefield in manual 'civil labour'. Bound by the strictures of military justice, and by the terms of enlistment, yet granted wages and certain rights, the soldier should be seen as an 'anomalous labourer, both free and unfree'.[59] Mansfield highlights that many soldiers retained their pre-enlistment trades, and their working-class attitudes, which contributed to sense of the military as a 'labour force'.[60] While Way views the process of mobilization as one of proletarianization, in which

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[55] R. N. Buckley, *The British Army in the West Indies: Society and the Military in the Revolutionary Age* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998).

[56] See Linch's PhD thesis and subsequent monograph 'The Recruitment of the British Army, 1807-1815' (Unpublished thesis, University of Leeds: 2001); *Britain and Wellington's Army: Recruitment, Society and Tradition, 1807-15* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[57] P. Way, 'Class and the Common Soldier in the Seven Years' War', *Labor History*, 44 (2003), pp. 455-81.

[58] N. Mansfield, 'Exploited Workers Or Agents of Imperialism? British Common Soldiers in the Nineteenth Century', in B. Frank, C. Horner, and D. Stewart (eds.), *The British Labour Movement and Imperialism* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010), p. 9.

[59] Way, 'Class and Common Soldier', pp. 457-8.

[60] N. Mansfield, 'Military Radicals and the Making of Class, 1790-1860', in C. Kennedy and M. McCormack (eds.), *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of Arms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 58.

masses of diverse civilian workers were converted into uniformed waged-labourers.[61] Likewise Dziennik has argued that, in the Highlands regiments at least, the military experience was primarily based upon 'contractual obligations'.[62] Furthermore, this approach calls for a re-evaluation of soldier's actions. Military crimes such as 'mutiny', 'desertion', and 'unsoldierly behaviour', can be re-cast as acts of protest against working conditions and as attempts to negotiate the terms of service.[63] Such an interpretation is convincing, it deepens our understanding, and further undermines any historical interpretation which sees armed service as an uncomplicated process of nationalist indoctrination.

The work of Mansfield and Way has been extremely influential upon the theoretical approach adopted by this study. However, the emphasis of these writers also invites us to reconnect with the rich literature on plebeian resistance, and urges the historian to bring the 'war and society' study into dialogue with the Industrial Revolution. For, if we are to consider 'soldiers as workers', their experiences should be placed alongside those of other occupational groups. In particular the work of the Hammonds, Eric Hobsbawm, John Rule, and Adrian Randall, has been consulted, both as a point of comparison and as an inspiration for the direction of research. Studies of contemporary civilian workers, and their vacillating fates during the Industrial Revolution, have been used in Chapter Two, to help make sense of patterns of recruitment. In addition, the analytical tools used by historians to examine 'collective bargaining' and labour unrest have been adopted here, in order to deconstruct the many soldiers' mutinies and disorders examined in Chapters Two and Three.[64]

The history of protest, pioneered by Thompson and Rudé has also been enormously influential upon this study. This thesis seeks to recover the 'faces in the crowd', to reconstruct the actions of plebeian protestors, to use their struggles as a means of understanding the grievances, and customary expectations of the eighteenth-century poor. It also seeks to foreground the agency

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[61] Way, 'Class and the Common Soldier', p. 458.
[62] M. P. Dziennik, 'The Greatest Number Walked Out': Imperial Conflict and the Contractual Basis of Military Society in the Early Highland Regiments' in C. Kennedy and M. McCormack (eds.), *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of Arms*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) pp. 17-36.
[63] *Ibid.*; P. Way, 'Rebellion of the Regulars: Working Soldiers and the Mutiny of 1763-1764', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 57 (2000), pp. 761-792; N. Mansfield, 'Exploited Workers or Agents of Imperialism?', p. 16.
[64] J.L. Hammond, and B. Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer* (London: Longman, 1979 first published 1919); Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men*; J. Rule, *The Experience of Labour in the Eighteenth-Century Industry* (London: Croom Helm, 1980); A. Randall, *Before the Luddites: Custom and Community and Machinery in the English Woollen Industry 1776-1809* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

of subaltern groups in the 1790s. As such, it is forged in the same mould as many 'histories from below'. However, the intention here is to build upon several decades of scholarship, by subjecting military sources to a 'history from below' approach. Thompson made selective use of War Office correspondence (WO 1) and reports (WO 40) in his seminal article on the English food riot.[65] A number of historians of protest have subsequently demonstrated the worth of this material for illuminating civilian disturbances.[66] Yet, with the exception of Roger Wells' study of the Oxfordshire Militia mutinies, there has been no systematic examination of these sources to reconstruct the various protests of soldiers and militiamen.[67] In stark contrast to the significant advances made to the accessibility of criminal proceedings of the Old Bailey[68], courts martial records remain understudied, despite their amenability to the same forms of historical analysis.[69] This thesis is thus an attempt to apply the well-established methodological approach of 'history from below' to relatively unconsulted sources in order to shed new light on popular attitudes to recruitment and service in the army and militia.

An additional aim of the thesis is to contribute to the literature on the Industrial Revolution. Economic historians have noted the important role played by the military in terms of drawing off 'surplus' labour.[70] Chapter Two is dedicated to elaborating upon the close relationship between economics and enlistment. In particular it will examine how short term changes wrought by war and longer-term industrialisation impacted upon patterns of enlistment into the armed forces. However, as Way has suggested, the army was also instrumental in extending and consolidating capitalist relations, both at home and abroad, through the suppression of civil unrest and through wars of conquest.[71] While British imperial expansion lays beyond the realms

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[65] Thompson, 'Moral Economy', pp. 101, 112-3, 116, 119, 121-30.
[66] See for example, Randall, *Before the Luddites*, p. 81; S. Poole, 'Popular Politics in Bristol, Somerset and Wiltshire, 1791-1805' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Bristol: 1992), p. 451. For some of the challenges presented with using military sources see R.A.E. Wells, 'Counting Riots in Eighteenth-Century England', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 37 (1978), pp. 68-72.
[67] R.A.E. Wells, 'The Militia Mutinies of 1795', in J. Rule (ed.), *Outside the Law: Studies in Crime and Order 1650-1850* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1982), pp.35-64.
[68] Thanks largely to the work of Bob Shoemaker and Tim Hitchcock of the *Old Bailey Online* project (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 7.2). For use of this material see their *Tales from the Hanging Court* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2006).
[69] See especially TNA, WO 71, General Courts Martial Proceedings.
[70] See for example M.M. Flinn, 'Trends in Real Wages, 1750-1850', *Economic History Review*, 27 (1974), p. 408.
[71] P. Way, 'Hercules, the Hydra and Historians', *Sozial Geschichte Online*, 3 (2010), p. 62.

of this study, which has been limited solely to England, an attempt has been made in the final part of this thesis to contextualise the army's role in the suppression of domestic protest.

Forty years of scholarship on food protests and industrial unrest have hitherto deepened our understanding of plebeian values and cultural norms.[72] However, there is still room for closer analysis of how the ruling elite sought to deal with social disorder. The work of Clive Emsley and Stanley Palmer have clearly set out the legal workings of the Riot Act, they have demonstrated constitutional limitations placed upon the army, and traced gradual development of the English police from 1829.[73] However, both police and protest historians tend to portray military intervention in the eighteenth century as a static phenomenon.[74] Further, their work makes only selective use of the source-material, sketched out by Hayter, for examining the role of the armed forces.[75] Building on Hayter's work, while simultaneously taking a broader diachronic view, the final part of this thesis considers the developing presence of military force in society during eighteenth century. In particular, it seeks to address the question raised by Charlesworth, over twenty years ago, of how officials perceived and reacted to disorder in different types of community.[76] It is hoped that by revisiting this area of research the role of the military during a period of industrialisation will be more fully established. Moreover, such an investigation is worthwhile as a means of challenging the presumed stability of England's '*ancien régime*'.[77]

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[72] For an excellent survey of the vast literature on popular protest see A. Randall, *Riotous Assemblies: Popular Protest in Hanoverian England* (Oxford: OUP, 2006).

[73] S.H. Palmer, Police and Protest in England and Ireland, 1780-1850 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); C. Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (London: Quercus, 2010).

[74] See especially S.H. Palmer, ''Calling Out the Troops': The Military, the Law, and Public Order in England, 1650-1850', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 56 (1978), pp. 198-214; C. Emsley, 'The Military and Popular Disorder in England 1790-1801', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 61 (1983), pp. 10,21, 96-112.

[75] Among police historians there is a marked preference for Home Office records. See C. Emsley, 'The Home Office and its Sources of Information and Investigation 1791-1801', *The English Historical Review*, 94 (1979), pp. 532-61.

[76] A. Charlesworth, 'An Agenda for Historical Studies of Rural Protest in Britain, 1750-1850', *Rural History*, 2 (1991), p. 235.

[77] I. Christie, *Stress and Stability in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain: Reflections on the British Avoidance of Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1688-1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice during the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Thesis Structure

The first two chapters deal with the politics and economics of enlistment. In Chapter One the political controversy surrounding the early stages of the war with revolutionary France is outlined and the social tensions created by the process of mass enlistment is examined. Particular emphasis is placed on the 'crimp riots' (1794-5) and the Supplementary Militia Act riots (1796-7), and new material is used to contextualise these popular protests. Chapter Two considers which civilians were drawn to a life in the army and militia and what their motivations for enlistment were. While a myriad of private motives operated upon the minds of young men, in the final analysis, economic considerations are demonstrated to have been of overwhelming importance.

The next part of the thesis examines the 'experience of soldiering'. Chapter Three compares the standard of living of soldiers in the home garrison with that of other plebeian occupations. It argues that a series of mutinies in the period underscored the numerous grievances held by soldiers. However, it will be suggested that these protests also successfully altered government policy. Soldiers in England were thus one of the few occupational groups to see a net improvement in their material conditions during the wars. Throughout it will be argued that soldierly loyalty was contingent rather than unreserved. Chapter Four explores this theme further by examining the most common military crime; desertion. It will be demonstrated that even in 1803-5, at the height of the Napoleonic threat, government had great difficulty in raising and retaining militiamen and soldiers.

The final two chapters examine military deployments during the periodic strikes and food riots of the eighteenth century. In Chapter Five, it is argued that there was an increasing intolerance among eighteenth-century elites towards popular disorder and a commensurate decline in the constitutional constraints upon the use of the army to contain popular protests. The qualitative and quantitative detail of military interventions during the strike waves of 1791-2 and the food riots of 1795 and 1800-1 are presented in order to illustrate this point. It is argued that the rise of popular radicalism after the French Revolution, structural changes in the English economy, and the influence of Smithian concepts of a 'free market' saw both increasing disorder from below and a hardening of attitudes from above. Lastly, the concluding chapter reflects upon how this study of civil-military relations and popular protest has contributed to our historical understanding of the period.

Part I – Recruitment

1. The Politics of Recruitment.

In the opening years of the French Revolutionary Wars there was a dramatic expansion of the size of the British Army and the militia. The total size of the army rose from 35,000, at the outset of the war in 1793, to 125,000, men by the close of 1795.[1] When rates of attrition are taken into consideration, it is clear that 96,000 men were raised for the regular army in the first three years of the conflict.[2] Around half of this number were recruited in England.[3] It is notable that more men were raised for the regular army in the opening years of the conflict than were recruited at any other period during the French Wars.[4] In addition to the army, from the mid-1790s, efforts were also directed towards increasing the scale of the militia. Embodied slightly before the outbreak of war, in December 1792, the establishment strength of the English militia stood at some 30,000.[5] County quotas for supplying men for the militia were extended via the 1796 Supplementary Militia Act and, by the close of the 1790s, 65,000 men were drawn into the English militia.[6] However, despite the state's achievement in raising large numbers of soldiers, in the case of both the militia and the army, recruitment figures fell consistently short of targets set by Parliament. By the middle of 1795 the army was twenty nine per cent under its voted strength and in 1799 the English Militia was similarly twenty eight per cent short of its quota strength of 90,000 men.[7] Through the rehearsal of these figures, I intended to suggest both the

[1] J. Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition* Vol. 2 (London: Constable, 1983), p. 485; R. Glover, *Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795-1809* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963). p. 6.
[2] R. Floud, K. W. Wachter, and A. Gregory, *Height, Health and History: Nutritional Status in the United Kingdom, 1750-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Table 2.1, p. 46 citing *Parliamentary Papers* Vol. 10 (1806), p. 389.
[3] Cookson states that the other half were Irish and Scots in *Armed Nation*, p. 28.
[4] Even at the height of the invasion scare of 1803 to 1805 a mere 55,886 men were added to the strength of the regular army. See Floud *et al.*, *Height Health and History*, Table 2.1, p. 46.
[5] The voted strength of the English militia before the war was 28,840. See 26 Geo. III cap. 107 s. 17, Act for Amending and Reducing into one Act of Parliament, the Laws Relating to the Militia (1786).
[6] TNA, PRO 30/8/244, part 1, State of Militia, 7 January 1799. English and Welsh militias together amounted to 68,234 this was 28.4 per cent short of the quota strength for English and Welsh ordinary and supplementary militias of 95,250.
[7] For the army's strength being 50,000 men short of voted numbers see Ehrman, *Young Pitt* Vol. 2, p. 485. For the raising of the militia quota in England to 90,000 see Colley, *Britons*, p. 294.

scale of recruitment in the 1790s, but also of the difficulties which faced the armed forces and the government at this time.

The regular army, in particular, was presented with significant problems when it came to enticing new recruits. In part, this was due to the weight of negative popular perceptions, which bore down upon the regular soldiery. National security in the late eighteenth century was seen to rest primarily on the policy of 'clear blue water'.[8] Hence the navy was lauded as the principal protector of 'English liberty' and the 'noble tar' was feted as a paragon of manly virtue and bravery.[9] In sharp contrast, the land forces were associated with 'standing armies', continental autocracy, and Catholicism.[10] The British Army was therefore denounced by 'Country' ideologues as a threat to 'liberty' and the soldiery themselves fared little better.[11] 'Redcoats' were condemned by radicals and conservatives alike. The former portrayed the soldiery as grovelling automatons, little better than slaves, while the latter felt them to be no more trustworthy than the criminal classes from which they were perceived to have been drawn.[12] In the colourful vernacular of eighteenth-century London, soldiers were known on the streets as 'Bloody Backs' – in reference to their subjugation under military law – and as 'Free Booters' – due to their perceived penchant for plunder.[13] Respectable workmen tended to keep their social distance from, and even looked down upon, the lowly private soldier. Francis Place, for example, complained that soldiers in the capital invariably associated with 'vagabonds', 'common women of the lowest description', and behaved in a manner which was 'excessively gross'.[14] Likewise, the radical tailor, Thomas Carter, commented that many soldiers in

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[8] D.A. Baugh, 'Maritime Strength and Atlantic Commerce: The Uses of 'a Grand Marine Empire'', in L. Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.185-223.
[9] M. McCormack, 'Citizenship, Nationhood, and Masculinity in the Affair of the Hanoverian Soldier, 1756', *Historical Journal*, 49 (2006), p. 978; K. Wilson, *The Sense of the People : Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). p. 196.
[10] For the seventeenth-century origins of this perception see: L.G. Schwoerer, *'No Standing Armies': The Anti-Army Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974) I. Roots, 'Swordsmen and Decimators - Cromwell's Major-Generals', in R. H. Parry (ed.), *The English Civil War and after, 1642-1658* (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 87; J. Childs, *The Army, James II and the Glorious Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), pp. 1-14.
[11] H.T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property : Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Birkenhead: Wilmer Brothers, 1977)., pp. 184-5.
[12] See for example, 'Albanicus', *Letters on the Impolicy of a Standing Army* (London, 1793), pp. 59-60; A. Young, *Annals of Agriculture and other Useful Arts*, Vol. 18 (Bury St Edmunds, 1792), p. 490-1.
[13] See entries in F. Grose, *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* 3rd ed. (London, 1796).
[14] M. Thale (ed.), *The Autobiography of Francis Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972)., pp. 213, 229.

Colchester Barracks used 'disgusting language' and engaged in 'degrading actions' which he felt were too depraved to describe in his memoir.[15] As Roger Wells has suggested, the soldiery were considered to be drawn from 'the sweepings of the street', and were therefore abhorred in many working-class circles.[16]

By contrast, the militia, as an institution, did not suffer from the same high political criticisms that were levied at the army. Those same eighteenth-century 'Country' politicians, who denounced large standing armies as a threat to 'liberty', tended to support the concept of a national militia made up of soldier-citizens.[17] In contrast to the army, which was under the control and patronage of the king and his ministers, the remodelled 'New Militia' of 1757 was designed to be administered and commanded by country elites in order to curtail the undue extension of executive power.[18] Furthermore, to avoid excessive taxation and corruption, men were to be raised relatively cheaply by local ballots which drew a proportion of adult males from each community into the county militias. As quotas of men were theoretically drawn at random from each locale, and, as service was limited to the home garrison, the militia was intended to be a defensive force drawn from a broad cross-section of society. However, in reality, the English militia did not match up to the idealised vision presented in eighteenth-century political rhetoric. Each of the Militia Acts, passed from 1757 onwards, included an important clause which allowed balloted men to pay a fine, or to provide a substitute, in order to avoid personal service.[19] The clause was intended to differentiate the militia ballot from conscription by ensuring that gentlemen were not compelled to serve against their will.[20] Yet the substitution clause was taken advantage of by a much greater social range of individuals than was originally anticipated and few men drawn by ballot served in person. The vast

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[15] T. Carter, *Memoirs of a Working Man*, (London, 1845), pp. 87-88.
[16] Wells, 'The Militia Mutinies', p. 36; J. Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales, 1790-1810* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983)., p. 172.
[17] Both Charles Sackville (Duke of Dorset) and William Blackstone were strong adherents of the militia and opponents of a standing army. See C. Sackville, *A Treatise Concerning the Militia* (London, 1752) and S. Skinner, 'Blackstone's Support for the Militia', *American Journal of Legal History*, 44 (2000), pp. 1-18. For the continuation of this argument into the 1790s see Albanicus, *Letters on the Impolicy of a Standing Army* (London, 1793).
[18] J. Innes (ed.), *Inferior Politics: Social Problems and Social Policies in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)., p. 50
[19] Western, *English Militia,* pp. 129, 290-1.
[20] Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 108. George Savile was critical of the partiality of the substitution clause, 'the poor man then feels his want; the rich man his advantage', and argued that a more conscriptive approach would be fairer and more effective. Savile, *An Argument Concerning the Militia* (1762), p. 10.

majority of militiamen were therefore either paid substitutes or men too poor to purchase exemption.[21]

Englishmen of all social ranks thus tended to hold similar prejudices against the militiaman as they did against the regular soldier. Although there were important differences in the terms of service in the militia and in the army, there were also many similarities between the two.[22] Militiamen wore the same long red coats as the regular soldiery, they shared the same barracks and camps as the regulars, and, their lifestyle, like that of the common soldier, was seen as one of moral laxity and of vice.[23] Similarities in the social composition of the army and militia also caused their personnel to be conflated in the popular psyche. Arthur Young, for example, felt privates in the army and militia were 'taken from dregs of the people' while many of John Reeves' correspondents agreed that, in the wake of the French Revolution, the lowly status of the British soldiery made them a potential threat to the social order.[24] Furthermore, negative perceptions regarding the militia extended down the social scale. There is much evidence to suggest that working men were often as unenthusiastic about service in the militia as they were about service in the army. For example, it was common practice for shopkeepers and artisans to invest in insurance schemes in order to avoid being drawn for the militia.[25] Similarly, workers in Birmingham were suspected of using phony apprenticeship indentures in order to fraudulently

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[21] Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 101; Colley, *Britons,* p. 293; Western, *English Militia,* p. 256.

[22] The differences between the army and militia are explored more fully in Chapter 3.3.

[23] For uniform see J. Davis, *Historical Records of the Second Royal Surrey or Eleventh Regiment of Militia* (Belfast: Marcus Ward, 1877), p. 85. For example of quartering of troops together compare TNA, WO 5/70, ff. 60-3, Quarters of Regulars and Fencibles, 4 August 1794; WO 5/102, ff. 117-8, Quarters of Militia, 4 August 1794. For respectable concerns about the vices of militiamen see the moralizing tract by Hannah More, *The Good Militia Man: Or, The Man That Is Worth a Host, Being a New Song, by Honest Dan The Plough-Boy Turned Soldier* (London, 1796).

[24] 'I think much dependence cannot be placed in the Militia or even in the Army in case of an Insurrection[,] consider for a moment the Militia themselves are part of the very People from whom most Danger is to be apprehended'. BL Add. MS 16,920, ff. 129-30, 'Pacificus' – Reeves, 5 December 1792; Add. MS 16,926, ff. 33-4. 'Well Wisher to my Country' – Moore, 24 November 1792. For a discussion of John Reeves' loyalist activities and the Reeves' Papers see M. Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism, 1792-3', *The English Historical Review*, 110 (1995), pp. 42-69; For Arthur Young's comments see *Annals of Agriculture and other Useful Arts,* Vol. 18 (Bury St Edmunds, 1792), p. 490-1.

[25] In 1796 eighteen shillings was enough to insure oneself against the militia ballot for one year. The insurance company would then issue £5.0.0 towards the purchase of a substitute if the policy holder's name was drawn. See advertisement in *Cambridge Intelligencer,* 10 December 1796.

claim an exemption from militia duty.[26] Moreover, journeymen often chose to slip away at the time of a ballot, by going 'on the tramp' in order to avoid having their name included in the militia lists.[27] Indeed the rank-and-file militiaman was commonly portrayed, not as an eager soldier-citizen, but as a broken-down artisan or a down-at-heel labourer, compelled by poverty and misfortune into service.[28]

The impact of longstanding popular prejudices against soldiers and soldiering were often acknowledged by senior officers. Throughout the period military commanders lamented the 'Contempt which really exists amongst the lower orders … for a soldier of the Line' and claimed that such prejudices were a bar to the recruitment of a wider cross-section of the working classes.[29] Contributing to the instinctive aversion of Englishmen to armed service were the relatively low rates of pay in the army and the militia, the harsh discipline, and long terms of service. Military commanders recognized that these realities ensured that service in the army and militia was an unattractive prospect to much of the civilian population.[30] In Chapters Two and Three the economics of enlistment and the changing material conditions of the private soldier over the period will be examined in more detail. However, here, it will be emphasized that the fortunes of the state, in terms of recruiting, hinged, not just upon economic and social considerations, but also upon contemporary political debates regarding the war with France.

1.1. Recruitment and the 'War of Ideas'

As Macleod has pointed out, the political debate surrounding Britain's war against France was almost as intense as the 'revolution debate' from which it emanated.[31] For conservatives in

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[26] TNA, WO 1/1088, f. 287, Haden - Lewis, 2 July 1795. Reverend Alexander Bun Haden complained that men 'of all ages from 21 to 40' had been claimed as apprentices - some of them having two or three indentures with the same master.

[27] Thomas Carter admitted to having 'tramped' to London to avoid the militia ballot in *Memoirs of Working Man*, p. 137. For a fuller discussion of journeymen's 'tramping' networks see E.J. Hobsbawm, 'The Tramping Artisan', *Economic History Review*, 3 (1951), pp. 299-320; Rule, *The Experience of Labour*, p. 165; M. Chase, *Early Trade Unionism: Fraternity, Skill and the Politics of Labour* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), p. 62.

[28] BMSat 8840, J. Gillray, *Supplementary Militia Turning out for Twenty Days Amusement*, (London, 1796).

[29] WO 1/902, f. 24, General Fox – Duke of York[?], 1 June 1804.

[30] PRO 30/8/242, ff. 5-6, Sir W Fawcett, 'Memorandum on Recruiting', 18 August 1787; WO 1/902, f. 116-7, James Craig – Duke of York, June 1804.

[31] Macleod, *A War of Ideas*, p. 2. The literature on the 'revolution debate' is of course extremely extensive. For works focusing on the response of different groups to the French revolution see: A. Goodwin, *The Friends of Liberty: The English Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution* (London: Hutchinson, 1979); Thompson *Making*, Part 1; K. Gilmartin, *Writing Against Revolution : Literary Conservatism in Britain,*

Britain the French Revolution represented an apocalyptic event. Arthur Young, for example, saw the triumph of 'popular tyranny' in France as a 'catching phrenzy [sic.]', one which the propertied classes were compelled to unite against.[32] The political rhetoric of the French revolutionaries themselves tended to exacerbate this feeling in England. In 1791 Brissot had called for 'a new crusade, a crusade of universal freedom!', and in 1792 the National Convention issued the 'Edict of Fraternity', offering assistance to all peoples wishing to topple tranny and to 'recover their liberty'.[33] The perceived danger of the French revolution spreading to England's shores ensured that many conservatives viewed the war with France as one of national survival. For Edmund Burke, there could be no lasting peace between Britain and the 'Jacobin Empire'. Burke argued that the future stability of Europe therefore relied upon a two-pronged policy, of allied defeat of the French, followed by the reestablishment of monarchy in France.[34] In the early stages of the conflict, the primary war aim of the Pitt ministry, in line with Burkean arguments, was overturning 'Jacobinism'. [35] Over time, as defeating the French on the continent proved to be an impossible task, the British government adopted more pragmatic goals. Pitt's stated aims became gaining overseas territory from the French, as an 'indemnity for the past', and containing French aggrandizement on the continent, in order to provide Britain with national 'security for the future'.[36]

However, not all Britons shared Burke's view of the French revolution nor did they universally support Pitt's war aims. Elite opposition Whigs, middle-class nonconformists, and working-class radicals were each critical of the struggle with France. In the early stages of the conflict, nonconformists, who made up a substantial part of J.E. Cookson's liberal anti-war faction – the

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1790-1832 (Leiden: Cambridge University Press, 2007); T.P. Schofield, 'Conservative Political Thought in Britain in Response to the French Revolution', The Historical Journal, 29 (1986), pp. 601-22; J. E. Cookson, *The Friends of Peace: Anti-War Liberalism in England, 1793-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[32] A. Young, *Annals of Agriculture and other Useful Arts* Vol. 18 (Bury St Edmunds, 1792), p. 490-1.

[33] Quoted in Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars*, pp. 3, 22; L. W. Cowie (ed.), *Documents and Descriptions in European History 1714-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

[34] Burke – Florimond-Claude, Comte De Mercy-Argenteau, c. 6 August 1793 in P. J. Marshall, and A. J. Woods (eds.), *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke* Vol. 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 387-8.

[35] Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars*, p. 23. For early British support for the French Royalist cause see: 'Declaration sent by HM's Command, to the Commanders of HM's Fleets and Armies Employed against France, and to HM's Ministers residing at Foreign Courts' *London Gazette* no. 13586 (26-29 October 1793), pp. 947-50; Marshall and Woods (eds.), *Correspondence of Edmund Burke* Vol. 7, p. 427.

[36] Quoted by Harling, 'A Tale of Two Conflicts', p. 21. Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars*, p. 22-3.

'Friends of Peace' – questioned the legitimacy of an aggressive war against the French. Informed by rational theology, they argued that only a war of self-defence, in response to an immediate threat of attack, was justified in the eyes of God.[37] Political arguments were also used to scrutinize the origins of the war. It was argued from various quarters that Britain should not interfere with the right of the French people to choose their own form of government.[38] Moreover, to those conservatives who pointed out that the French had first declared war on Britain, Foxites and reformers argued that the French revolutionaries had been backed into a corner; first by a Bourbon tyrant, and then, by a coalition of European despots and counter-revolutionaries. The cause of liberty, they argued, was squarely on the side of the French.[39] Furthermore, as the war progressed, these same groups criticized the deleterious economic and social effects of the war. The 'Friends of Peace', for example, many of whom were involved in manufacture, pointed to the detrimental effects of war upon British commerce and to the burden of war-time taxation which, they argued, fell unevenly upon the middle classes.[40] During the scarcities of 1795 and 1800-1, as well as during periodic slumps in industry, pro-reform newspaper editors claimed that declining living standards among the poor were the consequence of the 'ruinous war'.[41] By the middle of the 1790s, war weariness, and the cry of 'peace and plenty', were gaining considerable ground amongst the working-classes, particularly in London and the North of England.[42]

Even in the first years of the war, before economic distress had really set in, political debates surrounding the conflict with France, had an effect upon, and interacted with, the recruitment process. In radical strongholds, for example, the strength of anti-war sentiment was such that attempts were made to obstruct the business of recruitment. Within two months of the outbreak

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[37] Cookson, *Friends of Peace,* pp. 7, 37-9.
[38] The Presbyterian minister Joseph Towers argued that 'no nation can ever have a right to dictate to other nations, what shall be their mode of government, or what their conduct to their princes'. J. Towers, *A Dialogue Between an Associator and a Well-Informed Englishman, On the Grounds of Associations and the Commencement of a War With France*, (London, 1793), p. 25; Cookson, *Friends of Peace*, p. 32.
[39] Harling, 'A Tale of Two Conflicts', pp. 22, 24; D. Stuart, *Peace and Reform, Against War and Corruption. In Answer To A Pamphlet Written by Arthur Young, Esq. Entitled, 'The Example Of France, A Warning To Britain'*, (London, 1794), p. 18; Towers, *A Dialogue Between an Associator*, p. 26.
[40] Cookson, *Friends of Peace,* pp. 56, 61, 63.
[41] See for example, Joseph Gales' *Sheffield Register,* 1 March, 4 April, 19 April 1793.
[42] A. Booth, 'Popular Loyalism and Public Violence in the North-West of England, 1790-1800', *Social History*, 8 (1983), p. 310; J. Stevenson, 'The London "Crimp" Riots of 1794', *International Review of Social History*, 16 (1971), p. 43; J. Stevenson, *Artisans and Democrats: Sheffield and the French Revolution* (Sheffield History Pamphlets: Sheffield, 1989). p. 23.

of war, in March 1793, 'near 500 of the Norwich Rabble' gathered in that town and assailed a captain of an Independent Company and 30 of his new recruits. They reportedly used 'improper language', damned the king, and 'exerted their Rhetoric to persuade the Recruits to mutiny and [to] return into the City'. When Captain Allen resisted the efforts of the crowd, they threw stones and attempted to physically prevent the troops from marching on.[43] Similarly, in Sheffield, a local butcher parodied the recruitment process, and underscored the catastrophic loss of life occurring during the Flanders campaign, by publically driving a cow – styled as 'a new recruit' and adorned with a cockade – through the town and toward the slaughter-house.[44] By 1794, regular open air meetings were being held in 'the enlightened city' of Sheffield, advocating for equal representation, the abolition of the slave trade, and an end to the war.[45] After one meeting, copies of a persuasive anti-recruitment handbill were 'pasted upon walls and Posts' in several parts of town, quite possibly by members of the extremely active Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information.[46] Addressed 'To Young Men', the author points out the dangers inherent to soldiering and further argues that, before enlisting in a time of war, men should consider 'whether or not that war is just'. According to the anonymous writer, Britain and her allies fought, not to defend the 'rights of poor and labouring men' in England, but 'to crush the infant Liberty of France, and to establish the old barbarous tyranny there'.[47] As was commonplace in contemporary radical works, the handbill appealed to a universal humanitarian form of patriotism, which saw the French as 'fellow creatures' engaged in a sister struggle for their rights.[48]

It is difficult to ascertain the precise impact of these radical activities upon the progress of recruitment. Certainly some working men adopted internationalist republican arguments and were steadfastly against enlisting to fight the French. Thomas Elston, a London weaver, for

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[43] TNA, HO 42/25, f. 110, Printed Reward for Information on Persons Seducing Recruits from their Oath at Norwich, 9 March 1793; f. 111, Extract of Letter Harvey Jr. –Harvey, 7 March 1793; Macleod, *War of Ideas*, pp. 191-2.

[44] *Sheffield Register*, 27 September 1793. For the disastrous Flanders campaign see J.W. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army: Second Part, from the Fall of the Bastille to the Peace of Amiens* Vol. 4 (London: Macmillan, 1906), p. 899-900.

[45] Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information, *Proceedings of The Public Meeting, Held at Sheffield, in the Open Air, on the Seventh of April, 1794*, (Sheffield, 1794);Stevenson, *Artisans and Democrats*, pp. 23-4.

[46] Sheffield City Archives (SCA), WWM/Y17/1a, Wilkinson – Fitzwilliam, 15 April 1794.

[47] SCA, WWM/Y17/1b, Anon., 'To Young Men', (Sheffield, 1794).

[48] For an elaboration on this kind of 'patriotism' see Edward Henry Iliff's, *Summary of Duty of Citizens, Written Expressly for the Members of the London Corresponding Society*, (London, 1795), pp. 24-7; Dinwiddy, 'England', p. 57.

example, boldly declared his sentiments in a letter which was intercepted by the Home Office in 1794:

> Let the King or his arm'd Banditti ask me to go for a soldier, what says I to support tyranny and injustice [-] no [-] I [know] better, if I go for a soldier it shall be to rid the world of tyrants and to banish those monsters called Kings from the Face of the Earth![49]

In the capital, during the first years of the war, the London Corresponding Society (hereafter LCS) grew fitfully in membership and occupied a powerful anti-war platform.[50] From 1793, LCS leader John Thelwall gave a series of twice-weekly lectures, to increasingly large audiences, which often reflected upon the 'detestable traffic in blood' associated with the 'present calamitous war'.[51] By 1795 the LCS was influential enough to stage two large open-air meetings which were extremely well attended and which pressed the government for peace as well as reform.[52] The anti-war activities of the LCS must surely have had a dampening effect upon recruitment and pro-war propaganda within the capital. Certainly the work of the Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information was feared to have been effective. According to the town's chief magistrate, Reverend Wilkinson, radical anti-recruitment propaganda had quickly become the talk of the workshops and alehouses. The 'Address to Young Men' was said to have been received in some quarters 'with applause'. Moreover, locally-stationed military officers were clearly displeased with the state of affairs in Sheffield and were concerned about the detrimental impact of radical agitation upon their ability to recruit. One officer urged Wilkinson (against his better judgement) to have the reformers' meetings forcefully broken up.[53] However, it must be acknowledged that anti-war activists had considerably less popular support outside of Norwich, Sheffield, and London. Attempts to obstruct recruitment either with direct action,

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[49] The Treasury Solicitor considered bringing a charge 'seditious words', however, this was later abandoned on the basis that it was too difficult to prove Elston had written the original letter. HO 42/29, ff. 325-6, Elston – Ives, 31 March 1794; ff. 357-8, White – Dundas, 8 April 1794. For more details of the state's difficulties in prosecuting sedition see C. Emsley, 'An Aspect of Pitt's 'Terror': Prosecution for Sedition during the 1790s', *Social History*, 6 (1981), pp. 155-84.

[50] Thompson, *Making*, pp. 142, 154.

[51] Between 1793 and 1794 Thelwall's lectures moved between various venues in London. In November 1793 audience numbers were said to be 60 – 70 strong and meetings confined to a 'back parlour' in Soho. By March 1794, however, Thelwall was speaking at Beaufort Buildings, a venue with a capacity of 500. J. Thelwall, *Political Lectures (No. 1.) on the Moral Tendency of a System of Spies and Informers, and the Conduct to be Observed by the Friends of Liberty during the Continuance of Such a System* (London, 1794), pp. ix, x, xi, 6, 14, 30; TNA, HO 42/29, ff. 268-270, Anon. ('L.L') - Pitt, 31 March 1794.

[52] Thompson, *Making*, pp. 154-55.

[53] SCA, WWM/Y17/1a, Wilkinson – Fitzwilliam, 15 April 1794.

or by political suasion, seem to have been confined to solely to England's most incurable 'Jacobin cities'.

Loyalist activists, on the other hand, had considerably greater resources at their disposal and, from the outset, pursued a broad-based campaign to bolster the war effort by promoting recruitment in the armed forces. In large part, this was a financial effort. Across the nation loyalist associations promoted public subscriptions to augment the bounty money offered to seamen for naval service.[54] Interestingly, patriotic public subscriptions to incentivise the enlistment of militia substitutes and army recruits do not appear to have been set up on the same scale, perhaps pointing to the privileged status of the Royal Navy in the eyes of the public. However, there is evidence of loyalist campaigns to raise bounty money for army recruits in both Surrey and Rochdale.[55] In Essex, a county-wide initiative led by the gentry, raised £13,000 in order to encourage 320 militia substitutes to come forward.[56] Loyalists committees also oversaw charitable campaigns to provide for the orphans and widows of seamen and soldiers 'who may fall in glorious defence of their country'.[57] Moreover, when the British army was found to be woefully underequipped during the Flanders campaign, charitable donations of £32,000 were raised over the winter of 1793-4 to provide warm clothing for the British army.[58] Additionally, loyalists expended considerable efforts in producing a 'legion' of patriotic commodities, including songs, plays, pamphlets, and prints, much of which was dedicated to promoting the war effort and the armed forces.[59]

As Frank O'Gorman has noted, in terms of personnel and organization, there was strong continuity between the earlier loyalist movement in England (1791-2), led ostensibly by John

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[54] The hundreds of Bosmere, Claydon and Stow (Suffolk) raised a total of £298 to provide additional bounties to seamen. While in Devizes 80 landsmen were provided with two guineas a head. In Manchester it was the local loyalist club, the Bull's Head Association, which oversaw donations. *Ipswich Journal*, 20 April 1793; *Sun*, 3 May 1793; *Manchester Mercury*, 26 February 1793; F. O'Gorman, 'English Loyalism Revisited', p. 233; R. Dozier, *For King Constitution and Country; the English Loyalists and the French Revolution* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983), pp. 104-10.

[55] WO 1/1057, f. 59, Resolutions of the Committee of Association of the Parish of Christchurch, Surrey, 6 February 1793; A. Peat (ed.), *'The Most Dismal Times': William Rowbottom's Diary, Part 1: 1787-1799* (Oldham: Oldham Education and Leisure Arts and Heritage Publications, 1996), p. 49.

[56] Essex Records Office (ERO), S/U1/1, Minutes of Proceedings of the Essex County Subscriptions Committee, May-November 1794.

[57] *True Briton*, 18 February 1793.

[58] Fortescue, *History* Vol. 4, p. 31; Colley, *Britons*, p. 267; Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars*, p. 37.

[59] F. O'Gorman, 'English Loyalism Revisited', p. 227.

Reeves' Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property Against Republicans and Levellers, and subsequent wartime loyalist activity.[60] As Philp has demonstrated, a key aspect of this earlier campaign, in response to the success of Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791-2), was an attempt to engage the masses in the revolution debate and to appeal to the people with a popularly accessible ('vulgar') form of conservatism.[61] This attempt at 'popular instruction', continued into the war years, most notably in the form of Hannah Moore's *Village Politics* (1793) and *Cheap Repository Tracts* (1795-8), which sought to convince ordinary Englishmen that they had the 'best laws', the 'best religion', and as 'much liberty as can make us happy'.[62]

However, it should be noted that conservative writers rarely sought to use political argument as a direct means of encouraging recruitment into the armed forces. The ideal soldier was seen to be apolitical – 'a solider has nothing to do with politics' – and the army, as an institution, also claimed to be above politics.[63] Hence a separate strand of loyalist output emerged during the war years which was less overtly conservative in tone and more nationalistic. Unlike radical anti-recruitment texts, pro-war propaganda avoided discussing the precise origins of the war or the more ideological aspects of the conflict. Instead they focused upon more emotive themes. The French were portrayed as the traditional enemy, a rallying cry was made for the 'unity' of the nation, and the perception of the 'nation in danger' was encouraged.[64]

Those propagandist works which specifically focused upon the armed forces attempted to increase the attractiveness of enlistment by associating military service with a valiant commitment to 'King and Country':

> Britons, To Arms – To Arms!
> Valour each bosom warms

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[60] F. O'Gorman, 'English Loyalism Revisited', p. 227. For the earlier movement see J. A. Caulfied, 'The Reeves Association: A Study of Loyalism in the 1790's' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Reading: 1988); R. Dozier, *For King Constitution and Country; the English Loyalists and the French Revolution* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983).

[61] Philp, 'Vulgar conservatism', pp. 42-51; Thompson, *Making*, pp. 60-1, 155.

[62] H. More, *Village Politics. Addressed To All The Mechanics, Journeymen, and Day Labourers in Great Britain. By Will Chip A Country Carpenter* (London, 1793), p. 23.

[63] J. Trueheart, *The Soldier's Answer to the Pamphlet Entitled 'The Soldiers' Friend' Written by a Subaltern. To Which is Added Three Loyal Songs*, (London, 1793), p. 5; H. Strachan, *The Politics of the Army*, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1997), p. 7.

[64] W.F. Sullivan, *The Test of Union and Loyalty: A New Piece, On the Present War with France to 1795. To which is Added Three New Songs, viz Un Petit Morcau; or the Year Nintey-Five. Poor Brown Bess, and The Sons of Neptune. The Whole Written Spoken and Sung by William Francis Sullivan at the Theatres of Dover and Deal* (Margate, 1795), pp. 8-10.

New fame to sing -
On Land and Over the main
Fresh Laurels we will gain –
GOD SAVE THE KING![65]

As Cookson has suggested, soldiers were encouraged to think of themselves as the protectors of society itself.[66] The possibility of sharing in the 'glories of war with France' were also repeatedly emphasised.[67] Even men balloted for the militia, who were unlikely to partake in battle with the enemy, were encouraged to see their 'sacrifice' in these nationalistic terms:

I was a Plough-boy tall Sir
My name was honest Dan
But at my country's call Sir
I've turned Militia Man.[68]

Furthermore, there was a considerable effort made by propagandists to present the process of recruitment in a picturesque fashion and to highlight the many private advantages of enlistment. The elegance of the soldiers' uniform – 'In Regimentals bright, Sir… Of Scarlet I do shine' – was a recurrent feature of loyalist pamphlets and particularly prominent in contemporary prints.[69] Scholars working closely with the latter source have argued that historians must attend closely to their 'narrative pattern, recurring formal devices and visual analogies'.[70] Within the popular prints of the 1790s, one can certainly identify a well-rehearsed genre which depicts the 'ritual' of recruitment. Rowlandson's *Soldiers Recruiting* is a prime example of this visual trope (Print 1).[71] In these images, the rustic would-be recruit is gently convinced to enlist by the appeal of army life. The affections of women are commonly part of the attraction and are usually associated with the soldiers' eye-catching uniform and the bravery and patriotism associated with his service. The availability of music and drink are also

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[65] T. Hurlstone, *To Arms! Or, The British recruit. A musical interlude. As Performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden* (London, 1793), p. 16.
[66] J.E. Cookson, 'Service without Politics? Army, Militia and Volunteers in Britain during the American and French Revolutionary Wars', *War in History*, 10 (2003), p. 383.
[67] Anon. *Sentiments on a War with France*, (London, 1793), p. 21.
[68] H. More, *The Good Militia Man: Or, The Man That Is Worth A Host, Being a New Song, by Honest Dan The Plough-Boy Turned Soldier* (London, 1796), p. 3.
[69] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[70] B. Maidment, *Reading Popular Prints, 1790-1870* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. xiv.
[71] For similar themes represented in other pro-recruitment prints see: BMP&D 2010,7081.3252, Anon., *The Soldier's Adieu*, (London, 1793); Brown University Military Collection (BUMC), GB-P1795mf-2, Anon., *The Recruiting Party* (London[?], 1795); BUMC, GB-P 1803 lf-2, C. Turner, *The Recruit* (London, 1803); BUMC, GB-P 1803 lf-1, J.R. Smith, *Recruit* (London, 1803).

set forth as advantages of military service. Implicit in Rowlandson's print, and others like it, is the latent loyalty and foundational nationalism of the would-be recruit.

Print 1 - BMSat 9316, T. Rowlandson, *Soldiers Recruiting* (London, 1798).

The precise effects of these loyalist representations of armed service and recruitment are just as difficult to gauge as those produced by the anti-war factions. As Philp has pointed out, 'patriotic publications were *directed* at the populace, but they were not, for the most part, produced by them'.[72] Nevertheless, we know from surviving soldiers' memoirs that some recruits were certainly taken in by this romantic image of enlistment and, perhaps, also by the appeal to monarchy and nationalism.[73] Allen Davenport, for example, although latterly a convert to Thomas Spence's radical land reform scheme, was a staunch 'Church and King' man in his teens. In his youth, Davenport believed that 'everything that was undertaken by England

[72] M. Philp (ed.), *Resisting Napoleon : The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 2.
[73] See Chapter 2.2 for a full discussion of these sources. A number of ex-soldier's memoirs are listed in J. Burnett, D. Vincent, and D. Mayall, *The Autobiography of the Working Class: An Annotated Critical Bibliography: 1790-1900* Vol. 1-3 (Brighton: Harvester, 1984). While extracts from well-known soldiers' memoirs can be found in T. H. McGuffie (ed.), *Rank and File: The Common Soldier at Peace and War 1642-1914* (London: Hutchinson, 1964).

was right, just and proper; and that every other nation that opposed her was wrong and deserved chastisement', hence he enlisted in a Fencible regiment with little hesitation. Moreover, Davenport claimed that 'nine tenths' of the English population were firmly behind the war with republican France around the year 1794, suggesting that the loyalist attempts at rousing the nation were effective indeed.[74] However, even in 1794, 'patriotism' was rather fluid and meant different things to different groups.[75] We should therefore be cautious of Davenport's assessment and avoid making the easy connection between military service and an overarching sense of patriotism and identification with the nation.[76]

Indeed, when one considers the fair number of surviving soldiers' memoirs, and the fact that they were often commissioned or patronised by conservative officers, it is surprising how few private soldiers articulated a deep sense of patriotic duty or nationalist sentiment as a motivation for enlisting into the army.[77] Davenport appears to have been rather exceptional in his willingness to act upon his evolving political commitments by taking up arms.[78] Very few plebeian 'Church and King' men left a record of their having enlisted for political reasons. What evidence there is, however, overwhelmingly suggests that economic circumstances were paramount in terms of the decision to enlist.[79] Moreover, we must recognize that the vision of the recruitment process portrayed by Rowlandson and other printmakers is a propagandist one. The image of the recruiting party effortlessly drawing upon the loyalty of the nation has been taken at face value by some historians.[80] However, recruitment was rarely as romantic and unproblematic as these sources would lead us to believe. What military historians describe as 'ordinary recruitment', where small detachments from experienced regiments, paraded into town to with tales of gallantry and with eye-catching uniforms did, of course, go on.[81] However,

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[74] M. Chase (ed.), *The Life and Literary Pursuits of Allen Davenport: With a further Selection of the Author's Work* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1994), pp. 7, 47.
[75] Epstein, *Radical Expression*, p. 24.
[76] A.I. Forrest, K. Hagemann, and J. Rendall (eds.), 'Introduction: Nation in Arms - People at War', in *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 14.
[77] N. Mansfield, 'Military Radicals and the Making of Class, 1790-1860', p. 62; See Appendix I.
[78] As well as becoming a soldier in the Windsor Foresters in 1794, Davenport later advocated the arming of the masses and was closely associated with the Spencean ultra-radicals who led the foiled Cato-Street conspiracy of 1820. Chase (ed.), *The Life and Literary Pursuits of Allen Davenport*, pp. 48-9.
[79] See Chapter Two.
[80] Colley, *Britons*, pp. 305-14.
[81] T.H. McGuffie, 'Recruiting the Ranks of the Regular British Army during the French Wars : Recruiting, Recruits and Methods of Recruitment', *JSAHR*, 34 (1956), p. 52.

the Secretary-at-War's in-letters reveal that recruiting parties were often extremely disruptive of civic harmony and therefore unwelcome by the authorities. 'Ordinary' recruiting parties were known to cause confusion in small towns by loudly 'beating up' for men, even doing so late at night, 'with a number of Drums … and Lighted Torches'.[82] Competing regiments were also seen poaching recruits from one another and might engage in pitched battles over the ownership of willing enlists.[83] Furthermore, for all their bluster, the itinerant recruiting party was often found to be an inadequate means of supplying the army with men.[84] The vast majority of recruitment, in the early stages of the French war, was therefore performed, not by ordinary recruitment, but by newly-formed, poorly disciplined, and often unscrupulous independent regiments. In order to get a better understanding of civil-military relations and the popular experience of recruitment during the early years of the French wars we must, therefore, explore the workings of independent army regiments and the recruitment techniques they pursued.

1.2. The Impact of Independent Regiments

In addition to expanding the size of established army regiments, in 1793 the British Government allowed the formation of 100 new independent companies of 100 men each.[85] By the beginning of 1794 the Secretary-at-War claimed that 11,000 men (sixty-five per cent of the total men raised in the previous year) had been recruited by these means.[86] Given this promising start, further permissions were granted for the formation of whole independent regiments. The *Army List* for 1794 shows 85 such regiments were in existence and most were tasked with raising 600 men.[87] Although some units probably fell short of this target, others raised considerably more and produced multiple cohorts of men year on year. Captain MacDonnell of the 113th Regiment, for

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[82] The beating of the drums of a recruiting party passing through Chelmsford caused a horse to buck and overturn a carriage killing two children in 1793; *Diary of Woodfalls Register* (London), 26 June 1793; While parties in Newark ignored the curfews set by the town's magistracy. WO 1/1091, uf., Godfrey (Town Clerk of Newark) – Windham, 11 August 1795.

[83] For examples of poaching by a Fencible regiment in London and for a pitched battle between recruiting parties in Bath see, respectively, WO 1/1094, u.f, Urquhart – Windham, 9 March 1795; WO 1/1082, f. 579, George – Windham, 5 April 1795.

[84] Conway has clearly demonstrated that this was the case during the American War of Independence see 'Entrepreneurs and the Recruitment of the British Army in the War of American Independence, 1775-1783', in J. Fynn-Paul (ed.), *War, Entrepreneurs, and the State in Europe and the Mediterranean, 1300-1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 117.

[85] Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars*, p. 36; Fortescue, *History* Vol. 4, p. 212 fn. 3.

[86] *Parliamentary Register* (Commons), Vol. 37, 4 February 1794, p. 284; For total of 17,000 raised see *Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. 10 (1806), p. 389.

[87] War Office, *A List of the Officers of the Army and Royal Marines, On Full and Half Pay*, (London, 1794), pp. 167-196; TNA, WO 40/6, Amherst – Yonge, 15, 17 May 1794.

example, had 733 recruits accepted in June 1795.[88] Unfortunately, the inspection returns which survive for 1794-5 are inadequate to tell us the precise contribution of the independent regiments. However, by the summer of 1795, five regiments whose returns do survive show, on average, that they produced 668 recruits.[89] It would not be unreasonable to suggest that the independent regiments contributed at least 50,000 men between 1794-5 or sixty-four per cent of the total manpower raised for the army in that time period.[90]

In electing to rely upon newly formed independent regiments, the government may well have been drawing upon the experiences of the American Revolutionary War. As Conway has demonstrated, it was recognized in the late 1770s, that 'ordinary recruitment' was a very sluggish means of increasing the size of the armed forces.[91] Officers were rarely found to exert themselves while on 'ordinary recruiting' duties. They stood to gain little in terms of promotion and were actually likely to lose out financially due to the costs associated with raising men.[92] Therefore, during the American conflict, government experimented with the creation of new independent regiments whose officers were given permission to 'raise men for rank'. Commanding officers were at liberty to dispose of commissions within these regiments and could bring in anyone who could help them reach their targets. If and when the regiment was complete, each officer was rewarded with a permanent step in rank which was calibrated to reflect the number of recruits he had secured. Through these incentives, it was found that independent regiments could be filled up much more quickly than the established corps.[93]

As steps in army rank were usually purchased, or earned by long years of service, the option of raising for rank was extremely attractive.[94] Eighteenth-century army commissions could be prohibitively expensive. A Lieutenancy in a light horse regiment could be bought for £1,600

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[88] TNA, WO 27/77, Inspection of 113th, 29-30 June 1795.
[89] Together the 105th, 106th, 113th, 118th and 132nd Regiments produced 3,341 men accepted into the line. See relevant inspection returns in WO 27/77 and WO 27/227.
[90] Based on 668 recruits x 85 independent regiments = 56,797 men. For the total manpower raised between 1794-5 (79,026) see *Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. 10 (1806), p. 389.
[91] Conway, 'Entrepreneurs and the Recruitment of the British Army', p. 111, 117, 124; *British Isles and War of American Independence,* p. 13, 19.
[92] Conway, 'Entrepreneurs', p. 117; Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*, p. 154-5.
[93] Conway, 'Entrepreneurs', p. 117.
[94] M. Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions: A Reappraisal', *JSAHR*, 58 (1980), p. 223.

while a Majority in a foot regiment went for £2,900.[95] On the other hand, an Ensigncy worth £400, could be obtained in an independent regiment in exchange for just 18 recruits.[96] Even gentlemen, such as Sir George Napier, saw the opportunity to exchange a few-score recruits for a promotion as unmissable.[97] Officers who took their chances could make extraordinary advances in their career. John Henry Loft, for example, rose from a Lieutenant in the Foot Guards to Lieutenant-Colonel of his own independent regiment in the space of twelve months – a career progression which took Wellington six years to accomplish.[98] Furthermore, civilians wishing to enter the army with the status of a commission, or who wished to obtain a much-coveted 'half-pay' pension, could also do so by engaging to raise men for an independent company. For the government, the plan was also attractive financially. The Treasury paid out fifteen pounds per recruit raised, but only after they had been examined by a surgeon, approved by a Field General, and drafted into the regiments of the line.[99] The scheme also had a pecuniary appeal for staff in the War Office, as each new commission was signed off by a clerk, for a small fee. As Harling has pointed out, in 1796 the Chief Clerk of the War Office earned six times the annual salary of the Secretary-at-War through these fees alone.[100]

However, for all these 'advantages', military historians are agreed that recruiting for rank encouraged corruption to such an extent that it represented 'one of the major military abuses of the Georgian period'.[101] Certainly some contemporaries were critical of a scheme which allowed inexperienced men to be promoted over the heads of veteran officers. The Opposition Whig, General Tarleton, objected to the rapid elevation of 'purse-proud schoolboys' but also to the

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[95] PRO 30/8/116, ff. 275-6, Dodwell Browne – Pitt, 14 September 1797; PRO 30/8/123, ff. 188-9, Clive – Pitt, 29 March 1795.
[96] Conway, 'Entrepreneurs', p. 117.
[97] In 1794 Lady Sarah Napier was assisting her husband in securing 100 recruits for a step in rank. Lady Sarah Napier – Susan O'Brien, 29 June 1794 in M. Fox-Strangways, and G. Fox-Strangways (eds.), *The Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox, 1745-1826, Daughter of Charles, 2nd Duke of Richmond, and Successively the Wife of Sir Thomas Charles Bunbury, Bart., and of the Hon. George Napier*, Vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1901), pp. 109-10.
[98] M. Loft, 'General Henry Loft' *Lincolnshire Life: The County Magazine*, 24 (1985), pp. 28-30.
[99] T.H. McGuffie, 'The Short Life and Sudden Death of an English Regiment of Foot: An Account of the Raising, Recruiting, Mutiny and Disbandment of the 113th Regiment of Foot, Or 'Royal Birmingham Volunteers', Apr. 1794 to Sept. 1795', *JSAHR*, 33 (1955), p. 24.
[100] The official salary of the Secretary-at-War was £2,480 but the Chief Clerk earned £14,482 in fees alone. P. Harling, *The Waning of 'Old Corruption': The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1779-1846* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 73; Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions', p. 227.
[101] Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*, p. 144; Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, Vol. 4, pp. 81-2, 212-4.

cost to the public of 'multiplying commissions'.[102] Military historians have also shown that independent regiments produced a lower 'quality' of recruit – men who were aged, infirm, or under the regulation height.[103] The inspection returns of the 126th regiment, for example, reveal that some recruits were rejected as being 'above seventy years' of age.[104] However, the main problem with the independent regiments was that they introduced an increased level of competition into the recruitment process.[105] It is true that at the outset of any war there is always a struggle for manpower. However, the new corps raised the stakes considerably. Each independent officer was conscious that, if he did not raise the requisite number of men, he would lose both his desired step in rank and any private capital laid out as bounty money. Hence many independent regiments can be seen operating in a desperate manner. Furthermore, competition between army regiments, and with the other arms of the military, led to a proliferation of various abuses of the recruiting service and the Secretary-at-War's in-letters in the period 1793-5 resound with complaints about the behaviour of recruiters.[106]

Corrupt practices within the recruiting service were in fact endemic in this period. Contrary to the Mutiny Act, recruits enlisted in pubs were often brought before a magistrate, while still drunk, to swear to their willingness to enlist.[107] The independent companies were particularly noted for recruiting drunken civilians. Lieutenant Wheatley of the 117th Regiment, for example, was a publican turned recruiter, who allowed would-be recruits to run up large drinking bills before encouraging them to enlist in order to repay the debt.[108] Likewise, Major Leeson's independent company operated out of the *Little George* pub in Chatham where a magistrate noted that 'Women of the Town are kept for the purpose of decoying young men who by that means are entrapped into the service'.[109] It was found that recruiters were also willing to sell their wards on to other officers to turn a profit, thus deceiving the recruit about the regiment he

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[102] *Parliamentary Register* (Commons), Vol. 40, 21 January 1795, pp. 202-3.
[103] Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, Vol. 4, p. 214; McGuffie, 'Recruiting the Ranks', p. 51.
[104] WO 27/77, Inspection of 126th Regiment, 24 February 1795.
[105] Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics*, p. 25.
[106] Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, Vol. 4, p. 214.
[107] The Mutiny Act specified that new recruits were to have a 24 hour 'cooling-off' period before being attested but this clause was frequently ignored. WO 1/1069, f. 135, Justice Conant – Lewis, 18 March 1794; WO 4/152, f. 10, Lewis – Connant, 18 March 1794; WO 4/153, f. 255, Lewis – Holbech, 8 July 1794.
[108] WO 1/1094, Uf., R Bailey, Newbury – Windham, 4 August 1795. For the same practice used to gain sailors to fill slavers and naval vessels see M. D. George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Peregrine, 1964). p. 302.
[109] WO 1/1083, f. 99, Wm Bishop, Maidstone – Windham, 22 May 1795.

was to join, and denying him the full value of the bounty money.[110] The Mayor of Norwich perceived this practice to be, 'disgraceful to the military Character, and if not checked, will materially injure the recruiting service'.[111]

Furthermore, reports from parishes in Lincolnshire, Warwickshire, and Herefordshire, suggest that it was common practice for desperate recruiting parties to force a coin into the hand of an unwitting villager, to claim the man had accepted the 'King's shilling', and to carry him off as an enlisted soldier.[112] Other recruiters rejected even this level of subtlety and simply illegally impressed, or 'crimped', their prey. A black servant was forcibly removed from the home of a gentlemen in Cheltenham by a party of dragoons in 1794.[113] While several high profile cases of illegal impressment by independent companies are recorded in the provincial press. At Long Itchington (Warwickshire) a Dissenting minister, Joseph Gronow, was forcibly enlisted while on his way to chapel, he was confined for three hours and forced to pay a guinea to be released. As one editor commented, the case revealed that 'the trade of *crimping* is not confined to London and its environs'.[114] In a similar case, John Liversage was illegally confined by a party of 125th Regiment in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Despite refusing to enlist, Liversage was claimed as a deserter, 'placed in … irons', and marched to Buckingham Goal, where he languished for upwards of eight weeks. Only after applying for a writ of *Habeas Corpus* from the Court of King's Bench was he freed and awarded damages of £145.[115] Less fortunate was John Meal, a labourer from Slaithwaite (Yorkshire), who got into conversation with Sergeant Charles Elliott and Private Joseph Barber of Colonel Cameron's Wakefield Regiment at a local public house. After failing to convince him to enlist, the two soldiers attacked Meal, and forced him to march with them to Huddersfield. The pair beat Meal viciously along the way and, on the outskirts of Huddersfield, he collapsed and was declared dead shortly after.[116] Elliot was subsequently

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[110] WO 1/1070, f. 443. Dalrymple – Lewis, 4 February 1794; WO 1/1081, f. 53,Villers – Lewis, 6 November 1794.
[111] WO 1/1076, f. 299, Hudson – Lewis[?], 01 November 1794.
[112] See respectively reports from Great Hale, Long Itchington and Pencombe: WO 1083, f. 85, Deposition of John Clerk, 12 May 1795; *Sun*, (London), 25 August 1794; WO 1/1072, f. 521, Rev Glasse – Lewis, 3 November 1794.
[113] WO 4/154, f. 28, Windham – Home, 19 August 1794.
[114] *Review and Sunday Advertiser,* 24 August 1794; *Sun*, 25 August 1794.
[115] *Chester Courant,* 21 April 1795.
[116] *Leeds Intelligencer,* 6 April 1795.

sentenced at the York Assize and was hanged for murder.[117] It is important to acknowledge cases such as these, both to give balance to the more propagandist images of recruitment, discussed above, and in order to understand the tensions involved in manning the armed forces in the 1790s.

In addition to the malpractices of the independent companies, the intense competition for recruits inevitably attracted middlemen, also known as 'crimps', who sought to profiteer from the recruitment process. In some cases these men were self-employed fraudsters who were entirely unconnected with the army. Military commanders, from the established regiments, considered these men to be a scourge. Crimps often impersonated legitimate recruiting parties in order in impose upon naïve villagers or to gain credit from shopkeepers. A 'set of sponging crimps' were reported to be roving the Yorkshire countryside in 1793, for example, 'enlisting' labourers and releasing them only for a fee.[118] While a man styling himself 'Captain' Brown extorted clothing and cash from a shop in Kent while posing as a recruiting sergeant.[119] In other cases, crimps were known to instruct soldiers of the best ways to desert and re-enlist undetected, taking a cut of the bounty money as their remuneration.[120] The Commander of Chatham barracks complained that this kind of poaching was common in the Medway towns, with crimps targeting disgruntled soldiers due to embark for foreign service.[121] Complaints about the poaching of recruits were also reported to the Secretary-at-War from Windsor, Sheffield, and Newcastle-under-Lyme, all places where, it was said, there were 'a number of crimps collected'.[122]

However, it should also be recognized that the crimping trade was given encouragement by the independent regiments who relied upon the trafficking of men to supply them with recruits. While military historians have sometimes made this connection, the case can put more forcefully, by examining the available evidence.[123] Advertisements posted by independent regiments, for example, show that they actively encouraged middlemen to come forward with

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[117] *Derby Mercury*, 2 April 1795.
[118] WO 1/1056, f. 367, Busfield – Yonge, August 1793.
[119] WO 1/1089, f. 357, Knatchbull – Brownrigg, 16 April 1795.
[120] Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, p. 80; Linch, 'The Recruitment of the British Army', p. 236; D.I. Eaton, *Reflections on the Pernicious Custom of Recruiting by Crimps*, (London, 1795), p. 15.
[121] WO 1/1085, f. 143, Dalrymple – Lewis, 18 March 1795.
[122] WO 1/1092, f. 15, Rooke – Windham, January 1795; WO 1/1091, u.f. Palerton – Windham, 31 August 1795; WO 1/1093, u.f., Slade – Windham, 3 September 1795.
[123] Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, Vol. 4, pp. 81-2; McGuffie, 'Recruiting the Ranks, pp. 50-1.

potential recruits by offering a 'finders' fee'.[124] Furthermore, crimping was encouraged by the subcontracting of recruitment to unscrupulous civilians. In 1794, for example, Major Blatch complained about a discharged drummer from the Essex Militia who marched about Colchester in a sergeant's coat, 'which he has, by some means, procured'. The 'sergeant' attempted to seduce men from Blatch's regiment and sent all his recruits by stagecoach to 'Lieutenant' Napper in London.[125] It was later established that Napper was promising recruits high pay and high bounties which he never handed over. Napper instead fed his recruits into the 106th Norwich Regiment.[126] When confronted by the War Office, Major Earle Bulwer of the 106th, simply replied that he had gained 'several good recruits' by these means.[127] Similarly, the extraordinary recruiting ability, and rapid career advancement, of John Henry Loft must, in part, be attributed to the help of crimps. In 1795 Loft was given permission to raise 4,000 men for general service.[128] However, he was accused by the High Sherriff of Lincolnshire of running a 'Licenced Crimping Office' in Grimsby 'where all his men come to him by stage coaches'.[129] On three separate occasions Loft was reprimanded by the Secretary-at-War for allowing improper subordinates to recruit on his behalf.[130] One crimp raising men for Loft was found to be a London coiner – 'a most infamous character'. The East London magistrate, Patrick Colquhoun, was astonished to find such a man engaging recruits and warned that the 'nefarious practices' of crimps were 'constantly bringing odium upon Government'.[131]

Indeed, the tricks and coercive practices perpetrated by the independent regiments, and the crimps with whom they were closely associated, were widely considered to be an outrage to 'English liberty'. As E.P. Thompson has argued, the 'birthright' of every Englishman was seen to be a set of negative rights which protected the individual and his property against arbitrary interference. 'English liberty' consisted of freedom from arbitrary arrest, trial by jury, equality

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[124] Major Eearle Bulwer's 106th Norwich Regiment offered two guineas to 'bringers of recruits'. *Norfolk Chronicle,* 24 May 1794.
[125] WO 1/1068, f. 35, Blatch – Lewis[?], 22 July 1794.
[126] WO 1/1075, f. 359, Captain MacLean – Lewis, 21 July 1794.
[127] WO 1/1075, f. 363, Earle Bulwer–Lewis 23 July 1794; WO 4/153, f. 360, Windham – Earle Bulwer 24 July 1794.
[128] WO 1/1089, f. 533, Loft – Lewis, 7 March 1795.
[129] LCL, Banks Correspondence, 3/1/20, Banks – [?] (draft) 14 November 1796. Although Banks did not specify the location of the 'crimping house', Loft's headquarters were at Grimsby. M. Loft, 'General Henry Loft', p. 30.
[130] WO 4/156, f. 323, Lewis – Loft, 4 February 1795; WO 4/158, ff. 45, 110, Lewis - Loft, 23, 29 April 1795.
[131] WO 4/156, f. 324, Lewis – Colquhoun, 4 February 1795; WO 40/7, Colquhoun - Windham, 2 February 1795.

before the law, freedom to travel, to trade, and to sell one's own labour. For the most part, authority upheld these rights and recognized that there was a limit beyond which the common man could not be pushed.[132] While the impressment of skilled sailors for the navy was, controversially, deemed to be legal, the trepanning of unwilling recruits for the army was certainly not.[133] Where crimping was seen to go on, it was universally condemned as detrimental to the image of the recruiting service.[134] In Lincolnshire, for example, the effect of such 'infamous practices' was said to have 'entirely stopped all recruiting in this County'.[135] While several conscientious provincial magistrates warned the Secretary-at-War about the activities of crimps. A Birmingham magistrate referred to crimps as 'Locusts', in Manchester their activities were seen as 'scandalous', while in Herefordshire the authorities warned that the 'Populace … are extremely incens'd … and consider [a party of the 113th Regiment] in the light of a Press-Gang'.[136] The evidence clearly suggests that, in the opening stages of the war, the activities of crimps and independent companies became 'infamous' in many regions of the country and that enlistment became increasingly linked in the popular psyche with coercion rather than consent.

1.3. London Crimp Riots Revisited, 1794-5

The growing national scandal of crimping was magnified within London. Crimps and recruiting parties were invariably drawn to London due to its large working-class population. By 1801, over one tenth of Englishmen resided in the capital, a larger proportion of the population than in any other contemporary European capital.[137] Moreover, there were two other advantages which attracted unscrupulous recruiters. Firstly, the capital was awash with public houses. Colquhoun estimated in 1794 that there was one public house to every 26 private dwellings. Considering the competition between alehouses, Colquhoun suspected that many

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[132] Thompson, *Making*, pp. 84-8.
[133] Coss , *All for the King's Shilling*, p. 80; Randall, *Riotous Assemblies*, p. 305. For controversy surrounding the legality of Naval impressment see Rogers, *Press Gang.*
[134] WO 1/1076, f. 299, Hudson – Lewis[?], 1 November 1794;
[135] WO 1/1091, u.f, Pocklington – Windham, 6 April 1795.
[136] WO 1/1083, f. 201, Bayley – Lewis, 29 July 1795; WO 1/1088, f. 287, f. 287, Haden - Lewis, 2 July 1795; WO 1/1072, f. 521, Glasse – Lewis, 3 November 1794.
[137] According to Wrigley, Middlesex and Surrey together amounted to 1,132,767 of the country's 8.6 million population, or 13.06 per cent of the total population. E.A. Wrigley, *The Early English Censuses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), Table 4.1; G. Rudé, *Hanoverian London, 1714-1808* (London: Secker, 1971), p. ix .

publicans fenced stolen goods as a means of supplementing their income.[138] Additionally, during the war, many of the capital's publicans were enticed, or forced, to convert their taverns into recruiting headquarters known as 'rendezvous' houses. Some of London's rendezvous houses were said to be equipped with cells and underground passages to assist in the secret traffic of unwilling recruits.[139] A second form of encouragement for crimps in London was the existence of a numerous set of 'trading justices'. These were impoverished magistrates who would issue legal writs for a small fee.[140] The services of venal justices were crucial to the crimping trade, allowing for drunken or unwilling recruits to be 'legally' attested.

In this fertile climate, it is unsurprising that the most outrageous instances of crimping emerged in the capital. Foremost for its notoriety, was the case of George Howe, who in August 1794 was reportedly trepanned, taken to a house in Johnson's Court, Charing Cross, and confined in an upstairs garret. On the 15 August Howe, who was often described as a simpleton ('better sent to Bedlam than to a regiment'), was found dead outside the property of Mrs Hanau after falling from the rooftop.[141] As John Stevenson has argued, this was the spark which ignited the London crimp riots.[142] On the morning of 15 August, crowds gathered around the body of Howe, they witnessed constables and magistrates searching properties in Johnson's Court, and saw a man in the later stages of smallpox being removed from a contiguous property occupied by John Jacques. Both Hanau and Jacques were then arrested before the ill-tempered crowd and lodged in a watch-house. At the subsequent coroner's inquest, it was established that both Hanau and Jacques were engaged by independent regiments in the 'recruiting business'. Specifically, Jacques had beating orders for Earl Bulwer's Norwich Regiment.[143] The crucial connection, between the independent regiments and London's 'crimp houses' was made explicit in prints

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[138] George, *London Life*, p. 294; P. Colquhoun, *Observations and Facts Relative to Public Houses* (London, 1794), pp. 7.
[139] Thale (ed.), *Autobiography of Francis Place*, pp. 36-7 J. Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism: Invasions of Privacy in the 1790s* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 42.
[140] N. Landau, *The Justices of the Peace, 1679-1760* (London: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 140-1; N. Landau, 'The Trading Justice's Trade', in N. Landau (ed.), *Law, Crime and English Society, 1660-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 60.
[141] Anon., *The Bon Ton Magazine or Microscope of Fashion and Folly,* Vol. 4, (London, 1794), pp. 200-1; *London Chronicle,* 16-19 August 1794.
[142] Stevenson, ''Crimp' Riots'', pp. 51-4.
[143] *London Chronicle,* 16-19 August 1794.

produced by Cruikshank (Print 2), but has been overlooked in Stevenson's analysis.[144] 'Fired by indignation' crowds gathered a second time on the evening of 15 August and gutted the properties of both Hanau and Jacques before being dispersed by the Horse Guards.[145] On the evening of 16 August the coroner's inquest heard a variety of contradictory evidence and delivered the equally confused verdict of 'accidental death in endeavouring to escape from illegal confinement from a house of ill fame'.[146] Hanau and Jacques were then released without charge.[147] Early the following morning, crowd attacks resumed, this time in neighbouring Craig's Court, where the King's Head, owned by William Ostliff was targeted. At the time, there were a number of recruits from the Norwich Regiment housed in Ostliff's tavern.[148] Crowds of 2-5,000 people shouted 'blast their eyes we will have them out', the front door of the house was taken off its hinges, and its sign 'removed in triumph'.[149] For over a week, rioting continued, with attacks upon recruiting houses taking place in the vicinities of Charing Cross, Fleet Street and Shoreditch (Map 1).

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[144] Stevenson refers to one 'Jacques Layzell' perhaps confusing John Jacques with Robert Layzell the owner of the Bull public house in Holborn. Stevenson, ''Crimp' Riots', p. 44 citing *The New Annual Register, or General Repository of History, Politics, and Literature, for the Year 1794*, (London, 1795), pp. 264-6. The latter primary source refers only to one 'Jaques a notorious crimp'.

[145] *The Sun*, 16 August 1794.

[146] Conflicting testimonies were heard, for example, regarding whether or not Howe had been locked in the garret. *Morning Post*, 18 August 1794.

[147] *London Chronicle*, 16-9 August 1794.

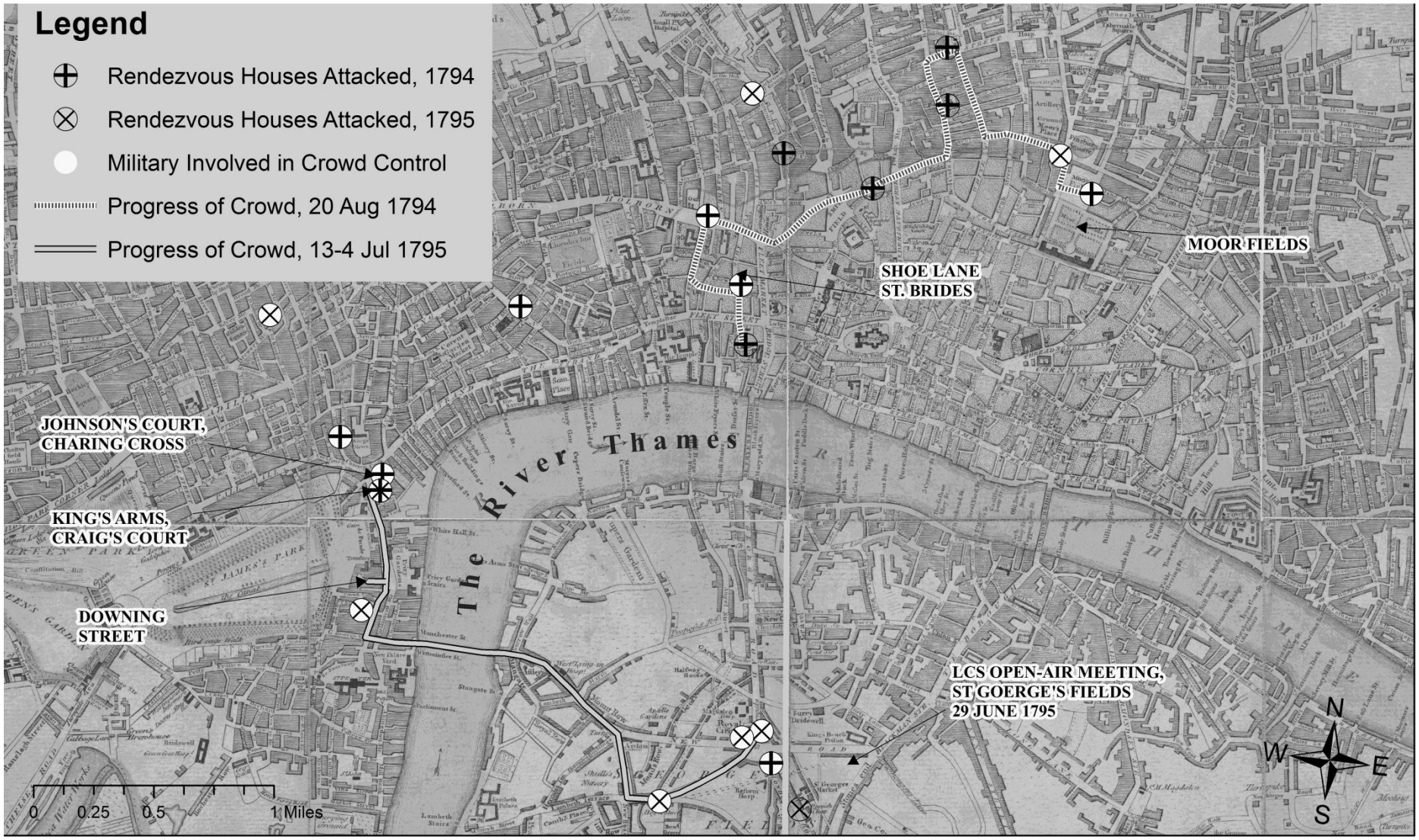
[148] In 1794 Ostliff personally brought a total fifteen recruits to Major Bulwer's 106th Norwich Regiment. See NRO, BUL 4/160/4, Attestation Book No. 2, 106th Regiment, (1794-5); *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 7.2, 04 August 2015), September 1794, trial of Joseph Strutt (t17940917-1); *Oralce*, 23 September 1794.

[149] *Ibid; Morning Post*, 18 August 1794.

Print 2 - BMSat 8484, I. Cruikshank, Kidnapping or Disgrace to Old England, (London, 1794)

Cruikshank portrays a female crimp-house-keeper (right), presumably the infamous Mrs Hanau, but also implicates three well-dressed soldiers. See George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, Vol. 7, p. 102

Map 1 - The London Crimp Riots, 1794- 5



Sources: Barrell, *Spirit of Despotism*, pp. 42-4; Hutton (ed.), *Selections*, p. 285; MacCoby, *English Radicalism*, p. 90; Stevenson, ‘‘Crimp’ Riots’, pp. 40-58; UNotts, PwF 3937, 9 Colquhoun - Ford, 14-15 July 1795; PwF 3940, Clark and Bleanine – Portland, 15 July 1795: HO 42/33, 35, Home Office In-Letters, 1794-5; Various newspaper sources (see text). Base Map: J. Ellis, *The London Directory…* (London, 1795).

There is some debate amongst historians regarding how the 1794 crimp riots should be interpreted. For both Gilmour and Linebaugh these disturbances were primarily instigated by London's radical societies.[150] The evidence for this interpretation rests largely upon the opinion of Patrick Colquhoun who claimed that the 'Corresponding Societies [were] at the bottom of the whole'.[151] Colquhoun arrived at this judgement after discovering a seditious anti-war handbill, which condemned the 'villains who kidnap and impress the poor'.[152] Although the bill had evidently been printed and circulated by 8 August, this does not seem to be sufficient evidence to justify Colquhoun's claims that the death of Howe, and the rioting outside Hanau's house, were somehow premeditated by the LCS.[153] In any case, as a Middlesex JP, Colquhoun was somewhat removed from the early stages of the protests which took place in the jurisdiction of Westminster.[154] The involvement of radicals was rather more complex than Colquhoun allowed for.

Officially, the LCS executive committee set their faces against the violence of the crowd and denied any involvement in the crimp riots.[155] However, some ultra-radicals were prepared to capitalize upon the disorders, by attempting to influence the riots in a revolutionary direction.[156] On 19 August, for example, inflammatory handbills were circulated outside the White Horse, Whitcomb Street, encouraging the crowd to 'Strike' and 'be avenged of the Murderers'.[157] While on 20 August, the most destructive day of rioting, spy reports claim Dr Robert Watson and 'young [Henry] Eaton' had incited the crowd in Shoe Lane.[158] From their beginnings in Shoe Lane, a series of attacks on recruiting houses commenced in the east of the city with several

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[150] I. Gilmour, *Riot, Rising and Revolution: Governance and Violence in Eighteenth Century England* (London: Hutchinson, 1992), p. 409; P. Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century*. (London: Allen Lane, 1991), p. 413-4.
[151] HO 42/33, ff. 257-260A, Colquhoun – Wickham,22 August 1794.
[152] See HO 42/33, f. 258, Anon., 'Fellow Countrymen', n.d. [posted 8 August 1794].
[153] *Ibid*. See Colquhoun's annotations: 'This bill clearly shows … it was a systematical [sic.] plan of the Jacobins from the beginning'.
[154] Colquhoun was based in the vicinity of Shoreditch (Middlesex) at the Worship Street office.
[155] See Thale (ed.), *Selections*, p. 198-99; LCS, *Reformers No Rioters* (London, 1794); Parkinson, *Revolutions Without Bloodshed; or Reformation Preferable to Revolt* (London 1794). The latter available at TNA, TS 24/31/153.
[156] Stevenson, ''Crimp Riots'', p. 58.
[157] HO 42/33, ff. 123-4, Kerby – Portland, 19 August 1794.
[158] Thale (ed.), *Selections*, 212; TNA TS 11/956/1, Metcalf Report, Meeting of LCS Committee, 20 August 1794.

rendezvous in Holborn and Shoreditch being totally 'destroyed' (Map 1).[159] On 22 August, after rioting had largely subsided, seditious bills were found in Grubb Street[160] and on 23 August, Watson and two other men were apprehended in Smithfield, 'with pen and ink' before them, composing further revolutionary bills.[161] One of these men, Robert Scott, turned informant, while Watson and Barrow were convicted for attempting to reignite the disturbances.[162] We know from Scott's reports to the Lord Mayor that Barrow, Watson, and Henry Eaton, were founding members of a shadowy 'new formed' political club with a more revolutionary bent than the LCS.[163] However, it is clear that much of the subversive activity of these ultra-radicals took place after the riots had commenced. Stevenson's interpretation that radical handbills were merely 'fuel to a fire that was already raging' is therefore convincing. However, his conclusion, that the crimp riots were, 'in the main … the outcome of rumour during a period of intense recruitment', requires considerable revision.[164]

Rumours were often an important ingredient within the complex matrix of riot, and exaggerated claims of crimping, certainly surfaced in the radical press at this time.[165] However, as George Rudé has argued, it is important to distinguish between the apparent 'trigger' and the underlying cause of popular tumult.[166] In the case of the crimp riots, Stevenson has dramatically underestimated the reality of coercive recruitment practices in the capital, and the close connection between crimping and the independent regiments. The death of Howe exposed this connection clearly in Johnson's Court. However, further evidence can be found in the Secretary-at-War's letters. In the vicinity of Whitechapel, for example, William Wickham voiced his concerns about crimping as early as January 1794.[167] In May, Wickham reported that

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[159] HO 42/33, ff. 162-164, Colquhoun - Nepean, 21 August 1794. Private houses used as recruiting offices were attacked in Bride Lane, Shoe Lane and Long Lane while taverns attacked include the Bull (Holborn), the Rum Puncheon (Old Street), and the Golden Sash (Middle Moor Fields).
[160] HO 42/33, ff.257-260A, 234-5 Colquhoun – Wickham, 22 august 1794.
[161] OBP, trial of Richard Barrow and Robert Watson, November 1794, (t17941111-58); HO 42/33, ff. 249, 263-7, Lord Mayor – King, 23, 26-7 August 1794.
[162] Both were sentenced to two years in Newgate. *Morning Chronicle*, 17 November 1794.
[163] HO 42/33, f. 263-7, Lord Mayor – King, 26-7 August 1794; For the revolutionary career of Robert Watson see M. Chase 'Watson, Robert (1746?–1838)' in H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds.) *O.D.N.B*(Oxford: OUP, 2004) Online ed. [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28862, accessed 5 August 2015].
[164] *Ibid*., p. 58
[165] J. Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism*, p. 44 fn. 52.
[166] Rudé, *Crowd in History*, p. 245.
[167] WO 1/1081, f. 87, Wickham – Lewis, 29 January 1794.

two men, Higginbottom (or Inkingbottom) and Noble were running a notorious recruiting house[168] 'in [a] most cruel and disgraceful manner'. Cries were heard from the building, which alarmed the neighbourhood, and caused crowds to gather. Before constables could be dispatched, three men were seen being 'forced into a coach and carried off'. Three further men were left behind who, under examination, claimed to have been 'trepanned', imprisoned in the house, and, through the use of 'threats', were forced to sign attestations in front of 'Colonel Whitfield' at the White Horse in Whitcomb Street. Prior to this report there had been ten different complaints lodged against Higginbottom, but he had evaded conviction by paying off his prosecutors. This evidence points to the sophistication of the London crimping trade but it also suggests that popular hostility against crimping was based on more than mere rumour. Wickham clearly took these reports seriously and stated that he was under 'infinite pains to satisfy the Neighbourhood that these practices were not countenanced by Government'.[169]

Indeed, an important source of legitimation for the crimp rioters, was the belief that the magistracy and the government had done too little to curtail the crimping trade. This can be inferred from the determined purposefulness of the crowd during the disorders. More than one commentator noted that the violence of the crowd was directed exclusively towards the destruction of houses of rendezvous.[170] As the editor of the *Morning Chronicle* reported, 'in no instance … has the mob shown the least disposition to do anything more than put a stop to the atrocious abuse which they erroneously think the magistrates are not inclined to punish'.[171] The belief that London's magistrates were prepared to countenance crimps was encouraged by the fact that both Hanau and Jacques were released without charge. However, radical authors also vigorously championed the notion that the crimps were in league with those in power. In one satirical play, which heavily insinuated the government's complicity in Howe's death, the principle protagonist, 'Captain Cut-Throat', proclaimed 'we are well protected by those in power, and e'en the justices will not be much inclined to punish us for our activity in *raising*

[168] This was probably the Swan and Anchor, Butcher's Lane, East Smithfield. For reference to which see OBP, trial of John Kerr and John Ruggles September 1794, (t17940917-4).
[169] WO 1/1081, f. 187, Wickham – Lewis 2 May 1794.
[170] HO 42/33, ff. 162-164, Colquhoun – Nepean, 21 August 1794; ff. 221-224, Lord Mayor – Portland, 21 August 1794.
[171] *Morning Chronicle*, 23 August 1794.

men'.[172] Both the LCS and the anonymous authors of revolutionary handbills claimed that 'crimps, kidnappers, and manstealers [sic.]' enjoyed the protection of 'venal courtiers' and the civil power.[173] London's authorities vociferously denied these claims. Sergeant Kirby, of the Queen's Square Police Office, insisted that both magistrates and ministers 'held an abhorrence towards crimping and kidnapping'.[174] However, the fact remained, that there were few high-profile prosecutions of crimps.[175] Moreover, only in March 1795, after the Duke of York was appointed Commander-in-Chief, did the army issue a General Order forbidding the use of civilian middlemen and rendezvous houses.[176]

Despite this edict, crimping and popular hostility to the practice spilled over into 1795. This continuity has rarely been recognized by historians.[177] However, the evidence is plentiful. In January 1795 a crowd gutted a house on London Road, St George's Fields, where magistrates found several recruits handcuffed inside.[178] Spontaneous outbursts also occurred in April against crimps based at the Rising Sun in Westminster.[179] Much to the annoyance of the magistracy, radical agitators continued to argue that crimps had official sanction.[180] 'Remember, Citizens, these dungeons of crimping-houses could not exist … if there were not police officers in league with the wretches who committed these depredations'.[181] By the summer, however, the political situation in London was significantly altered. The LCS had grown in strength helped by increasing war weariness and the rapid inflation of food prices.[182] Moreover, as E.P. Thompson has argued, the attempts of the Pitt ministry to prosecute the LCS leadership in 1794 discouraged many moderate reformers and gave succour to the revolutionary wing of the

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[172] H. M Saunders, *Crimps, or the Death of Poor Howe: A Tragedy in One Act Performed at a House of Ill Fame or, What is Called A Recruiting-Office with Universal Execration* (London, 1794), p. 17.
[173] Compare LCS, *Reformers No Rioters* (London, 1794), pp. 3-5 with HO 42/33, f. 230, Anon., 'To the Public', [Grub Street, 22 Aug 1794].
[174] *St James' Chronicle*, 21-23 August 1794.
[175] It took until June 1795, for example, for a successful case to be brought Higginbottom at the Court of King's Bench. *Oracle*, 2 July 1795; *Telegraph,* 2 July 1795.
[176] WO 1/157, ff. 54-7, Windham Circular, 11 March 1795; *Star*, 24 March 1795
[177] With the exception being John Barrell, *Spirit of Despotism*, p. 44.
[178] *London Packet*, 9-12 January 1795; *Star*, 13 January 1795.
[179] *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 25 April 1795; *Oracle*, 17 April 1795.
[180] WO 40/7, Colquhoun - Windham, 2 February 1795; Anon., *Reflections on the Pernicious Custom of Recruiting by Crimps*, (London, 1795), pp. 13-4.
[181] J. Thelwall, *The Tribune, a Periodical Publication Consisting Chiefly of the Political Lectures of J. Thelwall* Vol. 1, No. 27 (London, 1795), p. 271.
[182] S. MacCoby, *English Radicalism: 1786-1832, from Paine to Cobbett* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1955), p. 90.

club.[183] By 29 July, the LCS was sufficiently confident to hold a large open-air meeting in St George's Fields, pressing the government for peace and reform. John Gale Jones addressed the crowd of 10,000, stating 'if they could not find relief for their grievances by legal and constitutional representation, they should take the law into their own hands'.[184] A fortnight later (12 August), protests were again seen outside William Ostliff's tavern in Craig's Court. Curiously, this disturbance seems to have been entirely fomented by a Guardsman, John Lewis, who was ejected from the King's Head for his unruly behaviour. Lewis raised a mob with the cry of 'crimps' and, despite a constable searching the building and finding no evidence of kidnapping, the crowd continued to pull down the house.[185] The attack on the King's Head sparked several days of rioting (13-16) with crowd actions occurring primarily south of the river, in St George's Fields, but also in Clerkenwell, Soho, and Moorfields (Map 1).

London's radical underground had a much greater influence upon the course of the riots of 1795. Revolutionary handbills, rather than appearing after the event, as they had done in 1794, were quickly produced and 'the most violent and inflammatory papers' were said to have been 'stuck up everywhere with impunity'.[186] At the height of rioting on 14 August, the High Sherriff of Surrey reported that a carefully prepared handbill was passed to soldiers policing protests in St George's Fields.[187] The bill was a persuasive call to the cause 'liberty', as well as an attempt to seduce the soldiery from their duty, 'let soldiers *protect the Rights of Citizens* and Citizens will *avenge the wrongs of soldiers*'.[188] Furthermore, the targets of the crowd were also more overtly political in this year. Downing Street was twice assailed by the crowd (on 13 and 14 August), and several of Pitt's windows were smashed, leaving one undersecretary in fear of bloody revolution.[189] John Hartland, who was later hanged, headed the crowd in St George's with cries

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[183] Thompson, *Making*, pp. 143-6.
[184] *Times*, 30 June 1795.
[185] Barrell, *Spirit of Despotism*, p. 44; *Lloyds Evening Post*, 10, 13-15 July 1795; OBP, trial of John Lewis, September 1795 (t17950916-50).
[186] J. Hutton (ed.), *Selections from the Letters and Correspondence of Sir James Bland Burges, Bart*, (London: John Murray, 1885), p. 285.
[187] HO 42/35, ff. 181-2, Turton – Portland, 16 July 1795.
[188] Emphasis in original. HO 42/37, ff. 360-1, Anon., 'Address to the Soldiery of Great Britain', n.d. [July 1795].
[189] This was Sir James Burges, who was Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at the close of century. See Hutton (ed.), *Selections*, pp. iii-iv, 286; *St James' Chronicle*, 11-14 July 1795.

of 'No King, Damn Pitt'.[190] However, the issue of crimping was still foremost, with known rendezvous houses, such as the Sash (Moorfields) and the Royal George (Southwark), being the principle targets. In both 1794 and 1795 the crimp riots were born of Londoner's instinctive hatred of soldiers, their increasing disenchantment with the war, and their first-hand knowledge of coercive recruiting. The protests were encouraged by a popular sense that crimping was closely connected to the officially sanctioned independent regiments and was carried on with the 'avowed connivance of those in power'. This sense, moreover, was carefully nurtured by the radical societies.[191] The curtailed liberty of the 'crimped' recruit was used by radicals as the perfect allegory for a people denied their full rights. In both the particular case of the kidnapped recruit, and in the broader struggle for universal suffrage, radicals argued, that government was responsible for devaluing English 'liberty'.

1.4. Supplementary Militia Riots Revisited, 1796-7

Evidence of crimping and coercion declined dramatically from the autumn of 1795 when the independent regiments were discontinued and their recruits were drafted into established army regiments. During the remainder of the war, recruitment figures for the regular army never exceeded those of 1794-5. In 1796, as we have seen, the government instead turned its attention to increasing the size of the English Militia by raising a 'supplementary' force of 59,441 men.[192] This plan was, however, greeted with hostility from various quarters. Unlike crimping, which primarily affected the poor young men who frequented the pothouses of the metropolis, the Militia Acts were felt most deeply in the countryside. The settled rural poor and the small farmer, could not easily escape the militia ballot by absconding, in the same way that the youthful journeyman could.[193] Neither could they afford the time off to train as a militiaman.[194] Their only means of evading personal service was to buy into militia insurance schemes. Thus, even the existing militia legislation, according to Major Drinkwater, was widely considered to be 'an oppressive money bill'.[195] When the supplementary militia scheme was announced, the Act was seen as an 'upper-class plot' to finance the defence of the nation by taking from the

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[190] HO 47/20, ff. 166, Summary of Evidence in case of Rex vs. Hartland, Williams, Webb and Maxey, [April 1796].
[191] Anon., *Reflections on the Pernicious Custom of Recruiting by Crimps*, (London, 1795), p. 19.
[192] 37 Geo. III cap.3 amended by cap. 22, Supplementary Militia Acts (1796).
[193] Western, *The English Militia*, p. 283; Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics*, p. 174.
[194] Randall, *Riotous Assemblies*, p. 168.
[195] BL Add. MS 37, 874, f. 249, Drinkwater – Windham, 29 January 1795.

pockets of the lower strata of society, and by forcing the poor to fight in defence of the rich.[196] In parliament, Fox and his supporters, such as John Curwen, criticised ministers for hiding behind 'the bugbear of invasion', and opposed the new levies as unjustified.[197] After the Act was passed in early November, the Deputy Lieutenants were called upon in the counties to draw up lists of adult males eligible to serve. In opposition to this process protests erupted in the English countryside. In Penrith, Cumberland, for example, the magistrates overseeing the administration of the militia ballot at the George Inn were interrupted by a well-armed crowd formed from the surrounding villages of the Northern Pennines. The protestors banged their bludgeons on the door, shouted 'No New Militia', seized the militia lists, tearing some, and consigning others to the fire.[198]

A number of historians have examined these tumults, and the earlier anti-militia riots of 1757, of which they are said to have been a 'carbon copy'.[199] However, some of the arguments surrounding their meaning requires updating. It is frequently repeated, in line with the arguments of John Western, that the anti-militia riots were 'mainly' the result of 'misunderstanding' on the part of the protestors. It is argued that the rioters were motivated by the erroneous fear that, if their name was drawn in the militia ballot, they would to be sent into the army and, from thence, to their death in the West Indies. Scholars have set these rustic rioters straight, by pointing to the Militia Acts themselves, which only ever required service in Britain.[200] However, this is a far too literal reading of the militia laws. In the 1750s, recruits had been systematically deceived into enlisting in the regular army, with the same promise that they would only be required to serve at home.[201] Furthermore, in the period under investigation, and particularly between 1796 and 1802, militiamen were often officially encouraged to transfer to the army.[202] Usually bounties were offered as an incentive, however, it was not unknown for militia companies to be 'drilled to death', their privates given ill-fitting clothing and their lives

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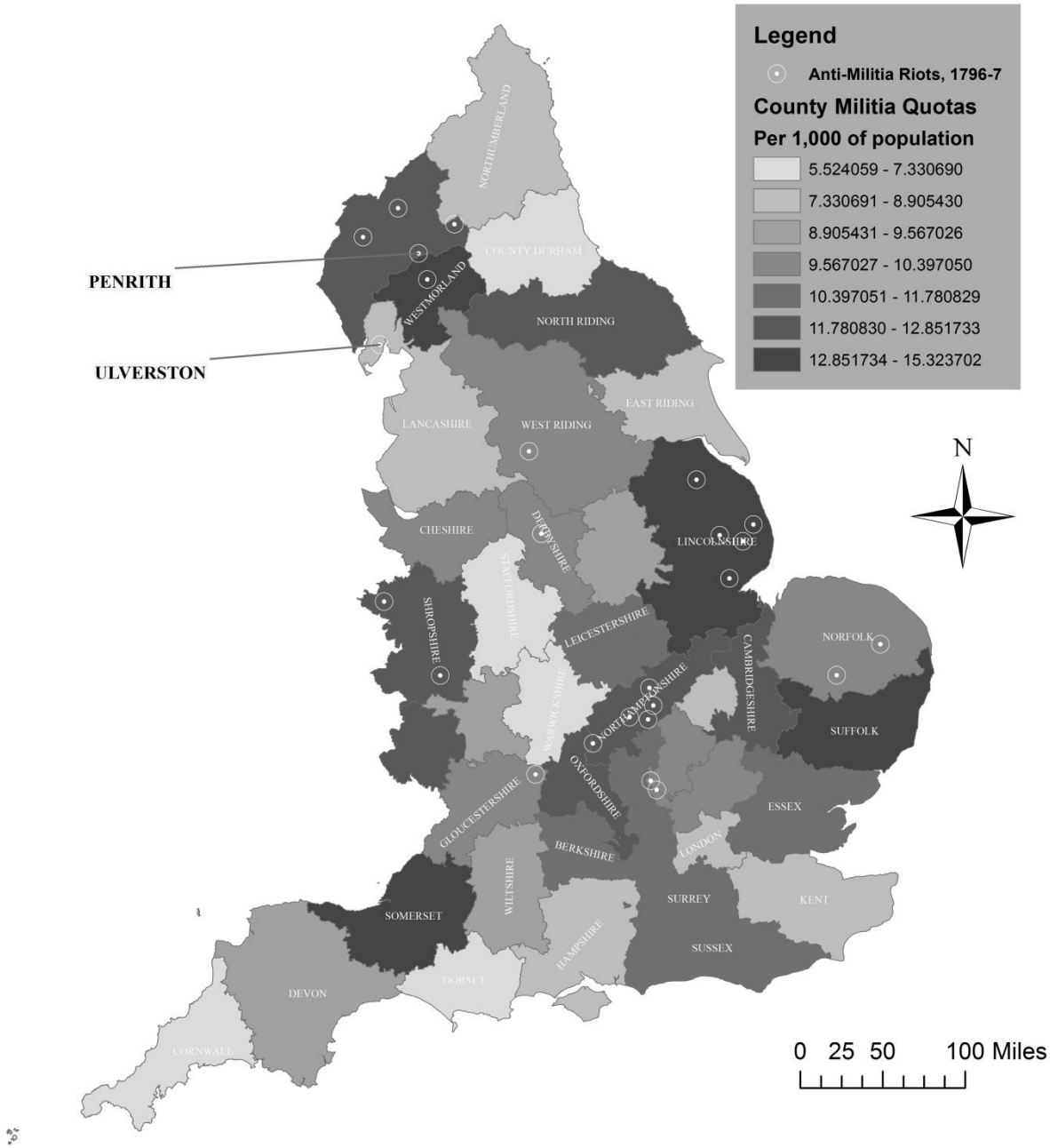
[196] Western, *The English Militia*, p. 299.
[197] *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England* (Commons), Vol. 32, 31 October 1796, cols. 1229
[198] TNA Assi 45/39/2/22, 24 46, 47, Examinations of Stephenson, Thomas Wallis, William Wallis, and Lough 26, 31 January and 18 August 1797.
[199] Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances*, p. 146.
[200] Western, *The English Militia*, pp. 290, 298; S. Skinner, 'Blackstone's Support for the Militia', *American Journal of Legal History*, 44 (2000), p. 16; Gilmour, *Riot, Rising and Revolution*, p. 411.
[201] W. Pitt (ed.), *Correspondence of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham* Vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1838), p. 258-9; Randall, *Riotous Assemblies*, p. 168.
[202] Western, *English Militia,* p. 265.

made a misery, until they relented and agreed to transfer to the regulars.[203] The English Militia was also called upon to fight in Ireland during the 1798 rebellion. Thus to claim that opponents of the Militia Acts had misunderstood what these laws meant is rather condescending. Contemporaries were keenly aware of the abuses to which the militia could be subjected and they were justly sceptical about the purported limits placed on militia service.

[203] *Parliamentary History* (Commons) Vol. 34, pp. 1139-41; S. H. Myerly, 'Review of Edward J. Coss 'All for the King's Shilling: The British Soldier under Wellington, 1808–1814' *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 50, (2011), p. 762. The same complaint of 'drilling to death' was also levied, at a later date, at the Army of Reserve, which was also supposedly for home service only. TNA, HO 50/88, Duke of Richmond – Charles York, 26 September 1803.

Map 2 - Anti-Militia Riots in England and County Militia Quotas per 1,000 of the Population (October 1796 - January 1797).[204]



[204] **Secondary Sources**: Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances*, p. 146; Caple, 'The Militia Riots', pp. 124-9; Western, *English Militia*, pp. 209-302; Bohstedt, *Riot and Community Politics*, pp. 173-84; *Cumberland Pacquet*, 1796-7; *Derby Mercury* 1796-7; *Newcastle Chronicle*, 1796-7. For total militia quotas in 1796 see Western, Appendix B, pp. 149-50 (cols. 1 + 2); for population density in counties see Wrigley, *Early English Censuses*, Table 4.1. **Primary Sources**: Assi 45/39/2, Assize Depositions: Northern Circuit; Assi 5/117/22, Shropshire Lent Assizes, 1797; PL 27/7/2, Lancashire Assize Depositions, 1796-7; CBS, Q/SC 1/1, /2, Calendar of Prisoners, 1789-1797; CBS, (Uncatalogued) Quarter Session Rolls, Epiphany and Easter 1797; HO 50/26-7, Home Office: Military In-Letters, 1796-7; HO 42/39-40, Home Office In-Letters, 1796-7.

A second point which needs reviewing is the geographical distribution of these protests. Using assize records, Home Office sources, newspapers and some county archival material, it is clear that reported instances of rioting fell predominantly in the counties of Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, with a further concentration in Cumberland and Westmoreland (Map 2). Charlesworth's map has, therefore, overlooked the concentration of protests in the Northwest of the country.[205] Furthermore, by comparing population density with the county militia quotas, it can be shown just how unevenly the burden of service fell across the country.[206] In the populous, and rapidly growing, counties of Warwickshire and Staffordshire, for example, after the Supplementary Militia Act was introduced, just seven men per 1,000 of the population were required to serve in the militia. While in Lincolnshire the number was fifteen and in Cumberland and Westmoreland it was twelve and fourteen respectively. Therefore, these relatively sparsely populated counties were expected to contribute around twice the number of militiamen per head of the population. A contributing factor to the distribution of protests was the manner in which the Act was administered at a local level. In Nottingham, for example, there were fears that radicals would use the militia ballots as a means of fomenting disturbances, as they had done in Norwich.[207] Nottingham's urban elites, however, formed a subscription which provided bounty money enough to secure seventy willing substitutes. There was therefore no compiling of the militia lists and no balloting to resist.[208] Similarly, in Essex, where a relatively large levy of 2,700 men was demanded for the supplementary militia, the Militia Act was 'so unpopular, that justices and Deputy Lieutenants in some subdivisions declined balloting for the men'. In Essex, the supplementary militia was raised slowly and

[205] Certainly rioting in Penrith, mentioned above, does not appear to have been included. J.N. Caple, 'The Militia Riots', in A. Charlesworth (ed.), *An Atlas of Rural Protest in Britain; 1548-1900* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), p. 128.

[206] Colley has also pointed to the uneven distribution of the militia levies. However, the full extent of the disequilibrium is rarely discussed in relation to the anti-militia riots and can now be demonstrated using the county data produced by Wrigley. Colley, *Britons*, p. 293-4; E.A. Wrigley, *Early English Censuses*, Table 4.1.

[207] For fears of disorder in Nottingham see HO 50/26, Newark – Portland, 22 November 1796. Radicals in Norwich did contribute to anti-militia disturbances see Western, *English Militia in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 295; Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances*, p. 146; Thale (ed.), *Selections*, p. 376.

[208] *Leicester Journal*, 9 December 1796.

gradually.[209] Therefore many areas of the country were unaffected by rioting because local rulers and private individuals conspired to mitigate the effects of compulsion.[210]

Finally, a word should be said about the status of the anti-militia protestors. In Lincolnshire a number of historians have noted that it was workers from the fens who descended upon the towns to destroy the militia lists.[211] In the Northwest, a similar scenario emerged, with the 'miscreant mountaineers' from the Pennines invading Penrith and Ulverston to disrupt the meetings of the Deputy Lieutenants.[212] Historically, labourers from the marshes of Lincolnshire were renowned, both for their ability to live off the fenlands, and for their spirited defence of those common lands.[213] While in Penrith, crowds were reportedly led by a number of skilled workers, including two blacksmiths and a joiner from the mountainous village of Croglin.[214] When Frederick Eden visited the tiny parish in December 1794 he reported the existence of only two blacksmiths and four joiners. The protestors were therefore highly valued members of an isolated community, precisely the kind of workers which the inhabitants of Croglin could ill afford to lose to the militia ballot. Eden also noted that there was not a single pauper residing in Croglin.[215] This suggests that the 'mountaineers' of the Pennines, and the anti-militia rioters in general, rose in opposition to the Militia Acts in order to defend their economic independence.[216] Like crimping, the militia bill was resented as an infringement upon the 'freeborn' Englishman's right to sell his labour as he pleased. Moreover, there was a strong sense amongst rioters that they were supported by certain 'great men'. In Ulverston, the protestors confronting the magistracy quoted Curwen's speech in the Commons and referred to the MP as 'their friend'.[217] While in Lincolnshire, protestors claimed to have the backing of large farmers, who were opposed to the increased parish rates which inevitably followed an

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[209] PRO 30/8/181, ff. 112-115, J.H Strutt – Pitt, 1 July 1805; For county quotas see Western, *English Militia*, Appendix B, pp. 149.
[210] Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 14.
[211] D. Neave, 'Anti-Militia Riots in Lincolnshire, 1757 and 1796', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 11 (1976), p. 21; Caple, 'The Militia Riots', p. 129.
[212] HO 42/40, ff. 373-6, Sunderland – Portland, 11 February 1797; Bohstedt, Riots and Community Politics, p. 174.
[213] Neave, 'Anti-Militia Riots in Lincolnshire', p. 21.
[214] Assi 45/39/2/24, 47, Information of William Wallis and Thomas Wallis, 31 January and 18 August 1797.
[215] F. M. Eden, *The State of the Poor: Or an History of the Labouring Classes in England, from the Conquest to the Present Period*, Vol. 2, (London, 1797), p. 68.
[216] Randall presents a similar case see *Riotous Assemblies*, p. 168.
[217] HO 42/40, ff. 373-6, Sunderland – Portland, 11 February 1797.

extension of the militia quotas.[218] Far from 'misinformed', the anti-militia protestors appear to have closely considered the potentially detrimental effects of the Act for their communities. Particularly in thinly populated areas of the country, the poor responded with hostility to the unequal burden of service which the Acts entailed, and sought to use landed objections to the quotas as a further justification for their actions.

1.5. Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has demonstrated that the political controversy surrounding Britain's involvement in the French Wars was reflected in the government's struggle to raise men. Radical groups strongly opposed the war and, in some places, were in a position to discourage enlistment. Conversely, loyalists emphasized nationalistic pride and the glory of British victory over the French. A host of patriotic productions were therefore aimed at creating an idealized image of enlistment within the popular psyche. Undoubtedly this loyalist effort had some impact, though its effects upon recruitment are difficult to discern. What is clear, however, is that there was a darker side to the recruitment process which also impressed itself upon the minds of the poor. To a much greater extent than is often recognized by historians, tricks, frauds, and coercion were employed, particularly by the officially sanctioned independent regiments, to compel men to serve. Where concrete evidence of 'crimping' came to light it produced scandal and, in London at least, the headquarters of unscrupulous recruiters became targets for popular violence. Similarly, government's attempts to extend the scope of the Militia Acts were also seen as unjust. The protests seen in this period, against recruiting agents and the militia quotas, therefore confirm the existence of an instinctive aversion to armed service within the ranks of the working classes. More specifically, anti-recruitment riots point to a strongly-held belief that military service should be entirely voluntary. Any attempt to compel men to serve in the army or the militia was seen as an infringement upon popular morality.[219] Ideally, the individual, 'the freeborn Englishman', should be left unimpeded to make his own decision about whether or not to enter the armed forces. As it will be seen in the following chapter, this decision was most often made on the basis of economic considerations.

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[218] W. J. Shelton, *English Hunger and Industrial Disorders: A Study of Social Conflict during the First Decade of George III's Reign* (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 110-11; Neave, 'Anti-Militia Riots in Lincolnshire', p. 21.
[219] Wells, *Insurrection*, p. 258.

2. Economics of Enlistment, 1793-1805.

Government and its agents undoubtedly employed elements of coercion and compulsion to man the army and militia. However, popular protests against crimping and the militia ballots ensured that compulsive measures could not be relied upon by the British state. We know that the numbers of balloted men serving in the militia were only ever a small fraction of those who volunteered as substitutes. In terms of the regular army, we may never know the number of men illegally impressed or tricked into the service. However, the evidence suggests that most regular soldiers 'volunteered' their service. In this chapter the pre-enlistment status of the typical army recruit will be investigated and their motives for enlistment examined. It will be argued, contrary to the traditional view of the military, that army recruits tended to be a fairly representative cross section of the working classes. Furthermore, by using working-class autobiographies, recruitment statistics, and the correspondence of officers, it will be shown that, while enlistment motivations were often personal, in general terms, economic considerations were of preeminent importance. Finally, this assertion will be reinforced through an analysis of the grievances which provoked several mutinies among independent army regiments in 1795.

2.1. 'Scum of the earth'? The Pre-enlistment Status of Army Recruits

Wellington's infamous characterization of the rank and file within the British army as 'the mere scum of the earth' has coloured many traditional accounts of the Georgian soldiery.[1] In the first half of the twentieth century military historians tended to wholeheartedly endorse the Iron Duke's remarks. Glover, for example, refers to 'drunken thugs', while Fortescue and Oram point to the 'irreclaimable' criminal element within the army.[2] Over time, views on the British soldier have softened slightly, but we may still find in more recent historical accounts, a Georgian army composed of the 'very lowest class of men', 'desperate individuals' and 'social outcasts'.[3] In part the 'scum of the earth' portrayal has persisted because, beneath the obvious class bias of Wellington's appraisal, their lies a grain of truth. There is evidence that criminals,

[1] P.H. Stanhope, *Notes on Conversations with Duke of Wellington*, (New York: Longmans, 1888), p. 14.
[2] Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*, p. 175; Fortescue, *A History of the British Army* Vol. 3, p. 518; C. Oman, *Wellington's Army, 1809-1814* (London: Edward Arnold, 1912), pp. 212, 213.
[3] Respectively, McGuffie, 'Recruiting the Ranks', p. 50; S. H. Myerly, *British Military Spectacle*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 3; Cookson, *Armed Nation,* p. 100.

beggars, and Irish rebels were all drawn into the ranks of the British army.[4] In short, the army did contain a certain number of men who, in the eyes of the upper and middle classes, would have been seen as the 'dregs' of society.[5] However, it is important to evaluate the social complexion of the army as a whole and to place the 'scum of the earth' portrayal in a broader historical context. The numbers of felons and vagrants to be found within the ranks of the army are not significant enough to justify the many exaggerated claims which are often made about the eighteenth-century soldiery.

For their part, historians of crime have often encouraged the 'scum of the earth' portrayal of the British army by placing heavy emphasis upon the impressment of criminals into the armed forces.[6] For Radzinowicz, the practice of enlisting criminals represented, an 'integral part of the penal system'.[7] Certainly, the highly discretionary nature of the eighteenth-century criminal justice system provided a number of channels through which criminals could be transferred into the army. Criminals could petition the Home Secretary for a royal pardon on condition of serving in the armed forces, they might be given the option of serving in lieu of punishment by a magistrate sitting at the Quarter Sessions, or offenders could be given the choice, by a prosecutor, of enlisting instead of facing trial. [8] Clearly the impressment of criminals was an important judicial resource, which operated at several levels of the legal process. However, we should be careful not to exaggerate the extent to which offenders were used to fill the ranks. Although contemporaries frequently claimed that, during wartime, the prisons were drained by the army, petitions for the release of criminals appear to have been closely scrutinized by the Home Secretary. Careful consideration was given to the age and health of the would-be recruit as well as his former crimes and the extent of his contrition.[9] While at the level of the Quarter Session, there was also highly selective filtering of offenders. Between 1790-99, the Hertfordshire Quarter Sessions, for example, permitted just four criminals to enlist as soldiers in

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[4] S. Conway, 'The Recruitment of Criminals into the British Army, 1775-81', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 58, pp. 46-58; A.N. Gilbert, 'An Analysis of some Eighteenth Century Army Recruiting Records', *JSAHR*, 54 (1976), p. 42; R. O'Donnell, ''Liberty or Death': The United Irish in New South Wales, 1800-4' in T. Bartlett, *et al* (eds.), *1798: A Bicentenary Perspective* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2003), pp. 609, 610.
[5] A. Young, *Annals of Agriculture and other Useful Arts*, Vol. 18 (Bury St Edmunds, 1792), p. 490-1.
[6] D. Hay, 'War, Dearth and Theft' p. 141-2.
[7] L. Radzinowicz, *A History of English Criminal Law and its Administration from 1750: Grappling for Control* Vol. 4. (London: Stevens & Sons, 1968), p. 95.
[8] D. Hay, 'War, Dearth and Theft' p. 141-2; P. King, *Crime, Justice, and Discretion in England, 1740-1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). p. 153; Conway, 'The Recruitment of Criminals', p. 55.
[9] See comments of the Recorder of London. HO 42/35, ff. 351-2, Rose – Portland, 5 August 1795.

lieu of punishment.[10] It was therefore only a minority of offenders who were given the option of enlistment and the wholesale drafting of prison populations was never resorted to.

Furthermore, as Stephen Conway has argued, in 'military terms', the numbers of offenders accepted into the army was 'miniscule'. During the American War of Independence, for example, Conway found that as few as 500 conditional royal pardons were handed down.[11] In our own period, comparable figures can be mustered. Between 1799-1802, for example, 1,200 prisoners were sent from Britain to serve as soldiers in the West Indies.[12] This figure pales in comparison to the 70,000 men recruited in total by the army over the same period.[13] Furthermore, this data points to the practice of ghettoizing impressed criminals within certain 'penal' regiments who were constantly on service overseas. Regiments such as the New South Wales regiment and the Royal African Corps were partly recruited by these means.[14] However, even in the regiments serving in the West Indies, where Buckley suggests many, if not all, prisoners were sent, the criminal element constituted, at most, one fifth of the whole.[15] In part, internal opposition from within the army itself, limited the degree to which convicts were used as a military resource. Military commanders believed that too many impressed convicts would be detrimental to discipline, morale, and to the image of the army.[16] A further limitation was the fact that, due to the unsanitary conditions within England's hulks and goals, and due to prisoners 'concealing every kind of bodily infirmity', some pardoned convicts were found to be unfit by army surgeons and were simply released.[17]

Similar problems were also attendant to the impressment of vagrants. The vagrancy laws of 1711, 1744, and 1792, permitted magistrates to send itinerant men without 'visible means of support' or without 'lawful employment or calling' into the army and navy.[18] However, in

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[10] See Thomas Newbrook, James Smith, William Norton, and John Warren. W. Le Hardy, *Hertfordshire Records Office: Calendar to the Sessions Books, Sessions Minute Books, and Other Sessions Records, 1752-1799*, (Elton Longmore: Hertford , 1935), pp. 456, 467, 479.
[11] Conway, 'The Recruitment of Criminals into the British Army', p.56.
[12] Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*, p. 183-4.
[13] Floud, et al., *Height Health and History*, Table 2.7, p. 72
[14] K. J. Bartlett, 'The Development of the British Army during the Wars with France, 1793-1815' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Durham University: 1998), p. 143.
[15] Buckley, *The British Army in the West Indies*, p. 104-6.
[16] Conway, 'The Recruitment of Criminals into the British Army', p.56; J. R. Western, 'Military Service as a Punishment', *JSAHR* 32 (1954), p. 89.
[17] P. Colquhoun, *Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis* 6th ed. (London, 1800)., p. 450-1.
[18] D. Hay, 'War, Dearth and Theft', p. 141.

London, where the problem of vagrancy was believed to be most acute, justices appear to have provided a trickle of vagrant recruits rather than a flood.[19] The majority of 'sturdy beggars' and vagrants appear to have been sent for short spells in the Bridewell and then passed to their parish of origin rather than being turned over to the armed forces.[20] Partly this was because many of the capital's vagrants were physically unsuitable for military service. In a survey of 2,000 London beggars, conducted by the Mendicity Society in 1803, ninety per cent were found to be women, a fact which may reflect the paucity of female employment in the capital.[21] Of the remaining male vagrants, eighteen per cent were found to be discharged veterans.[22] While the young male vagrants of Marylebone were characterized as 'blind, sick, or disabled'.[23] These difficulties are reflected in the statistics produced by Colquhoun between 1794-5 which relate to all offenders (both criminals and vagrants) incarcerated by the higher and lower courts of the metropolis. These returns reveal that of 4,462 offenders discharged from prisons in London, Middlesex, and Surrey, just 216 inmates (4.8 per cent) were released into the army and navy in that year.[24] If we calculate that half of these men went into the army (108) and that the rest of the England turned over a similar proportion of offenders per head of the population (x10), then the resulting national figure of 1,080 impressed convicts and vagrants represents just 5.3 per cent of men recruited in England in 1795.[25] The criminal and vagrant element within the army was a therefore a small but significant minority of the whole.

Recent military histories have rightly been sceptical of the 'scum of the earth' stereotype. For Edward Coss, and others, such a damning assessment of the common soldier is difficult to

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[19] Rogers gives statistics of twenty vagrants sent into the armed forces between December 1779 and May 1781 from Wood Street Compter or just over one per month. 'Policing the Poor', p. 137.
[20] For the process of vagrant removal see T. Hitchcock, A. Crymble, and L. Falcini, 'Loose, Idle and Disorderly: Vagrant Removal in Late Eighteenth-Century Middlesex', *Social History*, 39 (2014), pp. 509-27.
[21] See also Rogers' claim that women were arrested as vagrants at a ratio of 3:1, 'Policing the Poor', pp. 133.
[22] 'Report from Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Capital', *Parliamentary Papers* Vol. 3 (1814-15), Appendix 4 pp. 90-4.
[23] *Ibid.* p. 12. As Patrick Colquhoun remarked, a 'vast number' of convicts and 'idle and disorderly persons' could not be sent into the army 'on account of some … disability or infirmity; which … incapacitate them from serving his Majesty…' *Treatise*, pp. 98-100.
[24] Colquhoun, *Treatise*, pp. 430-1.
[25] I have estimated that one half of recruits were found in England. For army recruitment figures and their nationalities of recruits see Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 28; Floud, et al., *Height Health and History*, Table 2.7, p. 72; For the population of England being ten times that of London see Wrigley, *Early English Censuses*, Table 4.1.

square with the relative efficiency with which the British army performed on the battlefield.[26] Economic historians interested in the study of 'anthropometry', have also sought to probe more deeply into the height, health, and pre-enlistment status of the ordinary recruit.[27] Working from regimental descriptions books, which record the personal details of each new recruit, several studies have found that the men who made up the regular army were a rather more heterogeneous group than is often allowed. From these sources Coss has recently demonstrated that just over half of the army's recruits in the Napoleonic period were drawn from England, a third were Irish-born and fourteen per cent were Scottish with the remainder made up of foreign recruits. The majority of soldiers were found to be less than twenty-five years of age.[28] Upon enlistment recruits were sworn before a magistrate and were asked not only for their age and place of birth but also for their trade or calling. Within certain regiments, regimental descriptions books survive and are of sufficient quality to allow the historian to reconstruct these pre-enlistment trades. Both Kevin Linch and Floud *et al* conclude from their own analyses of this data that, while recruits for the army were certainly working class, they were 'not drawn from a particularly unusual section of that class'.[29] Brumwell has argued along similar lines, for an earlier period, that the composition of the mid-Georgian army 'mirrored that of the workforce in general'. The most common occupational designation recorded for the rank and file is that of 'labourer'. Many historians have read this to mean that, in England's predominantly rural economy, most recruits were farm hands.[30] However it is notable that, alongside these unskilled wage-earners, the skilled artisan trades are similarly well represented. By sampling a number of regiments, Linch suggests that army recruits were drawn roughly equally from waged labourers on the one hand and skilled artisans, with some degree of independence, on the other.[31]

There are some difficulties with repeating studies from the Napoleonic period for the 1790s due to the patchy survival of regimental records. However, an attempt has been made here to work from the records of the 3rd Regiment of Foot Guards and the Royal Artillery. Neither regiment can truly be considered to be representative of the army as a whole, but both corps left behind

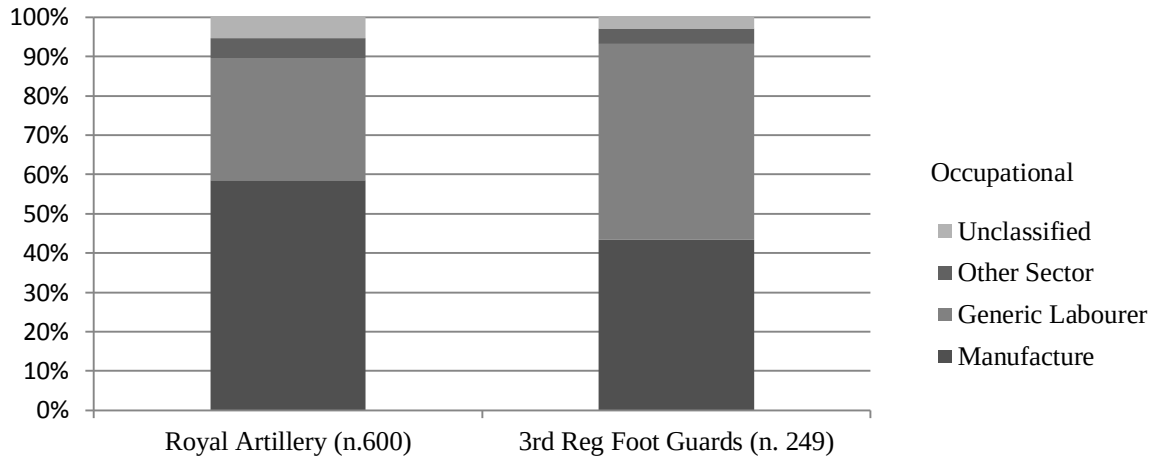
[26] E. J. Coss , *All for the King's Shilling*, p. 1.
[27] R. Floud et al., *Height, Health and History*, p. xviii.
[28] Coss , *All for the King's Shilling*, p. 53.
[29] Linch, 'Recruitment', pp. 200-4; R. Floud, et al., *Height, Health and History*, p. 111.
[30] Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas*, p. 79.
[31] Linch, 'Recruitment', pp. 201-2.

fulsome documentation of enlists which are worthy of investigation.[32] A database was created of all recruits attested between 1790-1802 and born in either the predominantly rural counties of Lincolnshire, Sussex, and Gloucestershire or in the urban areas of London, Sheffield, Nottingham, and Manchester. The intention being to capture a roughly equal number of urban- and rural-born recruits. Each recruit's pre-enlistment trade was then recorded and categorized following the modified version of the Booth-Armstrong economic classifications used by the authors of the *Westminster Historical Database*. Given their preponderance in the regimental records, an additional category of 'generic labourer' was added, as well as one for 'unclassified' for those whose occupation was left blank.[33] The pre-enlistment occupational breakdowns for both regiments bolster the findings of Linch and Floud et al. (Figure 1). Not only are men from manufacturing sectors present but, in the case of the Royal Artillery they actually predominate.

[32] TNA, WO 67/1, Description Book for the 3rd Regiment Foot Guards; WO 54/261-2, 267-8, 273-4, 277, 281, 287, 299, 1-6th and 9th Battalions of the Royal Artillery.

[33] For a helpful discussion of the methods and modes of economic classification which have been followed here see C. Harvey, E. Green and P. Corfield, *The Westminster Historical Database* (Bristol: Bristol Academic Press, 1998), pp. 88-100 especially Table 4.7, pp. 95-6.

Figure 1 – Graph Showing Pre-Enlistment Trades of English Soldiers Attested, 1790-1802



Sources: TNA, WO 67/1, Description Book for the 3rd Regiment Foot Guards; WO 54/261-2, 267-8, 273-4, 277, 281, 287, 299, 1-6th and 9th Battalions of the Royal Artillery.

The Royal Artillery drew a large number of men from the tool manufacturing sector, particularly the Sheffield cutlery trade, into the ranks of the regiment. In fact, manufacturers born in Sheffield (n.170) were more numerous within the Royal Artillery than all the 'labourers' born in the counties of Gloucestershire, Lincolnshire, and Sussex combined (n. 150). It may be the case that men with skills in metalwork were actively sought to serve as gunners in the artillery. However, even in the 3rd Regiment of Foot Guards, where there was no such requirement, we can still see significant numbers of skilled men from the dress manufacturing sectors (framework knitters, shoemakers, and breeches makers) as well as workers involved in the manufacture of woollen and cotton materials. Those included in the 'other sectors' include dealers, shopkeepers, and domestic servants, all of whom are present in both regiments, but only in very small numbers. The army clearly drew men from various parts of the economy. The suggestion that soldiers were drawn solely from the dregs of society is therefore impossible to substantiate. The remainder of this chapter will therefore seek to examine the motivations which drove these ordinary men to enlist in the army.

2.2. Personal Motivations for Enlistment

After the defeat of the French at Waterloo there was a strong appetite in England, particularly amongst the Victorian middle classes, for the autobiographies of ordinary soldiers who

contributed to Britain's success.[34] Both David Vincent, and more recently, Emma Griffin, have clearly demonstrated the potential of autobiographical sources for reconstructing the lives and experiences of the English working classes during the Industrial Revolution.[35] A handful of these life writings reflect upon long careers, or short spells, in the military and can be used to reconstruct the various reason which motivated ordinary citizens to join the armed forces. Alongside these autobiographies, many popular prints from the period explore the narrative of 'going for a soldier' and these too provide a valuable insight into the motivations for enlistment. Historians who have worked with these sources have found that the reasons behind enlistment were often as varied as army recruits were themselves. Both Colley and Linch have emphasised a tangle of personal reasons, both 'pull' and 'push' factors, which operated upon men who enlisted into the armed forces.[36]

Autobiographical accounts often emphasize the perceived excitement and adventure of soldiering as an important lure for recruits.[37] Allen Davenport, for example, in addition to his political convictions and patriotic sentiments, left his work as a veterinary surgeon's assistant and joined the Windsor Foresters, in order to satisfy his desire to see more of the world.[38] Similarly, John Vine Hall stressed that joining the colours was alluring to his 'restless spirit'.[39] Edward Costello enlisted in 1806 after 'imbibing martial ardour' from an old veteran who told him tales of 'glory'.[40] As we have seen, conservative propagandists attempted to capitalize upon the heroic image of the common soldier and particularly focused upon the appeal of the military uniform. As part of the 'military spectacle', officers were required to wear their finest uniforms while on the recruiting service, and they were often accompanied by musicians.[41] Even Joseph Cottle's anti-war poetry acknowledged the persuasive sartorial display of the recruiting party:

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[34] D. Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography* (London: Europa Publications, 1981), p. 26.
[35] *Ibid.*; E. Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (London: Yale University Press, 2013).
[36] Linch, 'Recruitment', p. 205; Colley, *Britons*, p. 315.
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] Chase (ed.), *The Life and Literary Pursuits of Allen Davenport*, pp. 6-7.
[39] N. Hall (ed.), *Hope for the Hopeless: An Autobiography of John Vine Hall, Author of the 'Sinner's Friend'*, (New York, 1865), p. 19.
[40] E. Costello, *Adventures of a Soldier; Written by Himself. Being the Memoirs of Edward Costello, K.S.F. Formerly a Non-Commissioned Officer in the Rifle Brigade …* 2nd ed. (London, 1852), p. 2.
[41] N. Steevens (ed.), *Reminisces of My Military Life; from 1795 to 1818 by the late Lt-Col. Charles Steevens* (Winchester: Warren and Son, 1878), p. 6; Myerly, *British Military Spectacle*, p. 53.

No rustic rags are we compell'd to wear
We dress like Princes, and like Princes fare;
Behold our cloaths [sic.], gay as autumnal trees
Behold our plumes nod to the passing breeze.[42]

Both John Shipp and Joseph Mayett were drawn to military service partly due to the 'finery and shrill music' of a recruiting party passing through their villages. It is perhaps significant that, at the time of their enlistment, both men were young farm hands, unused to the colour and clamour provided by the cleanly presented soldiers.[43] It may be that the success of this kind of pageantry was confined to the rural setting.

In addition to the spectacle of the military, Lynn has powerfully argued that young men were often drawn to the 'sexualized libertine lifestyle' of army life.[44] Certainly, contemporary printmakers frequently encouraged the association between the wearing of a uniform and the attentions of young women.[45] Ballad writers also played upon the theme, by suggesting that the 'jolly soldier' was in a position to make a cuckold of the 'silly ploughman':

For when we come into a town
We make ourselves be known
We hug and kiss the pretty girls
And call them all our own.[46]

Few ex-soldier's autobiographies explicitly mention enlisting for sex. However, more than one of these sources is written in the form of a 'confessional ' in which the author's early years, including those spent serving in the army, are referred to obliquely as a time of sin, before they found religion and moral rectitude.[47] Beyond the sexual appeal of soldiering more respectable

[42] J. Cottle, 'War. A Fragment' in *Poems by Joseph Cottle* 2nd ed. (Bristol, 1796), pp. 80-1.
[43] H. Manners (ed.), *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Military Career of John Shipp* (London, 1890), pp. 23-31; A. Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett of Quainton, 1783-1839* (Aylesbury: Buckinghamshire Record Society, 1986), pp. 23-5;
[44] J.A. Lynn, *Women, Armies and Warfare in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 38.
[45] See especially Rowlandson's recruitment series. British Museum Satires (BM Sats) 9315, *She Will be a* Soldier (London, 1798); BM Sats 9316, *Soldiers Recruiting*, (London, 1798); BUL, GB-P 1803 lf-2, C. Turner after Eckstein, *The Recruit*, (London, 1803). Myerly, *British Military Spectacle*, p. 58; Lynn, Women, Armies and Warfare, p. 38.
[46] Anon. *The Jolly Soldier a New Song*, (London, n.d. c. 1791-1803).
[47] Anon, *Memoirs of a Sergeant in the Late 43rd Regiment, Previously and During the Peninsular War: Including an Account of his Conversion from Popery to the Protestant Religion* (London, 1835), p. 12; Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett*, pp. xv, 23.

notions of gender might also induce a man to enlist.[48] As Charles O'Neil described, during the Napoleonic Wars, 'the fair young damsels of our dear Island … were scarcely willing to regard any young man as honourable or brave who did not enlist'.[49] However, the association between soldiering and manly qualities, such as honour and bravery, was not universally upheld. As we have seen, there was a strong dislike for the profession amongst sections of the working class and this was not the sole preserve of men. Joseph Mayett's mother was extremely disappointed when she found her son had enlisted and asked repeatedly for an explanation.[50] Similarly, Allen Davenport found the romance he attempted to strike up with one 'Highland Jane' was undone by her parents being 'strongly prejudiced against the profession of arms'.[51] For private soldiers, at least, the sex-appeal of the uniform had limits. We should therefore be cautious about making generalizations from the fanciful and middle-class accounts of sexual and civil-military relations presented in the works of Jane Austen.[52]

For some men enlistment in the army might represent a means of escaping an unwanted relationship. Kent has used eighteenth-century Westminster settlement records to argue that poor men often enlisted in the army as a means of abandoning their families. In St Martin-in-the-Fields, Kent found that over ten per cent of 'abandoned' wives examined by parish officials claimed their husbands had joined the army and a further five per cent had joined the navy. The true figure may be somewhat higher as a further fourteen per cent of these women reported their husbands to have simply 'gone abroad' or 'gone to sea.[53] Snell also found that soldiers headed the list of deserting husbands and claimed that enlistment was the 'institutionally accepted form of familial desertion'.[54] This research is supported by one light-hearted contemporary print, accompanied by a brief song, in which a rural labourer finds himself

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[48] S. Conway, *War, State, and Society in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 116.
[49] Linch, 'Recruitment', p. 208; C. O'Neil, *Military Adventures of Charles O'Neil*, (Worcester, 1851), p. 9.
[50] Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett*, p. 25.
[51] Chase (ed.), *The Life and Literary Pursuits of Allen Davenport,* p. 9.
[52] Colley is tempted to read *Pride and Prejudice* in this manner. See *Britons*, p. 263.
[53] D.A. Kent, ''Gone for a Soldier': Family Breakdown and the Demography of Desertion in a London Parish, 1750-1791', *Local Population Studies*, 45 (1990), pp. 27-42.
[54] K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1900*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 362.

enlisting with a recruiting sergeant in order to end the 'eternal disputes' which he and his wife engage in.[55]

However, Jennine Hurl-Eamon has challenged the 'fiction of female dependence' and argued that enlistment by married men was not always the result of marital disharmony. Some married men might enlist as part of a family survival strategy.[56] In Lancashire, for example, William Rowbottom noted that a stream of men enlisted in the early 1790s leaving their wives and children behind them.[57] Economic historians have noted that the introduction of large-scale technologies, such as the spinning jenny, in Lancashire created work for the women and children while simultaneously suppressing the wages of men.[58] In the face of protoindustrial reorganization the enlistment of married men was often seen as beneficial to the household economy. In Wigan it was noted that soldier's wives 'turn[ed] Weaver' and 'lived better' after their husbands enlisted than before.[59] Thus not all married men showed a casual indifference to their families and their fate. Enlistment could be both consistent with, or contrary to, familial obligations.[60]

The personal stories penned by recruits emphasize the competing meanings of soldiering and frequently suggest mixed motives for enlistment. Mayett enlisted, not just because of the draw of the dashing 'Corporals and music men', but because of a feud between himself and his master's wife, who accused him of an improper 'correspondence' with one of her maidservants.[61] Likewise, John Shipp was amenable to the charms of the recruiting party, primarily because he was looking to escape the cruelty of his master, who frequently beat him with a 'long hunting whip'. Although the army was technically forbidden from accepting

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[55] BUMC, GB-H1799mf-6, Anon., *Robin & Sue – A Whimsical Tale*, (London, 1799).
[56] J. Hurl-Eamon, 'Did Soldiers really Enlist to Desert their Wives? Revisiting the Martial Character of Marital Desertion in Eighteenth-Century London', *Journal of British Studies*, 53 (2014), pp. 356-77; J. Hurl-Eamon, 'The Fiction of Female Dependence and the Makeshift Economy of Soldiers, Sailors, and their Wives in Eighteenth-Century London', *Labor History*, 49 (2008), pp. 481-501.
[57] Peat (ed.), *William Rowbottom's Diary*, p. 59.
[58] M. Berg, and P. Hudson , 'Rehabilitating the Industrial Revolution', *Economic History Review*, 45 (1992), p. 36; J. Humphries, 'Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution', *Economic History Review*, 66 (2013), p. 404.
[59] Hammond and Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer*, p. 47 citing HO 42/47, ff. 1-3, Singleton – Portland, 25 May 1799.
[60] J. Boulton, '"It is Extreme Necessity that Makes Me do this": Some "Survival Strategies" of Pauper Households in London's West End during the Early Eighteenth Century', *International Review of Social History*, 8 (2000), pp. 47-70.
[61] Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett*, p. 23-5.

apprentices like Shipp, he was accepted aged thirteen, after telling a sergeant he was a labourer.[62] The eighteenth century was an era when masters had a 'general right of correction' over their apprentices.[63] It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, to find many apprentices attempting to escape their indentures by enlisting as soldiers.[64] Apprentice boys may also have been attracted by the belief that soldiers lived a life of leisure. As Brumwell points out, 'in an era when it was not unusual for craftsmen to toil for fourteen hours a day, the sheer drudgery of civilian life should not be dismissed as a motivating factor'.[65] One ex-soldier admitted to being enticed by, what he perceived to be, the 'soldier's holiday life'.[66] Another simply disliked the trade of a nail-maker.[67] Many military commanders believed the army absorbed large numbers of men 'idle in their Disposition'. Arthur Young concurred, claiming that the 'truly industrious' do not enlist, only the feckless.[68] As we shall see, the army certainly did tap into pools of surplus labour within the English economy. However, we should be careful not to repeat contemporary prejudices and presume that all recruits were work-shy, nor should we accept that life in the military was entirely without toil.[69]

Furthermore, as historians we should seek to move beyond anecdotal evidence and towards a general conclusion about soldier's motives for enlistment. Compiling the enlistment motives of soldier-autobiographers is one step towards this goal. By doing so we find that most recruits were influenced by more than one motive. However, even among the highly self-selecting group of literate military autobiographers, many of whom were writing for an audience expecting tales of glory and gallantry, we find that the majority of recruits experienced some unfortunate private circumstance which pushed them into the army. Indeed, it is quite

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[62] H. Manners (ed.), 'Introduction' in *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Military Career of John Shipp* (London, 1890), pp. 8, 23.
[63] Kenyon's Charge to the Staffordshire Assize. *Billinge's Liverpool Advertiser*, 13 October 1795.
[64] For letters to and from the War Office, respecting the enlistment of apprentices, see WO 1/1056, f. 229, Bragg – Yonge, 28 May 1793; WO 1/1090, f. 125, Malbon – Windham, 3 April 1795; WO 4/145, f. 183, Yonge – St John[?], 6 November 1792; ff. 337, 427 Lewis – Colonel Fox, 14 December 1792 and 7 January 1793.
[65] Brumwell, *Redcoats*, p. 79.
[66] Anon, *Memoirs of a Sergeant in the Late 43rd Regiment, Previously and During the Peninsular War: Including an Account of his Conversion from Popery to the Protestant Religion* (London: John Mason, 1835), p. 12.
[67] T. Guthrie, (ed.), *The Street Preacher: The Autobiography of Robert Flockhart, Late Corporal 81st Regiment*, (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1858), p. 3.
[68] PRO 30/8/242, ff. 5-6, Sir William Fawcett, 'Memorandum on Recruiting', 18 August 1787; A. Young, *The Farmer's Tour Through the East of England*, Vol. 2 (London, 1771), p. 78.
[69] See Chapter 3.5.

surprising how few of these writers articulated a deep sense of patriotism or nationalistic sentiment. Most frequently, the issues of work, pay, and unemployment were advanced.[70] Thus the relationship between recruitment and economics needs to be carefully examined. As Kevin Linch has pointed out, most soldiers left no explicit account of their motives for enlistment.[71] It is important therefore that we make use of what evidence is available. Below, the statistics provided by both the War Office and economic historians, as well as contemporary accounts from newspapers, and informed observers have been analysed. This evidence suggests that the real value of civilian wages, short-term fluctuations in the economy, seasonal, and structural unemployment each had an important impact upon levels of recruitment into the army.

2.3. Economics of Enlistment

John Cookson, in part informed by the traditional view of the common soldiery as the 'scum of the earth', has argued that the army recruited a fairly consistent number of men annually, 'family mavericks, bastard-getters, adventurers, and so on'.[72] However, contrary to Cookson's suggestion, it is worth attending to the variations in levels of recruitment, which, at times, could be quite dramatic. To a certain degree, as Floud et al. have argued, the army had to compete with other working-class occupations in the labour market.[73] Military life, at least in theory, guaranteed men 'minimum security' in the form of food, clothing, shelter, with a not insignificant amount of bounty money.[74] We should not preclude the possibility that men considered the cost-benefits of enlistment. With this in mind, it is logical that the army would recruit more effectively at times when the real value of civilian wages was in decline. This hypothesis can be tested by taking the real wages of artisans and labourers, who together made up the bulk of the rank and file[75], and comparing them against annual returns of levels of recruitment.

In order to achieve this comparison, two real wage indices, one to give an impression of the real wages of rural labourers and one of urban artisans, have been taken from the work of Richardson and Tucker for the years 1793-1805. The real wage index for rural labourers has

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[70] See Appendix I.
[71] Linch, *Recruitment Wellington*, p. 90.
[72] Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 100.
[73] Floud et al., *Height, Health and History*, p. 32. See also M. P. Dziennik, 'Imperial Conflict and the Contractual Basis of Military Society in the Early Highland Regiments', p. 18.
[74] Frey, *British Soldier in America*, pp. 16, 53.
[75] Linch, 'Recruitment', p. 201-2.

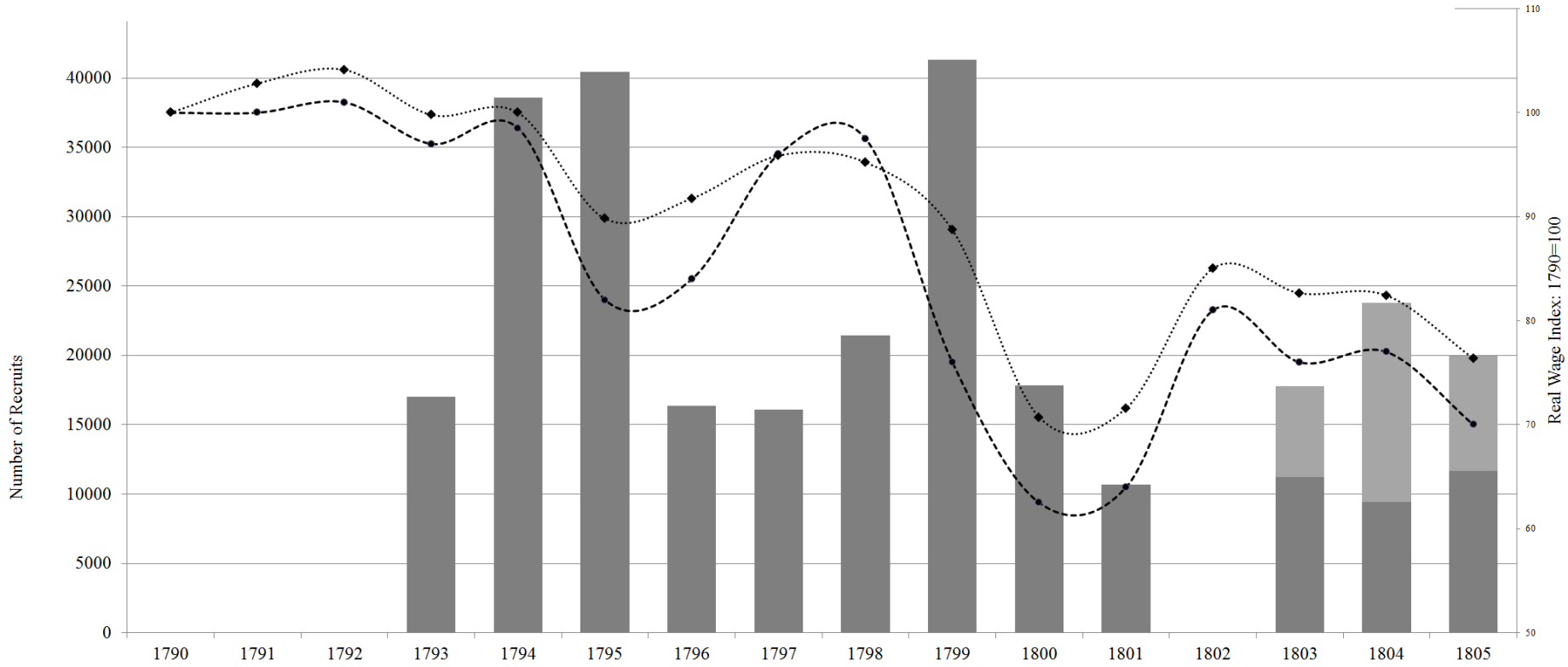
been produced by taking an average from Richardson's studies of Essex and Lincolnshire. In both studies Richardson constructed cost-of-living indices and combined these with indices of monetary wages of agricultural labourers to produce a single real wage index for labourers.[76] Similarly, Tucker charted fluctuations in the contract price of consumables in London and compared this with the monetary wages of a range of artisans in the capital.[77] Although neither series gives us a truly national picture, nor can they be said to supply a complete measure of the economic welfare of these two broad groups, they do provide a point of reference for changes in real wages over time. These series can then be placed alongside annual returns from the War Office for recruitment (Figure 2).[78]

[76] T.L. Richardson, 'The Agricultural Labourer's Standard of Living in Lincolnshire, 1790-1840: Social Protest and Public Order' *Agricultural History Review*, 41 (1993), pp. 1-18; T.L. Richardson, 'Agricultural Labourers' Wages and the Cost of Living in Essex, 1790-1840: A Contribution to the Standard of Living Debate', in B. A. Holderness and M. E. Turner (eds.), *Land, Labour and Agriculture, 1700-1920: Essays for Gordon Mingay* (London: Hambledon, 1991), pp.69-90.

[77] R.S. Tucker, 'Real Wages of Artisans in London, 1729-1935.' *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 31 (1936), pp. 73-84. As Tucker uses 1900 as his 'base year' it was necessary to recalibrate his figures so that 1790 was the 'base year' as in Richardson's studies.

[78] Annual recruitment statistics for the regular army 1793-1801 have been taken from Floud et al., *Height Health and History*, Table 2.1 citing *Parliamentary Papers,* Vol. 10 (1806), p. 389. For the subsequent period 1803-5 see *Commons Journal*, Vol. 69 (1813-14), p. 635. To these must be added transfers from the Army of Reserve (1803-4) and the Additional Force (1804-5). See J. W. Fortescue Sir, *The County Lieutenancies and the Army, 1803-1814* (London: Macmillan, 1909), Appendix IV, pp. 296-8.

Figure 2 - Graph Showing Annual Army Recruitment Figures Compared with Real Wage Indices for London, Lincolnshire, and Essex, 1790-1805.



Sources: Richardson, 'Agricultural Labourers' Wages and the Cost of Living in Essex', p.90; 'The Agricultural Labourers' Standard of Living in Lincolnshire', p. 18; Tucker, 'Real Wages of Artisans in London', pp. 78-9; Floud et al., *Height Health and History*, Table 2.1 p. 47; *Commons Journal,* Vol. 69 (1813-14), p. 635; Fortescue, *County Lieutenancies*, Appendix IV, pp. 296-8.

The years in which the army was most successful at procuring recruits were also those years when inflationary prices suddenly reduced the ability of both artisans and labourers to purchase commodities. The years 1795 and 1799, for example, were exceptional periods in terms of recruitment, but they were also moments in which the value of real wages had taken a steep dive. Conversely, when real wages were recovering from a slump, as they were in 1796-7 and again in 1802-5, the army had relatively little success in enticing recruits.[79] The failure of the army to capitalize more effectively on the period 1800-1, when real wages were at their lowest point of the decade, however, may have been be the result of peace negotiations with France, which created the general expectation of a contraction in the strength of the army. Alternatively, after seven years of intensively recruiting for the army, the militia, and the navy, Britain may have been pushing at, what Cookson has described as, 'the manpower ceiling'.[80] A further point to note is the close correlation between movements in the real wages of unskilled labourers and levels of recruitment. In 1798, for example, labourer's wages were relatively buoyant and recruitment levels relatively poor. The Duke of Gloucester complained, whilst travelling through Kent after the harvest of 1798 had been gathered, that he saw a 'prodigious number of idle able bodied men' while the country suffered from a 'want of regular troops'.[81] The following year, however, labourers' real wages, according to Richardson's data, dropped 16.5 points, the most dramatic yearly fall of the decade. At the same time, 1799 was found to be the single most fertile year for army recruiters. This suggests that rural labourers, who were generally paid less than their artisanal counterparts, were less equipped to absorb falls in real wages and therefore more amenable to enlistment when inflation ate away at their purchasing power.

However, one weakness of the above graph is that it relies upon real wage indices which assume that workers were in full employment. In reality, during the French Wars, only a minority of manufacturing sectors, such as the armaments trade in Birmingham and the Royal Dockyards of Portsmouth and Plymouth, could guarantee steady employment to their

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[79] Real wages were higher in 1806 than they were in 1801 according to A.D. Gayer, W. W. Rostow and A. J. Schwartz, *The Growth and Fluctuation of the British Economy, 1790- 1850: An Historical, Statistical and Theoretical Study of Britain's Economic Development* Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 81.
[80] Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 95.
[81] Frederick, Duke of Gloucester – Windham, 31 October 1798 in L. Melville (ed.), *The Windham Papers: The Life and Correspondence of the Rt. Hon. William Windham 1750-1810* Vol. 2 (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1913), pp. 81-3.

workforces.[82] According to Rule the war closed all overseas markets except for those in the Far East.[83] For the majority of artisans, whose employment was uncertain the best of times, the war with France therefore created the conditions for under- and unemployment. This was especially true in the 'grand industrial towns', where larger manufacturing operations reliant upon the export trade, were conducted. Frederick Eden's observations on conditions in Manchester, in the opening stages of the conflict, are worth quoting at length:

> The stagnation of business, since the war, has induced many thousand manufacturers to enter his Majesty's service … It must be confessed that, at present, constant and regular employment cannot be procured by all who are inclined to work. The town would have suffered much more severely than it has done, by the stagnation of business, had not the Navy and Army carried off those superfluous labourers, who, had they remained in Manchester without employment, must have ultimately fallen on the parish ... [84]

It was not only Eden who recognized this dynamic. The satirist 'Pasquin Shaveblock' calculated (not improbably) that 60,000 button-makers and weavers from the towns of Birmingham and Manchester had enlisted between 1793-5 from 'want of work'.[85] Likewise, in Sheffield, radical writers lamented seeing 'thousands' of their fellow citizens 'brought to the necessity of enlisting' merely 'from want of employ'.[86] Working-class writers also provide evidence. William Rowbottom, for example, noted the propensity around Oldham for distressed weavers, and even 'heads of families', to go for soldiers while Thomas Jackson of Walsall reported that the steel buckle industry was badly affected by the loss of overseas trade. According to Jackson, wartime recession caused a 'sort of periodical panic … with much privation and distress[.] [I]n consequence … it has driven many of my fellow townsmen to enter into the army, who under

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[82] P. J. Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns 1700-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 166; C. Emsley, 'The Impact of War and Military Participation on Britain and France 1792-1815', in C. Emsley and J. Walvin (eds.), *Artisans, Peasants and Proletarians, 1760-1860 : Essays Presented to Gwyn A. Williams* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 72.
[83] J. Rule, *Experience of Labour,* p. 50.
[84] Eden, *State of the Poor*, Vol. 2, pp. 351-7.
[85] P. Shaveblock, *The Shaver's New Sermon for the Fast Day. Respectfully Inscribed to the Rev. and Laborious Clergy of the Church of England, by their Humble Servant, Pasquin Shaveblock, Esq. Shaver Extraordinary*, (London, 1795), p. 20-1.
[86] SCA, WWM/Y17/1b, Anon., 'To Young Men', (Sheffield, 1794).

fairer circumstances, would never have enlisted'.[87] Certainly, in the northern industrial towns, economic recession at the outset of the war, and the unemployment which it generated among manufacturers, was intimately linked to the bumper crop of recruits produced for the army.

Military commanders well understood the gains to be made by mopping up surplus labour in the industrial districts. In 1793, the Whig reformer, David Erskine, observed that the 'populous manufacturing towns' were the 'hotbeds for recruiting the Army'.[88] The Black Country was similarly referred to by one magistrate as a 'grand Nursery for Soldiers and Sailors'.[89] Recruiting parties certainly tended to focus their efforts in the densely populated regions of England and not without reason. In Wakefield, for example, the 95th Regiment raised 500 infantrymen at the same time that Colonel Beaumont of Bretton Hall recruited 360 light dragoons. Both regiments were said to have been complete within a matter of months and their success due to a combination of liberal bounties and 'the extreme bad Trade' in Yorkshire.[90] The methods used by recruiting parties stationed in large towns are also instructive. Sergeant Bull, of 113th Regiment, had his party march around Birmingham, 'sporting a pig on a spit' and the editor of the *Sheffield Register* claimed that recruiting parties parade 'every night with turkeys, geese, ducks, flitches of bacon … elevated upon poles … to attract and entice the male part of the swinish multitude, (who are starving for food) into the service'.[91] The aggressive tactics of the urban recruiting party again refutes the idealized and bucolic image of recruitment portrayed in contemporary prints. By the Napoleonic period, the profitability of urban recruitment was so well established that the Duke of York could write that '[a]ll Recruiting is carried on in the large Manufacturing or Market Towns, where the lower class of people periodically and frequently Assemble, and not in the Country at Large'.[92]

Furthermore, even when the economy was relatively stable, England's large towns continued to provide the best opportunities for recruitment. Workers striking for higher wages, for example,

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[87] J. Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution: Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns* (London: Methuen, 1974), p. 34-5; Peat (ed.), *William Rowbottom's Diary*, p. 59; T. Jackson, *Narrative of the Eventful Life of Thomas Jackson*, (Birmingham, 1847), pp. v-vi, 1-2.
[88] 'Albanicus', *Letters on the Impolicy of a Standing Army*, p. 89.
[89] WO 1/1088, f. 287, Haden – Lewis, 2 July 1795.
[90] SCA, WWM/Y17/2, Milnes – Fitzwilliam, 15 April 1794; TNA, WO5/70, ff. 60-3, Quarters of Troops in Britain, 4 August 1794.
[91] McGuffie, 'The Short Life and Sudden Death of an English Regiment', p. 24; *Sheffield Register*, 13 December 1793.
[92] Add. MS 37, 842, f. 184, Duke of York – William Windham, 17 September 1806.

could provide the army with men. It has been observed that, during the eighteenth century, artisans often engaged in strikes during economic upturns, in order to enhance their chances of success.[93] An unintended consequence of strikes, however, was that they often left workers vulnerable to economic distress and to legal prosecution. John Brown, for example, earned a guinea a week as a London shoemaker, but was left penniless during a ten-week strike and, unwilling to become a 'scab', he enlisted instead.[94] Similarly, in 1796, a relatively good year nationally, the Royal Artillery recruited thirty per cent more than the usual number of men from the Sheffield cutlery trade.[95] It is no coincidence that in the summer of that year, the journeymen cutlers of Sheffield were engaged in an acrimonious strike for higher wages. In response, the master manufacturers set up a fund in order to suppress 'the conspiracy'.[96] Enlistment was an attractive option for those who wished to avoid prosecution and for those struggling to survive on dwindling strike funds.

English towns also provided the army with a steady trickle of failed retailers and dealers. George Fraser, for one, set up business as a grocer in London in the early 1790s but ran into debt. He was forced to sell all of his property and having 'no other resource, and poverty approaching with rapid strides, [he] enlisted as a private soldier … and began [his] march with light purse and heavy heart'.[97] Similarly, James Turner, had been 'in a very respectable line of life' as the keeper of the Crown Inn in the London parish of St Pauls. Falling on hard times, however, he was confined as a debtor in Newgate and, upon his release, 'having no money or subsistence', was obliged to enlist in the 34th Regiment to avoid being further pursued by his

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[93] J. Rule, 'Trade Unions, the Government and the French Revolution, 1789-1802', in R. W. Malcolmson and J. Rule (eds.), *Protest and Survival: The Historical Experience; Essays for E.P. Thompson* (London: Merlin, 1993), p. 123. For a 'more complex chain of connection' between politics, economics, and the timing of strikes see Chase, *Early Trade Unionism*, p. 73-4.

[94] J. Brown, *Sixty Years' Gleanings from Life's Harvest, A Genuine Autobiography by John Brown* (New York, 1859), p. 49.

[95] Between 1793-5 and 1798-1801 the Royal Artillery recruited on average 8.9 men born in Sheffield and working in the tool-making sector. Yet in 1796-7 the average was 23. See Figure 1 for sources.

[96] *Lloyd's Evening Post* (London), 18 July 1796; *Sun* (London), 19 July 1796; SCA, Wil D 412/1-16, Printed Handbills Regarding the Cutlers' Strike, 1796.

[97] G. Fraser, *Memoirs in the Life and Travels of George Fraser, Late Soldier in the III. Reg of Foot Guards*, (Glasgow, 1808), pp. 16-18.

creditors.[98] As soldiers were exempt from prosecution for any debt of less than twenty pounds the army could be something of a refuge for the debtor.[99]

In addition to insolvency and short term fluctuations in the economy, structural unemployment has been posited, by both Sylvia Frey and Peter Way, as an important factor contributing to army enlistment. Frey's sample of two army regiments suggests that, between 1759 and 1800, twenty per cent of soldiers were textile workers, mainly weavers from the Midlands and South West. Frey argues that the high proportion of these workers reflects the fact that their wages and employment options were adversely affected by the introduction of labour-saving machinery.[100] Brumwell has been sceptical of these claims, however, suggesting that large numbers of weavers were present in the mid-Georgian army simply because weaving was a common trade among the population at large.[101]

However, we should not dismiss the relationship between socio-economic change and patterns of recruitment. In the period under investigation, Frey's analysis seems pertinent. We can infer from Floud's data, for example, which sampled 5,000 recruits per decade, that the proportion of textile workers in the army dramatically increased between the American and the French Revolutionary Wars, from 13.9 per cent in the former conflict, to 23.2 per cent in the latter.[102] Over the same period, as Adrian Randall has demonstrated, the woollen weaving trade in the South West of England, was in decline. It suffered both from competition with the woollens produced, partly by outworkers and partly by factories, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and from competition with the rapidly industrialising cotton industry of Lancashire.[103] At the same time, as we have seen, the reorganization of the weaving trade in the North, with the introduction of more detailed division of labour, created work for women and children, whilst

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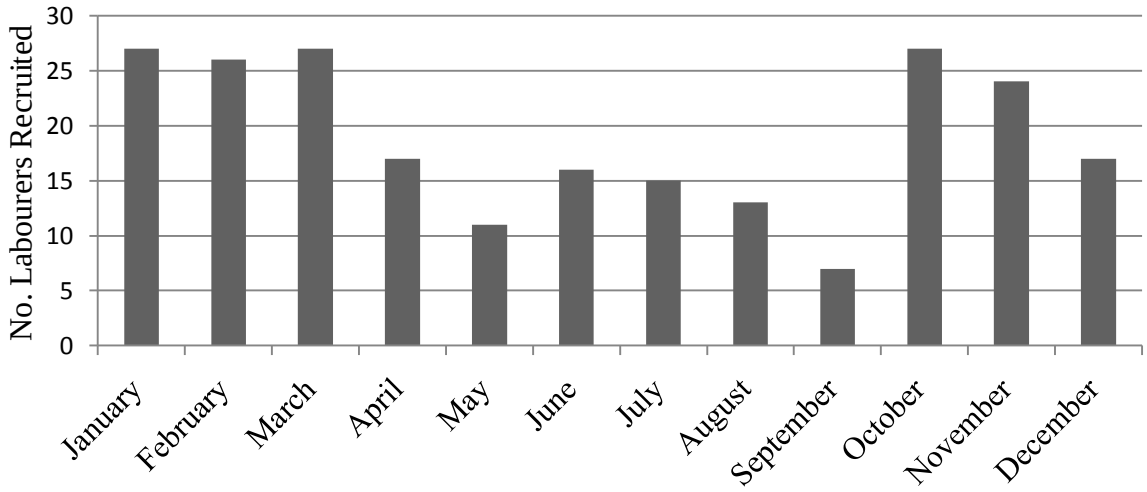
[98] Turner was tried in shortly after his enlistment for desertion and was sentenced to transportation for life. TNA, WO71/205, GCM Pankhurst, 18 March 1806; defence plea of James Turner.
[99] 41 Geo. III cap. 11 s. 65, Mutiny Act, (24 March 1801); Gilbert, 'An Analysis of some Eighteenth Century Army Recruiting Records', p. 42.
[100] Frey, *British Soldier in America*, p. 12; Way, 'Class and the Common Soldier', p. 461. The regiments surveyed by Frey were the 58th Regiment and the Coldstream Regiment.
[101] Brumwell, *Redcoats*, p. 79.
[102] See Floud et al., *Height, Health and History*, Table 3.8. I have assumed that army recruits born between 1747-1757 were roughly the right age to serve during the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and that those born between 1772-1777 were likely to have served during the French Wars (1793-1801).
[103] Randall, *Before the Luddites*, p. 5; For the introduction of factories in the North see R.A.E. Wells, *Dearth and Distress in Yorkshire 1793-1802* (University of York: Borthwick Papers, 1977), p. 8; Hammond and Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer*, p. 39.

simultaneously dispensing with traditional skills associated with male workers.[104] The increasing proportional presence of textile workers in the rank and file, therefore tends to support Peter Way's assertion, that the army was the 'unwitting beneficiary' of the Industrial Revolution.[105] Conversely we may note that miners and foundrymen are considerably underrepresented within the ranks of the army.[106] These workers were notoriously well paid, and their employment prospects were well-protected in this period, as England continued in the transition from an 'organic' to an 'energy' driven economy.[107] Hence we find only small numbers of workers from the iron and coal industries in the ranks.

Figure 3 - Graph Showing Monthly Recruitment Figures for 'Labourers' Born in Gloucestershire, Lincolnshire, and Sussex, 1790-1801.



Sources: As in Figure 1.

Unlike the textile worker, farm labourers were not threatened by machinery in this era, nor were his employment prospects chained to the boom and bust of the trade cycle. Instead, the weather and, more especially, the season governed the amount of work available for labourers. Over the winter months, hired farm labourers were routinely subjected to seasonal

[104] Hammond and Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer*, p. 50; Humphries, 'Child Labour', pp. 399-400.
[105] Way, 'Class and the Common Soldier', p. 462.
[106] From my sample of recruits in the Artillery and Foot Guards (n. 850), only 5 miners, all born in Gloucester, are recorded. For sources see Figure 1 for sources.
[107] E.A. Wrigley, *Energy and the English Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For relatively high wages rates among these groups see Hammond and Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer*, p. 14; B. S. Trinder, *The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire* (London: Phillimore, 1973)., p. 207.

unemployment when as much as seventeen per cent of the workforce could be laid off.[108] This lull in employment prospects provided further opportunities to army recruiters. If we examine the months in which unskilled labourers, born in the predominantly rural counties of Gloucestershire, Sussex, and Lincolnshire, were 'attested', or sworn in as soldiers, this becomes apparent (Figure 3). In the South-East, peas were harvested in the latter part of July, followed by wheat in August, and other grains in September.[109] Eden noted that in Sussex the labourer could earn three pounds above his ordinary wages during the hop season, which picked up at the end of August.[110] It follows therefore that September was by far the least fertile month for obtaining recruits as it was precisely when wages and demand for agricultural labourers were at their highest. Conversely the majority of labourers appear to have enlisted in the winter-spring months, and often immediately after the harvest, in late October. Agricultural labourers therefore appear to have enlisted, both in those years when their real wages were in decline, but also at those times of year when they were most likely to be out of work.

2.4. Enlistment, Unemployment, and the Role of the Parish

For both skilled artisans and unskilled labourers, financial desperation resulting from a period of unemployment, appears to have been the most common prelude to enlistment. This fact raises questions about the role of the parish and the poor relief system and its impact upon levels of recruitment during wartime. Famously, during the French Wars, the 'Speenhamland system', was first conceived of and introduced. This system was intended to relieve agricultural labourers and their families suffering from the effects of inflation and underemployment, by granting doles which rose incrementally in relation to the number of dependents a labourer had and the going rate of bread. Throughout the period, parish officials could also provide the temporarily unemployed with 'occasional relief' or, for those experiencing a longer period without work, the parish could offer a certain amount of employment by 'farming out' men to employers at a contracted rate. We might ask why men facing the prospect of enlistment due to economic hardship did not simply take advantage of such welfare provision.

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[108] G. R. Boyer, *An Economic History of the English Poor Law, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 89, 132.

[109] A. Driver and W. Driver, *General View of the Agriculture of Hampshire, with Observations on the Means for its Improvement*, (London, 1794), 52.

[110] F. M. Eden, *State of the Poor*, Vol. 2, p. 732. For the timing of the hop season see WO 1/1079, f. 117, Shotter and Trimmer – Windham, 23 August 1794.

Firstly, it should be emphasized that young able-bodied men largely fell outside of the poor law system, which was primarily aimed at providing provision to four other groups; single mothers and their dependents, orphaned children, the elderly, and the sick. Places in workhouses, for example, were exclusively filled by these groups, and able-bodied men were legally excluded from being sent to the workhouse, by the terms of Gilbert's Act.[111] Regular 'outdoor relief' was likewise primarily directed toward women, the aged, and the infirm. Secondly, it should be noted that the relief which was accessible to able-bodied men was extremely limited. Agricultural labourers could turn to the parish if they were out of work. However, the prospect of being 'farmed out', their bed and board provided to them by a farmer, and their labour harnessed for less than the market rate, was an unattractive prospect for single men, and of little help to those with families to support.[112] Furthermore, the generous provision for labourers embodied in the much-vaunted 'Speenhamland system' were by no means universally upheld.[113] Even in Berkshire, where the system was devised, it was adopted by few, if any, of the county's overseers.[114] Irregular payments of cash or kind certainly were provided to able-bodied men, particularly those with large families to support. These payments, along with charitable donations, undoubtedly went some way toward mitigating the effects of declining real wages seen over the 1790s.[115] However, as King has pointed out, nowhere in England did these payments represent a 'comprehensive welfare package'. Moreover, King's research highlights that expenditure on poor relief was geographically uneven. Labourers in the South and East of the country, who generally lived closer to the subsistence level, were relatively well provided for. However, in the North and West, poor relief expenditure per head of the population, was relatively parsimonious. Particularly in the urban districts, in the North and

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[111] See, for example, Eden's observations on the inhabitants of the workhouses at Reading, New Windsor, Bury, and Manchester in *State of the Poor* Vol. 2, pp. 12, 23, 294, 343; For discussion of Gilbert's Act see M. Neuman, *The Speenhamland County: Poverty and the Poor Laws in Berkshire, 1782-1834* (London: Garland, 1982), p. 150.

[112] For an explanation of 'farming out' see S. King , *Poverty and Welfare in England 1700-1850: A Regional Perspective* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 24, 185.

[113] Christie overemphasizes the importance of the scheme in *Stress and Stability*, p. 112-3.

[114] Neuman, *The Speenhamland County*, p. 160.

[115] S.A. Shave, 'The Dependent Poor? (Re)Constructing Individuals' Lives "on the Parish" in Rural Dorset, 1800-1832', *Rural History*, 20 (2009), p. 86; Neuman, *The Speenhamland County*, p. 161; Christie, *Stress and Stability*, p. 111.

West, able-bodied men could expect little in the way of support from the parish and many individuals fell through the numerous 'holes' in the welfare system.[116]

Therefore, men suffering the effects of unemployment or low wages could not guarantee that the parish would come to their aid, nor could they be certain that relief would be sufficient for the subsistence of themselves and their families. A number of historians have emphasized the 'micro-politics' of poor relief and have shown that a 'complex web of considerations' operated on overseers when they came to decide who constituted the deserving, and the underserving, poor.[117] An aspect of this 'micro-politics' which has been overlooked, is the claim, made by political radicals in the 1790s, that parish overseers actively discriminated against men sympathetic to the cause of reform. John Baxter, of the LCS, for example, wrote that 'it is notorious that, among the numerous applications for relief, those only have been supplied who were the Abettors of Administration'.[118] While the editor of the *Sheffield Register*, Joseph Gales, and John Harrison, the president of the Birmingham Society for Constitutional Information, provided anecdotal evidence (from Manchester and Birmingham respectively) that loyalist officials refused to grant relief to the families of working-class reformers, unless they enlisted in the army.[119] Certainly such claims are plausible. Parish overseers had the double incentive of ridding themselves of 'Jacobins' and of filling recruitment quotas. In addition to administering the militia ballots, the Recruiting Act of 1796 required English parishes to raise 5,764 men for the army.[120] This mode of recruiting for the army was reintroduced on a much larger scale in 1803-5, via the Army of Reserve and the Additional Force Acts, which 'turned parish officers into recruiting sergeants'. How parish officials went about meetings these quotas remains

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[116] King , *Poverty and Welfare*, pp. 158, 170, 209, 215.
[117] P. Sharpe, 'Malaria, Machismo and the Original Essex Man: The Limits of Poor Relief in the Early 1830s', in J. Cooper and M. Holland (eds.), *Essex Harvest: A Collection of Essays in Memory of Arthur Brown* (Chelmsford: Essex Record Office, 2003), p. 57.
[118] J. Baxter, *Resistance to Oppression, the Constitutional Right of Britons Asserted in a Lecture Delivered Before Section 2 of the Society of the Friends of Liberty, on Monday, November 9th* (London, 1795), p. 6.
[119] *Sheffield Register*, 3 May 1793; J. Harrison, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Henry Dundas* (London, 1794), pp. 20-22.
[120] 'Report of the Committee to Enquire into Certain Questions Which Have Arisen With Respect to the Militia and the Present Brigade Depot System' *House of Commons Reports* Vol. 18 (1877), Appendix 27, p. 519.

largely opaque.[121] Although it should be stressed that most enlists, in both the militia and the reserves, were hired substitutes and non-natives of the parishes for whom they served.[122]

The question of whether radicals were maliciously denied relief is also difficult to substantiate. Overseers accounts and vestry minutes, tend only to reflect on those who were granted relief, they rarely record the names of those who were denied or the reasons why they were rejected.[123] However, we know that the army was officially used as a means of siphoning off small numbers of vagrants and criminals and that political dissidents did not escape impressment. In 1793, for example, six sailors, arrested for riot during a labour dispute in Ipswich, were sent into the navy.[124] While in 1799 undersecretary John King offered to send army recruiting parties into Lancashire in order to mop up the unemployed and the increasingly-politicized cotton weavers around Manchester.[125] There is no reason why similar punitive measures, against radicals and unionists, couldn't have been taken by parish officials.[126] However, as with other aspects of 'Pitt's reign of terror', establishing the extent to which radicals were harassed, and demonstrating that such harassment was systemic, is the crucial difficulty.[127] Unfortunately, poor law records may not be adequate to demonstrate conclusively whether parish relief was systematically denied in order to force men into the armed forces.

What poor law records do tell us, however, is that the families of military men were generally treated far better by the parish than their civilian counterparts. During the period, the Militia

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[121] For a discussion of these Acts see Gilbert, 'An Analysis of some Eighteenth Century Army Recruiting Records', p. 44; Fortescue, *The County Lieutenancies*, pp. 127, 131-3; C.J. Fedorak, 'In Defence of Great Britain: Henry Addington, the Duke of York and Military Preparations Against Invasion by Napoleonic France, 1803–1804', in M. Philp (ed.), *Resisting Napoleon: The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp.91-110.

[122] Western, *English Militia,* p. 256; Fortescue, *The County Lieutenancies*, p. 73.

[123] For a useful discussion of the kinds of evidence available see S. Ottaway, and S. Williams, 'Reconstructing the Life Cycle Experience of Poverty in the Time of the Old Poor Law' *Archives*, 23 (1998), pp.19-29.

[124] C. Emsley, 'The Recruitment of Petty Offenders during the French Wars 1793-1815', *Mariner's Mirror*, 66 (1980), pp. 199-208., p. 199; HO 42/24, ff. 555-6, Stisted – [?] 18 February 1793.

[125] King – Bayley, 11 November 1799 cited in A. Aspinall (ed.), *The Early English Trade Unions: Documents from the Home Office Papers* (London: Batchworth Press, 1949), p. 29-30, Doc 32; Hammond and Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer*, p. 46.

[126] For the connection between radicalism and trade unionism in the 1790s see Chase, *Early Trade Unionism*, pp. 70-102; J. Rule, 'Trade Unions, the Government and the French Revolution', pp. 112-38.

[127] See the debate between Emlsey and Poole regarding the apprehension and prosecution of radicals on charges of sedition. C. Emsley, 'An Aspect of Pitt's 'Terror': Prosecution for Sedition during the 1790s', *Social History*, 6 (1981), pp. 155-84; S. Poole, 'Pitt's Terror Reconsidered: Jacobinism and the Law in Two South Western Counties, 1791-1803', *Southern History*, 17 (1995), pp. 65-87;

Acts granted the wives of militiamen 1*s* 6*d* every week for their support, plus an additional 1*s* 6*d,* for every child born in wedlock and under the age of ten.[128] However, overseers often went beyond the letter of the law to assist military families. The experiences of Ann Sherborn, of Wisborough Green, West Sussex, demonstrate this well. Between 1795-7, Ann's husband, James, was working as a labourer. During this time Ann gave birth to two children (both of whom died shortly after birth) and, during her second pregnancy, she was granted 4*s,* presumably to cover the additional costs incurred from childbirth.[129] In 1798, however, James enlisted in the militia and Ann began to receive her weekly allowance. After becoming pregnant for a third time, Ann was granted the much more generous sum of £1.0.6 'lying-in money' in March 1798. As the wife of a militiaman Ann Sherborn was clearly considered part of the 'deserving poor'.[130] In the spring of 1800, she was given a further £3.7.4 for clothes and 7*s* towards an outstanding debt for flour.[131] Here the overseers of Wisborough Green went beyond what was required of them by the Militia Acts.

The families of regular soldiers were not legally entitled to weekly allowances. The ideal soldier was seen to be a single man and, on this basis, the army officially discouraged marriage among the rank and file, and the state offered no specific financial support to soldier's dependents. However, many regulars were in fact married. A recent 'conservative' estimate suggests twelve per cent of British soldiers had wives. Some of these women were allowed to 'go on the strength' and followed their husband's regiments, even going on campaigns with the army. At least half, however, remained at home.[132] There is some evidence to suggest that parish officials prioritised the relief of soldier's wives and their dependents. Eden noted that in Colchester the widow of a soldier with three children was in receipt of poor relief to the value of three shillings

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[128] LRO, HORNCASTLE PAR/13/34/11, 'Order to Overseers of Horncastle for Relief of Mary Burton', 15 March 1793.

[129] See James Sherborn(b. 1776), Ann Sherborn n. Stanford (b. 1776), Elizabeth Sherborn (b. Feb 1795, d. March 1795), and George Sherborn (b. Jan 1796 d. Jan 1796). Parish Register Transcript Society, *Sussex Parish Register Transcripts*: *Wisborough Green* CD version (PRTSOC, 2011); WSRO, PAR 210, 31/1, Wisborough Green, Overseers Accounts, 5 January 1796.

[130] WSRO, Par 210/37/12, Wisborough Green, Vestry Decisions. See entry for 1798 where reference to James enlisting in the militia is given; PAR 210, 31/1, Wisborough Green, Overseers Accounts, 16 March 1798.

[131] WSRO, PAR 210, 31/1, Wisborough Green, Overseers Accounts, 11 April 1800; Par 210/37/12, Wisborough Green, Vestry Decisions, 1 April 1800.

[132] For the difficulties of quantifying how many soldiers were married and the figure of twelve per cent, see J. Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army in the Long Eighteenth Century: 'The Girl I Left Behind Me'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 24-6.

six pence whilst a labourer's widow with four children received just two shillings.[133] The dramatic increase in poor relief expenditure in St Mary's Nottingham, which rose 196 per cent between 1790-4, was also explained by Eden in terms of money allocated to the dependents of militiamen *and* soldiers.[134] Nor was Nottingham unique. In St Margaret's Westminster, twenty per cent of indoor and outdoor poor relief recipients were said to be the dependents of soldiers.[135] Moreover, nationally poor relief expenditure grew dramatically during the wars.[136] Over the same period Patricia Lin has argued that there was a decisive redefinition of the 'deserving poor'. National initiatives, to allow seamen to allocate their wages to their wives, and for the children of soldiers to enrol in the Royal Military Asylum (est. 1803), according to Lin, demonstrate that notions of the 'deserving' woman or child were increasingly defined, not solely in terms of need, but in terms of their relationship to men serving in the forces.[137] At the level of the parish, it seems likely that these conceptions of 'deservingness' also had an influence, and that payments to military families partly explain the significant rises in wartime poor law expenditure.

Thus, for unemployed men with families to support, enlistment could be a means of making their kin appear more 'deserving' in the eyes of the parish. This was surely an important calculation within the economics of enlistment. Moreover, there was a certain amount of social stigma which might prevent any man from approaching his parish directly, even in times of distress. For the skilled artisan, accepting poor relief was considered to be the 'grave of all independence'.[138] While even the lowly West Country weaver could find himself 'rejected by all men' as a consequence of becoming 'troublesome' to his parish.[139] This social stigma was likely to operate more forcefully upon young men without dependents. Younger members of trade unions, for example, were expected to go 'on the tramp' in times of localized economic distress,

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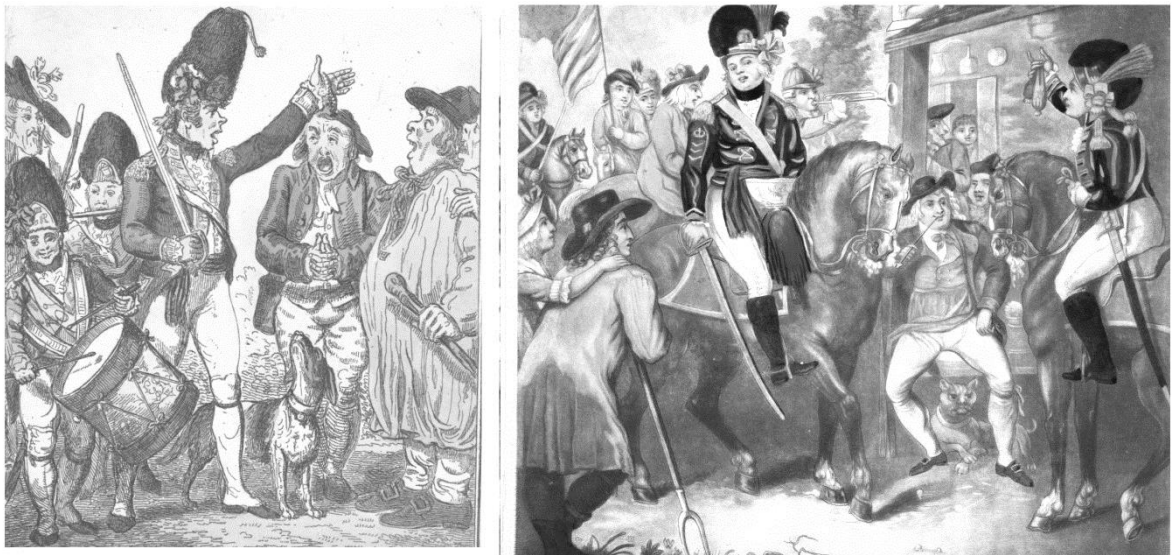
[133] Eden, *State of the Poor,* Vol. 2, p. 178.
[134] Annual expenditure rose from £3,000 to £5,892. Eden, *State of the Poor*, Vol. 2, p. 579.
[135] Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army*, pp. 40-1.
[136] D.A. Baugh, 'The Cost of Poor Relief in South-East England, 1790-1834', *Economic History Review*, 28 (1975), pp. 50-68.
[137] P. Lin, 'Citizenship, Military Families, and the Creation of a New Definition of "Deserving Poor" in Britain, 1793–1815', *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 7 (2000), pp. 5-46.
[138] Thompson, *Making*, p. 219 citing 'A Journeymen Cotton Spinner' in *Black Dwarf,* 30 September 1818.
[139] This was the experience of John Bezer a Melksham weaver. His 'last dying words' are cited in [A. Boyer], *The Political State of Great-Britain,* Vol. 57 (London, 1739), p. 532.

in order to leave more work for older and more settled members.[140] For non-journeymen, 'going for a soldier' provided a similar means to relieve the community of the burden of supporting them. Moreover, for those struggling to make ends meet, the enormous sums offered as bounty money could often prove to be irresistible.

2.5. Bounty Money and Mutiny in the Independent Regiments



Print 3 – Details from (Left) BMSat 9128, I. Cruikshank, *A Recruiting Party* (London, 1797); (Right) BUMC, GB-P1795mf-2, Anon, *The Recruiting Party*, (London, 1795).

Finally, the attraction of the bounty money offered to the would-be recruit must be considered. Bounties are a recurrent theme in the popular prints of the period (Print 3). Cruikshank's *A Recruiting Party* was based upon a group of Grenadier Guards which the humourist, George Moutard Woodward, encountered in Cirencester. The rustic subjects of the piece gawp in amazement at the bounty money on offer for enlistment, as a purse is held aloft by the recruiting sergeant.[141] Amusing though the print is, the sums offered in the period, really were astonishing and grew more inflated as the war progressed. Heated competition between the colonels of the independent regiments between 1794-5 raised the rate of bounties to between ten and sixteen guineas per man, while established regiments were offering as much as fifteen

[140] Brown, *Sixty Years' Gleaning from Life's Harvest*, p. 49.
[141] See G. M Woodward, *Eccentric Excursions, or, Literary & Pictorial Sketches of Countenance Character & Country, in England & South Wales* (London, 1796), p. 147; M.D. George, *Catalogue of Personal and Political Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum* Vol. 7 (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1942), p. 404.

pounds.[142] The latter figure was the equivalent of nine months' pay for an Essex labourer.[143] Government attempted to get a handle on spiralling bounties between 1795-6 by disbanding the independent companies and fixing cash bounties at £3.13.16 for a light cavalryman and £7.18.17 for an infantryman.[144] However, as more men were captured by the army, competition for militia substitutes became increasingly fierce. Between five and ten guineas were offered to militia substitutes in 1793, rising to at least twenty-five pounds, in 1803.[145] The rapid increase in the price of substitutes in the period after the Peace of Amiens was largely a result of the introduction of the Army of Reserve, which created a second ballot, and therefore doubled demand for substitutes. Fortescue suggests that prices paid for substitutes in the Army of Reserve varied by region but, on average, the cost fell between thirty and sixty pounds.[146] The Army of Reserve proved hugely costly to the government and, again, attempts to rationalize were made. Pitt's Additional Force Act (1804) replaced the older legislation and fixed bounties at sixteen guineas for army volunteers and offered twelve guineas for reservists. A further ten pounds was offered for those who transferred from the reserve into the regular army and sixteen pounds to those who transferred from the militia.[147] Thus, by the Napoleonic period, men who took advantage of a combination of the available bounties, could secure well over the annual income of a common labourer.[148]

The importance of these bounties to new recruits should not be underestimated. Although some of the 'levy money' was reserved for the purchase of clothing and other 'necessaries' new recruits expected to receive a sizeable windfall.[149] We can infer the significance of recruitment bounties from the actions of those unfortunate soldiers whose prizes went unpaid. In the course of 1795, for example, a year of soaring prices and widespread food rioting, at least nine newly

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[142] Regiments commanded by Major Earle Bulwer and Colonel Cameron were offering, respectively, ten and sixteen guineas between 1794-5. See figures quoted in *Sheffield Times*, 4 October 1851 and *Norfolk Chronicle*, 24 May 1794. Gilbert, 'An Analysis of some Eighteenth-Century Army Recruiting Records', p. 42.

[143] This calculation is based on an Essex labourer in full employment at the rate of 8*s* 3*d*. See Richardson, 'Agricultural Labourers' Wages', pp. 79, 90.

[144] War Office, *Regulations and Instructions for Carrying on the Recruiting Service For HM's Forces Stationed Abroad*, (London, 1796), p. 22-4.

[145] Peat (ed.), *William Rowbottom's Diary*, p. 48; BL Add. MS 33,111, f. 223, Sheffield – Pelham, 18 June 1803.

[146] Fortescue Sir, *The County Lieutenancies*, p. 70.

[147] *Ibid.*, p. 131; Floud et al., *Height, Health and History*, p. 41.

[148] Coss suggests that bounties for the regular army peaked in in 1812 at £23.12.0. Coss , *All for the King's Shilling*, p. 73.

[149] War Office, *Regulations and Instructions* (London, 1796), p. 22-4.

raised army regiments stationed in England mutinied in protest against the non-payment of bounties. Social historians have often focused upon the best documented of these protests, the mutiny of Colonel Cameron's Loyal Regiment of Foot.[150] On 4 August 1795 Cameron's regiment was paraded at Stewards Croft, Norfolk Street, Sheffield, but refused to return to their quarters when ordered. Word was sent to Lieutenant-Colonel Athorpe, of the Loyal Sheffield Independent Volunteers, and his regiment was summoned. By the time of their arrival, however, a large crowd of civilians had gathered on Norfolk Street. Athorpe attempted to disperse the crowd by reading the Riot Act. However, the people remained, inciting Cameron's men to violence, and throwing stones at the volunteers. Athorpe resorted to charging into the crowd with his sword drawn, in a vain attempt to seize ringleaders, and an hour after reading the proclamation, ordered his men to fire, killing two people, and scattering the rest.[151]

In addition to the use of lethal force at Sheffield, historians have noted that the mutiny was remarkable, in terms of the level of radical agitation which surrounded it.[152] Sheffield's publicans were accused of attempting to seduce the soldiery from their duty in the days leading up to the riot.[153] Certain men in Cameron's regiment were also feared to be mixing with 'the disaffected among the lower orders of the People'. Rumours of a concerted effort, between soldiers and inhabitants, to seize the town's corn supplies, were also aired.[154] Most notably, on the day of the riot, an anti-war handbill accusing the government of conspiring to 'starve the poor into the army', was published. This handbill demonstrates the continuation of Sheffield's radical anti-recruitment campaign, noted earlier.[155] However, at the root of the original mutiny was the issue of the non-payment of bounty money. [156] In this regard, the disturbances were far from unique.

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[150] Stevenson, *Artisans and Democrats*, p. 31; *Popular Disturbances* 2nd ed., pp.181-2; Wells, *Dearth and Distress in Yorkshire*, p. 26.
[151] The narrative of events is based on the following sources: *York Courant,* 10 August 1795; *Morning Chronicle, 10 August* 1795; UNotts, PwF 3943, Wilkinson – Ford, 6 August 1795; SCA, MD1092-31, Evidence of Sergeant-Major William Hinde and Colonel Athorpe, n.d. [1795].
[152] Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances* 2nd ed., pp.181-2; Wells, *Dearth and Distress in Yorkshire*, p. 26.
[153] See 'Information of Francis Fargin' published in *Sheffield Iris*, 14 August 1795.
[154] UNotts, PwF 3943, Wilkinson – Ford, 6 August 1795; HO 42/35, ff. 384-386, Wilkinson – Portland, 13 August 1795.
[155] Handbill was republished in full in *Sheffield Iris* 14 August 1795. See Chapter 1.1.
[156] Wells, *Dearth and Distress in Yorkshire*, p. 26; Stevenson, *Artisans and Democrats*, p. 31.

At least eight other protests occurred in 1795, all of which played out in a different context to the Sheffield mutiny, but which shared similar origins. In each case the mutinous regiments were newly raised independent corps. Many of them had recently received orders that they were to be disbanded and drafted into regiments of the line. However, these orders exposed underlying frictions. The men of the Londonderry Regiment were unhappy about being drafted into the 43rd, as they had sworn oaths 'to defend their *own colours*', and resented being broken up and separated from their comrades.[157] In addition, the men refused to obey orders until their accounts had been settled. The 125th Regiment at Buckingham, the 127th Regiment at Chester, and the 114th Regiment at Chelmsford, all refused to be transferred until they had received their bounties.[158] While three Irish regiments at Birmingham, Exeter, and Pill (near Bristol) went further and broke out in armed rebellion. At Birmingham the men were immediately promised the balance of their accounts and, in the dead of night, the town's constables toured their quarters and secretly secured the men's arms.[159] At Pill and Exeter, violent clashes occurred, with a number of recruits receiving sabre and bayonet wounds from the cavalry and militia units ordered against them.[160] During the mutiny at Pill, Sir John Carden of the 30th Light Dragoons, had his horse killed beneath him, after receiving several bayonet blows from the mutineers.[161] While at Newcastle, after 'various meetings', the private men of the Ulster Light Dragoons resolved to break open the arms store, forcing General Smith to call for military aid, and to personally reassure the men that their bounties would be granted.[162] Many of these disputes, therefore, represented serious outbursts of disorder, and demonstrate the determined commitment of the men involved.

Admittedly, many of the regiments concerned were Irish. Upon inspection, the War Office often found the finances of these regiment to be poorly administered. The regimental accounts books of the 114th Munster Regiment, for example, were left behind in Ireland, and no certainty about

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157 WO 1/1089, f. 753, Stonehouse - Windham, 8 August 1795.
158 WO 3/13, ff. 38-9, 74, 112, Fawcett – Treen, 14, 24 February, 17 March 1795; f. 118-121, Fawcett –Hewitt, 24 March 1795; ff. 142-5; WO 27/77, Thos Musgrave, Chester – Windham[?], 28, 29 April 1795; *York Courant*, 6 July 1795.
159 WO 1/1082, f. 475, Magistrates of Birmingham – Windham, 10 March 1795; WO 1/1090, ff. 55, 69, Montgomery – Windham, 9 March 1795; *St James' Chronicle*, 7-12 March 1793; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 9-11, 18-20 March 1795
160 *Stamford Mercury*, 24 July 1795; J. R Williams, 'The Londonderry Regiment of Foot, 1794-5', *Journal for the Society of Army Historical Research*, 57 (1979), pp. 177-9.
161 *Times*, 29 July 1795.
162 *York Courant*, 14 September 1795.

who in the regiment had been paid could be achieved.[163] While the 122nd regiment was lacking 'regularity and attention' in regard to the settling the men's accounts.[164] Further, as with their English counterparts, serious claims of corruption were also levelled at the officers of the Irish independent regiments. Large numbers of troops arrived at Bristol in a state of ill health, having been subjected to 'close confinement' and crowded conditions before and during their passage from Ireland. Worse still, some of the Irish troops at Bristol, as well as those in Birmingham, told the inhabitants they had been crimped, forced to attest before corrupt J.Ps, and then denied any bounty money.[165] These mutinies further demonstrate the disruptive nature of the independent regiments and the dubious methods which were used to recruit them. It is likely that corrupt recruitment practices were even worse in Ireland than they were in England. However, we should not assume that mutiny, arising from the non-payment of bounty money, was a uniquely Irish problem. Some of the regiments concerned had been raised primarily in England.[166] Further, as McGuffie has shown, more than one of the English independent regiments, sent over to Ireland in 1795, mutinied in equally dramatic fashion when called upon to be drafted. These mutinies therefore clearly demonstrate the perceived importance of bounty money to both British and Irish recruits.[167]

To conclude, the manner in which the independent mutinies were conducted is evocative of the 'collective bargaining by riot' which Hobsbawm observed within many eighteenth-century labour disputes.[168] Recently enlisted men clearly saw their agreement to serve as a contractual arrangement and resented and resisted any infringement by their superiors upon the perceived terms. These mutinies therefore reinforce the calls of labour historians who urge us to recast the common soldier as 'worker'.[169] This call is also consistent with the findings of the chapter as a whole. Some recruits were impressed from prisons, coerced by parsimonious parish officials, or

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[163] WO 27/77, Inspection Return of the 114th at Abingdon, 20 April 1795.
[164] WO 4/159, f. 287, Lewis –CO 122nd Regiment, 6 July 1795.
[165]For the claims regarding troops in Bristol see W. Bryan, *A Testimony of the Spirit of Truth* (London, 1795), p. 36-7. For Birmingham see *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 9-11 March 1795.
[166] Specifically Colonel Cameron's Sheffield Regiment and the 125th Stamford Regiment.
[167] T.H. McGuffie, 'The Short Life and Sudden Death of an English Regiment of Foot : An Account of the Raising, Recruiting, Mutiny and Disbandment of the 113th Regiment of Foot, Or 'Royal Birmingham Volunteers', Apr. 1794 to Sept. 1795' *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol. 33 (1955): pp.49-56; Emsley, 'The Military and Popular Disorder', p. 103.
[168] Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men*, pp. 5-22.
[169] See Way, 'Class and Common Soldier', pp. 457-8; Mansfield, 'Exploited Workers Or Agents of Imperialism?', p. 9.

inveigled by crimps into the army. However, demand for recruits was such that, inevitably, a military labour market emerged in this period. The fortunes of that market were closely tied the wider English economy. It has been established here that, the majority of enlists for the army carefully weighed their employment prospects, and the value of their wages, against the costs and benefits of entering the army. Enlistment therefore had profoundly economic roots and, as we be discussed in the following chapter, it also had significant economic consequences.

Part II – Experience of Soldiering

3. The Experience of Soldiering, 1790-1801.

Military historians tend to agree upon the 'wretched' condition of the common soldier at the beginning of our period.[1] Most would also acknowledge that the alterations made to the pay of the soldiery, and particularly the pay rise granted in 1797, were of great significance to the rank and file.[2] However, it is notable how little work has been done by military historians to place these reforms in context. The reforms of 1792 and 1795 are rarely mentioned in the military histories of the period. Even the origin of the 1797 reform, despite its widely-accepted significance, is usually treated in a perfunctory manner.[3] The main contribution to our knowledge in this domain, has come not from military historians, but from historians of protest. Both John Stevenson and Roger Wells, whose work this chapter takes as its starting point, have produced research which suggests that the pay reforms of the 1790s were the result of considerable pressure from below, to which the government was forced to yield. In short, mutiny in the militia, the army, and the navy produced, on more than one occasion, concessions from above.[4]

However, these findings sit awkwardly with the overarching narrative of the French Wars which many military historians have sought to construct. Typically, military histories of the period seek to explain how a weak and ineffective British army, which was decisively defeated in Flanders (1793-5), was 'rehabilitated' and 'transformed' into the effective fighting force which won the day at Waterloo.[5] Following the lead of Sir John Fortescue and Richard Glover, military histories tend to take a top-down and institutional approach, and focus on the development of new weaponry, stratagem, modes of military organization, and on the introduction of greater

[1] Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, Vol. 3, p. 515, 520; Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*, pp. 215, 220; Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 119.
[2] Bartlett in particular has argued forcefully for the significance of the 1797 alteration in, 'The Development of the British Army', p. 137. See also, Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', pp. 25-26; Fortescue, *History of the British Army* Vol. 4, pp. 897-8.
[3] *Ibid.*; Glover, *Peninsular Preparation,* pp. 215-20.
[4] Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances* 2nd ed., p. 187; Wells, 'The Militia Mutinies of 1795', pp. 35-64.
[5] See especially, Glover, pp. 2-12.

professionalism within the bureaucracy of the armed forces.[6] Particularly in Glover's influential work, certain key politicians and military men are seen as the driving force behind these 'transformations'. The Duke of York, despite his involvement in a notorious corruption scandal[7], is praised by Glover, and by many subsequent historians, as the architect of a number of farsighted and thoroughgoing reforms.[8] It is not the intention here to entirely dismiss these findings or the research agenda which traditional military historians have set out to address. However, it will be argued that the approach which has been adopted by many military histories is one which is overly deterministic.

It will be demonstrated that the alterations made to the provisioning and pay of the troops in the 1790s were not programmatic. If anything, they ran contrary to the instincts of a number of high-ranking officials. Perhaps for this reason they have been side-lined in many accounts of this period. Yet, viewed from below, this seems like an unjustifiable omission. The pay and conditions attached to soldiering surely had an equal bearing, if not a greater significance, for the rank and file than the drill manual from which their officers worked, or the line formation they learned on the parade ground. Moreover, as has been demonstrated by subsequent research, the improvements witnessed in this period were hard fought for. This chapter will pursue this theme further by investigating the standard of living of soldiers in the home garrison by comparing it to that of the civilian population. Firstly, this chapter will reconstruct the often complex arrangements for the pay and provisioning of the soldiery in England. Secondly, the circumstances surrounding the several successive reforms to the common soldier's pay and subsistence will be investigated, and the impact of these changes will be weighed. Thirdly, and finally, the social world of the common soldier will be investigated. Again, a comparative approach will be taken and the losses and gains involved in enlistment will be scrutinized. An emphasis upon soldiers' protests will be maintained throughout. The 'mutinies' which soldiers engaged in are often the best means we have of accessing the attitudes

[6] Bartlett, 'The Development of the British Army'; R.J.B. Knight, *Britain Against Napoleon: The Organisation of Victory, 1793-1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2013)., p. 162-75; White-Spunner, *Horse Guards* (London: Macmillan, 2006), p. 273-300.
[7] P. Harling, 'The Duke of York Affair (1809) and the Complexities of Wartime Patriotism', *Historical Journal*, 39 (1996), pp. 963-84.
[8] Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*, pp. 12, 121, 150-3; Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 124; White-Spunner, *Horse Guards*, p. 273.

and experiences of the regulars and the militia, the vast majority of whom, left no written account of themselves.

3.1. Standard of Living of the Common Soldier, 1790-2

On 17 August 1790 two Coldstream Guardsmen approached Henry Sharpe of Covent Garden and demanded he buy them a drink. When Sharpe asked the pair why he should 'treat' them, James Templeman replied, 'everyone knows soldiers' pay is very small, such as they cannot live by, and we will have money somehow'. We have a record of this exchange because both Templeman, and his accomplice Platt, were sentenced to death for extorting money from a stranger, by threats of violence, and false accusations of 'unnatural crimes'.[9] While Templemen's actions were drastic and unusual, his candid assessment of the material conditions of the common soldier was a fair one, which many literate contemporaries endorsed.

The pay of the soldier was set in the reign of Queen Anne at the same rate as that of the day labourer. However, after remaining unaltered for much of the eighteenth century, the comparative value of the soldier's wage had degraded significantly.[10] At least from the mid-century, commentators pointed to the relative poverty of the ordinary soldier. In 1772 it was claimed that common labourers earned three times the pay of the ordinary soldier, while a tailor in London in 1768, could earn five times as much as a redcoat.[11] During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, economic historians tend to agree that there was a thirty to forty per cent rise in the price of commodities. While the wages of workers, over the same period, tended to lag behind price increases, they did at least begrudgingly follow a similar upward trend.[12] The soldier, on the other hand, received no increase in pay. By the 1790s, when the 'prices affixed to each article of living' began to rise even more steeply, informed observers, such as

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[9] *Gazeteer and New Daily Advertiser,* 6 November 1790; OBP, trial of James Templeman George Platt, December 1790 (t17901208-28).

[10] PRO 30/8/242, ff. 5-6, William Fawcett, 'Memorandum Regarding Recruiting', 18 August 1787; H. Sinclair, *Cursory Remarks on the Army in General and the Foot Guards in Particular, In a Letter to The King* (London, 1791), p. 17.

[11] London tailors were said to earn two shillings seven pence per day in 1768, according to James West, 5.2 times higher than the soldier's six pence. See G.F.E. Rudé, *Wilkes and Liberty: A Social Study of 1763-74* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 7 citing BL Add. MS 32990, ff. 77-8, West (MP) – Newcastle, 16 May 1768. For comparison with labourers see letter of 'An Old Officer' in *St James' Chronicle*, 27 October 1772.

[12] For helpful summaries of the available data see M.M. Flinn, 'Trends in Real Wages, 1750-1850', *Economic History Review*, 27 (1974), Table 2, pp. 404, 408; C.H. Feinstein, 'Pessimism Perpetuated: Real Wages and the Standard of Living in Britain during and After the Industrial Revolution', *Journal of Economic History*, 58 (1998), p. 642-3.

Henry Sinclair of the 57th Foot, questioned how the common soldier could expect to meet the cost of his substance while stationed at home.[13] Even the Secretary-at-War, looking back to the early 1790s, admitted that 'it was a matter of general surprise how [the soldier] could exist' on his limited pay.[14]

Such concerns were justified. The soldier's nominal wage of eight pence a day had to meet a long list of demands before it could be extended to his sustenance. Firstly, there was a customary daily charge of two pence known as 'off reckoning', which was granted to the soldier's colonel, to cover the cost of uniforms. From the remaining three shillings and six pence a week a further 'stoppage', amounting to one shilling weekly, was reserved for the purchase of various items known as 'necessaries' (equipment such as stockings, foraging cap, gaiters etc.) which had to be replaced throughout the year. Finally the private soldier, who was expected to be cleanly turned-out with powdered hair, had to keep an additional day's wages aside for laundry and hair-powder. Further annual fees known as 'poundage' were also taken from the soldiers wage for the Paymaster General, for the upkeep of Chelsea Hospital, and for the regimental surgeon.[15] Although accommodation and 'small beer' were provided *gratis*, the demands on the soldier's wages left him at best with two shillings a week with which to buy food (Figure 4a). At this point it should be stressed that there was some variation between regiments. Although colonels were expected to make a healthy profit on the men's clothing allowance, the amount of 'off reckoning' taken from the men was, to some degree, contingent upon their commander.[16] Some colonels might charge their men inflated prices for low quality garments, while others might subsidize the cost of uniforms, by reducing their own profit margin. The system was open both to exploitation and to paternalism.[17] However, the figures quoted below are based on a strict reading of the regulations.

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[13] H. Sinclair, *Cursory Remarks on the Army in General, and the Foot Guards in Particular. In a Letter to the King. By Henry Sinclair. Late Captain-Lieutenant in the Fifty-Seventh regiment* (London, 1791), pp. 17-18.
[14] See William Windham's speech in the House of Commons, 24 May 1797. *Whitehall Evening Post*, 23 May 1797. Windham was Secretary-at-War 1794-1801 and was reflecting upon the tenure of his predecessor George Yonge.
[15] Marshall, *Military Miscellany,* pp. 68-9; Fortescue, *History of the Army,* Vol. 1, pp. 317-9; Vol. 3, p. 521-2.
[16] Conway, 'Entrepreneurs and the Recruitment of the British Army', p. 129.
[17] Fortescue, *History of the British Army* Vol. 1, p. 319; Myerly, *British Military Spectacle*, p. 2.

Figure 4 - Weekly Wages of a Soldier 1791-2.

a) Weekly Wages of Soldier, 1790:[18]

	s.	*d.*
Pay	3	6
Less:		
Cost of Necessaries	1	0
Washing & Hair Powder	0	6
Leaving	**2**	**0**
Equivalent to	3.4 Loaves of Bread at	7

b) Weekly Wages of Soldier, Jan1792:[19]

	s.	*d.*
Pay	3	6
Clothing & services allowance		3.9
Bread Allowance		10.5
Less:		
Necessaries (Standardized and including washing and hair powder)	1	3
Leaving	**3**	**5.25**
Equivalent to	7 Loaves of Bread at	5.9

Figure 5 - Soldier's Weekly Expenditure on Food, c. 1791.[20]

Item	**Weight (*lb.*)**	**Weight (*kg.*)**	**Cost (*d.*)**
Meat	3	1.3	10.5
Roots and Vegetables	3.5	1.5	3.5
Second Bread	9.5	4.3	10
Total			**2*s***

Even in this (perhaps optimistic) assessment, the pay of the common soldier appears relatively scanty. When David Davies, the rector of Barkham, compiled his famous survey of agricultural labourers (1787-95), the average male wage was generally reported to be between five and eight shillings a week. The lowest return was from Keddlestone in Derbyshire where one labourer earned just four shillings eight pence weekly. This was still twice that of the common soldier's

[18] TNA, PRO 30/8/243, f. 1-2, Fawcett, 'Proposal for Relieving the Present Necessitous Situation of the Private Solider', 24 August 1791; ff. 7-16, Richmond, 'Proposal for Relieving Soldiers', 10 November 1791; 'Loaves of Bread' calculated at average price of one loaf at London market see E. Royle, *Revolutionary Britannia?: Reflections on the Threat of Revolution in Britain, 1789-1848* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000). Appendix, p. 199.

[19] Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, Vol. 3, p. 529; *Star*, (London), 26 January 1792; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 13 January 1792.

[20] PRO 30/8/243, ff. 7-16, Richmond, 'Proposal', 10 November 1791.

net wages.[21] Unlike Davies' labourers, soldiers were usually (but not always) single men free from the expense of dependents. Soldiers may also have benefitted from 'economies of scale'. William Cobbett, when serving as a private soldier in 1784, recalled how the majority of his regiment's pay was 'expended for us at market', suggesting that officers were entrusted to buy the men's food in bulk.[22] However, it should be noted that the prices which soldiers paid for food, while in quarters, were still market prices.[23] Moreover, any benefit derived from the bulk purchase of food does not appear to have amounted to much.

The estimates compiled by the Duke of Richmond, of the weekly subsistence which a soldier could afford in 1791, suggest an extremely rudimentary diet (Figure 5). The average soldier was reported to consume 9.5 pounds of bread. This was actually slightly more than the average eight pounds which George Rudé calculated was purchased by most labourers in the mid-century.[24] However, soldiers could only afford 'second bread', the kind of coarse fare which was provided in the workhouse, and which Arthur Young remarked even 'beggars' refused to buy.[25] Indeed, among the few social groups who endured a more meagre diet than the soldier, were prisoners and workhouse paupers. On board the prison hulks, for example, a man's diet consisted primarily of 'soup' (twenty-five pints a week) with only small rations of bread (six pounds) and meat (four pounds).[26] While in the workhouses visited by Eden, although conditions could vary quite dramatically[27], where the diets of individuals can be discerned, inmates appear to have received six to seven pounds of bread and between one to two pounds of meat weekly.[28] Soldiers certainly did better than both of these groups. However, it should

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[21] D. Davies, *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry Stated and Considered, in Three Parts* (Bath, 1795), Appendix pp. 130-200, especially p. 147 for Keddlestone. For details of Davies see P. Horn, 'Davies, David (1742–1819)', *O.D.N.B* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7229, accessed, 24 Jan 2014].

[22] J. Derry (ed.), *Cobbett's England: A Selection of Writings of William Cobbett with Engravings by James Gillray* (London: Folio Society, 1968), p. 30.

[23] Anon., *Standing Orders for Prince William's Regiment of Gloucester 115th Regiment*, (Gloucester, 1795), p. 47.

[24] Rudé, *Wilkes and Liberty*, p. 8.

[25] A. Young, *Annals of Agriculture and other Useful Arts* Vol. 17 (Bury St Edmunds, 1792), p. 291; For 'second bread' served in St Andrews Holborn Workhouse see Anon., *An Account of the Work-Houses in Great Britain, in the year MDCCXXXII. Shewing their Original, Number, and the Particular Management of Them at the Above Period. With Many other Curious and Useful Remarks upon the State of the Poor* (London, 1786).

[26] HO 42/26, ff. 189-90, Statement of the Daily Allowance of Provisions for Six Convicts on Board the *Lion Hulk* in Portsmouth Harbour, n.d. [1793].

[27] For a survey of a variety of workhouse diets see Christie, *Stress and Stability*, p. 105.

[28] Based on workhouse diets reported in Portsea, St Martin's in the Fields, and Preston. See Eden, *State of the Poor* Vol. 2, pp. 226, 443-4, 391. These totals were slightly higher than, but not dissimilar to, the

remember that in this period, the workhouse was geared primarily at supporting children, the aged, and the sick, not young men.[29] Further, with a large proportion of his wages laid out for bread, the soldier had to forgo other items of consumption. Middleton's survey of the provisions consumed in Middlesex, for example, suggests that labourers consumed an average of eight pounds of meat per week, more than double what soldiers could afford.[30] Similarly, the family budgets, examined by Davies, included small proportions of 'luxury' items, such as salt, butter, tea, and sugar. The soldier's basic weekly diet, by contrast, appears to consist solely of meat, vegetables, and bread.

Somewhat controversially, Sylvia Frey has argued that the economic status of the common soldier was slightly higher than that of the country labourer, in the mid-eighteenth century.[31] By 1790, however, the evidence clearly shows that the comparatively poor pay and diet of the soldier, placed him well above the workhouse pauper but decidedly below the rural labourer. The soldier's unenviable position in the social structure sheds light upon the strength of working-class scorn which was often directed towards military men. It also helps us to understand the revulsion which ordinary Englishmen felt at the thought of being 'trepanned' into the armed forces.[32] Within the army itself, some advanced military men recognized the detrimental effects of the declining living standard of the soldier. The Adjutant-General, Sir William Fawcett, for example, diagnosed that hunger and distress in the ranks retarded recruitment:

> Each individual can now calculate too accurately to offer himself for a soldier, when he can be so much better paid in *every other* Species of Labour and Industry.[33]

Therefore, from 1787, Fawcett advocated for improvements to be made to the provision of the soldiery, forwarding his recommendations to William Pitt, who was simultaneously Prime

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amounts of meat and bread recommended by the parsimonious William Bailey in *A Treatise on the Better Employment, and More Comfortable Support, of the Poor in Workhouses* (London, 1758), Tables 1-7, pp. 25-39.

[29] King , *Poverty and Welfare*, p. 163.

[30] J. Middleton, *View of the Agriculture of Middlesex; with Observations on the Means of its Improvement, and Several Essays on Agriculture in General* (London, 1798), p. 389

[31] Frey, *The British Soldier in America*, p. 53. Peter Way remains sceptical of this fact, particularly for soldiers on active service in America, whose subsistence Way characterizes as 'marginal'. 'Class and the Common Soldier', pp. 468-9.

[32] For wider discussion see Chapter 1.4.

[33] PRO 30/8/242, ff. 5-6, Fawcett, 'Memorandum on Recruiting', 18 August 1787. My emphasis.

Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer. However, Fawcett's arguments fell on deaf ears and neither the Chancellor nor the Secretary-at-War backed Fawcett's suggestion for additional allowances.[34] Neither was there any interest in more modest proposals, presented in 1788, such as supplying the private soldier with an additional pair of shoes, in order to relieve his 'necessitous situation'.[35] In fact, the policy of improving the living-standards of the common soldier was not seriously considered by government until after the advent of the French Revolution (1789).

3.2. Mutiny in the Queen's Dragoons and the Pay Reforms of 1792

It is well rehearsed fact that the French Revolution energised and polarised English politics. As well as encouraging indigenous working-class radical organizations, the revolution provoked an equally powerful loyalist backlash, which sought to promote ideological hegemony, by rallying the populace under the banner of 'Church and King'.[36] The French example also focused the loyalist mind upon the military as a bulwark against revolution. It was common knowledge in England that the *Gardes Françaises* had played a pivotal role in bringing down the French *ancien régime*.[37] Further, the financial grievances of the French soldiers who stormed the Bastille, were emphasized by Burke, who cynically suggested that 'the King of France [was] sold by his soldiers for an encrease [sic.] in pay'.[38] In the early 1790s, and throughout the decade, there were widespread fears of an English insurrection on the French model.[39] Cookson has argued that the pay rise granted to British soldiers in 1792 was the direct result of this tense political climate.[40] Undoubtedly, the French Revolution, and elite fears of insurrection, were an important backdrop to the changes. However, Pitt did not grant an expensive addition to the soldier's pay on the basis of abstract fears alone. Entirely overlooked within this story is the mutiny of the Queen's Dragoons at Taunton.

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[34] Fortescue, *History of the British Army* Vol. 3, p. 521.
[35] WO 3/7/76, Fawcett – Mackay, 29 May 1788 cited in Bartlett, 'The Development of the British Army', p. 131.
[36] For the 'classic' account of the emergence of English radical clubs see Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, p. 115. For the loyalist response see M. Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism, 1792-3', pp. 42-69 and R. Dozier, *For King, Constitution and Country.*
[37] See, for example, *London Gazette,* 18 July 1789.
[38] E. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* 2nd ed. (London, 1790), p. 138.
[39] The most in-depth treatment of this theme is R.A.E. Wells, *Insurrection: The British Experience, 1795-1803* (Gloucester: Allen Sutton, 1986).
[40] Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', p. 25.

On the 5 July 1791 Captain Gordon's company presented their colonel with a petition complaining of their unfair punishment for appearing 'slovenly' while on parade. They claimed their appearance was not a reflection of their 'character' but of their 'oprest' [sic.] state.[41] When Lord Herbert ordered the arrest of the author of the petition, his comrades 'broke their Ranks' and resisted his being taken-up, swearing, 'they were as much in fault as he was' . The mutinous soldiers were 'encircled', by Captain Crawford's troop in the market-place, but by that time a 'Great Mob' from the 'suburbs' of the town had amassed and had commenced abusing and throwing stones at Crawford's men, in an attempt to prevent the arrest of the mutineers. It was only with great difficulty, and with the assistance of the town mayor, that the crowds were dispersed and eleven ringleaders were placed in confinement.[42] Historical accounts of July 1791 tend to focus upon the much more destructive and politically-charged 'Birmingham riots' of 14-17 July.[43] However, the mutiny of the dragoons was also significant. Reflecting on the subversion of military discipline that had occurred in Taunton, and the involvement of numerous civilians, the Secretary-at-War proclaimed that, such disturbances 'are to me, much more alarming than any other'.[44]

Included in the soldiers' petition was a requested to be engaged on foreign service. This suggests that the soldier's primary grievance was the high cost of living while stationed in England.[45] Newspaper editors also interpreted the mutiny as a demand for higher pay. Simultaneously, many news reports articulated concerns about the circulation of 'new-fangled political doctrines' in the South West and noted that that a group met in Taunton, a week after the mutiny, to celebrate the second anniversary of the storming of the Bastille.[46] In the course of the subsequent court martial, Colonel Vyse identified one man, William Madden, as a principle ringleader and 'a dangerous Incendiary'.[47] Madden was given 775 lashes and drummed out of the regiment. The other prisoners were pardoned after signing their names to a statement of

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[41] WO 1/1048, f. 689, 'Copy of Petition of Captain Gordon's Troop', 5 July 1791.
[42] WO 1/1048, f. 685, Herbert – Secretary-at-War, 6 July 1791; WSA, 2057/F6/66/2-3, 'Court of Enquiry Papers', 7 July 1791; CBS, D-HV/B/28/1, Vyse – Lord Dover, 8 August 1791.
[43] See especially R.B. Rose, 'The Priestley Riots of 1791' *Past & Present* 18 (1960), pp.68-88.
[44] HO 50/452, f. 41, Extract of Yonge –Nepean, 23 July 1791.
[45] Soldiers on foreign service were provided with subsidized food rations. WO 1/1048, f. 689, 'Copy of Petition', 5 July 1791.
[46] *Diary of Woodfall's Register*, 18 July 1791; *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* , 19 July 1791.
[47] WO 72/15, Lord Herbert – Charles Morgan, 24 and 25 July 1791.

loyalty.[48] The relative leniency of the sentences may have had something to do with rumours that any attempt to execute the culprits would be strongly resisted by Taunton's turbulent labouring classes. Troops at neighbouring towns were held in readiness, with 'powder and ball', to counter any disruption to Madden's punishment,[49] while Lord Herbert pondered whether anything could be done to stop the 'Contagion' of disaffection spreading throughout the army.[50]

It was as a direct result of the mutiny at Taunton that the issue of a pay rise for the military was returned to in August 1791, with Fawcett advocating for a generous increase in soldiers' pay and a reduction in the cost of 'necessaries'.[51] The government, however, rejected Fawcett's plan on the advice of the Duke of Richmond:

> [S]o direct an increase of Pay … to the Soldier, may put it into his head, that Government stands in need of his Assistance, and … [h]e will consider the addition … an admission that it was too low, that you have been driven to do something for him by the fear of what has happened in France, happening in England. [52]

Instead, it was agreed that soldiers would be supplied with certain articles (gaiters, breeches etc.) *gratis* and an additional 'allowance' for bread (Figure 4b). Fawcett also standardized the prices paid by soldiers for 'necessaries', which could vary widely from regiment to regiment, and banned colonels from charging their men for 'useless ornaments, and superfluous expense in dress'.[53] By January 1792 these alterations were implemented, not by Parliament, but via Royal Warrant, in order to frame the increase as 'gift' from the Crown.[54] Thus the soldiers' weekly subsistence rose to three shillings and five pence, which brought him, temporarily at least, slightly closer to the standard of living of the day labourer.

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[48] WO 1/1048, f. 501, Herbert – Secretary-at-War, 25 August 1791.
[49] HO 50/425, f. 41, Extract of Yonge –Nepean, 23 July 1791.
[50] WO 1/1048, f. 685, Lord Herbert – Secretary-at-War, 6 July 1791.
[51] PRO 30/8/243, f. 1-2, Fawcett, 'Proposal for Relieving the Present Necessitous Situation of the Private Solider', 24 August 1791.
[52] PRO 30/8/243, f. 7-16, Richmond, 'Memorandum', 10 November 1791.
[53] Fawcett's orders are reproduced in *Star*, 26 January 1792,.
[54] *Oracle,* 10 January 1792.

Politically, however, the move was a failure. Opposition Whigs railed against the use of the Royal Warrant as an unconstitutional circumvention of Parliament.[55] Even more concerning was the intervention of William Cobbett. Inspired by Part One of *Rights of Man,* and appalled at the level of corruption he had witnessed while serving in the 54th Regiment, Cobbett penned a powerful attack on the pay reforms.[56] *The Soldier's Friend* portrayed the Royal Warrant as a farce. Cobbett argued that the Mutiny Act did not condone the common practice among officers of overcharging for 'necessaries', and pointed out that all soldiers were gaining by the '*King's Bounty*' was that which was granted them 'by Act of Parliament' – three shillings a week without deduction.[57] Government considered the pamphlet a dangerous work of sedition.[58] In conjunction with the widespread circulation of Part Two of *Rights of Man,* Cobbett's work ensured that concerns about disaffection in the military actually grew between January and December 1792. A flood of anonymous tips came into the Home Office claiming that soldiers were engaging with the works of Paine, that they were clamorous for a real rise in pay, and ripe for rebellion.[59] Such reports are difficult to substantiate and are addressed in more detail in a subsequent chapter.[60] However, Emsley's assessment of the limited nature of political disaffection within the ranks fits with the fact that there is little or no evidence of open mutiny in the War Office files for this period.[61] Nevertheless, as Philp has pointed out, 'a consistent concern' among conservatives in the early 1790s was the question of the military's reliability.[62] This stemmed, in part, from the soldiers' continued impoverishment.[63]

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[55] See speech of Fox House of Commons, 22 February 1793 in *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England: from the Norman Conquest in 1066 to the Year 1803* Vol. 30 (London, 1817), col. 491.

[56] For Cobbett's political growth in 1791-2 and, for a convincing dismissal of the doubts raised about Cobbett's authorship of *The Soldier's Friend* see J. Grande, *William Cobbett, the Press and Rural England: Radicalism and the Fourth Estate, 1792-1835* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 19-22.

[57] [W. Cobbett], *The Soldier's Friend; or, Considerations on the Late Pretended Augmentation of the Subsistence of the Private Soldiers* (London, 1792), pp. 12-5, 21.

[58] A brief was prepared for the prosecution of James Ridgeway who published Cobbett's pamphlet. See Grande, *William Cobbett, the Press*, p. 25.

[59] See for example HO 42/22, ff. 505, Anon. – Dundas, 24 November 1792; HO 42/23, ff. 108B, 'Meanwell' – Yonge, 3 December 1792; 255-6, 'A Patriot' – Grenville, 8 December 1792.

[60] See Chapter 5.4-5.5.

[61] C. Emsley, 'Political Disaffection and the British Army in 1792', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 48 (1975), pp. 230-45.

[62] See Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism', p. 49 fn. 6.

[63] For primary evidence of concern regarding the reliability of the military and advocacy for increase in their pay and conditions among loyalists see BL Add. MS 16,919, ff. 97-8, 'A.B' – Moore, 28 November 1792; Add. MS 16,925, ff. 156-7, Anon – Moore, 21 March 1793; Add. MS 16,926, ff. 39-40, W.B – Moore, November 1792.

3.3. Militia Mutinies and the Pay Reforms of 1795

In the period 1793-5, it was not the regular army, but the militia who gave greatest cause for concern. In terms of pay and conditions, there was little to distinguish the militia from the army serving at home. The Militia Act dictated that, once embodied, militiamen were to be paid at the same rate as the regular soldiery.[64] However, there were a few key difference between the two forces. The family allowance granted to the dependents of militiamen suggest that they were more likely to be married men.[65] This is underscored by the requests made by certain militia officers, to have their units stationed near their home county during the winter months, to facilitate family visits.[66] Arguably, therefore, the militia had a stronger bond with civilian society. Congruent with their status as family men, service in the militia was also limited to the home garrison, and to a certain number of years of duration. While in the army, service was for life and was likely to involve overseas campaigns. Due to their relatively light duties, militiamen were often goaded as 'featherbed soldiers'.[67] The limited nature of the militiaman's commitment led George III to diagnose that 'ties' of deference and obedience, between officers and their men, were more fragile in the militia than in the army.[68] In one sense, a weaker form of discipline was consistent with the contemporary political view of the militia, as a citizen-army staffed by amateurs.[69] However, senior militia officers were often criticized for taking extended leaves of absence, and for allowing standards of drill and discipline to drop too low.[70] For these reasons the militia, particularly in the early stages of the conflict, was viewed as less reliable than the troops of longer standing.[71]

Immediately after the militia was embodied for permanent duty in December 1792, there were 'murmurs' and disobedience over the issue of 'marching guineas'. Militiamen were entitled to

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[64] See 26 Geo. III cap. 107, s. 95, 103, Act for Amending and Reducing into one Act of Parliament, the Laws Relating to the Militia (1786).
[65] Western, *The English Militia*, pp. 269, 289.
[66] PRO 30/8/173, ff. 66-7, Rolle (Colonel South Devon Militia) – Pitt, 4 October 1795.
[67] T. Jackson, *Narrative of the Eventful Life of Thomas Jackson*, p. 3.
[68] BL Add. MS 37,842, ff. 20-23, George III – Windham, 29 March 1806.
[69] For a discussion of this aspect of the militia see M. McCormack, 'Supporting the Civil Power: Citizen Soldiers and the Gordon Riots', *London Journal*, 37 (2012), pp. 29-30.
[70] Duke of Gloucester – Windham, 31 October 1798 in L. Melville (ed.), *The Windham Papers* Vol. 2 (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1913), p. 81; WO 1/1094, u.f., Townshend – Windham, 4 April 1795; Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars*, p. 42
[71] For questions about the reliability of the Bedfordshire Militia in riot control see HO 42/25, f. 194d, Monoux,– [?], 26 March 1793. For the use of the soldiery in the suppression of protest see Chapters Five and Six.

one guinea before being marched out of their home county, and some regiments refused to budge until payment was forthcoming.[72] Rather more serious protests occurred in the summers of 1793 and 1794, when most militia units were encamped on the southern coast, to ward off a French invasion.[73] At Warley Common in Essex, for example, privates of the Cambridgeshire Militia complained of being cheated out of their pay by officers who supplied them with sub-standard shoes in order to enrich themselves. This injustice was compounded by the relative generosity displayed by the officers of the Derbyshire Militia, who allowed their men an extra hour in the evenings before curfew.[74] Open rioting broke out in the camp on 22 July 1793. One hundred and fifty men of the Cambridgeshire refused to return to their tents, shouting 'every Man for his Right', and headed for the armoury in order to seize their weapons. Three men were later sentenced by court martial to between 300-500 lashes.[75] Vertical relations within the militia were not much improved the following year, when Captain Farmer, Adjutant of the Leicestershire Militia, was 'designedly shot' during firing practice at Danbury Camp.[76] It was presumed that the incident was an act of personal revenge for an earlier flogging.[77] However, upon investigation, a wider consensus among the men revealed itself. One witness from the Leicestershires remarked, 'there was not a man that liked [Farmer] and now the redgiment [sic.] does as well again'.[78]

Evidence from newspapers and courts martial records reveal that a great deal of disorder emanated from the militia units based in the southern encampments.[79] There was inter-regimental fighting between the 12th Dragoons and East York Militia in June 1794, for example.[80] Further, the illegal appropriation of private property, particularly fencing and trees to provide

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[72] See details of Cumberland Militia in *Sheffield Register* 26 July 1793 and Surrey Militia in Emsley, 'The Military and Popular Disorder', p. 104. For legality of the marching guinea see Western, *English Militia,* pp. 345, 348.
[73] WO 5/101, ff. 333-5, Quarters of the Militia Stationed in Britain, 8 August 1793; WO 5/102, ff. 117-8, Quarters of the Militia Stationed in Britain, 4 August 1794.
[74] For the men's petition see BL Add. MS 35,663, f. 280, Anon. – Townshend, 4 September 1793.
[75] WO 71/166, GCM Warley Camp, 24-29 July 1793.
[76] *Chelmsford Chronicle,* 22 August 1794; A.F.J. Brown, Prosperity and Poverty: Rural Essex, 1700-1815 (Chelmsford: Essex Record Office, 1996).
[77] *St James' Chronicle,* 21-3 August 1794.
[78] BL Add. 35,665, f. 34, Staners – Hardwicke, 25 August 1794; f. 229, Information of Thomas Thurman n.d. [1794].
[79] The 'picquet guard', similar to the 'military police' in modern armies, was frequently called to act at Warley Camp according to the editor of *Chelmsford Chronicle* 25 July 1794.
[80] WO 71/167, GCM Warley Camp, 26 June 1794.

firewood, appears to have been a perennial problem.[81] Yet, while soldiers in camps were often lacking in sufficient fuel, they were at least provided with six pounds of subsidized 'ammunition bread' every four days. A charge of five pence was 'stopped' from soldiers wages and the remaining cost was made up by government, who purchased vast quantities from contractors.[82] When camps were broken up in the winter months, however, the army and militia were sent into towns to live in barracks or, more usually, public houses until the following spring. Over the winter of 1794 most militia regiments were sent into southern coastal towns.[83] Here they were expected to group together in small 'messes' and to purchase their own food at market prices.[84] However, this proved difficult after the poor harvest of 1794 precipitated nationwide price increases in the spring of 1795.

Inflationary food prices were exacerbated in the South by the high concentration of troops. Not only was additional bread needed to feed the soldiers themselves, a surprising amount of flour was also consumed by regiments in the form of hair-powder, supplies of corn were required to feed cavalry horses, and prodigious quantities of biscuit and fresh foods were loaded each day onto warships, by order of the Victualling Office.[85] In the southern maritime counties, where both troops and naval vessels were stationed, prices rose faster than they did in the country as a whole.[86] Although both soldiers and citizens felt the effects of price movements, the troops were particularly vulnerable, as they could not take advantage of the charitable subscriptions, and parish relief schemes, which supplemented the wages of the civilian poor.[87] Their sensitive economic situation, their strength in numbers, combined with the lax discipline noted above, explains why militiamen were among the first groups to resort to food rioting in the spring of 1795. From March there were a series of food riots, starting in Devon and Gloucestershire, and later occurring in Kent and Sussex, in which soldiers, and primarily militiamen, took an active

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[81] WO 71/169, GCM Warley Camp, 27 October 1794; NRO, MC 3119, Orders to the Norfolk Fencibles, East Heath Camp, 15 August 1795.
For similar instances see Emsley, 'The Military and Popular Disorder', p. 110.
[82] In 1756, for example, just short of one million loaves of bread were provided by governmental contractors. G.E. Bannerman, *Merchants and the Military in Eighteenth-Century Britain: British Army Contracts and Domestic Supply, 1739-1763* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), pp. 67, 88.
[83] WO 5/102, ff. 241-2, Quarters of Militia in Great Britain, 19 March 1795.
[84] Anon., *Standing Orders in His Majesty's 1st Royal Regiment of Dragoons Commanded by the Earl of Pembroke*, (London, n.d. [1790]), p. 17-8.
[85] WO 1/1082, f. 147, Reverend Abdy Abdy – Secretary-at-War, 26 June 1795; WO 1/1083, f. 491, Nugent – Secretary-at-War, 24 November 1795; Knight, *Britain against Napoleon*, p. 159.
[86] Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances* 2nd ed., p. 121.
[87] WO 1/1092, f. 139, Richmond – Windham, 13 April 1795; Wells, 'The Militia Mutinies', p. 39.

role in market interventions and price fixing.[88] In all there appear to have been protests at twelve locations involving militia units, and a further two involving Irish independent companies.[89]

The principal target of the protesting troops was upon the two main constituents of their diet, bread and meat.[90] Where we have sufficient detail regarding their actions, the consistency with which riotous soldiers set a 'just price' is quite remarkable. The price of butcher's meat, for example, was set by militia-crowds at the rate of four to four and a half pence by several different militia units stationed at Canterbury, Portsmouth, Chichester, and Seaford.[91] There was a similar consistency in terms of bread, which was set at six pence per quartern loaf, at both Canterbury and Chichester, towns ninety miles apart.[92] Soldiers were typically outsiders to the communities in which they were stationed and therefore relatively alienated from the local 'micro-politics of provisioning' emphasised by John Bohstedt.[93] However in the majority of these food riots, soldiers can be seen championing the 'moral economy' on behalf of the local inhabitants. In Plymouth, for example, the assistance of locally stationed troops was actively sought by dock-men wishing to lower prices in the marketplace. Likewise at Chichester 'the soldiers and the Towns People [were] *united* in requiring of the Bakers to deliver them Bread at Six pence'.[94] Furthermore, on a handful of occasions, it was the traditional enemy of the 'moral economy', the withholder of locally-grown foodstuffs, who was the target of the crowd's animosity.[95]

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[88] Wells, *Wretched*, pp. 102-8.
[89] These totals are based on a survey of newspaper and War Office material quoted below in conjunction with Roger Well's tables. See *Wretched Faces*, Appendix, p. 363.
[90] See Figure 5.
[91] See Gloucester Militia at Portsmouth,; HO 42/34, ff. 314-5, J. Carter – Portland, Portsmouth, 12 April 1795. Hereford Militia at Chichester; *Oracle*, 21 April 1795. Oxfordshire Militia at Seaford; WO 1/1088, f. 117, Harben – Secretary-at-War, 16 April 1795. South Hampshire Militia at Canterbury; *Oracle*, 2 April 1795.
[92] Compare *Morning Post*, 22 April 1795 and *Oracle*, 2 April 1795.
[93] J. Bohstedt, Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales, 1790-1810 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 41.
[94] WO1/1092, f. 139, Richmond – Windham, 13 April 1795.
[95] R.A.E. Wells, 'The Militia Mutinies of 1795', in J. Rule (ed.), *Outside the Law: Studies in Crime and Order 1650-1850* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1982), pp. 48-52; WO 1/1082, f. 91, 'Verax' – Secretary-at-War, 28 April 1795. For more detail on public antipathy for 'forestallers', 'regrators' and 'engrossors' of corn see E.P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', *Past & Present*, 50 (1971), pp. 88, 96, 113.

However, the actions of the militiamen suggest that their grievances lay beyond market malpractice and local 'community politics'. The highly consistent levels at which prices were regulated by different units, at different times and places, sets them apart from other crowd interventions. Both Bohstedt and Stevenson have emphasized the importance of 'face-to-face' community relations and have suggested that a 'just price' was usually 'dictated by local circumstances and the conditions of the market'. [96] The militiamen, by contrast, seem to have formulated a 'just price' which reflected what they could afford to pay, and what they customarily received in camp, rather than one which mirrored the agreed worth of the produce in the context of the local economy. By mid-April it was clear that troops 'from Plymouth all along the coast … [were] in a state of Commotion on account of the high Price of Bread and Provisions'.[97] Serious rioting was witnessed at Chichester with the Hereford Militia overpowering the civil authorities, releasing rioters in custody, and stoning the windows of a tavern in which the magistrates had taken shelter.[98] However the climax was undoubtedly the infamous rioting amongst the Oxfordshire Militia on 16-17 April. Wells has documented in detail their extensive mutiny, however, the original cause of their actions bears repeating. Matters came to a head when the price of meat pushed up above the rate of four and a half pence per pound, with the soldiers complaining that, at that price, they would have nothing left to pay for washing, and that they would sooner be 'revenged of the butchers'.[99]

In the two-day mutiny which followed, the Oxfordshires lowered the price of numerous articles in Seaford, and seized large quantities of corn for resale at Newhaven. The seriousness which government attached to these events can be inferred from their swift reaction. Three separate military units converged on Seaford including the Horse Artillery equipped with cannon. After the mutiny was suppressed four men were put to death under the authority of a Court Martial and a hastily assembled Special Assize.[100] Moreover, as a direct result of the increasing frequency and intensity of the militia mutinies, government was forced to alter the manner in which troops were provisioned. Again reluctant to raise wages, orders were given on 18 and 25 April for colonels to enter into contracts with bakers and butchers to supply bread at five pence

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[96] J. Stevenson, 'Food Riots in England 1792-1818', in R. E. Quinault and J. Stevenson (eds.), *Popular Protest and Public Order: Six Studies in British History 1790-1920* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974), p. 64-5.
[97] WO 1/1082, f. 627, Lt-Col Bishopp – Windham, 6 April 1795.
[98] *Whitehall Evening Post,* 21 April 1795
[99] Cited in Wells, 'The Militia Mutinies', p. 47.
[100] *Ibid*., pp. 61-1.

per loaf and meat at four and half pence per pound to their soldiers. Where contractors' charges exceeded the set rate for bread and meat, government would make up the shortfall, and the soldier's subsistence would be protected.[101] It is notable that the government-approved prices for bread and meat were almost identical to the rate at which the militiamen themselves had been enforcing sales.

Although justified by Pitt as 'a mere temporary relief', subsidized bread and meat remained a feature of military provisioning at the end of the decade.[102] For government the reforms were an immediate success. By purchasing from contractors, officers could place a distance between their men and the marketing of food and, as a result, troop-led food rioting quickly evaporated.[103] A lone private of the North York Militia was prosecuted in Sunderland for riot and theft from a butcher in August 1795, and it was claimed that the Somerset Militia had incited food rioting at Weymouth in April 1801.[104] However, in the main, the reforms effectively ended the militia's involvement in food rioting. Some units were even trusted to suppress civilian food rioting in the summer of 1795.[105] Having said this, we should not overestimate the generosity of the provision provided. Young soldiers with 'sharp appetites' continued to complain of their hunger and of the quality of the 'ammunition bread' supplied by contractors.[106] It remained common for farmers to find soldiers, 'on the turnip rounds', plucking up root vegetables lying near their barracks and camps.[107] However, subsidized bread and meat, did at least secure to the soldier a baseline of subsistence which was protected from inflation. In a decade in which the cost of living rose by sixty-five percent, this was a significant concession from government, and an important victory for the men.[108]

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[101] J. Debrett, *Parliamentary Register*, (London, 1795), Vol. 41, cols. 336-7, Commons, 18 May 1795.
[102] *Ibid*., cols. 341-2, Commons, 18 May 1795; PC 1/45/162, 'Observations upon the Proposed Arrangements Respecting the Pay of the Soldier', December 1799.
[103] The last instance of rioting was the 25 April, the same day as changes to the provision of meat was announced, with Irish recruits in the 122nd Regiment leading protests in Wells. WO 1/1082, f. 91, 'Verax' – Windham, 28 April 1795; f. 348, Turner – Portland, 28 April 1795.
[104] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 3 August 1795; HO 43/12, f. 256, Portland – Poulett, 15 April 1801.
[105] See for example the suppression of riots in the Forrest of Dean. *Times*, 2 July 1795.
[106] Chase (ed.), *The Life and Literary Pursuits of Allen Davenport*, p. 9; PC 1/45/162, 'Observations upon the Proposed Arrangements Respecting the Pay of the Soldier', December 1799.
[107] R. Palmer (ed.), *The Rambling Soldier: Life in the Lower Ranks, 1750-1900, Through Soldiers' Songs and Writings* (Gloucester: Sutton, 1985), pp. 99-100; WO 79/51, General Orders, Colchester Barracks, 20 June, 29 October 1796.
[108] J. Rule, *Albion's People: English Society, 1714-1815* (Harlow: Longman, 1992), p. 178; Feinstein, 'Pessimism Perpetuated', p. 642-3.

3.4. The Menace of Mutiny and the Pay Increase of 1797

The reform of soldier's pay and provisioning did not follow a premeditated program. The government was responsive to the political situation on the ground, and sought to stem the growth of disaffection in the armed forces where it appeared. The substantial pay rise granted in 1797 followed a similar pattern to the earlier reforms but took place in a more heated political context. By 1797 the repressive 'Two Acts' (1795) had cowed many moderate radical leaders into silence and inactivity, and had destroyed overt extra-parliamentary opposition in England. In the absence of a legal arena in which to organize, committed radicals were increasingly drawn towards a 'revolutionary underground'.[109] At the same time, from April 1797, there were a series of mutinies in the navy. E.P. Thompson saw the naval mutinies of 1797 as a 'revolutionary moment' which, for over two months, created an opening for a French invasion, and exposed 'how precarious was the hold of the English *ancien régime*'.[110] Certainly, the government was afraid that the mutinies were instigated by French agents or Irish revolutionaries. Recent revisionist histories have demonstrated that such concerns were overdrawn.[111] The United Irish societies did not awaken to the possibility of systematically infiltrating the navy until after the 1797 munities. Likewise, the French Revolutionary government had no information on the mutinies until after they were concluded.[112] The initial Spithead mutiny (16 April – 15 May) is now seen primarily as a protracted labour dispute which won important improvements for the seamen. From mid-May the wages of able seamen were increased to thirty shillings per month.[113]

However, it is undeniable that during the sequel mutiny at the Nore, there were concerted efforts by English ultra-radicals to communicate with the fleet and that a minority of

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[109] Thompson, *Making*, pp. 182-3; Wells, *Dearth and Distress in Yorkshire*, p. 36.
[110] Thompson, *Making*, p. 184.
[111] For the most recent and comprehensive account of the Nore mutinies see A. V. Coats, and P. MacDougall (eds.), *The Naval Mutinies of 1797: Unity and Perseverance* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011).
[112] N.A.M. Rodger, 'Mutiny Or Subversion: Spithead and the Nore', in T. Bartlett, et al (eds.), *1798: A Bicentenary Perspective* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2003), p. 562; M. Elliott, *Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France* (London: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 137-8.
[113] Coats and MacDougall, 'Introduction', Table 1.1. p. 27; 'The Delegates: A Radical Tradition', p. 60; D. W. London, 'What Really Happened on Board HMS *London*?', p. 78 all in Coats and MacDougall (eds.), *The Naval Mutinies of 1797*.

revolutionary sailors had some bearing upon events.[114] Robert Watson, who was goaled for his attempts to reignite the crimp riots of 1794, for example, was in communication with the figurehead of the Nore mutiny, Richard Parker.[115] There is also evidence that a handful of United Irishmen were present in the sailors' delegations.[116] The fact that one vessel sailed to France, in order to evade capture, also suggests a revolutionary impetus among a minority of the mutineers.[117] The government was unwilling to accede to the more radical demands of the men at the Nore, and suppressed the mutiny by intercepting the seamen's correspondence, curtailing their supplies, and eventually, by court-martialing, and hanging their presumed leaders.

At the same time as these potentially revolutionary events were unfolding, as Stevenson has suggested, the government was also dealing with the 'tremor' of mutiny in the land forces.[118] Once the demands of the Spithead sailors were conceded by government (23 April), ultra-radicals resolved to inspire jealousies and copycat mutinies among the militia and the army. At Newcastle on 14 May, for example, troops were encouraged by anonymous handbills to assemble *en masse* 'in order to demand an increase of pay'.[119] Concurrently, bills were left in the sentry boxes of Hyde Park and Westminster for the Foot Guards to find.[120] While an agent, 'wicked Williams', was sent by persons unknown, to 'inflame' the soldiers barracked in London. The man was found to be an impoverished preacher, who went about 'reading aloud proposals' for a pay rise which he claimed had been endorsed by William Wilberforce.[121] Emsley has suggested that the leaders of the LCS were instrumental in publishing the seditious pamphlets which sought to seduce the soldiery.[122] It is plausible that the same men were connected with Williams. While it remains unclear how the soldiers themselves reacted to these

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[114] Wells, *Insurrection*, p. 99; Even the fiercest critic of Wells and Thompson concedes this point. C. Doorne, 'A Floating Republic? Conspiracy Theory and the Nore Mutiny of 1797', in Coats and MacDougall (eds.), *The Naval Mutinies of 1797*, p. 182.
[115] Thompson, *Making*, p. 185; C. Gill, *The Naval Mutinies of 1797* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1913), p. 340.
[116] Coats, 'The Delegates: A Radical Tradition', p. 41.
[117] Gill, *The Naval Mutinies,* pp. 243, 250.
[118] Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances* 2nd ed., p. 187
[119] *London Chronicle,* 18-20 May 1797.
[120] *London Evening Post*, 23 May 1797.
[121] R. I Wilberforce and S. Wilberforce, *The Life of William Wilberforce* Vol. 2 (London: J. Murray: 1838), p. 217-8; J. H. Rose, *William Pitt and the Great War* (London: Bell and Sons, 1911), p. 318-9.
[122] Emsley convincingly implicates Francis Place and John Bone despite their subsequent denials of revolutionary plotting. Emsley, 'Military and Popular Disorder', pp. 96-7.

attempts[123], we know that the government was extremely alarmed, and responded quickly to developments in London. On 13 May, Williams was arrested and questioned, and Pitt called a meeting to consider the pay of the soldiery.[124] The following day, the Duke of York issued general orders for the Guards to be kept in their 'orderly rooms', and for the men to be informed that, 'in consequence of the advantages granted to the Navy, Government would take their situation into consideration so as to render it more comfortable'.[125] On 16 May these intentions were made public by Pitt in the Commons.[126] The government thereby removed much of the sting from the radical agitation.

In the following week, handbills continued to be thrown into barrack yards, notably in Norwich, Newcastle, and particularly around the Medway towns, where committed revolutionaries, such as Watson and Henry Fellows, had gravitated. These attempts at subversion were a complete failure. Soldiers in London burned the handbills while, elsewhere in the country, several regiments offered a week's pay as a reward for the arrest of their author.[127] Partly, this reflected on the faulty logic of the radical argument which was held out. As Miller has argued for the Chartist era, English revolutionaries could not easily reconcile the plebeian status of the common soldier with his position as an agent of unelected authority. Seditionists therefore frequently struggled to make a convincing appeal to the soldiery without veering into anti-militarist abuse.[128] For example, the handbill found in Henry Fellows' possession at Maidstone, which made appearances elsewhere, effectively isolated a number of hardships connected with soldiering; low pay, long marches, harsh discipline, and being confined in barracks. However, in the same breath, the author accused the soldiers of being 'slaves' and questioned their manly independence.[129] Soldiers in the Chatham Marine Barracks published a strongly-worded repost to the handbill which suggests they were greatly 'insulted'

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[123] Wells, *Insurrection*, p. 104.
[124] Rose, *William Pitt*, p. 319.
[125] PC 1/38/117, Duke of York – [?], 14 May 1797; These General Orders are reproduced in *Whitehall Evening Post*, 23-5 May 1797.
[126] *London Chronicle*, 16-18 May 1797.
[127] *London Evening Post*, 23 May 1797; *St James' Chronicle,* 25 May 1797; *Star*, 3 June 1797; C. B. Jewson, *The Jacobin City: A Portrait of Norwich in its Reaction to the French Revolution, 1788-1802* (London: Blake & Son, 1975). p. 81.
[128] M. A. Miller, "The Ultimate Engine': The British Soldier and Popular Radicalism, 1815-1850' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Southampton: 1995), p. 136.
[129] For Fellow's arrest in May see *St James' Chronicle,* 25-7 May 1797. For copy of the handbill 'To the British Army' see TS 11/1028, Rex v. Henry Fellows, 1797.

by its contents. As well as being unimpressed by allusions to their subordination, it is important to note that the marines rejected the radicals' case on the grounds that they were 'satisfied' with the government's 'declared intentions in our favour'.[130] The 'satisfaction' among the troops is further evidenced by the successful deployment of regular and militia regiments to the coasts of Kent and Essex, where they assisted in the apprehension and processing of the Nore mutineers.[131]

However, the authorities did face worrying signs of mutiny within the Royal Artillery, although this was largely the result of a political bungle, rather than radical subversion. Pitt's pay increase, for the army and militia, passed the House on 24 May but the Prime Minister had said nothing about the Royal Artillery, which was under the separate jurisdiction of the Ordnance Office. The London press reported that on 25 May, during the evening parade at Woolwich, there was a 'disagreeable altercation' between an artillery gunner and an officer, followed by a 'spirit of insubordination'.[132] A great deal of 'noise and improper proceedings' followed, and Pitt was awoken early on 26 May with news of a 'riot' among the artillery gunners.[133] A Cabinet meeting was hastily convened and Marquis Cornwallis, as Master General of the Ordnance, was dispatched to Woolwich.[134] The authorities clearly feared the prospect of a violent confrontation. Dragoons were marched in from Croydon, the East London Militia was sent to Greenwich Park, the Light Horse Volunteers were assembled on Blackheath, and the Foot Guards were held in readiness at St James'.[135] At 7am Cornwallis successfully paraded the 900 privates and NCOs of the Woolwich Garrison and heard their grievances. The men complained that they had been subjected to unnecessary drilling, to 'severity and contempt' from certain officers, and, most tellingly, they suffered from a 'want [of] increased pay'.[136] General Orders were therefore hastily issued which confirmed that the artillerymen would be granted the same raise as the army.[137]

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[130] *Norfolk Chronicle,* 3 June 1797.
[131] *London Evening Post*, 23 May 1797; *Nottingham Journal,* 24 June 1797.
[132] *Whitehall Evening Post,* 25-7 May 1797.
[133] *Whitehall Evening Post*, 1-3 June 1797; Wilberforce, *The Life of William Wilberforce* Vol. 2, p. 219.
[134] *St James' Chronicle,* 25-7 May 1797.
[135] HO 50/399, Herries –King, 30 May 1797; *London Evening Post*, 27-30 May 1797; *St James' Chronicle,* 25-7 May 1797.
[136] *Whitehall Evening Post,* 25-7 May 1797.
[137] HO 55/1065, f. 96, Artillery General Orders, 26 May 1797.

By the suggestion of the men themselves, declarations of contentment on the part of the artillerymen, were signed and issued to the public.[138]

Thus the soldier's pay was increased by two shillings and a half pence, giving him a gross wage of seven shillings a week. From this total, four shillings were allocated for food, two shillings for necessaries and washing, leaving the soldier with, a not inconsiderable, one shilling a week net pay.[139] This contrasts favourably with the two pence weekly which Cobbett claimed he was left with as a private in the 1780s.[140] Moreover, when taken alongside the provision of free accommodation, small beer, and partly subsidized food, it is clear that the new terms placed the soldier on par with Davies' labourers, for the first time in decades. This is further borne out by orders that soldiers were to receive seven pounds of better-quality 'household bread' and five pounds of meat, both at pegged prices. The Duke of York was confident that his orders would 'rivet that affection for the King and Country, which has ever been the pride of British soldiers'.[141] Indeed, the substantial rise was met with some elation. Artillerymen at Porchester, for example, left their posts to go drinking, they abused local farmers, and broke windows, 'all [in] consequence of the King's bounty'.[142] Such behaviour is testament to the generosity of the pay increase. Yet, it must be acknowledged that the raise was largely won by the men themselves. The menace of mutiny in the Foot Guards and the Artillery was enough, in the shadow of the naval mutinies, to force government's hand. The adjustments to pay and provision seen in this decade must, therefore, be seen as a process of negotiation between the soldiery and the authorities. However, soldiers did not live by bread alone. It is now necessary to consider his social existence. His duties, his labours, his leisure activities, his health, and his living conditions.

3.5. Social Conditions of Soldiering: Work and Leisure

The primary task of the soldier in the home garrison was to learn his 'drill and exercise'. In camp, soldiers were drilled, for eight hours every day, except Thursdays and Sundays. The men

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[138] *Whitehall Evening Post*, 1-3 June 1797.
[139] Fawcett, 'General Orders' reprinted in *St James' Chronicle*, 27 May 1797
[140] Derry (ed.), *Cobbett's England*, p. 30.
[141] The soldier was to pay no more than six pence per pound of meat and no more than six pence per quartern loaf. Fawcett, 'General Orders', reproduced in *St James' Chronicle*, 27 May 1797. 'Household bread' is made with coarser parts of flour on one side and finest flour on the other' see *Gloucester Journal*, 20 July 1795.
[142] WO 55/1065, ff. 64-5, Tenott – Macleod, 21 June 1797.

learned formations, manoeuvres, and how to handle their weapons.[143] Given that the barrel of the soldier's musket weighed over two and a half kilos, performing manoeuvres without 'sloping' one's arms was physically exerting.[144] Thomas Jackson describes the particularly painful 'porcupine drill' which was used as punishment for 'incorrigible bad characters'. The men were made to march up and down, with their muskets held constantly in the firing position, for 'eight hours' at a time.[145] Unsurprisingly, many new recruits were shocked at the relentlessness of their training and struggled to acclimatize to the 'eternal drill'.[146] Once mastered, however, soldiers were occasionally called upon to demonstrate their skills at reviews and mock-battles which were open to the public. These events were undoubtedly intended to inspire public confidence in Britain's military might and thereby heighten national sentiment.[147] These were intensely physical spectacles, with huge distances covered by the troops, in which injuries, and even deaths, were not uncommon.[148] Soldiers may well have enjoyed the performative aspect of these parade days, however, their duties were usually more mundane.

As Linebaugh has pointed out, eighteenth-century soldiers 'were as familiar with the spade as the musket'.[149] At the beginning of each summer encampment, for example, troops were expected to clear the ground and set up their tents.[150] 'Ordinary duties' saw soldiers digging entrenchments to strengthen defensive positions, and mending roads to facilitate the marching of troops. While 'extraordinary duties' included the construction of public works, such as forts and Martello towers. In the latter case, soldiers were paid as day labourers between eight pence to one shilling eight pence, depending on their level of skill.[151] Soldiers were looked upon as an extremely cheap source of labour for these projects.[152] However, they were known for shirking.

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[143] Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*, p. 119-122.
[144] WO 1/1082, f. 375, Liddels – Windham, n.d [1795]; Anon., *Standing Orders of the 1st Wiltshire Regiment of Militia* (Newport, 1790), p. 19.
[145] Jackson, *Narrative of the Eventful Life*, 12.
[146] Brown, Sixty Years' Gleaning from Life's Harvest, p. 50; Kussmaul (ed.), *The autobiography of Joseph Mayett*, p. 24.
[147] Myerly, *British Military Spectacle*, pp. 9-10; Colley, *Britons*, p. 263.
[148] See the reported deaths and injuries among the cavalry at Swinley camp near Reading in *Morning Chronicle,* 5 September 1798.
[149] Linebaugh, *London Hanged*, p. 299. See also Mansfield, 'Exploited Workers or Agents of Imperialism?', p. 13; Way, 'Class and the Common Soldier', p. 467.
[150] *Morning Chronicle,* 29 June 1812.
[151] WO 72/214, Cavlert (Adjutant-General), 'General Orders', 1 July 1802.
[152] *Derby Mercury*, 27 January 1791.

The stipendiary magistrate Aaron Graham reported that, convict-labourers did 'double the quantity performed by an equal number of Labouring Soldiers', and advised that troops were better placed in a supervisory role.[153] As 'overseers' of convict labour from the hulks, soldiers were paid a shilling on top of their wages.[154] The Board of Ordnance relied on this combination of military and convict labour to build a number of defensive structures, including the vast Cumberland Fort at Portsmouth.[155] Soldiers were also called upon to guard French prisoners of war held in prisons like Norman Cross. This duty could be arduous, as troops were often considerably outnumbered by prisoners bent on escape. Sixteen Frenchmen escaped from Norman Cross in 1804 and two were shot attempting to do the same at Porchester Castle in February 1797.[156] Other guard duties included protecting the 'King's treasure' in transit to naval vessels, escorting felons sentenced to transportation, and deserters *en route* to the Savoy prison in London.[157] The labour of soldiers was therefore invaluable for the construction of the nation's physical defences and for the daily workings of the penal system.

By far the most visible and arduous duty the soldiery in England performed was the suppression of public disorder.[158] Hastily dispatched troops could arrive on the scene of a riot lacking essential equipment.[159] Even when fully accoutred, soldiers received no riot-control training, and were invariably outnumbered by crowds. News that troops had been dispatched might disperse protestors. However, crowds often re-formed elsewhere, leading to a cat-and-mouse scenario.[160] The South Devon Militia were on high alert for seven days during the tin-miners' disturbances of 1793. Some of the men got no sleep and were left 'worn out and ill with fatigue'.[161] Five days of continuous riot duty in the vicinity of Nottingham in 1800 had a similar

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153 HO 42/72, ff. 1-4, Graham – King, 12 August 1803.
154 WO 72/214, Cavlert (Adjutant-General), 'General Orders', 1 July 1802.
155 HO 42/78, f. 615, Graham – King, 29 March 1804,
156 *Lincoln Rutland and Stamford Mercury,* 16 November 1804; *London Chronicle,* 21-3 February 1797; WO 1/1091, ff. 29-30, Napier – Windham, 16 April 1795.
157 WO 5/69, f. 416, Lewis – Commanding Officer Foot Guards, n.d. [1794]; WO 5/78, f. 257, Lewis – Commanding Officer of the Foot Guards, 14 August 1801; WO 1/1084, f. 55, Cartwright – Windham, 15 January 1794.
158 The extent to which the state deployed military force in the public order context is evaluated in Part 3, here the experience of the rank and file is the main focus.
159 Those deployed in Stroud were lacking in sabres and boot-spars. WO 1/1091, u.f, George Paul – Windham, 20 and 21 July 1795.
160 See for example the 'marauding nature' of the 1794 crimp riots. Stevenson, 'The London "Crimp" Riots', p. 55-6
161 PRO 30/8/173, ff. 32-4, Rolle – Pitt, 26 January 1793.

effect upon the Horse Guards.[162] In a significant minority of cases, crowds chose to confront the soldiers. Here the military were at risk from projectiles, fist blows, and even pistol fire. While the Staffordshire miners were said, on more than one occasion, to have set their bulldogs against the troops.[163] Riot-duty was thus gruelling and intrinsically dangerous.

However, maintaining public order could be more than just physically punishing for the men. Where civilian blood was spilt, soldiers invariably had to bear the odium of the populace, sometimes for years to come.[164] For example, in 1791, the Mayor of Nottingham informed the Secretary-at-War, that the 15th Light Dragoons were still popularly reviled for having killed an inhabitant twenty-five years earlier, and that quartering the regiment in the town would be ill-advised.[165] Similarly, due to their violent suppression of the 'Bristol Bridge riot', the Hereford Militia were heckled in the streets, as 'the bloody regiment', every time they passed through the city.[166] Thus the soldier became a pariah by dint of his duty. However, given the immense potential for fatalities, historians have noted how rarely large death-tolls accrued during late eighteenth-century riots.[167] Out of seventy-six military interventions in the food riots of 1795, for example, there were just eight recorded civilian fatalities, six of which were the result of actions by the volunteers and yeomanry, not the regular soldiery.[168] The restraint shown was partly due to the legal restrictions placed upon the military by the terms of the Riot Act.[169] Yet equally, the rank and file of the army had no desire to massacre their countrymen. This was particularly true where regiments had a local connection with the areas they were 'policing'. During food rioting at the Etruria pottery works in 1783, for example, the Staffordshire Militia refused to fire upon their friends and neighbours.[170] Likewise the men of the Oxford Blues, who were largely

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[162] HO 42/51, ff. 21-2, William Watson – Portland, 3 September 1800.
[163] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 24-5 June 1795; *St. James's Chronicle*, 6-8 May 1800; *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 20 September 1800.
[164] Thompson, 'Moral Economy, pp. 120-1.
[165] WO 1/1049, f. 109, Fellows – Yonge, 16 September 1791.
[166] M. Harrison, '"To Raise and Dare Resentment": The Bristol Bridge Riot of 1793 Re-Examined', *Historical Journal*, 26 (1983), pp. 557-8, p. 579.
[167] Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland*, p. 66; Gilmour, *Riot, Rising and Revolution*, pp. 143-6.
[168] For sources see Map 3 in Chapter 6.2. In Birmingham two food rioters were killed by the regulars in June 1795. HO 42/35. ff. 32-33, Magistrates of Birmingham – Portland, 23 June 1795. See also Wells, *Wretched Faces*, p. 270.
[169] For a good summary see Randall, *Riotous Assemblies*, pp. 24-43.
[170] *London Chronicle*, 15-18 March 1783; *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. 53, (London, 1783), p. 262; J. Bohstedt, *The Politics of Provisions: Food Riots, Moral Economy, and Market Transition in England, c. 1550-1850* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 165-66.

recruited from the industrial districts of the North[171], 'repeatedly refused to fire' during food rioting in Nottingham in 1800, and were said to be 'beloved … by all the people' for their 'humanity'.[172] Given these difficulties, officers tended to adopt the tactics of symbolic confrontation and intimidation, rather than ordering the use of deadly force.[173]

The army could be used to neutralize social tensions. However, the presence of troops was just as likely to create frictions of its own. Publicans, for example, continually complained of having to provide soldiers with quarters and some simply refused to do so.[174] Remuneration from the War Office was often unforthcoming and military lodgers reduced the amount of revenue publicans could make from civilian customers.[175] Moreover, while in quarters, soldiers were in direct contact with the public, who could be antagonistic.[176] Irish regiments, in particular, were known for eliciting civilian hostilities, but also for retaliating to insults with gang violence.[177] The High Sherriff of Gloucestershire remarked, with some justification, that Irish troops were likely to 'create infinitely more Broils than they would quell'.[178] The 5th Dragoon Guards, for example, were involved in three major clashes with civilians in 1795 alone, the last of which, at Stratford-upon-Avon, resulted in a civilian fatality.[179] Historians often associate Irish forces with indiscipline.[180] However, their behaviour in England also reflects the attitudes of the public,

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171 White-Spunner, *Horse Guards*, p. 278.
172 HO 42/51, f. 201-2, T. and E. Golby – Stockley, 7 September 1800.
173 R. Paley, '"An Imperfect, Inadequate and Wretched System"?: Policing London before Peel', *Criminal Justice History*, 10 (1989), p. 121; Emsley, *Great British Bobby*, p. 34.
174 See complaints about publicans Joshua Walkins (master of the White Heart) and Susan Morden (keeper of the Flower de Luce) in ERO, P/Co R18, Colchester Petty Sessions, 10 November 1794, 3 February 1795.
175 WO 1/1057, f. 165, 'Petition of the Publicans of Billericay' – Yonge , 1 April 1793 WO 1/1060, f. 71, Mayor of Hastings – Yonge, 26 February 1793; WO 1/1069, f. 579, Hodges (Mayor of Canterbury) - Yonge, 13 November 1794. See also J. Stone, 'Colchester', in P. Dietz (ed.), Garrison: Ten British Military Towns (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1986), p. 9; Emsley, 'The Military and Popular Disorder', p. 20.
176 For soldier-baiting in Newcastle-under-Lyme see *Derby Mercury,* 18 July 1793.
177 Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 203; Emsley, 'The Military and Popular Disorder', p. 110; S. Poole , 'To be a Bristolian: Civic Identity and the Social Order, 1750-1850', in M. Dresser and P. Ollerenshaw (eds.), *The Making of Modern Bristol* (Tiverton: Redcliffe, 1996), p. 78.
178 WO 1/1091, u.f, Paul – Windham, 12 October 1795.
179 See, respectively, disturbances in Reading, Ware, and Stratford-upon-Avon; WO 1/1082, f. 157, Francis Annesley – Windham, 6 June 1795; WO 1/1083, f. 205, Baker – Windham, 29 July 1795; WO 1/1094, Warwick, Warwick – Windham, 27 December 1795.
180 T. Bartlett, 'Indiscipline and Disaffection in the Armed Forces in Ireland in the 1790s', in P. J. Corish (ed.), *Radicals, Rebels and Establishments* (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1985), pp.115-134.

who were often fiercely intolerant of the Irish.[181] The Wallace Fencibles (who were largely recruited in Ireland) struck out at the inhabitants of Hampshire after they found that Englishmen everywhere 'stigmatized' them as 'Rebels'.[182] Indeed Anglo-Irish civil-military clashes were most common in the aftermath of the Irish rebellions of 1798 and 1803 suggesting increased tensions at these moments.[183]

However, non-Irish regiments could also be ill-treated by their host communities. Hayter asserts that, in the mid-century, 'soldier baiting was a common form of sport'.[184] During our own period this popular recreation seems to have gained momentum. In Brentwood for example, two female 'vagrants' were apprehended by a captain of the marines for singing seditious ballads 'which reflected on the military'.[185] Likewise, in Manchester, the West Yorkshire Militia came to blows with 'a vast concourse of unemployed artisans', as the former were paraded in St Anne's Square. The militiamen were subjected to hisses and groans, while performing their 'evolutions', and the windows of their quarters were subsequently smashed.[186] It is unclear what caused the disturbances in Manchester. However, there frequently appears to have been political undertones to these confrontations. For example, street battles between the inhabitants of Sheffield and the 6th Enniskillen Dragoons occurred in 1792, after a 'misunderstanding' emerged between the townspeople and the officers of the regiment. It was heavily implied that radicals had been attempting to engage the private soldiers in political conversation at the Tontine inn.[187] Similarly, radicals in York were drawn to the parading of the 115th Regiment in order to 'inflame the minds of the men'. Several civilians were arrested for shouting seditious slogans including 'England is a country of freedom' and 'Damn you, why

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[181] The 5th Dragoons attacked the inhabitants of Ware, for example, after Irish recruits were subjected to abuse of 'a general National Reflection'. For similar civil-military clashes see those identified by Emsley, 'The Military and Popular Disorder', p. 111.
[182] See the GCM held against several privates and NCOs of the Wallace Fencbiles and particularly their pre-prepared defence plea. WO 71/182, GCM Proceedings, Andover, 31 January 1798.
[183] *Ibid*.; See civil-military clashes in Nottingham, for example; HO 50/393, Depositions of the 6th Regiment Dragoons, 13 May 1803.
[184] Hayter, *The Army and the Crowd*, p. 21
[185] ERO, Q/SMg 26, Sessions Book, 25 August 1793; Q/SBb 352/55, Information of John Brusk, 25 August 1793.
[186] *Derby Mercury*, 16 May 1793; *Sheffield Register*, 10 May 1793.
[187] *Sheffield Register*, 11 May 1792; WO 1/1051, f. 153,Bates - Yonge, 11 May 1792; WO 1/1052, 433-5, Major Hart - Yonge, 25 May 1792.

don't you lay down your arms?'.[188] In an effort to reduce fraternization, political indoctrination, and hostilities, the War Office kept regiments in constant circulation round the country.[189] Even well-behaved regiments were not allowed to remain stationary for long, and soldiers became habituated to long marches, and to a regular 'change of scene'.[190]

In between marching, drilling, day-labour, and occasional riot-duty, soldiers did get some free time. Indeed, as we have seen, the popular perception that soldiers enjoyed a 'holiday' lifestyle, was an important attraction for many working-class enlists.[191] Upon inspection, this popular view appears to have been somewhat exaggerated, and was undoubtedly encouraged by recruiters. Soldiers were clearly put to work by their officers. Having said this, in the winter months, when troops were dispersed in quarters, and when the weather prevented manual labour and drilling, soldiers may well have had more leisure time than many other occupational groups. Highly-paid artisans were notorious for exercising their 'leisure preference' and for keeping alive the custom of 'Saint Monday'. However, live-in farm-servants, and wage-earning field labourers, were subjected to 'unrelenting' work-discipline and received very little leisure time.[192] Both agriculturalists and officers agreed that life in the militia was an 'easier and more idle life' than full-time farm labour.[193] Moreover, we know from the actions of militiamen that their leisure time was a jealously guarded privilege. In December 1795, for example, the Huntingdonshire Militia 'badly smatch'd' [sic.] Yarmouth barracks in protest against the introduction of an earlier curfew. The barrack gates were shut against the men to prevent them from frequenting 'low Alehouses' and causing disturbances. However, the men resented the infringement upon their leisure hours and 'broke windows, destroyed part of the building, and

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[188] *Courier*, 27 July 1795; *Oracle*, 4 August 1795; Assi 45/38/3/125, York Summer Assizes - Examination of Richard Walker, 18 July 1795; WO 1/1093, f. 458, Spencer – Windham, 29 June 1795.
[189] Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns*, p. 167; S. H. Myerly, *British Military Spectacle*, p. 7.
[190] See account by George Borrow, whose father was Adjutant to the East Norfolk Militia, and whose early years were spent following that regiment; G. Borrow, *Lavengro; The Scholar, The Gypsy, The Priest* (Paris, 1851) p. 9.
[191] See Chapter 2.2.
[192] E.P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', *Past & Present*, 38 (1967), pp. 73-4, 77; Rule, *Experience of Labour,* pp. 56-7.
[193] Western, *The English Militia*, p. 270-1.

threatened to demolish the whole'. Order was only restored by the arrival of cavalry, and by the artillery, who turned their cannons on the riotous soldiers.[194]

As the above instance suggests, much of the soldier's free time was spent in the alehouse. George has argued that drink was ever-present in eighteenth-century society.[195] However, alcohol appears to have figured more prominently in the lives of soldiers than it did among other groups. As a daily minimum, soldiers in settled quarters were entitled to five pints of small-beer, or three pints of 'better quality' beer when in barracks.[196] By comparison, Eden considered labourers who allowed themselves one pint a day, to be overindulgent.[197] In camps, soldiers represented a captive market for itinerant retailers, known as 'sutlers', who sold them beer as well as food.[198] In addition, the potential for profit-making meant that strong 'spirituous liquor' was often smuggled into camps by locals.[199] Likewise, soldiers quartered in taverns were unavoidably exposed to conviviality and hard-drinking.[200] On royal birthdays, loyalists might 'treat' soldiers and urge them to join in loyal toasts.[201] While on other occasions, moralizers castigated soldiers for their drinking-habits, and warned of the ruinous consequences which flowed from alcohol.[202] Closely associated with his weakness for drink was the soldier's penchant for gambling. Men of all ranks in the West Yorkshire Militia, for example, stayed up until the early hours playing cards and laying bets. One officer complained his regiment had become a 'crib of low gamesters'.[203] Similarly, private soldiers in Colchester barracks were ordered to refrain from 'breaking the Sabbath'. They were known to gather in large numbers on a Sunday to play 'pitch and toss and other games'.[204] Finally, soldiers were also noted for their use of prostitutes. Francis Place claimed the Foot Guards habitually associated with London's

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[194] HO 42/37, ff. 354-355, Lord Townshend, Yarmouth – Portland, 4 December 1795; WO 1/1094, uf, Townshend – Windham, 4-5 December 1795.
[195] George, *London Life*, p. 294.
[196] PC 1/45/162, 'Observations upon the Proposed Arrangements Respecting the Pay of the Soldier', December 1799.
[197] Eden, *State of the Poor*, Vol. 1, p. 542.
[198] Conway, 'Locality, Metropolis and Nation', p. 554; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, p. 125. S. Conway, 'British Soldiers at Home: The Civilian Experience in Wartime, 1740–1783', in E. M. Charters, E. Rosenhaft, and H. Smith (eds.), *Civilians and War in Europe 1618–1815* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), p. 136.
[199] For evidence of this at Lexden Camp in Essex see ERO, P/Co R17, Examinations of Thomas Kelley and Williamm Reynolds, 6 September 1793.
[200] Erskine, *Letters on the Impolicy of a Standing Army*, p. 83.
[201] *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 8 June 1792.
[202] See S. More, *Cheap Repository. The Two Soldiers*, (Bath, 1795).
[203] SCA, WWM/Y/16/97, Marshall – Fitzwilliam, 1 February 1801.
[204] WO 79/51, General Orders, Colchester Barracks, 22 October 1796.

'horrible women' and that the latter congregated round the Tilt Yard Guard House.[205] Regimental Courts Martial records tend to confirm this assertion. Privates from the Grenadier Guards were punished, on more than one occasion, for assaulting watchmen sent to arrest 'disorderly women'.[206] Similarly, although prostitutes were banned from military encampments, demand tended to ensure supply.[207] Indeed, one pamphleteer argued that, as soldiers in the army were discouraged from taking wives, such liaisons were inevitable.[208]

Thus, there is some truth to the popular view that soldiers spent long hours in 'idleness' and 'vice'. William Cobbett, for one, claimed that all of his fellow-soldiers spent their time in vulgar 'dissipations', while he bettered himself through reading and study.[209] However, we should be cautious of accepting this account. Cobbett's industriousness was not unique. Many soldiers used their free time to practice their pre-enlistment trades. Tailors and shoemakers could supplement their military wages by altering soldiers' clothing. Moreover, when new uniforms were issued, tailors would be excused from 'ordinary duties', placed in workshops, and employed by the regiment to make up the men's clothes.[210] Although the men were paid piece-rates for their labour, the work-discipline was severe, with fines and military punishments for lateness and drunkenness.[211] Farriers were likewise gainfully employed by cavalry regiments and were sought-after recruits.[212] Even unskilled labourers could earn extra money, by working the harvest, so long as they had a change of clothes and permission from their commanding officer.[213] Leisure hours could also provide an opportunity to learn new skills. Allen Davenport acquired the trade of a shoemaker while in the Windsor Foresters.[214] This was a particularly shrewd use of one's time. Once discharged, soldiers were entitled to set up trade in any town,

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[205] Thale (ed.), *Autobiography of Francis Place*, p. 229.
[206] GGA, D4/20/559, RCM Confirmation Book, Cases of Wright, Robinson, Moodie, and Nichols, 1 August 1797, 29 August 1798.
[207] At Warley Camp soldiers formed a 'ring' around copulating couples. See ERO, Q/SBb 356, Information of Thomas Banister, 14 June 1794. For further evidence of camp prostitutes see Conway, 'British Soldiers at Home', p. 141; 'Locality, Metropolis and Nation', p. 550; Lynn, *Women, Armies, and Warfare*, p. 68.
[208] Erskine, *Letters on the Impolicy of a Standing Army*, p. 83-4.
[209] Derry (ed.), *Cobbett's England*, pp. 29-30.
[210] For evidence of tailors working for the Leicestershire Militia see *St James' Chronicle*, 21-23 August 1794.
[211] Anon. *Standing Orders … 106th Regiment*, pp. 23-4.
[212] Farriers in the North British Dragoons earned an extra penny per day per horse attended to. See Anon. *Standing Orders … 11th Regiment Light Dragoons*, p. 47; WO 1/1083, f. 543-5, f. 543, Bruce – Lewis, 23 December 1795.
[213] Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett*, p. 31; Anon. *Standing Orders … 106th Regiment*, p. 34-5.
[214] M. Chase (ed.), *The Life and Literary Pursuits of Allen Davenport*, p. 11.

even if they had not served an apprenticeship, or earned the 'liberty of the city'.[215] Civilian by-employment was therefore an important part of the experience of soldiering in the home garrison.

In addition to being maligned as idlers, soldiers are often seen, by both contemporaries and historians, as politically inert.[216] Yet, as in English society at large, there is scattered evidence of republicanism and anti-monarchism within the rank and file of the armed forces. William Peever, for example, while quartered in a Manchester alehouse, damned the king, cursed his regiment, and wished success to the French.[217] While Joseph Ward proclaimed himself to be of equal worth to his officers, and castigated his 'tyrannical' commanders, for failing to pass on the benefits of the 1795 pay reforms.[218] 'Seditionists', such as Ward, who articulated the language of 'rights', tended to be publically punished, and ignominiously 'drummed out' of the regiment, to prevent their politics from taking root.[219] Likewise, the penalties for civilians attempting to 'seduce the soldiery from their duty' were ratcheted up in the period after the naval mutinies.[220] Some officers tried to inspire a countervailing loyalism in their men. Captain Crauford, in an attempt to recover the mutinous reputation of the Queens Dragoons, for example, laid on a lavish 'Paine burning' at Dorchester.[221] Yet Crauford was admonished by the Home Secretary for having gone too far.[222] As Cookson has pointed out, the eighteenth-century military ideal was to 'compartmentalise' political partisanship, not to encourage it. More usually troops were urged to identify simply with the monarchy and the nation as a whole.[223] As Emsley has

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[215] This was the case for both regulars and militiamen. 22 Geo. II cap. 44, Discharged Soldiers Act (1748); 26 Geo. III cap. 107, s. 131, Act for Amending and Reducing into one Act of Parliament, the Laws Relating to the Militia (1786).

[216] Trueheart, *The Soldier's Answer to the Pamphlet Entitled 'The Soldiers' Friend'* (London, 1793), p. 5; McGuffie, 'Recruiting the Ranks', p. 124.

[217] WO 1/1059, f. 279, John Griffis, Manchester – Yonge, 24 September 1793.

[218] WO 71/172, GCM Proceedings, Canterbury, Evidence of Captain Kent, 30 December 1795.

[219] Ward, for example, was given 300 lashes and drummed out of the regiment. See also the case of William Madden above Chapter 3.2.

[220] From June 1797 the death penalty could be applied to such cases. See Thompson, *Making*, p. 185; Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances* 2nd ed., pp.181-2.

[221] For a broader discussion of this loyalist ceremonial see F. O'Gorman, 'The Paine Burnings of 1792-1793', *Past & Present*, 193 (2006), pp. 111-55.

[222] For Crauford's original report and partial apology to Dundas see WSA, 2057/F6/75, Captain Crauford – Herbert, 19 December 1792; HO 42/24/94, ff. 231B-C, Capt Crauford – Dundas[?] 22 January 1793.

[223] Cookson, 'Service without Politics?', pp. 38-4, 392.

suggested, for the most part, troops in England wore an outward face of patriotism, and appear to have remained loyal.[224]

Only in the Foot Guards were there consistent signs of political disaffection. Historians have rightly focused upon the 'Despard conspiracy' of 1802 where as many of 300 guardsmen were implicated in a revolutionary plot to 'take possession' of the king on his way to Parliament. Two soldiers were hanged as traitors on the gallows with Despard in February 1803.[225] However, signs of politicisation were in evidence much earlier. During the Flanders campaign, Lord Herbert described the Foot Guards as the 'most terrible apt scholars'.[226] Seditious material was known have been brought into their London barracks in August 1795 and, if Thomas Jackson is to be believed, this was not unusual.[227] As a private in the Coldstream Guards, Jackson was exposed to numerous works of 'republican' and 'immoral tendencies' including Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791-2), *Age of Reason* (1794), and Volney's *The Ruins: Or Survey of the Revolutions of Empires* (1789).[228] There was limited official supervision of guardsmen as the majority were found, 'scattered and left to their own discretion', in London's pubs.[229] As the Guards rarely left the capital, a number of soldiers lived as 'outlyers' [sic.], and worked part-time civilian jobs.[230] Guardsmen were thus peculiarly vulnerable to radical indoctrination. Long before the arrest of Despard and his co-conspirators in November 1802, anonymous revolutionary placards, dating from the food crisis of 1800, heralded the Guards as the shock-troops of an impending rebellion.[231] Likewise Spy reports suggest a regicidal plot led by the Guards was in meditation

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[224] Emsley, 'The Military and Popular Disorder', p. 101; Royle, *Revolutionary Britannia?*, p. 187.
[225] Emsley, 'The Military and Popular Disorder', p. 101; S. Poole, *The Politics of Regicide in England, 1760-1850: Troublesome Subjects* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 134-8; P. Linebaugh and M. Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (London: Verso, 2000), pp. 250-80; Elliott, *Partners in Revolution*, pp. 282-97.
[226] Lord Herbert – Lady Pembroke, 26 September 1793 in Lord Herbert (ed.), *Pembroke Papers: Letters and Diaries of Henry Tenth Earl of Pembroke*, Vol. 2 (Johnathan Cape: London, 1950), pp. 493-7.
[227] WO 1/1085, f. 493, D'Oyly – Windham[?], 15 August 1795.
[228] Jackson, *Narrative of the Eventful Life of Thomas Jackson*, pp. 157-8.
[229] Sinclair, *Cursory Remarks on the Army in General*, p. 9.
[230] For example, William Graham, a private in 1st Regiment Foot Guards who was an informant in the Despard circle, was described in a memorandum as 'a Cumberland Man lives at number 2 Windmill street, is a shoemaker'. See also the case of Thomas Humphreys, who lodged with a shoemaker as an 'outlyer'[sic.] from the Guards, and worked 'dressing tripe' in his front room. OBP, trial of Thomas Humphreys & Thomas Johns, 10 May 1780 (t17800510-33); HO 42/46, ff. 105-6, Examination of William Graham before Richard Ford, 12 March 1799.
[231] HO 42/51, f. 347, Anon. Handwritten Notice, 'Britons who will live Free', 21 September 1800.

as early as July 1800.[232] A letter-writer claiming to be from the Foot Guards, claimed in October 1800 that, 'we have a great man that will join as soon as a revolt is made', presumably an advanced reference to Colonel Despard.[233] At least one of the key conspirators was an English-born soldier.[234] However, it was the high proportion of London-Irish found in the Guards which explains their readiness to engage in the regicidal plot, which was intended to coincide with Emmet's Dublin rising of 1803.[235]

Indeed by the Napoleonic period one third of the army's rank and file was Irish.[236] The significant presence of Irishmen, and therefore Catholics, complicates the notion, put forward by Conway and Brumwell, of a 'military melting pot', in which a protestant national consciousness was forged.[237] Firstly, the mixing together of many ethnic groups within the army was not always a unifying experience. The English and Irish in the 81st Regiment, for example, 'made a game' of Richard Flockheart whenever he spoke in his native Scottish accent.[238] While inter-regimental fighting could break out between units with strong ethnic or regional ties.[239] Secondly, Colley has emphasized the role of the Anglican clergy in promoting a sense of national 'patriotic consensus' among the civilian public.[240] Again this is difficult to apply neatly to the military. As Snape has argued, the there was a strong religious subculture of Catholicism and Nonconformity among the rank and file. Some army officers attempted to enforce attendance at Anglican services and even flogged Catholics who attended Mass.[241] However, this was by no means common practice, and punishing Catholics for observing their religion

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[232] HO 42/50, ff. 415-17, Examination of John How before Richard Ford, 21 July 1800. See also HO 42/55, ff. 40-43, Deposition of Thomas Amsden before Richard Ford, Middlesex, 9 December 1800.
[233] HO 42/52, f. 250-1, Anon 'V.V' – John Wilson, Major Higgins Company, Old Bailey , 23 October 1800.
[234] John Francis, who went to the gallows with Despard, for example, was born in Worcestershire. C. Oman, 'The Last Days of Colonel Despard', *English Historical Review*, 43 (1928), p. 83.
[235] Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, pp. 258, 275.
[236] Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 126.
[237] Conway, *British Isles and the American War of Independence*, p. 196; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, pp. 309-10.
[238] T. Guthrie (ed.), *The Street Preacher: The Autobiography of Robert Flockhart* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1858), 3-4.
[239] The Westminster Militia and the West Lowland Fencibles clashed in 1796, for example, when a man from the former regiment 'wantonly' killed the latter's mascot 'a tame goat … which had followed the regiment out of Scotland'. *Sheffield Iris*, 16 December 1796; While the Fingall's 118th Irish Regiment clashed with men of Staffordshire Militia at Newcastle-under-Lyme in 1795; WO 1/1094, u.f, Taubman – Windham, 3 March 1795.
[240] Colley, 'Whose Nation?', p. 107.
[241] M.F. Snape, *The Redcoat and Religion: The Forgotten History of the British Soldier from the Age of Marlborough to the Eve of the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 140, 142, 145, 159, 162, 241.

had been formally banned by 1811.[242] There was no official campaign to suppress sectarianism in the army until the late nineteenth century. Rather than risk exacerbating religious divisions through enforced conformity, official policy allowed soldiers a surprising degree of autonomy, in terms of religious practice, and association.[243] From 1799 Catholics no longer had to swear an oath of allegiance to the Church of England, for example, while Methodists and Dissenters appear to have been free to associate and worship together throughout the period.[244] I would therefore agree with the recent conclusions of Kennedy, that the army was not a 'crucible' for Britishness, as it did not strive to impose a unitary identity upon recruits.[245]

Greater emphasis was placed upon regimental loyalty than upon religious conformity or national sentiment. Recruits were encouraged to lose their civilian ties and to see the regiment as their new 'family', with the Colonel assuming the role of the 'father figure'.[246] Cookson has stressed the importance of the 'officer-soldier relationship' and the primacy of regimental loyalty.[247] Certainly there was great scope within the military for acts of paternalism. Officers could assist their men financially by granting them credit or permission to work.[248] Leave was also contingent upon good relations between soldiers and their officers.[249] The possibility of promotion was a further integrative device. In a sample of enlists in the Scots Guards (n. 249) nearly a fifth were promoted, at least to the position of corporal.[250] Although illiterate men could not hope to progress much beyond this rank, there was at least some opportunity for career progression, open to all in the army and militia.[251] In an era in which the gap between

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[242] WO 17/156/3, Copy of General Orders, Horse Guards, 5 July 1811 in Returns of the 44th Regiment.
[243] Snape, *Redcoat and Religion*, p. 149
[244] *Ibid.*, p. 146; C. James, *The Regimental Companion; Containing the Relative Duties of Every Officer in the British Army* Vol. 1 (London, 1800), p. 47; For evidence of Dissenters within the Huntingdon Militia see HO 42/37 ff. 354-355, Townshend – Portland, 4 December 1795.
[245] C. Kennedy , '"True Brittons and Real Irish": Irish Catholics in the British Army during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars', in C. Kennedy and M. McCormack (eds.), *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of Arms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 51.
[246] See the fictional Colonel who states - 'I regard every man in my regiment as my son' in More, *The Two Soldiers*, p. 21.
[247] Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', p. 24
[248] *Ibid.*; *Standing Orders…115th Regiment*, p. 68-9.
[249] *Standing Orders….Wiltshire Militia*, p. 16.
[250] 18.4 per cent were promoted to corporal. This is consistent with the figure of one sixth of soldiers promoted referenced by John Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', p. 32. WO 67/1, 3rd Regiment of Foot Guards Description Book. For method of sampling see Chapter 2.1.
[251] J.D. Ellis, 'Promotion within the Ranks of the British Army: A Study of the Non-Commissioned Officers of the 28th (North Gloucestershire) Regiment of Foot at Waterloo', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 81 (2003), p. 217.

worker and master was increasingly insurmountable, especially in trades such as weaving, this may well have been one attraction of armed service.[252] Further, the regiment provided medical care. Each regiment had a surgeon, who was responsible for the health of the men[253], and for the distribution of medical supplies.[254] Soldiers were routinely inoculated against smallpox.[255] Those who became very sick could be placed in hospitals at regimental head-quarters. Bartlett has emphasized that free medical care was a significant advantage of soldiering.[256] In addition, soldiers who were maimed in service were also entitled to receive disability allowances.[257] Military units therefore offered a fairly comprehensive package of benefits, all of which encouraged the men to retreat from their civilian lives, and to identify with the regiment.

However, we should not overplay the care offered by the regiment or misrepresent the nature of the officer-soldier relationship. The distinctions of class were firmly upheld within the armed forces. There were strict rules preventing officers from socializing with the men.[258] Additionally, the medical care provided was of little consolation when one considered the terrible conditions in which the rank and file lived. In camps men were exposed to the weather, sleeping equipment was often rotten and unusable, and tents overcrowded.[259] High rates of mortality meant that churchyards close to encampments became choked with the bodies of dead soldiers.[260] Living conditions in barracks could also be poor. On the Isle of Wight, for example, a new military cemetery had to be found in 1800 as the parish graveyards had been saturated with the dead from the island's military depot.[261] Many barracks were half-built in the 1790s and soldiers generally had less space in which to sleep than in the workhouse.[262] The insufficiency of military hospitals meant that sick troops taken from transport vessels died in

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[252] Thompson, *Making*, p. 223.
[253] Surgeons were accountable for the health of their wards and could be brought to trial if they neglected sick soldiers. See trial of Lieutenant-Surgeon John Drinkwater for allowing the death of William Rigby. WO 71/171, GCM Dover, 20 July 1795.
[254] *Standing Orders….Wiltshire Militia*, p. 15.
[255] WO 1/1058, f. 323, Fox – Yonge, 5 April 1793; WO 1/1080, f. 339, Townshend – Young, 27/11/1794
[256] Bartlett, 'The Development of the British Army', p. 136.
[257] Lin, 'Citizenship, Military Families', p. 8.
[258] Anon. *Standing Orders … 115th Regiment*, p. 31; WSA, 2057/F6/75, Captain Crauford –Herbert, 19 December 1792.
[259] Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett*, p. 27; WO 1/1083, f. 107, Bruce – Windham, 21 May 1795; T. Jackson, *Narrative of the Eventful Life of Thomas Jackson*, 17.
[260] Conway, 'Locality, Metropolis, and Nation', p. 551.
[261] WO 4/177, f. 366, Lewis –de Lancey, 10 February 1800.
[262] Wells, 'The Militia Mutinies', p. 46; Spiers, *The Army and Society, 1815-1914*, p. 56.

extraordinary numbers.[263] Four hundred diseased men, including one in seven of the 40th Regiment, succumbed to the 'plague' in 1794, due to lack of hospital accommodation in Plymouth. The Governor of Plymouth complained that the troops had been kept too long at anchor awaiting for orders to embark to the West Indies. Furthermore, due to the lack of hospitals in the South West, the sick had to warm themselves by open fires, 'like gypsies', and a further 110 men died over the winter 1794-5.[264] In Southampton 1,600 troops contracted 'dysentery and putrid fever' in the course of their voyage from Ireland.[265] Unsurprisingly, the civil authorities were often reluctant to find quarters for hordes of soldiers carrying the 'itch' and other contagious diseases. Pubs in garrison towns were frequently overcrowded. It was common for four to five soldiers to share a bed, and for cavalrymen to sleep in stables.[266] Rates of mortality in England were clearly far better than the disastrous levels found in the West Indies.[267] Yet even in the home garrison, soldiers were subjected to some of the worst living conditions in the country, which took a toll on their health.

3.6. Conclusion

For men seeking to escape a desperate economic situation, the military was understood to offer a bare minimum of bounty money, food, accommodation, low wages, and some leisure time. Where these perceived terms of engagement were deviated from, as we have seen, soldiers were likely to offer up strong resistance. The protests of the soldiery, over food and pay, forced the government to rethink the terms of this military 'package' on several occasions in the 1790s. In the shadow of the French Revolution, the government was particularly alert to symptoms of mutiny and disaffection, and quick to offer concessions. As a direct result of these struggles, soldiers became one of the few occupational groups whose basic subsistence was provided at pegged prices. After many years of declining real wages, and in a decade of particularly rapid inflation, this was an extremely important improvement to the soldier's lot. Moreover, with the pay rise of 1797, soldiers became one of the few working-class groups, along with merchant

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[263] Fortescue, *A History of the British Army* Vol. 4, pp. 882-3.
[264] WO 1/1089, f. 461-9, Lennox – Windham, 15 January 1795; HO 42/29, f. 7-8, Gilchrist – Dundas, 3 March 1794.
[265] Add. MS 37.874, ff. 196-201, Fitzpatrick –Moira, n.d. [1794].
[266] WO 1/1089, f. 653-5, Lloyd – Windham, 14 May 1795; WO 1/1084, f. 617, Harrington – Windham, 20 February 1791; WO 1/1071, f. 337, Tappenden – Lewis[?] 11 November 1794.
[267] Buckley, *The British Army in the West Indies*, p. 220.

sailors and workers in the Royal Dockyards, whose real wages actually rose during the Revolutionary French War.[268]

However, we should not exaggerate the privileged position of the soldier within society. The experience of soldiering in the home garrison was decidedly mixed. Although the 1795 and 1797 adjustments represented significant improvements, they merely raised the purchasing-power of the soldier to the economic standard of the common labourer. In some aspects of his social existence, the soldier appears to have been better off than the farm-hand or the sweated out-worker. Soldiers generally worked less intensively for their daily bread and enjoyed longer hours of leisure. They had ample opportunity for promotion and for engaging in by-employment to supplement their wages. They also had time for learning new trades and for relaxing with their comrades. On the other hand, they endured awful living conditions, which were hardly made up for by the free medical treatment offered to them. Moreover, outside of the London-based Foot Guards, the soldier's associational activities were limited almost exclusively to his regimental unit. While the soldier had a degree of religious freedom, within the 'regimental world', officers sought to neutralise and contain political engagement. At a time when many occupational groups were becoming more organized and politicized this was an important distinction between soldiers and civilians.[269] The alienation of the soldier from wider civilian society was furthered by his occasional involvement in riot-control and his contribution to the workings of the penal system. However, perhaps the single biggest sacrifice which the enlist made, was allowing himself to be subject to military law. This aspect of the experience of soldiering will be tackled in more detail the following chapter.

[268] For these occupational groups see Emsley, 'The Impact of War and Military Participation', p. 72; Rogers, *Press Gang*, p. 6

[269] Rule, 'Trade Unions, the Government and the French Revolution, 1789-1802', pp. 112-38.

4. 'The Blackest Perjury': Desertion, Military Justice, and Popular Politics, 1803-5.

According to military autobiographies, adjusting to the severity of military discipline was one of the most difficult aspects of the transition from civilian life.[1] The experiences of soldiers under the military justice system therefore requires close treatment. In particular, the crime of desertion, which was the most common offence to come before the General Courts Martial (GCM), will be investigated here in detail. Centring around the execution of Stephen Carroll in December 1803, this chapter will reconstruct the way in which the ruling elites viewed desertion in the home garrison. In contrast to the historiography of the early Napoleonic Wars, which tends to emphasize a nation 'galvanised' by the threat of a French invasion, this chapter will show that stark lines of conflict existed over the issue of desertion. From an examination of official correspondence, parliamentary returns, and little-used deserter bounty certificates, this chapter will demonstrate that, in the period 1803 to 1805, levels of desertion from the army and militia rose to unparalleled heights. So profound was the 'desertion problem' in this period that the recruitment initiatives of successive governments were severely hindered. A discussion of how the authorities sought to control levels of desertion will therefore be entered into. This will be followed by a detailed consideration of the reasons why men absconded from their regiments and a discussion of what desertion can tell us about the experience of soldiering.

4.1. Desertion and the Death Penalty at Home and Abroad

On the morning of Tuesday 6 December 1803 Stephen Carroll, a private soldier of the 70th Regiment, was marched under armed guard from Hilsea Barracks to Portsdown Common, on the outskirts of Portsmouth. Carroll was reportedly guilty of multiple counts of desertion and had been sentenced to the death penalty.[2] At just twenty years old, he was dressed in white flannel and was accompanied on the three mile journey by a Catholic priest and an artillery waggon containing his coffin.[3] Twelve thousand military personnel were drawn out to witness the 'awful scene'. Additionally, crowds of civilian spectators were reported as being 'exceedingly numerous'.[4] The condemned soldier was blindfolded and made to kneel on a truss

[1] Guthrie (ed.), *The Street Preacher,* p. 3-5; Jackson, *Narrative of the Eventful Life of Thomas Jackson*, p. 13.
[2] *Portsea, Portsmouth and Gosport Journal* , 11 December 1803.
[3] *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*, 15 December 1803.
[4] *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* , 5 December 1803; *Bury and Norwich Post*, 14 December 1803.

of hay as the firing-party loaded their weapons.[5] Several eye-witness accounts describe how the doomed soldier survived the first round of rifle fire, only to be dispatched by a second volley from extremely close range. The assembled regiments were then given orders to march past the deceased 'in slow time … in order that we all might observe the terrible example'.[6] Finally, for the benefit of those troops stationed too distantly to attend in person, the Commander-in-Chief ordered that the sentence of Stephen Carroll be read aloud at the head of every British corps so that the army in general 'may be aware of the fatal consequences attending desertion'.[7]

In the eighteenth century, desertion was frequently punished with death. During the American War of Independence, for example, a quarter of British soldiers tried by GCMs were sentenced to death.[8] Particularly in cases of desertion 'in time of battle', or of desertion 'to the enemies of the crown', soldiers found guilty were likely to suffer the ultimate penalty.[9] In both contexts desertion was seen as a serious breach of masculine codes of honour.[10] Hence, on the battlefields of Europe and in colonial postings, the firing squad was utilised with awful regularity. Outside of the British Isles, there were 380 confirmed executions for desertion, between 1796 and 1815.[11]

In practice, however, military authorities made a distinction between these crimes and desertion in the home garrison. Desertion at home was viewed by officers primarily in terms of the great financial loss which it entailed. Fifty pounds was thought a 'modest estimate of the loss sustained by each desertion' and, as each soldier took an oath of allegiance in exchange for bounty money, the Secretary-at-War characterized desertion at home as an act of 'the blackest perjury'.[12] Nevertheless, by the late eighteenth century, in line with changing respectable sensibilities regarding the propriety of using public hanging to punish minor property

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[5] H. Curling (ed.), *Recollections of Rifleman Harris,* (London, 1848), p. 6.
[6] Curling (ed.), *Recollections*, pp. 5-7.
[7] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 21 December 1803.
[8] Gilbert, 'The Changing Face of Military Justice', p. 83.
[9] S. Adye, *Treatise on Courts Martial; Also an Essay on Military Punishments and Rewards*, 5th ed. (London, 1799), p. 253; E. Samuel, *Historical Account of the British Army, and of the Law Military, as Declared by the Ancient and Modern Statutes and Articles of War*, (London, 1816), p. 323.
[10] For the continuation of these views well into the twentieth century see D. French, 'Discipline and the Death Penalty in the British Army in the War Against Germany during the Second World War' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33 (1998), pp. 531-45.
[11] WO 90/1, Judge Advocate General (JAG) – 'Register of Courts Martial Confirmed Abroad, 1796 – 1815'.
[12] *Parliamentary Register 1802-1805* (Commons), Vol. 2, 22 February 1803, pp. 98-99.

offenders, deserters tried in England were generally spared the death penalty.[13] During the Wars of the French Revolution the firing squad was utilized only twice in England. Firstly, to dispatch two men of the Oxfordshire Militia, after the Seaford mutiny of 1795, and secondly, for the execution of two Hanoverian soldiers, tried for 'desertion to the enemy', after they and four comrades stole a boat and attempted to cross the English Channel in 1801.[14]

Thereafter GCMs in England became even more selective in their use of the death penalty. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, alterations to the Mutiny Act granted greater discretionary powers to military courts by authorizing them to condemn deserters to a term of compulsory service in the West Indies or to transportation 'as a felon' in lieu of capital punishment.[15] As a result, the majority of deserters tried by English GCMs during the Napoleonic Wars were sentenced to these forms of banishment.[16] A large proportion of deserters in England were still subjected to the 'lesser' punishment of flogging.[17] However, only a handful of offenders were capitally convicted and, of these, all except Carroll were granted a royal pardon.[18] Moreover, War Office tabulations for the later nineteenth century suggest that Stephen Carroll was the last soldier ever to be executed for a military offence on English soil.[19] Yet, despite the obvious significance of Carroll's death, and the richness of the source material surrounding his execution, there has been little interest in placing his final moments within their wider historical and political context. In light of prevailing sentencing patterns, and the

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[13] In 1787, Sir William Fawcett, the Adjutant-General for the forces in Britain, observed that 'Capital Punishment [for desertion] … has almost everywhere been laid aside'. PRO 30/8/242, ff. 5-6, Fawcett, 'Memorandum on Recruiting', 18 August 1787. For the influence of elite 'squeamishness' on the declining use of capital punishment within the criminal law see V. A. C. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770-1868* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 267, 590-7.

[14] For the former see Wells, 'The Militia Mutinies', pp 60-3. For the latter see *Morning Post* (London), 6 July 1801.

[15] Foreign service (for militiamen and regular soldiers) and transportation (for regulars only) were introduced in the early 1800s as legal sentences for deserters but were already in use by GCMs before then. See respectively 42 Geo. III cap. 90 s. 127, Militia Act, 26 June 1802; 47 Geo. III cap. 32 s. 18, Mutiny Act, 23 March 1807; 43 Geo. III cap. 20 s. 4, Mutiny Act, 24 March 1803.

[16] Of 266 cases of desertion tried in England, between 1803 and 1815, 26.7 per cent were sentenced to transportation, 29.3 per cent to foreign or 'general' service - or 56 per cent in total. WO 71/196-235, GCM Proceedings, 1803-1815; WO 92/1, JAG – 'Register of Courts Martial Confirmed at Home 1806-1838'.

[17] 29.7 per cent were sentenced to flogging. For contemporary opposition to this practice see J.R. Dinwiddy, 'The Early Nineteenth-Century Campaign Against Flogging in the Army' *The English Historical Review*, 97 (1982), pp. 308-31.

[18] Only 7 soldiers were sentenced to death or 2.6 per cent.

[19] WO 92/1, JAG – 'Register of Courts Martial Confirmed at Home 1806-1838'. A survey of the relevant literature for the First World War also suggests that there were no military executions staged in England. J. Putkowski, and J. Sykes, *Shot at Dawn* (Barnsley: Wharncliffe, 1989).

clear move away from the use of the firing squad in England, the decision to execute Carroll certainly requires some explanation. In particular, the question arises as to why in December 1803, *after* the introduction of transportation, and while the government was attempting to rouse the nation to fight the French, was it deemed expedient to stage such an 'awful' display on the English coast?

4.2. Historiography of the Period 1803-5

The dominant historical accounts of this period emphasise the success of the British state in mobilizing the nation in response to the perceived threat of a large-scale French invasion. Significant emphasis is often placed on the 'volunteer movement' which raised, at its height in 1804, some 400,000 men for part-time civil-defence duties. Contemporary politicians and historians alike are fond of pointing out that the combined total of volunteers, army, militia, and naval personnel, some 803,700 in 1805, was equivalent to at least one in five men of serviceable age – the highest proportion ever before achieved by any government.[20] Cookson has stressed that this level of mobilization was achieved with hardly any popular opposition.[21] Moreover, Colley argues that this mass military endeavour shows us that the 'British state rested on the active consent of a substantial numbers of its inhabitants' and that collective 'training in arms under the auspices of the state' was crucial to the growth of a national identity of 'Britishness'.[22]

However, Colley's analysis of the post-Amiens period has recently received criticism. Philp has suggested that the 'popular' mobilizations of this period were carefully 'calculated and orchestrated' by a government which was deeply uncertain about the basic allegiances of its own people.[23] Similarly, Semmel's analysis of the propaganda from this period demonstrates that there was an underlying 'anxiety in the loyalist mind' about the perceived complacency of the lower orders towards the possibility of a French invasion.[24] While Linch has expressed doubt as to whether the raw number of men who joined the volunteers is sufficient evidence upon which to assert the loyalty of the nation. According to Linch, English counties raised large quotas of volunteers, for fear that if they did not they did not, they would be subjected to the

[20] Colley, *Britons*, p. 293; Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p 95; Dickinson, 'Popular Conservatism and Militant Loyalism 1789-1815', p. 117.
[21] Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 100.
[22] Colley, *Britons*, pp. 316-8.
[23] Philp (ed.), *Resisting Napoleon*, pp. 2-5.
[24] S. Semmel, *Napoleon and the British* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 54-5, 68.

more conscriptive measures threatened by the *Levee en Masse* Act.[25] We may question, therefore, whether such numbers can be used as a gauge for loyalism or nationalism.

A further criticism of the approach favoured by Colley is that, in order to show a linkage between armed service and a loyal British consensus, preference is given to evidence gleaned from the volunteers while the experiences of those men who served in the regular forces is glossed over. Nicholas Rogers has recently made the case that Colley's account of the Napoleonic Wars inadequately incorporates the experiences of those who found themselves serving in the British navy. By examining eighteenth-century anti-recruitment disturbances Rogers has demonstrated that it was in the years 1803 to 1805 when popular resistance to naval impressment was at its most intense.[26] In spite of the government's aggressive propaganda campaign, and the expectation of a French landing at this time, portside communities continued to evade naval service and to forcefully resist impressment.[27] Rogers concludes from this that the seafarers' commitment to king and country was, at best, pragmatic and selective.[28]

This chapter seeks to strengthen Rogers' arguments concerning the early years of the Napoleonic Wars by broadening out the discussion to include the experiences of men in the army and militia. Although there were no anti-recruitment riots directed against the land forces in this period, as there had been in the mid-1790s, it will be argued that the large-scale desertions from the armed forces, seen between 1803 and 1805 should be considered as a similar form of protest.[29] Using court martial testimony and newspaper sources the traditional view of desertion as drunken, impulsive, and essentially reactive will be challenged. Instead, the competing agencies of officers and their men will be emphasised. It will be argued that both enlistment and desertion were viewed by the labouring poor, not primarily in terms of loyalism or nationalism, but through the prism of the makeshift-economy.[30] As Peter Way has suggested, desertion, in particular, was seen as a tactic for seizing control of the price and conditions of

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[25] Linch, 'A Geography of Loyalism? The Local Military Forces of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1794-1814', pp. 8-9, 20.
[26] Rogers, *Press Gang*, pp. 37-58.
[27] N. Rogers, 'The Sea Fencibles, Loyalism and the Reach of the State', in M. Philp (ed.), *Resisting Napoleon: The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 41-60.
[28] Rogers, *Press Gang*, p. 15.
[29] For the crimp riots (1794-5) and the Supplementary Militia Act riots (1796) see Chapter 1.4-5.
[30] For a discussion of the origin and meanings of the phrase see S. King, and A. Tomkins (eds.), *The Poor in England, 1700-1850: An Economy of Makeshifts*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 11-14.

one's labour and it was this concern which coloured the way in which the lower orders saw armed service.[31]

4.3. The Extent of the Desertion Problem, 1803-5

Military historians have tended to play down the problem of desertion within the British army. Studies of the Seven Years' War suggest that annual British losses from desertion were around 3.5 per cent.[32] This figure compares favourably with other European armies, including those of Frederick the Great, where contemporary rates of desertion were nearly three times higher.[33] Similarly, in Napoleonic France, where conscription met with 'resentment and evasion', rates of desertion and non-reportage could be as high as half of all conscripts.[34] By comparison, Linch estimates that between 1807 and 1815, the British army lost just 2.9 per cent of its rank and file to desertion.[35]

There is a general consensus, however, that desertion was far more problematic for regiments garrisoned at home.[36] Between 1803 and 1805, 60 per cent of the United Kingdom's army and militia units were stationed in Britain with over half of this force concentrated in the South East of England.[37] At this moment desertion from the regular army can be shown to have been unusually high. As early as February 1803 the Secretary-at-War revealed the extent of the problem when he announced that one fourth of new recruits for the regular army were being lost to desertion.[38] Furthermore, official returns suggest that desertion peaked in 1804, with the regular regiments stationed in Britain, losing one in thirteen soldiers to desertion.[39] Yet the

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[31] Way, 'Class and the Common Soldier', p. 476.
[32] A.N. Gilbert, 'Why Men Deserted from the Eighteenth Century British Army', *Armed Forces and Society*, 6 (1980),p. 558; T. Agostini, ''Deserted His Majesty's Service': Military Runaways, the British-American Press, and the Problem of Desertion during the Seven Years' War', *Journal of Social History*, 40 (2007), p. 960.
[33] C. Duffy, *The Army of Frederick the Great* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1974), p. 67; J. Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe, 1648-1789* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), pp. 70-73.
[34] A. Forrest, *Conscripts and Deserters: The Army and French Society during the Revolution and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 43.
[35] Linch, 'The Recruitment of the British Army', p. 210.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 211; C. D. Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War, 1803-1815* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 7.
[37] J. W. Fortescue, *County Lieutenancies*, pp. 73, 303; Cookson, *Armed Nation*, 41.
[38] *Parliamentary Register 1802-1805* (Commons), Vol. 2, 22 February 1803, pp. 98-99.
[39] Based on 4,686 'desertions from the army at home' divided by total size of the army in Britain, 59,785 men, equals 7.8 per cent. *Commons Journals,* Vol. 60, p. 668; Fortescue, *County Lieutenancies*, p. 303.

regular army was by no means the force worst affected by desertion at this time. Desertion from the Army of Reserve and the militia proved even more problematic.

In March 1803, in reaction to the very real prospect of French invasion, Prime Minister Addington embodied the militia and supplementary militia for home service.[40] As with the earlier Militia Acts, few individuals served in person. Men drawn by ballot tended to pay for a substitute, or they were part of a militia insurance scheme, which provided substitutes for their members.[41] Additionally, as members of the volunteers were entirely exempt from the militia ballot, it became common practice for men to enlist as 'nominal volunteers', purely to evade militia service. The Earl of Sheffield, for example, complained that 'very many young men in these parts [Sussex] intend to offer themselves as volunteers merely to avoid the ballot for militia'. Sheffield stated that in the populous town of East Grinstead, there were only 150 men left, who were not claiming exemption.[42] While in Liverpool, 'one half of the persons available to serve' had enrolled in the volunteers making it extremely difficult for the local authorities to meet their quota.[43]

With large numbers of men exempt from militia service altogether the premium placed on substitutes rose to new heights. In Sussex, for example, a substitute for the militia could not be had for less than twenty five pounds.[44] With such large prizes on offer, the system of substitution inevitably attracted fraudsters and the down-at-heel. Captain Harris attended a Portsmouth divisional meeting in February 1803, for the enrolment of the Hampshire Militia, and described the men who travelled to offer themselves as substitutes:

> I have been at many Militia meetings before, but never see a Tenth of the Confusion I see there … for your Regiment, there came to offer themselves as substitutes; all my old acquaintances and Friends, the Gipsies [sic.] and Chimney sweepers, and I do believe, all the Rascals in the Country joined and came with them.[45]

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[40] J. D. Grainger, *The Amiens Truce: Britain and Bonaparte, 1801-1803* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004). p 167; R. Glover, *Britain at Bay: Defence Against Bonaparte, 1803-14* (New York: George Allen, 1973), p. 15.
[41] Western, *The English Militia*, 256.
[42] BL Add. MS 33,111, f. 216, 'Pelham Papers', Sheffield – Pelham, 12 June 1803.
[43] HO 50/110, uf. Stratham – Wilson, 18 February 1804.
[44] BL Add. MS. 33,111, f. 223, Sheffield – Pelham, 18 June 1803.
[45] Hampshire Records Office, 44M69/F10/37/2, Harris – Jervoise, 17 February 1803.

William Cobbett's nephew, George, procured the services of such a man to serve in his room in the Hampshire regiment but found that his replacement deserted '*before the officers could have time to look at him*'. Cobbett had it on good authority that this was common in 'one half of the cases of enlistment into the militia'.[46]

Indeed newspaper reports show that, while men were forthcoming when it came to receiving enlistment bounties, many failed to join their regiments once they were embodied.[47] So apparent was the problem of non-reportage by June 1803 that the War Office issued a proclamation for pardoning deserters. This granted a one month amnesty to deserters from the militia in the hope that men who had previously failed to join their regiments could be encouraged to do so. Those who remained at large would be 'proceeded against with the utmost severity'.[48] Although it is difficult to quantify overall levels of desertion from the militia it seems that the proclamation had little impact. In October the Sussex Regiment of Militia advertised the names of 113 deserters, most of whom were substitutes, who had 'not joined'.[49] In London, where the anonymity of the metropolis facilitated desertion, the Lord Lieutenant found it 'almost impossible to keep the persons who are sworn in'.[50] Finally in Lincolnshire, where resistance to the militia ballot had a long history, 411 deserters were acknowledged as absent, representing some 20 per cent of the entire regiment.[51]

Additionally, in July 1803, the Addington ministry adopted a new recruitment initiative – the Army of Reserve – in order to raise 50,000 men along similar lines to the militia. Eligible candidates were drawn by ballot to serve as reservists within the United Kingdom but were actively encouraged to transfer to the regular army for an additional bounty. As in the militia, a clause in the Act allowed balloted men to avoid personal service by providing a substitute.[52]

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[46] Add. Ms. 37853, 130, 'Windham Papers', Cobbett – Windham, 20 July 1804. Emphasis in original.
[47] See advertisement 'List of men who have not joined the Eastern Regiment of Suffolk Militia'. *Ipswich Journal*, 9 April 1803.
[48] *Ipswich Journal*, 18 June 1803.
[49] This represented ten per cent of the quota for the militia and supplementary militia for the county of 1,132 men. *Hue and Cry Police Gazette* (London), 15 October 1803.
[50] HO 50/78, Titchfield - Hobart, 9 June 1803.
[51] The militia and supplementary militia quota allotted to Lincolnshire was 2,052 men. *Stamford Mercury*, 10 June 1803. For resistance to the New Militia and the Supplementary Militia in Lincolnshire see Western, *English Militia*, pp. 294-301.
[52] 43 Geo. III cap. 82 sec. 14, Defence of the Realm Act, 6 July 1803.

The plan initially met with success and 25,000 men were raised in a matter of months.[53] However, less than ten per cent of balloted men accepted personal service and competition with the militia meant that the price of substitutes rose precipitously. The average cost of a substitute for the reserves was calculated at thirty pounds.[54] Coupled with this, desertion considerably hampered progress. The Secretary-at-War rose again in the Commons in March 1804 and admitted that desertion 'had got to a very high pitch', with the total numbers recruited for the Army of Reserve, in the first few months of 1804, being 'fully balanced by the number of deserters'.[55] In all 12.2 per cent of the men raised for the Army of Reserve deserted.[56] When Pitt returned to power in 1804 the ballots for both the Army of Reserve and the militia were scrapped and a single ballot was introduced in the form of the Additional Force Act.[57] While this simplified the administration of the levies the Act failed in its primary objective of raising men.[58] During its two years of operation just 15,778 men were recruited in Britain and Ireland and some nineteen per cent of this figure was lost to desertion.[59]

4.4. Containing the Desertion Problem

Levels of desertion were evidently acute in the period 1803-5. However, what the official statistics fail to show is the effort expended by the authorities in their attempts to contain the losses. Military commanders, for their part, attempted to limit opportunities for desertion by removing new recruits from large urban centres and into barracks or isolated military depots, such as the Isle of Wight, where the possibility of escape was considerably reduced.[60] Where desertion could not be prevented, the identification and apprehension of runaways became paramount. It was commonplace for sentries to be placed on main highways, with orders to

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[53] Anon, *Statements Relating to the Measures Adopted During the Present War, For the Augmentation of the Military Force of the Country, Previous to the Introduction of the System of Recruiting For Service During a Term of Years* (London, 1808), p. 6.
[54] J. W. Gordon (ed.), *Military Transactions of the British Empire: From the Commencement of the Year 1803, to the Termination of the Year 1807*, (London, 1808), p. 61.
[55] *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), Vol. 1, 28 March 1803, col. 1079.
[56] Fortescue, *The County Lieutenancies*, p. 73.
[57] C.J. Fedorak, 'In Defence of Great Britain', p. 106.
[58] Glover, *Britain at Bay*, 137.
[59] Gordon, *Military Transactions of the British Empire,* p. 63.
[60] HO 50/78, Titchfield - Hobart, 9 June 1803; Linch, 'The Recruitment of the British Army', p. 215; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, pp. 103-4.

detain suspect individuals.[61] Furthermore, the Home Secretary made appeals to the magistracy for their vigilance and 'active co-operation' in the 'discovery and apprehension of deserters'.[62] In London, the Bow Street Runners were called upon on several occasions to sweep buildings where deserters were suspected to be 'secreted' in great numbers.[63] In this sense, desertion was not a purely military problem but constituted an area of considerable civil-military co-operation.

In order to facilitate the capture of deserters, voluminous descriptions lists of new recruits were kept in the War Office.[64] Extracts from these lists were frequently forwarded from Whitehall to provincial magistrates to help identify suspicious individuals in their custody.[65] Advertisements, including a description, were regularly posted in the *Hue and Cry Police Gazette* to inform the authorities of the names and appearances of runaway soldiers and these could also be circulated locally to alert the public-at-large.[66] Although the descriptions were often vague or subjective, soldiers were peculiarly identifiable.[67] Recruiting sergeants in London insisted on shaving the hair of new recruits, 'in the military stile [sic.]', and deserter advertisements reveal that many military men had little option but to desert in their full regimental uniforms.[68] Others bore battle scars or were marked by military punishments.[69] In

[61] Sergeants Hill and Smith, of the Chatham Division of Marines, were placed on the London Road in Kent. During this period they 'recovered to the Army and Navy above four hundred deserters'. They were, however, indicted for assaulting a bargeman whom they wrongfully believed to be a deserter. See petition against their conviction; HO 47/38/24, 191-2 Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty – Earl Spencer, 1 April 1806.
[62] A circular letter was communicated to the county magistracy via the Lords Lieutenants. *Bury and Norwich Post*, 27 April 1803.
[63] *Mirror of the Times,* 7 July 1798; *The Morning Post*, 14 September 1804; *The Times*, 5 February 1805.
[64] E. Higgs, *Identifying the English: A History of Personal Identification 1500 to the Present* (London: Continuum, 2011), pp. 106-7.
[65] See Secretary-at-Wars' deserter out-letter books, for example, WO 4/609, 23, Yonge –Gepp, 5 November 1792.
[66] Although the *Hue and Cry* was originally intended to circulate information relating to criminals, by the late eighteenth century, the paper was dominated by deserter descriptions. *Hue and Cry*, 1797-1805. See also, Higgs, *Identifying the English*, pp. 104-5.
[67] *Ibid.*
[68] For example, James Capes of the 70th deserted in 'full regimentals' while Thomas Dale claimed to have employment shaving the heads of recruits. *Hue and Cry*, 15 October 1803; WO 71/203, GCM Proceedings, Chelsea Hospital, 3 April 1805.
[69] Joseph Barber was described as bearing 'the marks of corporal punishment on his back', *The Derby Mercury*, 15 August 1805.

addition, from 1807, a form of branding, using needle punctures and gunpowder to leave an indelible 'D' on the skin, was introduced to punish repeat offenders.[70]

Furthermore, the Mutiny Act offered a statutory twenty shilling reward, as an inducement to the soldiery and the public, for the capture of each deserter.[71] An individual could obtain the reward once a deserter was positively identified and sworn before a magistrate. Receipts of this transaction exist in great numbers amongst the assessed tax records for each county.[72] The surviving deserter bounty certificates for Essex and Kent demonstrate a remarkable upsurge in the workload of justices operating in these counties from the year 1803 which did not diminish significantly until 1807 (Figure 6). Ninety three per cent of the rewards issued in Essex and Kent between 1803 and 1805 were for soldiers in the army, the Army of Reserve and the militia.[73] It is tempting to explain the sharp increase in the number of deserters apprehended in this period in terms of the increased number of troops stationed in these counties. Certainly, the numbers of troops stationed in Essex and Kent had almost trebled, rising 2.7 times, between 1796 and 1803.[74] However, over the same period, the number of deserter rewards being issued increased 5.6 times suggesting that the relative frequency of desertion had grown as well as the absolute number.[75]

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[70] 47 Geo. III cap. 32 sec. 7, Mutiny Act, 23 March 1807; See William Addington of the Bow Street Office who, 'in consequence of the great number of deserters lately brought before [him]', suggested the introduction of this punishment as early as 1799; WO1/620, f. 117, Addington – Brownrigg, 26 March 1799.

[71] 4 Geo. III cap. 3 sec. 50, Mutiny Act, 24 March 1764. Deserters whose names were advertised in newspapers usually had an additional bounty on their head. See T. Agostini, ''Deserted His Majesty's Service'', p. 960.

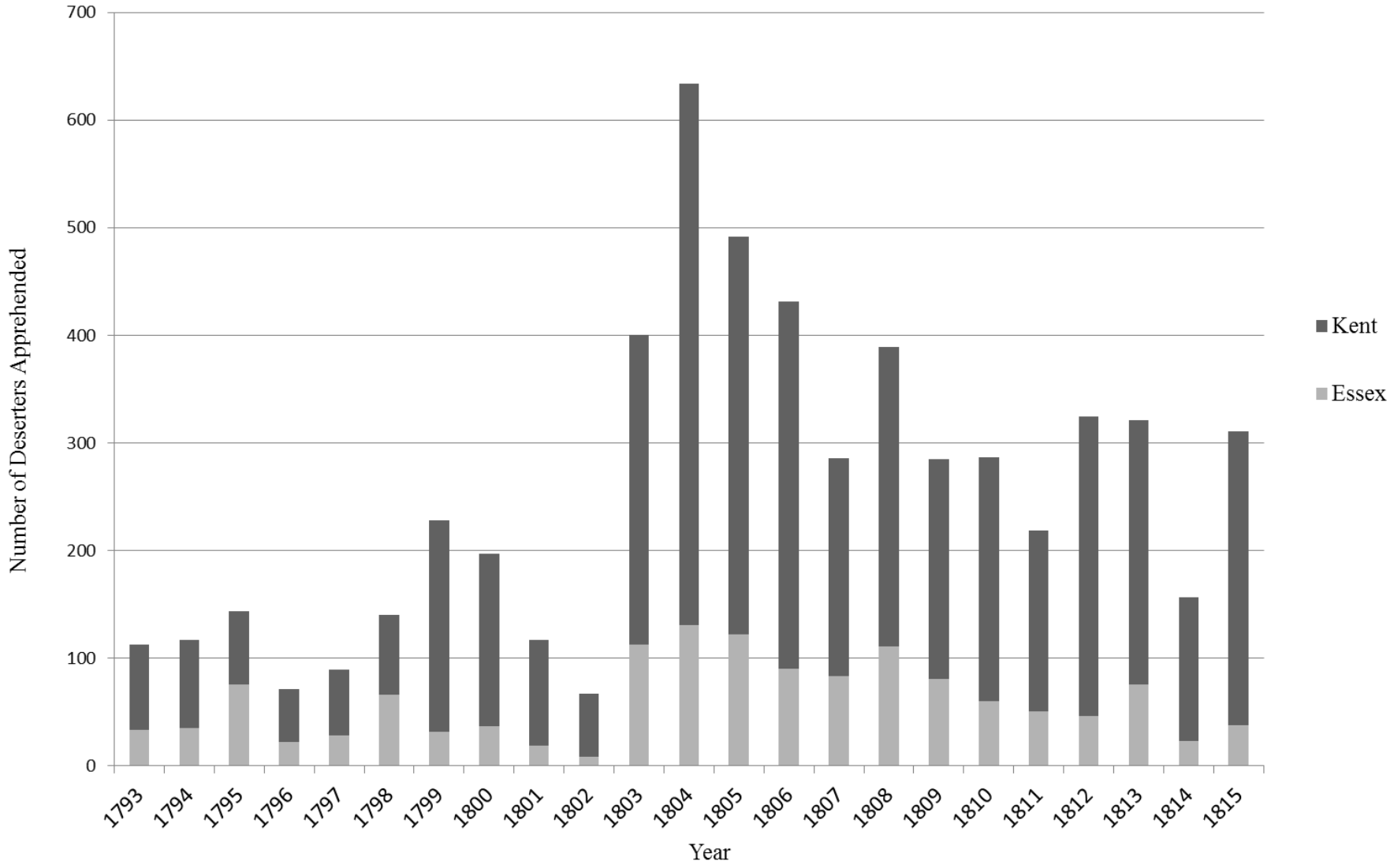
[72] R.J. Goulden, 'Deserter Bounty Certificates' *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 50 (1972), pp. 161-8.

[73] With the remainder being; deserters from the marines (five per cent), the navy (one per cent) and paid members of the volunteers (less than one per cent). See sources for Figure 6.

[74] In 1796 the army and militia amounted to 13,897 men in Essex and Kent. This figure rose to 38,517 in 1803. See WO 30/65, 2, 'Numbers of Troops in Different Parts', October 1796; WO 1/626, 503-538, 'Distribution of the Army in Great Britain in District and Brigades', 1 November 1803.

[75] Rewards were issued for 71 deserters in 1796 and 400 in 1803. Sources as in Figure 6.

Figure 6 - Number of Deserters Apprehended in Essex and Kent, 1793 to 1815.



Source: Essex; TNA, E182/319-336; Kent; TNA, E182/450-472.

By the summer of 1803, there was general agreement among military officers that the extent of the desertion problem called loudly for a remedy. In addition to directing resources towards the apprehension of runaways, military authorities were prepared to invest in the terror of exemplary punishment in order to inhibit desertion.

> [M]any officers … are disposed to make some severe example in the case of Desertion, and indeed it is very much wanted, as they happen very frequent; two from our very own Regiment last night and two a few days ago and they are not less frequent from other Regiments.[76]

In October six deserters from the Army of Reserve were tried at Chatham Barracks and sentenced to the maximum flogging penalty of 1,000 lashes.[77] Unusually for cases of desertion in England, the king did not moderate the sentence and the infliction of the full punishment was well publicised in the press.[78]

Nevertheless, by the winter of 1803, with desertion showing no signs of abating, military authorities believed that a further public show of force was required. Stephen Carroll, who was tried for desertion in late October 1803, and was sentenced to death by a court martial assembled in Kent, proved to be a convenient object for this exemplary justice. Compounding his situation was the fact that his regiment had recently embarked without him for the West Indies.[79] Additionally, newspaper reports claimed that Carroll was 'a proper object to be made example of' because he had taken multiple enlistment bounties in return for service in the Army of Reserve.[80] These claims are impossible to verify from the exceedingly brief proceedings of his court martial.[81] Regardless of the foundation of these reports, it was principally the scale of the desertion problem experienced at this time, which led the king and Judge Advocate General to decide that it was 'indispensably necessary for the sake of example', that Carroll should be

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[76] WO 72/23, Morrison (West Norfolk Militia) – Morgan, 9 August 1803.
[77] WO 71/196, GCM Chatham Barracks, 29 August 1803.
[78] *Bury and Norwich Post,* 12 October 1803.
[79] *Hampshire Telegraph* (Portsmouth), 5 December 1803.
[80] *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*, 15 December 1803.
[81] No mention was made at the court martial of Carroll having enlisted in the Army of Reserve. Certainly the account repeated by Harris that Carroll had deserted sixteen times seems improbable. Culring (ed.), *Recollections of Rifleman Harris,* 4; WO 71/1796, GCM Proceedings Sandgate, 27 October 1803.

executed. Furthermore, if there was to be an execution, the king demanded that it be conducted in a manner which was 'as public as may be'.[82]

4.5. Why Men Deserted

Having looked at the official response to the desertion problem in this period an account will now be given of why so many men risked severe punishment and absconded from their regiments. Military historians have pointed to a range of motivating factors behind desertion. Bartlett suggests that the numerous desertions in this period simply reflect the extent to which the army relied on social misfits and criminals to fill the ranks, the implication being that such men were inevitably incapable of adapting to life in the military.[83] More recently, Coss' systematic analysis of the average calorie intake of a soldier during the Peninsula Campaign, suggests that desertion was spurred by short rations and dreadful working conditions.[84] While Gilbert's influential study of courts martial defence pleas emphasises drunkenness and fear of punishment as typical motivations behind the 'spur of the moment' decision to desert.[85]

There is some wisdom in all of these assessments. However, few historians have considered deserters in the domestic context. In England the evidence suggests that desertion was often a conscious act of protest against working conditions, a means of denying one's labour to the army or the militia, or a deliberate and calculated attempt to improve one's lot, by escaping the confines of the camp or the barrack room.[86] What follows will therefore attempt to highlight the individual agency of deserters. Moreover, as deserters frequently received help from various support networks, this chapter will attempt to establish that, despite the financial inducements offered by the Mutiny Act and deserter advertisements for the apprehension of military runaways, many plebeian men and women were prepared to assist deserters. Further, the evidence suggests that absconding from the military to find more profitable work elsewhere,

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[82] WO 71/196, Morgan (JAG) – Duke of York, 26 November 1803; WO 71/196, Morgan (JAG) – Dundas, 26 November 1803.
[83] T. Bartlett, 'Defence, Counter-Insurgency and Rebellion : Ireland, 1793-1803', in T. Bartlett and K. Jeffery (eds.), *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 255-7; Bartlett, 'Indiscipline and Disaffection', p. 116.
[84] Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, pp. 36, 207-208, n. 65.
[85] Gilbert, 'Why Men Deserted', pp. 564-5.
[86] Peter Way has recently argued for desertion to be viewed in these terms see 'Class and the Common Soldier', 476.

and even fraudulently obtaining multiple enlistment bounties, were practices deemed legitimate amongst certain sections of the labouring poor.

An analysis of the defence pleas presented by deserters tried by GCMs in England between 1793 and 1815 tends to support Gilbert's claims that drunkenness and fear of punishment were the two most important factors behind desertion. Eleven per cent of defendants mentioned 'fear of punishment' as the reason for their desertion.[87] Many soldiers admitted in their autobiographies to struggling to come to terms with the severity of life in the military. The regularity of public floggings was often particularly shocking to new recruits.[88] Robert Flockheart, for example, was deeply affected by the floggings which took place every morning while he was stationed at Guernsey.[89] While in England, the RCM records of the Grenadier Guards reveal that there was a flogging nearly every week in the regiment, for the crime of absence without leave, with soldiers receiving an average of 185 lashes.[90] From GCM proceedings it appears that many soldiers deserted from their hospital beds, after receiving part of a flogging sentence, in anticipation of the next round of punishment.[91] John Blackman, for example, escaped from Deal Military Hospital, where he was recovering from the flogging inflicted on him by a RCM. In his defence he explained that it was the 'Very Great Dread of the Last punishment … which caused him to desert'.[92] Paradoxically then, the lash, the army's 'preeminent means of instilling discipline', actually had the effect of making some men desert on impulse.[93]

Similarly, ten per cent of defendants claimed that it was mistreatment by officers or comrades which caused them to desert. The officer's right to summarily punish their men with painful drill exercises, with solitary confinement in the 'black hole', and even with physical correction,

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[87] Statistics presented in this section are based on analysis of the defences of the 306 cases desertion tried by English GCMs between 1793 and 1815. WO 71/167-241; WO 92/1, JAG – 'Register of Courts Martial Confirmed at Home 1806-1838'.
[88] Jackson, *The Eventful Life of Thomas Jackson,* p. 13.
[89] Guthrie (ed.), *The Street Preacher*, pp. 3-5.
[90] There were 117 floggings for absence without leave over a period of 156 weeks. See GGA, D4/20/560, Regimental Courts Martial Confirmation Book of the Grenadier Guards, 1803-5.
[91] WO 71/202, GCM Proceedings Norman Cross, 25 April 1805; WO 71/204, GCM Proceedings Gosport Barracks, 28 October 1805; WO 71/205, GCM Proceedings Hull, 14 March 1805.
[92] WO 71/178, GCM Proceedings Canterbury, 11 January 1798.
[93] Gilbert, 'Why Men Deserted', p. 561.

could be demoralizing to the uninitiated, and was often felt to be 'hard usage' by new recruits.[94] Robert Jones complained of his treatment at the hands of Sergeant Fawthrop and Captain Sullivan whose '*Brutality* … induced him to absent himself'. It was proven in his trial that Jones had been subjected to 'very irregular punishments' including being gagged and flogged 'with sticks' at the head of the regiment.[95] Similarly, Thomas Weymark put his desertion down to the 'constant teasing he met with' from the men of the 91st which made his life 'wearisome'.[96] Clearly many desertions were linked to the brutality of military justice and the hardness of military life. The fact that most desertion occurred in the first year of service points to the difficulty recruits had in adjusting to this regime.[97]

In addition to martial punishment, drunkenness has often been seen as the preeminent cause of desertion. Brumwell, for example, states that 'most frequently it was the momentary irresponsibility engendered by alcohol that underlay desertions'.[98] In some instances it was true that men got so drunk that they fell behind their regiments. Thomas Stephenson, for example, entered into the 'convivial spirit' at a 'binding' in Pensham, as a result he was absent from his regiment for five days and was eventually brought back as a deserter by a party sent to find him. The officers at his GCM accepted Stephenson had not intended to desert and reduced his sentence to 500 lashes under a charge of absence without leave.[99] With twenty three per cent of deserters claiming to have been drunk at the time of their desertion this was the single most common factor mentioned in the defences laid before GCMs in England.

However, there are several reasons why we should be cautious with this statistic. Firstly, the 'drinking culture' amongst military personnel suggests that most recruits were quickly acclimatized to the effects of heavy drinking.[100] Moreover, alcohol was more likely to have been a catalyst in the decision to desert rather than the reason itself. Most importantly, soldiers were aware, or they could easily guess, that those who claimed to have been 'in liquor' were much more likely to receive royal clemency than those who appeared to have been sober at the time of

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[94] Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett*, p. 33; Guthrie (ed.), *The Street Preacher*, p. 3.
[95] WO 71/197, GCM Proceedings Plymouth, 21 January 1804.
[96] WO 71/212, GCM Proceedings Wheeley, 30 January 1805.
[97] P. Way, 'Class and the Common Solider', p. 476.
[98] Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 104.
[99] WO 71/196, GCM Proceedings Tynemouth Barracks, 10 November 1803.
[100] Agostini, '"Deserted His Majesty's Service"', 975; P.E. Kopperman, ''The Cheapest Pay': Alcohol Abuse in the Eighteenth-Century British Army', *Journal of Military History*, 60 (1996), pp. 445-70.

their departure.[101] As Adye's military manual pointed out, it was 'the intention of totally abandoning the service' which legally distinguished 'desertion' from the lesser crime of 'absence without leave'.[102] It is plausible therefore, that in many cases deserters chose to plead drunkenness rather than admitting to being disaffected or having committed a premeditated act of desertion. Overall statistics calculated from deserters' defences are clearly limited in their reliability. However they are also partial. The majority of deserters tried in England chose to enter no defence plea whatsoever.[103] Therefore, the characterization of desertion as a drunken or spontaneous act is one which is overly reliant upon the image which deserters presented of themselves while on the stand. It is possible however, through careful examination of subsidiary information provided in courts martial cases, and, through the use of supplementary sources, to arrive at a different construction of desertion, one which grants deserters a greater degree of agency.

In many cases desertion can be seen as a premeditated act. This is hinted at by the frequent practice of selling one's uniform. Deserters would often do this in order to generate enough money to fund their escape whilst simultaneously disguising their martial status while on the road. Thomas Waller of the 70th Regiment, for example, sold his uniform to an 'ostler' at the Crown in Romford.[104] The frequency with which this practice was carried on in Brighton led to the issuing of a General Order requesting that all regimental shirts should be marked in indelible ink with the names of their owners.[105] Similarly acts of theft might be committed in order to facilitate desertion. John Maybury 'procured coloured Cloaths [sic.] by breaking open a Box in the House where he was Quartered', thus disguised, he then stashed his regimentals on the highroad to Bath.[106] Foreign mercenaries frequently hijacked sailing boats in order to make a

[101] Forty per cent of deserters tried in England who claimed to have been drunk received a reduction in their sentence compared with 24.5 per cent of deserters overall in England.
[102] Adye, *Treatise on Courts Martial*, p. 208.
[103] In 61 per cent of cases of desertion in England no defence was recorded.
[104] Essex Record Office (ERO): Chelmsford, D/DU23/134, Copy of a Letter to Major Gordon, 8 December 1796.
[105] *The Derby Mercury*, 30 June 1803.
[106] WO 71/218, GCM Proceedings Bristol, 21 July 1809; Trial of John Maybury.

return to their homeland.[107] And, the notorious deserter-turned-footpad, known as 'Whitehorn', managed to escape from a party of marines on the back of a stolen horse.[108]

Determined deserters also stole weapons in order to facilitate their escape. Joseph Davies was taken up 'with a loaded Pistol in his Bed' and George Hook, captured outside a public house in Huntingdon, fired a horse pistol, belonging to the regiment, at his pursuers.[109] The most infamous case of this kind is that of Philip Keating and John Keggan, who were advertised in the *Hue and Cry* as having deserted from Canterbury Barracks, taking with them their regimentals and a pistol.[110] The two passed through Wrotham and, appearing suspicious, were cross examined by Colonel Shadwell who asked to see Keating's pass:

> [T]he ruffian replied, "I'll Show you my furlough and be d---d to you", and drawing a pistol from his pantaloon pocket, shot him immediately through the heart…[111]

The Colonel died from his injuries and Keating was sentenced to hang for murder at the Maidstone Assizes.[112]

Clearly these men were highly committed to a predetermined plan of escape. Linebaugh has emphasised the popularity of 'excarceration' narratives within eighteenth century popular culture and contemporary newspaper editors recognized this appeal by making room for the daring escapes of deserters.[113] Five deserters from the Army of Reserve, for example, were reported to have broken through the arched ceiling of Lewes Prison and were discovered only as they lowered themselves by a 'scaling ladder' made from torn blankets.[114] Even in London's notorious Savoy Military Prison, with its 'walls of prodigious thickness … raised up to an

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[107] WO 71/202, GCM Proceedings Bexhill, 28 May 1805; Trial of three soldiers of the Kings German Legion.
[108] *General Evening Post* (London), 20 April 1797; *Star* (London), 20 April 1797.
[109] WO 71/197, GCM Proceedings Nottingham, 26 January 1804; WO 71/199, GCM Colchester Barracks, 27 December 1804.
[110] *Hue and Cry Police Gazette,* 22 June 1799.
[111] *St James' Chronicle*, 6 June 1799.
[112] *Craftsman or Say's Weekly Journal*, 27 July 1799; W. Cole, *A Tear of Regret on the Death of Lieutenant-Colonel Shadwell* 2nd edition (Maidstone, 1799).
[113] Linebaugh, *London Hanged*, pp. 7-41. The daring and miraculous escapes performed by the notorious housebreaker Jack Sheppard and his accomplice Edgeworth Bess had an enduring appeal which lasted well into the 1840s, helped in a large measure by W.H Ainsworth's rewriting of Sheppard's biography with illustrations provided by George Cruickshank. See M. Buckley, 'Sensations of Celebrity: Jack Sheppard and the Mass Audience', *Victorian Studies*, 44 (2002), p. 426.
[114] *The Times*, 13 October 1803.

immense height for security', inmates awaiting corporal punishment, transportation, or foreign service, frequently made attempts to escape their confines.[115] Six men scaled the walls of the prison and escaped over neighbouring rooftops in 1797 and a group of 25 prisoners successfully breached a wall on the Thames side of the building in 1790.[116] Thus we often see deserters working together in small groups to an agreed plan. Seen in this light desertion begins appear more like a conscious act of protest than a spontaneous decision.[117]

Furthermore, the reception which deserters received from civilians reveals something about popular attitudes towards desertion more broadly. Despite the financial penalties for assisting deserters enshrined in the Mutiny Act, William Fawcett lamented that 'Harbouring Deserters' was popularly viewed as a 'meritorious act'.[118] The relatives of deserters were certainly prepared to run the risk of prosecution by lending assistance to their loved ones. James Wood's family, for example, obstructed a search party sent to his home in 1804, just long enough for Wood to make his escape out the back door.[119] Rather more surprising is the support deserters received from complete strangers. For example, while escorting two captured deserters from Windsor to the Isle of Wight in 1805, Sergeant Jackson found that the people he met with in public houses along the way 'pitied the prisoners … [and] were ready to aid their escape'.[120] As we have seen, many individuals were prepared to assist deserters by purchasing their regimentals.[121] Others provided them with a safe place to hide from the authorities and one Deal boatman was even willing to smuggle deserters from the Kentish coast to Calais.[122] The protection offered to deserters clearly demonstrates a disjuncture between the way in which the authorities conceived of the crime and the manner in which it was viewed by the lower orders.

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[115] WO 40/7, Report on the State of the Savoy Prison; Keate – Windham, 5 February 1795.
[116] *London Chronicle,* 12 January 1790; *Whitehall Evening Post,* 6 July 1797.
[117] P. Way, 'Class and the Common Soldier', p. 476.
[118] PRO 30/8/242, 5-6, Fawcett – 'Memorandum on Recruiting', 18 August 1787.
[119] The War Office considered launching a prosecution against James' brother under the terms of the Mutiny Act. HO 51/111, George Harrison – Colonel Wynyard, 31 March 1804.
[120] T. Jackson, *Narrative of the Eventful Life of Thomas Jackson, Late Sergeant of the Coldstream Guards, Detailing his Military Career During Twelve Years of the French War*, (Birmingham, 1847), 26-7.
[121] London Metropolitan Archives (LMA): Clerkenwell, MJ/SP/1795/02/034; Matthew Baynes fined £5.0.0 for 'harbouring and assisting' a deserter, February 1795. ERO, Q/R Sc 1/1, 8, Essex Book of Convictions; James Sayer fined £5.0.0 for buying the shoes from a militiaman, 9 April 1795; William Spurgeon tried in 1805 for buying a soldiers' regimentals, *Bury and Norwich Mercury*, 16 January 1805.
[122] HO 42/82, 72-3, Wingfield – Hugoning, 7 April 1805. For a publican who hid a deserter for three days see *Maidstone Journal*, 29 July 1794.

Irish deserters, in particular, could rely upon the support of their own ethnic communities. While being escorted in handcuffs through London James Ruggan, for example, broke free of his captors and ran into Covent Garden Market:

> [Ruggan] got under a stall, and upon the Prisoner's speaking Irish, several women covered him over with Baskets, and threatened to kill the witness [Sergeant James Hogg].[123]

The inhabitants of the Irish enclave of St Giles were also prone to violent resistance whenever the Bow Street Runners attempted to execute warrants for the apprehension of deserters.[124] Similarly, in September 1804, when a deserter was captured and held in the Horse Shoe pub by a small detachment of the 81st Regiment, a 'prodigious multitude' collected outside and a 'regular siege was commenced'. So menacing was the crowd that the soldiers were obliged to break a hole through the back wall of the pub and to make their escape towards Tottenham Court Road.[125] Six labourers were convicted for assaulting Captain Shaw and his party during the attempted rescue and the incident led to stricter policing of the area.[126] Twenty men were taken up after magistrates issued warrants to search several houses in St Giles 'suspected of harbouring deserters' but similar raids on pubs in 1805 were again a locus for violent conflict.[127]

For the Irish poor, and for those on the fringes of criminality, the practice of enlisting for the bounty money and immediately deserting was clearly seen as an acceptable and convenient means of supplementing one's income. In London, and 'for fifty miles around', Colonel Ross believed there were 'an uncalculable [sic.] number of bad characters' who were prepared to engage in this 'dreadful Traffic'.[128] John Oswell, for example, who narrowly escaped execution for having enlisted and deserted four times in the space of fourteen months, confessed that he had been encouraged to do so by his father who 'led him into habits of inebriety, and not only advised him to enlist into different regiments, but received part of the money, which was

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[123] WO 71/198, GCM Proceedings Chelsea Hospital, 27 July 1804.
[124] Linebaugh and Rediker describe St Giles as 'virtually an autonomous zone of the motley proletariat'. In 1798 one Bow Street officer was killed during an attempt to apprehend deserters. Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, p. 250; J.M. Beattie, *The First English Detectives: The Bow Street Runners and the Policing of London, 1750-1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 197-8.
[125] *The Times*, 10 September, 18 September 1804.
[126] LMA, MJ/SR/13705, Middlesex Sessions Rolls, 17 September 1804.
[127] Raids in 1805 on pubs in Johnson's Court, where 'deserters from the army and navy' were supposed to be residing, ended in bloodshed. *The Morning Post*, 14 September 1804; *The Times*, 5 February 1805.
[128] WO 71/182, Ross – Brownrigg, 1 and 11 January 1799.

iniquitously procured by so doing'.[129] In North West England, where recruits could easily gain passage to Dublin, the practice of 'bounty jumping' was so acute in 1804 that recruiting officers in Lancashire refused to enlist any more Irishmen.[130]

Crimps exacerbated the desertion problem by encouraging repeated enlistments and sharing their knowledge of the recruitment process with bounty jumpers. Joseph Pickard, for example, admitted to having made an agreement with James Noble, a 'crimp residing at Guildford', to defraud the South Hampshire Militia.[131] It is unclear exactly how much desertion can be put down to this kind of 'swindling'.[132] The large volume of recruits who absconded *immediately* after enlistment in the Army of Reserve or the militia between 1803 and 1805 certainly suggests that premeditated bounty jumping was a sizeable part of the problem.

However, for the majority of recruits, enlistment was less about the bounty money, most of which was quickly spent on the purchase of 'necessaries', and more about the need for a steady income. Many soldiers had wives and families to support[133] and, while pay in the forces was low, military service was at least a reliable source of income. Enlisting came at a price however. For those with a stake in the land or a skill in a craft, joining the army or militia entailed the loss of a degree of economic independence.[134] Much of the desertion which occurred in England should be considered, from this perspective, as an attempt on the part of soldiers to reclaim control over their labour by returning to civilian patterns of work. Occasionally soldiers confessed in the courtroom that they deserted in order to seek employment elsewhere. John Young, for example, was found working as a 'gentleman's groom' in London and Ernest Mellin deserted to gain 'better situations' in the employ of a sugar baker.[135] Often the low pay of the army and militia was not enough to meet soldiers' familial responsibilities. Hence men deserted in order to seek better paid work. William Goldsmith, for example, stated:

> The cause of his Desertion to be the Extreme want of a Wife and four helpless Children, whom He hoped to support by working

[129] WO 71/197, Dakins – Duke of York[?], 7 August 1804.
[130] HO 50/110, Statham - Wilson, 18 Feb 1804; HO 50/399, Ridgeway – Brown, 19 November 1804.
[131] See WO 71/197, GCM Proceedings Brighton, 8 June 1804.
[132] D.I. Eaton, *Reflections on the Pernicious Custom of Recruiting by Crimps*, (London, 1795), p. 15.
[133] P. Lin, 'Citizenship, Military Families', p. 14; Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army*, pp. 24-6.
[134] Way, 'Class and the Common Soldier', p. 466.
[135] WO 71/203, GCM Proceedings Dover, 23 October 1805; WO 71/208, GCM Proceedings Haslar Barracks, 6 August 1806.

> near them. He further alleges that He has maintained them ever since his Desertion without any assistance from the Parish of Sandwich where they now reside.

The fact that Goldsmith was sentenced to the maximum 1,000 lashes suggests that the officers at his trial were unimpressed by the impertinence of his defence.[136] Similar themes, and the same defiant tone, can be seen in an extraordinary anonymous letter sent to the Duke of Richmond in 1793:

> I am a deserter out of his majesty sarvis … and there is to the number of fourteen more of [us] Now present which maney of them has wifes and familyes in a Wreched Condishin as [they] are a fread to put there heads out to look for work for fear of Bean taking up I hope your grase will take it in to Consideration to optain a free pardon for all disarters up to this time if Not the Consequence of this if his Majesty Does not grant a free parden … he shall be shot by me the writer for I may as well die for that[,] as to be shot or flogged to death at Water Dowen Camp.[137]

As Thompson has argued, anonymous threatening letters were a customary means of expressing unvarnished plebeian grievances.[138] This letter is perhaps unique in that it portrays aspirations common to so many eighteenth-century deserters. The author strongly conveys his desire to evade capture and punishment, to find gainful employment, and to support his dependents financially.

There is convincing evidence to suggest that large numbers of deserters sought agricultural employment after leaving their regiments. As we have seen, almost half of the men in the British army were casual labourers, drawn from rural employment.[139] Much of the soldiery therefore had a thorough understanding of the seasonal fluctuations in agricultural wages. In the South East of England, it was during the harvest months that losses to desertion were most severe, suggesting that soldiers timed their escape to coincide with the upturn in wages (Figure 7).[140] Even on a national scale, it was September, when agricultural workers were most needed

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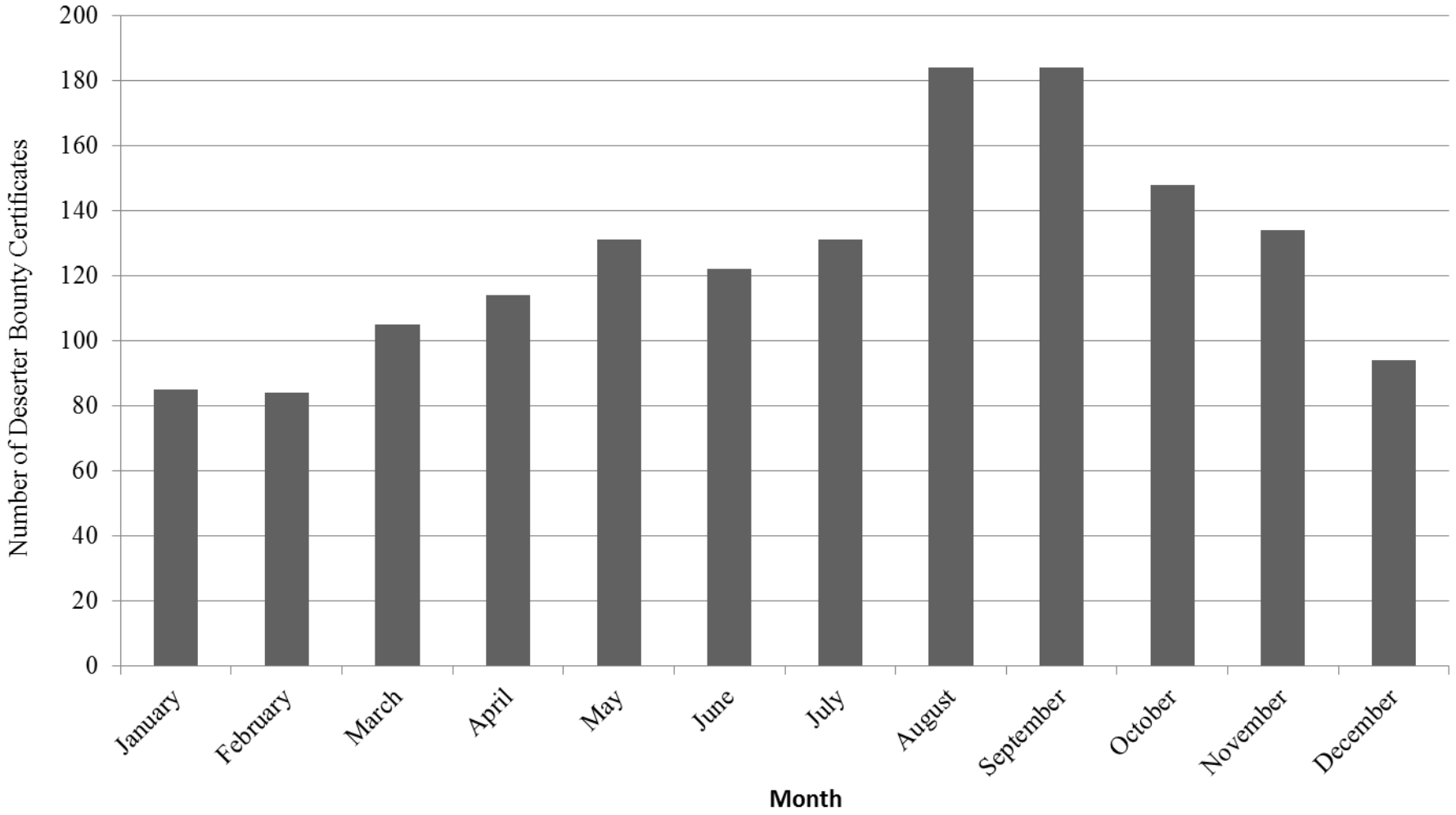
[136] WO 71/196, GCM Proceedings Sandgate, 27 October 1803.
[137] HO 42/26, ff. 273-275, Richmond – Dundas, 6 August 1793.
[138] E.P. Thompson, 'The Crime of Anonymity', in D. Hay, et al (eds.), *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (Bristol: Allen Lane , 1975), pp. 255-309.
[139] See Chapter 2.1 and Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, p. 69.
[140] In the South-East, peas were harvested in the latter part of July, followed by wheat in August, and other grains in September. See A. Driver and W. Driver, *General View of the Agriculture of Hampshire, with Observations on the Means for its Improvement*, (London, 1794), p. 52.

for the grain harvest, which was by far the most popular month in which to abscond.[141] The declining tendency in real wages, noted by Gayer *et al*, between 1793 and 1801, may have inhibited rates of desertion in England during the 1790s. Between 1803 and 1805, by contrast, the increasing money wages of agricultural labourers, and the strong demand in the labour market, was undoubtedly motivation enough for many soldiers to risk deserting.[142]

[141] See 'Return of Desertions from the Army at Home January to December 1804', *Journal of the House of Commons*, Vol. 60, (1805-6), p. 668.
[142] A.D. Gayer, W. W. Rostow and A. J. Schwartz, *The Growth and Fluctuation of the British Economy, 1790-1850: An Historical, Statistical and Theoretical Study of Britain's Economic Development* Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), pp. 54, 81.

Figure 7 - Monthly Breakdown of Deserter Bounty Certificates Issued in Essex and Kent, 1803 to 1805.



Source: Essex; TNA:PRO, E182/319-336; Kent; TNA:PRO, E182/450-472.

Furthermore, agricultural labour was advantageous to deserters, not just because of the wages on offer, but because of the anonymity and protection which a large workforce could provide.[143] Captain Coldberg of the Windsor Foresters, for example, complained that 'many Deserters get into farmer's employ and cannot be heard of'.[144] For the same reason deserters can also be seen seeking employment in the country's coal mines and ironworks. Both were places densely populated with workers known for their hostility to military and magisterial intervention. Deserters were reported both in the ironworks at Merthyr Tydfil and in the collieries around Stourbridge.[145] Similarly, in 1804, several reports from South Lincolnshire reached the Home Office, of deserters being 'received, harboured and protected' in the town of Boston.[146] Military runaways were undoubtedly attracted to the area by the abundance of unskilled work offered by contractors engaged in the draining of the Fen-lands.[147] However, the fen-drainers, who were themselves 'very numerous', were also deemed responsible for the 'encouragement of desertion'. The Adjutant General was convinced that the workmen had entered into a successful 'confederacy' to ensure that no deserter could be taken up by the local authorities, an accusation which caused considerable embarrassment amongst the Justices of the borough.[148]

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that between 1803 and 1805, during the height of invasion fears, desertion from the army and militia was a considerable problem facing the civil and military authorities. Contrary to those accounts of the period which emphasise the power of anti-invasion propaganda, and suggest that the nation was 'galvanised' in the face of the French threat, stark lines of conflict can be seen between the elites and the lower orders over the issue of desertion. Nicholas Rogers has demonstrated the ferocity with which port-side communities

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[143] Linch, 'The Recruitment of the British Army', p. 232.
[144] WO 1/1084, ff. 599-601, Coldberg – Windham, 11 June 1795.
[145] HO 42/71, f. 415, Bute –Pelham, 25 June 1803; WO 1/1048, f. 699, Hovenden Yonge, 27 July 1791. See also, R. Malcomson, 'A Set of Ungovernable People: The Kingswood Colliers in the Eighteenth Century', in J. Brewer and J. Styles (eds.), *An Ungovernable People; the English and their Law in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), pp. 85-127.
[146] HO 50/399, u.f. Cavlert –King, 26 September 1804.
[147] The introduction of horse-driven pumps in 1803 by some contractors simplified the process of drawing up water and meant that 'labourers of any description … would answer to the purpose', *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury*, 6 May 1803.
[148] HO 50/399, Cavlert – King, 22 September 1804; LRO, HILL 22/2/3/14, Jenkinson – Banks, 25 October 1804.

resisted naval service and impressment in this period.[149] This chapter supports Rogers' position. While there was no extensive rioting against the recruitment initiatives of the army and militia between 1803-5, desertion can be seen to undermine, or at least significantly limit, each new plan of action put forward by successive governments.

Far from a drunken or impulsive act, the evidence suggests that desertion was often a carefully calculated action committed as a fraud to obtain bounty money or as a means of returning to civilian forms of employment. It was also an act of protest. Often committed by small groups of soldiers working together, desertion was a rejection of the strictures and brutality of military discipline, and an attempt to regain a position of economic independence. The nature and extent of the desertion problem in this period, reiterates the point that enlistment had profound economic consequences, and that the experience of soldering at home, was by no means preferable to civilian forms of labour.

The authorities fought hard to stem the flow of deserters from the army and militia and exercised the full terror of the military law in the case of Stephen Carroll. However in England, under the watchful eyes of the civilian public, military justice was a limited tool. Deserters were inevitably treated more leniently in the home garrison. Furthermore, the help and support which some deserters received from sympathetic strangers, workforces and communities – in direct contradiction of the Mutiny Act – suggests that the labouring poor understood both enlistment and desertion to be risky but legitimate components of the 'makeshift economy'. Moreover, the sheer scale of desertion from the army and militia should be taken into consideration when attempting to gauge the loyalty of the nation at this time. Clearly not every man in uniform should be counted as a loyalist. A close examination of the experiences of the thousands of men who deserted from the army and militia in this period demonstrates that, while 'training in arms under the auspices of the state' may have roused nationalism in some, for others it was a profoundly alienating experience. Many of the poor men who joined the ranks of the regular army and the militia clearly had a very different experience of the early 1800s than those who joined the volunteers. We should be careful therefore to distinguish between the different branches of the armed forces. Moreover, the rough conflicts of this period,

[149] N. Rogers, *The Press Gang*, p. 46.

which often tell us most about the culture and lives of the labouring poor, should not be smoothed clean from the historical record in order to buttress the narrative of nation-building.

Part III – The Military and Public Order

5. The Military and Public Order: Attitudes in Transition, 1714-1792.

This chapter looks at how the role of the military in public order developed over the course of the eighteenth century. It will be argued that strongly-held elite prejudices against the notion of a 'standing army' placed considerable checks upon the role of the military in society. Over the second half of the eighteenth century, however, these elite notions were gradually worn away. It will be argued that the American and French Revolutions, as well as the growing scale of domestic protest, gradually undermined, and ultimately transformed, the terms of the high political debate. Particular emphasis will be placed upon the strike waves of 1791-2. These labour disputes were the first major outbreak of popular protest experienced after the French Revolution. Elite responses to the industrial disturbances of 1791-2 can be shown to have been qualitatively different from those which characterised the earlier period. Government sought to strengthen its hand through the building of barracks and the extension of the military resources at its disposal. Moreover, it will be seen that the central state was encouraged and supported in this endeavour by local magistrates in the worst affected regions. This chapter therefore seeks to trace how a new consensus, which granted greater latitude for military interventionism, emerged over the eighteenth century.

5.1. Military Interventions in Protest c.1714-1779

The Riot Act (1714) established a firm legal basis for the involvement of the army in the suppression of popular protests.[1] It was passed by a Whig government harried by Jacobite opposition to the Hanoverian Succession.[2] The terms of the Act indemnified civil and military officers of the crime of maiming or murdering any protestor assembled (peacefully or otherwise) above an hour after the reading aloud of the Proclamation against riots and tumults by a Justice of the Peace. Despite this seemingly draconian legislation the Riot Act did not open the floodgates for violent military suppression of all forms of protest.[3] Throughout the eighteenth century, and indeed in our own period, the civil and military authorities usually

[1] 1 Geo. I s. 2 cap. 3, Riot Act, (17 March 1714).
[2] S. H. Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland*, pp. 57-9; W.A. Speck, *Stability and Strife: England 1714-1760* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), p. 80.
[3] Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland*, p. 59.

avoided deploying lethal force when confronting protestors. Moreover, in the first half of the eighteenth century, historians have noted that local authorities were reluctant even to request military assistance, and government was equally cautious in authorizing the use of soldiers in the aid of the civil power.[4] The heavily circumscribed role of the armed forces in the context of riot control requires some further explanation.

In part, we can account for the restricted role of the military in eighteenth-century society in terms of the landed gentry's longstanding fears regarding standing armies. Standing armies were seen as the basis for the establishment of despotism or of Catholic absolutist monarchy and were therefore deemed a threat to the constitution. This eighteenth-century prejudice was rooted in seventeenth-century experience. During the Interregnum, for example, Cromwell's 'Major Generals', army officers of low social origin, effectively usurped powers from rural magnates - the 'natural rulers of the countryside' - and upset the traditional social hierarchy.[5] Although Cromwell's New Model Army was disbanded at the Restoration, 'English liberty' was again seen to be threatened under the reign of pro-Catholic James II. Parliament was suspicious of the fact that James continued his enlarged army, which trebled in size between 1685 and 1688, after the successful defeat of the Monmouth Rebellion. The monarch's subsequent attacks on the established Church, his proroguing of Parliament, and his replacement of Protestant officers in the Irish branch of the army with Catholics, all tended to confirm the suspicion that James was attempting to use a professional standing force to establish a Bourbon-style Catholic autocracy.[6]

Landed concerns about the political threat posed by James' standing army therefore played an important part in the Glorious Revolution. In the settlement which followed, a small army, under the authority of the Crown, was tolerated on the grounds of national defence. However, the constitutional compromise was that Parliament had control over the 'purse strings'; voting

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. 64; C. Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain 1758-1834* (London: Paradigm, 2005), p. 136; R. B. Shoemaker, *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century London* (London: Hambledon & London, 2004), p. 146; Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd', p. 120-1.
[5] W.A. Speck, *Tory and Whig: The Struggle in the Constituencies, 1701-15* (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 3; *Stability and Strife*, pp. 3, 5; I. Roots, 'Swordsmen and Decimators - Cromwell's Major-Generals', in R. H. Parry (ed.), *The English Civil War and after, 1642-1658* (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 87.
[6] Brumwell, *Redcoats*, p. 55; Beloff, *Public Order and Popular Disturbances, 1660-1714* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 108; Childs, *The Army, James II and the Glorious Revolution*, pp. 1-14, 204.

on both the size and pay of the army.[7] Peacetime standing armies, and the extent to which they should be used to uphold law and order, remained constitutionally controversial well into the eighteenth century.[8]

Successive Whig administrations implemented the Riot Act and deployed the regular army with a degree of caution in the knowledge that military interventionism could invite a chorus of constitutional criticisms from their political opponents.[9] During the Wiltshire weavers' dispute of 1738, for example, a lengthy editorial in the *Gloucester Journal* criticised the use of a detachment of Foot Guards to subdue a crowd that had destroyed the property of a prominent Melksham clothier:

> When it discovers a riotous Spirit in the People, [Government] must not trust in the trite, and, of late, too common Way of suppressing, or rather stifling the Discontents of the Subjects by a *Military Force*; which may only spread the Gangrene farther… *A Body of Troops* may disperse *Rioters*, and cause an outward Face of *Quiet* on the People; but this is not *giving Bread to the Hungry,* nor *covering the Naked with a Garment* … a Government ought to shew themselves, by looking with the utmost Integrity and Care, into the *real Causes* of a Riot and using all possible Means to redress all *True Grievances* of the People.[10]

Similarly, the use of troops to contain a bitter strike in the North Eastern colliers in 1765 drew a great deal of negative editorial attention in the London press:

> I am really heartily grieved and pained to hear that the light-horse have been out against the poor pitmen … it really vexes me as an Englishman, as a man born in a free country, to see the fashion daily more and more prevailing of sending out a regular military force to oppose every commotion of the people … we may soon be reduced to

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[7] Schwoerer, *The Anti-Army Ideology,* p. 4; Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army*, p. 45.

[8] The 'very modest' peacetime establishment, (which allowed for just 17,000 home troops in the 1783) is testament to the survival of the anti-army ideology into the last quarter of the eighteenth century. See Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland,* p. 209; and for vociferous debate on the reduction of the army in the Commons see *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England: from the Norman Conquest in 1066 to the Year 1803*, (London, 1816), Vol. 10, (Commons), 3 February 1738, col. 397-457; (Lords), 9 March 1738, col. 479-561.

[9] Gilmour, *Riot, Rising and Revolution*, p. 143.

[10] Anon., 'An Essay on Riots … of the Poor Wiltshire Manufacturers', *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. 9 (London, 1739), p. 7. Colley attributes this essay to the Tory clergyman Thomas Andrews; Colley, *Defiance of Oligarchy*, p. 159.

> a military power, and every gentleman depend upon the favour of the army.[11]

To some extent then, when considering the deployment of soldiers, government had to balance the need to maintain public order against the inevitable accusation that the army was being used to erode 'English liberty'.

Tony Hayter has demonstrated that for much of the century government attempted to protect itself from the political force of such criticisms by adopting a very specific administrative procedure for the deployment of troops. Firstly, magistrates were discouraged from calling upon troops except as a means of 'last resort'.[12] Secondly, any requests for military assistance that were made were subject to the approval of both the Secretary-at-War and the Secretary-of-State.[13] In this manner, accusations that government was allowing military commanders to act unilaterally, or beyond their legal authority, could be effectively countered. However, the practical implication of this policy was that provincial magistrates could often be left in extreme isolation. Any military assistance they might request could take several days or even weeks to arrive.[14] During the anti-militia riots of 1757, for example, the authorities of Yorkshire struggled unaided for two weeks while the Secretary-of-State prevaricated over whether to endorse requests for troops.[15] The sluggish response-times of military aid may therefore have prevented local magistrates calling for their assistance on a more frequent basis.

However, the limitations placed on the role of the military in maintaining public order did not derive solely from the policies of central government. Many magistrates were themselves sufficiently indoctrinated by constitutional ideology to revile at the idea of relying upon a military force to maintain order and exhibited a marked preference for civilian institutions. As one London J.P put it in 1738, 'a constable at the head of his posse, by a warrant from a justice of

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[11] 'Y.E' in *London Chronicle,* 1 October 1765. For discussion of the response of the London press to the strike see D. Levine, and K. Wrightson, *The Making of an Industrial Society: Whickham, 1560-1765* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 425.
[12] Hayter, *Army and the Crowd*, pp. 52-3.
[13] See Hayter's detailed description of the 'quadrilateral process' for the deployment of troops; *Ibid.*, p. 53; Palmer, *Police and Protest*, p. 64.
[14] P. Rock, 'Law, Order and Power in Late Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth Century England', in S. Cohen and A. Scull (eds.), *Social Control and the State: Historical and Comparative Essays* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983), p. 193; Thompson, 'Moral Economy', p. 120-1.
[15] Hayter, *Army and the Crowd*, p. 103.

the peace who is beloved, can do more than a colonel at the head of his regiment'.[16] While Bernard's claims were largely rhetorical he was nevertheless right to point out that magistrates had a limited amount of coercive force at their disposal in the form of the 'civil power'. Members of the community could be temporarily enlisted – as parish constables, special constables, and the *posse comitatus* – to serve under the direction of the Justice of the Peace.[17] Beloff asserts that in the early part of the century the raising of the *posse* was a fairly commonplace response to rural disorder.[18] While in the more populous towns, the swearing-in of respectable ratepayers as special constables remained common practice throughout the century.[19]

Early modern historians have, however, rightly doubted the practical ability of magistrates, constables and the *posse comitatus* to suppress instances of serious rioting on their own. Particularly where local inhabitants shared, or had empathy for, the 'legitimising notions' of the crowd, enlisting the support of the community to suppress disorder could be extremely problematic. Magistrates might have difficulty in raising a sufficient *posse* or in keeping one in the field long enough to effect its purpose. While it was not unknown for parish constables to sympathise with or even lead crowds drawn from their own communities.[20] According to Bohstedt's recent work, during the nation-wide food riots of 1740, military forces opposed crowds in one in five food riots while large bands of civilians were raised for peace-keeping duties in just one in twenty instances.[21] In addition, Bohstedt's work highlights that, in 1740, 1756 and 1766, the military was deployed in only a minority of recorded instances against the

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[16] See speech of John Bernard, *Cobbett's Parliamentary History*, (London, 1816), Vol. 10, (Commons), 3 February 1738, col. 432-3.

[17] For an overview of the growing literature on parish constables see V.A.C. Gatrell, 'Crime, Authority and the Policeman-State', in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950,* Vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 247.

[18] Beloff, *Public Order*, p. 139. Bohstedt suggests that one in fifteen food riots between 1740-1773 the *posse* was summoned see J. Bohstedt, *The Politics of Provisions*, p. 155.

[19] During the Birmingham Priestly Riots 1791, for example, several hundred special constables were sworn in and armed with half-mop sticks. Rose, 'The Priestley Riots of 1791' p. 73.

[20] K. Wrightson, 'Two Concepts of Order: Justices, Constables and Jurymen in Seventeenth-Century England', in J. Brewer and J. Styles (eds.), *An Ungovernable People? the English and their Law in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), p. 29; Randall, *Riotous Assemblies*, p. 35; Gatrell, 'Crime, Authority and the Policeman-State', p. 257 P. Rock, 'Law, Order and Power in Late Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth Century England', pp. 194-6; J. L. Hammond, and L. B. Hammond, *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832: The New Civilisation* 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, 1928), p. 82.

[21] These figures are based on 40 English food riots recorded in Bohstedt's 'Riot Census for 1740-1', [http://web.utk.edu/~bohstedt/test/, accessed 9 April 2015].

crowd and, particularly in the early stages of the protests, many food riots were allowed to run their course seemingly unopposed by local authorities.[22]

The prime weapon at the disposal of the magistrate in these mid-century disorders tended to be compromise rather than coercion. Indeed several historians have argued that the intended function of 'riot' was to underscore popular grievances and to enlist the support of local grandees in order to facilitate the amelioration of those complaints. Brewer and Styles, for example, have argued that crowd actions should be placed in the wider context of the 'negotiative process'. Collective action tended to be preceded by petitions for redress, litigation, threatening letters, or acts of arson. On these grounds, they argue that outbreaks of disorder were rarely unforeseen by the active magistrate.[23] Riot can therefore be read as the final stage in this process and as an attempt by the crowd to establish a 'dialogue through disorder'.[24]

In many mid-century food riots historians have found examples of magistrates entering into such a dialogue. In September 1766, for example, after several food riots in Gloucestershire, High Sheriff William Dallaway met a crowd at Stroud 'to speak with the chief of them'. Dallaway exhorted those present not to break the law, but he also read to them the Royal Proclamation against forestalling and regrating, and he later prevailed upon local farmers to bring their produce to market at a fixed rate.[25] Similarly, in the same year, Sir Roger Newdigate confronted a large body of colliers at Nuneaton and promised to 'satisfy all their reasonable demands' so long as they remained peaceable. Under Newdigate's supervision, the colliers searched the town for produce, which was then sold off, and the town's magistrates subsequently set the Assize of Bread.[26] In both Gloucestershire and the West Midlands then, magistrates dealt with the crowd in a manner that was placatory and overtly interventionist.

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[22] J. Bohstedt, 'The Pragmatic Economy, the Politics of Provisions and the "Invention" of the Food Riot Tradition in 1740', in A. Charlesworth and A. Randall (eds.), *Moral Economy and Popular Protest: Crowds, Conflict and Authority* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 74; J. Bohstedt, *The Politics of Provisions*, p. 154-5. For magisterial inactivity in the 1766 as 'tantamount to sanction' see Shelton, *English Hunger*, p. 95.
[23] J. Brewer, and J. Styles (eds.), *An Ungovernable People; the English and their Law in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1980), p. 17; A. Charlesworth (ed.), *An Atlas of Rural Protest in Britain; 1548-1900* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), p. 5.
[24] Randall, *Riotous Assemblies*, p. 300.
[25] A.J. Randall, 'The Gloucestershire Food Riots of 1766', Midland History, 10 (1985), pp. 76, 79-80.
[26] D.E. Williams, 'Midland Hunger Riots in 1766', *Midland History*, 3 (1976), pp. 266-7.

Similarly, a number of historians have noted that magistrates tended to eschew a repressive stance towards collective bargaining in labour disputes and instead put themselves forward in a mediatory role between masters and men.[27] Particularly in the capital, magistrates were cautious about calling on the assistance of troops to break up striking workers and Dobson suggests that by the 1760s an informal 'tripartite system of industrial relations' had emerged.[28] In 1766, for example, the Middlesex magistrate Saunders Welch, went unattended to a gathering of striking journeymen shoemakers in Cranbourne Alley and prevailed upon the workers to disperse. However, Welch also harangued the master shoemakers, listening from their first-floor windows, and successfully persuaded them to engage in wage-negotiations with their workers.[29] Several interventions of this nature have led Dobson to suggest that, in the mid-century, 'conciliation in industrial disputes' was a major part of the urban magistrate's duties.[30]

The often sympathetic response of magistrates to both food riots and trades disputes in this period can be attributed to landed acceptance of 'the paternalist model' of economic relations. As E.P. Thompson has demonstrated, many gentlemen, certainly in the mid-eighteenth century, believed in the principle of a regulated economy. This paternalist model had both a 'fragmentary real' existence, in terms of customary practices, as well as a strong ideological grounding in various pieces of Statute and Common Law.[31] Until their repeal in 1772, statutes from the reign of Edward VI prohibited dealers from engaging in the practices of forestalling (buying-up of foodstuffs before they reached the marketplace), engrossing (engaging in the wholesale purchase of grain) and regrating (purchasing stock to sell again at the same market for a profit).[32] Additionally, J.Ps were empowered to check weights and measures in the marketplace and to peg the price of bakers' loaves in relation to the going rate for wheat through the Assize of Bread.[33] Through these laws magistrates were empowered to prevent

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[27] C. R. Dobson, *Masters and Journeymen; A Prehistory of Industrial Relations 1717-1800* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), p. 77; R. Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship: Studies of our Changing Social Order* (London: John Wiley, 1964), p. 70; Christie, *Stress and*, p. 145.
[28] Dobson, *Masters and Journeymen,* p. 77.
[29] W. Whitten (ed.), *Nollekens and His Times, And Memoirs of Contemporary Artists from the Time of Roubiliac Hogarth and Reynolds to that of Fuseli Flaxman and Blake by John Thomas Smith* Vol. 1, (London: Henry Colborn, 1829), pp. 108-9; R. Paley, 'Welch, Saunders (1711–1784)', *O.D.N.B.*, [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/100608, accessed 28 May 2014].
[30] Dobson, *Masters and Journeymen*, p. 89.
[31] Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd', p. 88.
[32] 5&6 Edw VI cap. 14, Forestallers Act, (1551).
[33] Thompson, 'Morale Economy', pp. 83, 84, 88.

attempts to artificially enhance the price of foodstuffs. Similarly, the apprenticeship clauses of the Statute of Artificers, as well the Common Laws regarding the rating of wages, granted to magistrates the authority to intervene in industrial relations.[34]

When riotous crowds asserted the 'moral economy', by punishing refractory dealers or setting a 'just' price for bread, the perceived legitimacy of their actions derived in part from the paternalist tradition of England's elites. Through their emulation of officially-sanctioned market regulations food riots can be seen, not as attacks upon the established order, but as efforts to reinforce it.[35] Similarly, in relation to trades disputes, Randall has argued for the existence of an 'industrial moral economy'. When skilled workers were engaged in defending customary wages, restrictions on apprenticeship, or attempting to ward off the detrimental effects of technical innovation, they too were appealing to the tradition of the regulated economy.[36] Some of the coolness and the spirit of compromise, which we may note in magisterial responses to disorder in the first half of the century, suggests that local authorities recognized the ideological force of this appeal, and even accorded an area of licence to the riotous crowd. Furthermore, by interposing themselves at the early stages of tumultuous proceedings, and by claiming to uphold the 'moral economy' of the poor, England's elites, in times of distress, could actually strengthen their authority by asserting popular consent for their rule.[37]

By contrast, the vigorous application of repressive force could be calamitous. When magistrates called in the army or authorized the use of firearms they had to go on living in the community after the troops had left 'incurring the odium of the local population, perhaps receiving threatening letters, and being the victims of broken windows or even arson'.[38] On rare occasions, magistrates and military officers who gave premature orders for the troops to fire, before the proclamation against riots had been read, could even face legal prosecution for the

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[34] J. Rule, 'General Introduction' in Hammond and Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer*, p. xvii-xviii; A. Charlesworth and A. Randall, 'Industrial Protest, 1750-1850' in *An Atlas of Industrial Protest in Britain, 1750-1990*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p. 3.

[35] B. Sharp, 'Popular Protest in Seventeenth-Century England', in B. Reay (ed.), *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1985), p. 279; Christie, *Stress and Stability*, p. 155; Randall, 'The Gloucestershire Food Riots of 1766', p. 86.

[36] J. Rule, 'Trade Unions, the Government and the French Revolution', p. 115; Randall, *Before the Luddites*, 273.

[37] E.P. Thompson (ed.), 'The Moral Economy Reviewed', p. 263; J. Walter, 'Crown and Crowd: Popular Culture and Popular Protest in Early Modern England', in J. Walter (ed.), *Crowds and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 19, 25.

[38] Thompson, 'Moral Economy', p. 121.

consequences.[39] Fear of the 'collateral damage' which might result from the 'sledgehammer' response of the agents of central government may explain why magistrates often failed to report even serious incidents of rioting to the Secretary of State in this period.[40] Asking for support from the centre involved an admission of defeat on the part of the magistracy and the arrival of troops to the area entailed a further loss of face within the local community.

To sum up then, in the first part of the century, politically charged arguments, which associated standing armies with an overly powerful executive, operated to constrain any desire on the part of central government to deploy troops regularly, or with any rapidity, in a public order capacity. The same forces also prevented ministers from allowing military commanders stationed in the home garrison to assume any autonomy in their policing responsibilities. However, by far the most important restraining factor in this period, in terms of the limited deployment of troops in trades disputes and food riots, was the attitudes of local authorities themselves. Magistrates appear to have been sympathetic to the crowds' invocation of the moral economy. They were therefore more inclined to interpose themselves, through the use of 'good words' and compromise, or to simply turn a blind eye to disturbances, which they themselves did not feel particularly threatened by, than to invite the potentially destabilizing influence of armed troops into their communities.

5.2. Attitudes in Transition, c.1760- 1789

The ending of Tory exclusion from government, at the accession of George III, extinguished much of the party-political opposition towards the use of the military and the Riot Act, which Whig governments had to contend with before 1760.[41] The removal of such opposition allowed the political space for Viscount Barrington, during his second tenure as Secretary-at-War (1765-1778), to oversee a gradual streamlining of the procedures for requesting military assistance, and granted him a growing autonomy from the Secretary-of-State. Although the War Office maintained a 'cautious approach' well into the 1770s – asking magistrates not to request military assistance until after the civil power had proved ineffective, and refusing to deploy

[39] See the murder charges brought against Captain John Porteous (1736) and Justice Gillam (1768); Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland*, p. 65; Radzinowitz, *A History of English Criminal Law* Vol 4, p. 132; Emsley, *Great British Bobby*, p. 36; Randall, *Riotous Assemblies*, p. 40.
[40] Fletcher and Stevenson (eds.), 'Introduction' in *Ungovernable People*, p. 29; Charlesworth and Randall (eds.), *An Atlas of Industrial Protest*, p. 3.
[41] Gilmour, *Riot, Rising and Revolution*, p. 142-3.

troops on the mere anticipation of riot – Hayter has stressed the increasing efficiency of troop deployments over this period.[42] Additionally, Shelton has argued that 'the growing scale of social protests in the late eighteenth century finally dispelled any lingering doubts about the use of military force' in the context of riot control.[43] Certainly the number of recorded food riots and trades disputes balloons considerably towards the close of the century. However, changing government policy, in regards to the suppression of these instances, derived not just from the growing number of disturbances, but from changing elite perceptions regarding the threat that such disturbances posed to the existing order.

A number of historians of crime have emphasized that during the later eighteenth century a new emphasis upon order and decorum arose among England's rulers.[44] The 'rising tide of order' can be seen in the 'moralising' and 'improving' reforms imposed on numerous aspects of everyday life.[45] The striking-out of traditional blood sports, field games, parish feasts, and other 'unrefined' indulgences, is one aspect of this transition.[46] Another is the closer supervision of labour seen in the increasing criminalisation of formerly tolerated customary perquisites.[47] The gradual closeting of previously *public* punishments is a further aspect: the renunciation of the procession to Tyburn, the removal of whippings from the open streets into the privacy of the prison along with the declining use of the pillory.[48] Concurrent with these changes there seems to have been a slow erosion of elite tolerance of the 'criminal' and the 'riotous' poor.[49] Popular

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[42] Hayter, *The Army and the Crowd*, pp. 54-73.
[43] Shelton, *English Hunger*, p. 102.
[44] C. Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History* 2nd ed. (Hemel Hempstead: Longman, 1996). p. 16.
[45] The phase 'rising tide of order' is borrowed from R. Paley, 'Policing London before Peel', p. 96.
[46] R. Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).
[47] A. Randall, 'Peculiar Perquisites and Pernicious Practices : Embezzlement in the West of England Woollen Industry, c.1750-1840.' *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 35 (1990): pp.193-2; Rule, *The Experience of Labour,* pp. 124-146.
[48] G. Smith, "Civilized People Don't Want to See That Kind of Thing': The Decline of Public Physical Punishment in London, 1760-1840' in C. Strange (ed.), *Qualities of Mercy: Justice, Punishment, and Discretion,* (London: UBC Press, 1996), pp. 21-51; R.B. Shoemaker, 'Streets of Shame? The Crowd and Public Punishments in London, 1700-1820', in S. Devereaux and P. Griffiths (eds.), *Penal Practice and Culture, 1500-1900: Punishing the English* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 232-57.
[49] Gatrell, 'Crime, Authority and the Policeman-State', p. 249.

demonstrations came to be regarded as 'unacceptable, dangerous and potentially revolutionary by the beleaguered authorities at both central and local government levels'.[50]

The shifting attitudes towards the riotous poor in particular, can be in part attributed to the fact that oppositional politics and plebeian unrest were increasingly thrown together, and perceived to be linked. In 1768, for example, London experienced 'a great crop of industrial unrest' which coincided with the 'Wilkes and Liberty' disturbances. Rudé has stressed that the two movements were ostensibly separate but that government was particularly concerned by the possibility of striking workers swelling the ranks of Wilkite demonstrators.[51] Exaggerated fears of a potential 'revolution' compelled government to repeatedly bring troops against both election crowds and workers' demonstrations.[52] Six Wilkes supporters were killed in the 'massacre of St George's Fields' in May of 1768 and, in 1769, troops swamped East London after the Foot Guards were involved in a bloody shootout with a gang of silk weavers.[53] The firm response of government to these disorders is suggestive of both their intensity and their perceived threat to the stability of London.

Although Wilkes was no revolutionary, historians have suggested that his protracted election campaign had important ramifications for the development of an anti-aristocratic reform movement in England. 'Wilkes and Liberty' touched on issues of a free press, an unrepresentative parliament and an overweening oligarchical government.[54] The movement may also have had an important politicising effect on London's plebeians. The campaign stimulated the formation of artisan radical debating clubs, where issues of universal suffrage were discussed, and even unskilled dockside workers were drawn into the political ferment, adopting the cry of 'Wilkes and Coal-heavers Forever'.[55] And if the Wilkes campaign 'planted

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[50] J.E. Archer, *Social Unrest and Popular Protest in England; 1780-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 75.
[51] Rudé, *Wilkes and Liberty*, pp. 90-1, 104; E. Royle, and J. Walvin, *English Radicals and Reformers 1760-1848* (Brighton: University Press of Kentucky, 1982), p. 20.
[52] Lord Mansfield believed that failing to respond to the seamen's march on the 11 May 1768 would lead to a revolution within the space of ten days. C. Dobson, *Masters and Journeymen*, p. 81.
[53] Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland*, p. 65; Hammond and Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer*, p. 169-70.
[54] Royle, and Walvin, *English Radicals and Reformers*, p. 20; J. Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 164- 179.
[55] Randall, *Riotous Assemblies*, p. 199.

the seeds' of an English reformism, these were surely nourished by the American Declaration of Independence.[56]

Social protest in the American colony, was 'central to the revolutionary process', and had ramifications on both the nature of English protest and on the perceived threat posed by such unrest.[57] Linebaugh, for example, has suggested that American politics cast a long shadow over England's ports, with sailors being particularly receptive to Atlantic 'ideas of opposition'. The Liverpool seamen's strike of 1775, which bordered on an insurrection – with the sailors taking the unprecedented action of seizing small arms from gunsmiths' shops and removing cannon from the decks of ships in the docks – provides some strong evidence for this interpretation. The strike was provoked by the lowering of wages for outbound voyages, but it took on a far more dangerous visage due to the bungled handling of the authorities, who hired armed mercenaries and allowed them to fire into a crowd of demonstrators outside the Exchange, killing several. The seamen responded with mass demonstrations and, flying a red flag, they fired their cannon over the Exchange and took control of the city.[58] Order was restored only by the arrival of a regiment of horse from Chester the following day. In the aftermath, one commentator couldn't help but observe that, 'we had Boston here, and I fear this is only the beginnings of our sorrows'.[59]

Furthermore, the Gordon Riots of June 1780 further compounded elite anxieties regarding the revolutionary potential of 'the mob'. A number of crime historians have emphasized this moment as a key watershed in terms of shifting elite attitudes towards popular protest[60] and the riots themselves are beginning to receive the historical contextualisation they deserve.[61] In the

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[56] J. Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics*, p. 179-80; Royle, and Walvin, *English Radicals and Reformers*, p. 27.
[57] E.C. Countryman, 'Social Protest and the Revolutionary Movement, 1765-1776', in J. P. Greene and J. R. Pole (eds.), *Companion to the American Revolution* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), p. 184.
[58] R.B. Rose, 'A Liverpool Sailors' Strike in the 18th Century', *Transactions of the Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 68 (1959), pp. 85-92; Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns*, p. 162.
[59] Quoted in E.P. Thompson, 'English Trade Unionism and Other Labour Movements before 1790', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 17 (1968), p. 24.
[60] Linebaugh, *The London Hanged,* pp. 330-331; Emsley, *The English Police*, p. 16; D. Philips, '"A New Engine of Power and Authority": The Institutionalization of Law-Enforcement in England 1780-1830', in V. A. C. Gatrell, B. Lenman, and G. Parker (eds.), *Crime and the Law: A Social History of Crime in Western Europe since 1500* (London: Europa, 1980), p. 164.
[61] For the most recent account of the Gordon Riots see the introduction to I. Haywood and J. Seed (eds.), *The Gordon Riots: Politics, Culture and Insurrection in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

early stages, demonstrators hostile to the Catholic Relief Bill (1778) attacked a number of West-End Roman Catholic chapels with little or no resistance from City of London magistrates, many of whom, including the Lord Mayor, Brackley Kennet, were sympathetic to the political aims of Lord George Gordon's Protestant Association.[62] Certainly, the licence granted to the crowd gave momentum to the disturbances and on 6 June 1780, 'events took a more revolutionary turn', as the crowd switched their targets of attack from symbols of popery to symbols of state power. A number of major institutions including the Palace of Westminster, the Bank of England and Lord Mansfield's house were attacked.[63]

In the most iconic moment of the Gordon Riots, troops stood awaiting permission from the City magistrates to fire on the crowd as Newgate prison was demolished and its prisoners liberated.[64] No orders were given by the J.Ps present and the Earl of Orford remarked that the Mayor of London was 'very blameable relative to the mischief which was done'.[65] Newspaper accounts and popular prints (Print 4) imply that, as rioting had become so furious and so widespread by this stage, no magistrate was willing to permit the troops to act for fear of becoming an object of the crowd's ire.[66] After a week of rioting and near-revolution, and dismayed by the 'great supineness of the civil magistrates', the King and Privy Council were forced to declare a modified form of martial law and the shooting dead of between 300 and 700 rioters was found to be the only means of restoring peace to the capital.[67]

The evident inadequacy of London's local authorities to meet the challenge of the riots was seen as a scandal and allowed the political space for new attitudes and approaches to the policing of the poor to be articulated. A slew of newspaper commentaries[68] and pamphlets[69] emerged

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[62] Rudé has suggested that the magistracy 'virtually condoned' the assaults on Catholic properties'. Rude, *Crowd in History*, p. 263; C. Hibbert, *King Mob: The Story of Lord George Gordon and the Riots of 1780* (London: Longman's, 1958)., pp. 43-4, 64-5, 56-61, 129.
[63] Haywood and Seed (eds.), *The Gordon Riots*, p. 5.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[65] Norfolk Records Office, BUL 16/13/11, Horatio Walpole - Wiggett Bulwer, 29 June 1780.
[66] *Whitehall Evening Post*, 10 June 1780; One magistrate is quoted as saying "Good God, Sir, if I should give such permission, I should have my house burnt down in a quarter of an hour".
[67] Haywood and Seed (eds.), *Gordon Riots*, pp. 5-6; Hibbert, *King Mob*, p. 88-91.
[68] 'An Englishman' criticised London's magistracy in *London Courant,* 30 June 1780; while 'G.A' observed 'there is no police in this country; [thus] there is no authority but what is trampled on and laughed at' in *London Chronicle*, 25-27 July 1780.
[69] Emsley, *The English Police*, p. 20; See for example W. M. Goodschall, *A General Plan of Parochial and Provincial Police,* (London, 1787); George Barrett, *An Essay Towards Establishing a System of Police on Constitutional Principles* (London, 1786); J. Hanway, *The Citizen's Monitor: Shewing the Necessity of a Salutary*

advocating centralisation and reform of London's police and it is in the 1780s that we see the first efforts of government to introduce a centrally co-ordinated system of stipendiary magistrates in the capital.[70] Furthermore, the Gordon Riots radically destabilised constitutionalist notions that the 'civil power' alone was the best means of maintaining the peace. In the event, it was the military, in spite of the magistracy, that had saved London from a worse fate. At least one innovative writer suggested a dramatic extension of the army's role in policing by allowing military officers themselves to read the Riot Act.[71] Although this specific plan received little traction lessons were clearly drawn from the 'June days'.[72] In the 1780s and 90s the Gordon Riots were remembered as a 'blot on our English History and Character', one which should never be allowed to happen again.[73]

In contrast to the tone of public opinion in the first half of the century, which, as we have seen, was frequently condemnatory of military interventions, after 1780 commentators frequently justified the vigorous suppression of protest by way of reference to the botched handling of the Gordon Riots. During the London Crimp Riots of 1794, for example, one editor announced; 'we know from experience that mobs are to be subdued by terror only; and not by reason'.[74] While yet another lamented:

> Had those who pulled down the Sardinian Ambassador's Chapel been fired upon by the Guards, and pursued by the horse until they were completely defeated, *there* the riot would have ceased. But an ill-timed lenity encouraged the insurgents to proceed, and produced widespread devastation which followed.[75]

In the intervening period between the Gordon Riots and the Crimp Riots, the French Revolution had, of course, compounded elite fears of a popular rising. William Pitt was informed direct

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Police … (London, 1780). For a full bibliography of police reform literature see L. Radzinowicz, *A History of English Criminal Law and its Administration from 1750 the Criminal Under Restraint* Vol. 3 (London: Stevens & Sons, 1977), pp. 579-89.

[70] D. Philips, '"A New Engine of Power and Authority": The Institutionalization of Law-Enforcement in England 1780-1830', in V. A. C. Gatrell, B. Lenman, and G. Parker (eds.), *Crime and the Law: A Social History of Crime in Western Europe since 1500* (London: Europa, 1980), p. 165.

[71] A. Ramsay, *Observations upon the Riot Act, With an Attempt Towards the Amendment of it. By a Dilettante in Law and Politics* (London, 1781), pp. 14-15.

[72] Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, p. 72-3.

[73] *The Trails of the Offenders Apprehended For the Riots in the Borough of Yarmouth, Norfolk,* (London, 1792), p. 25.

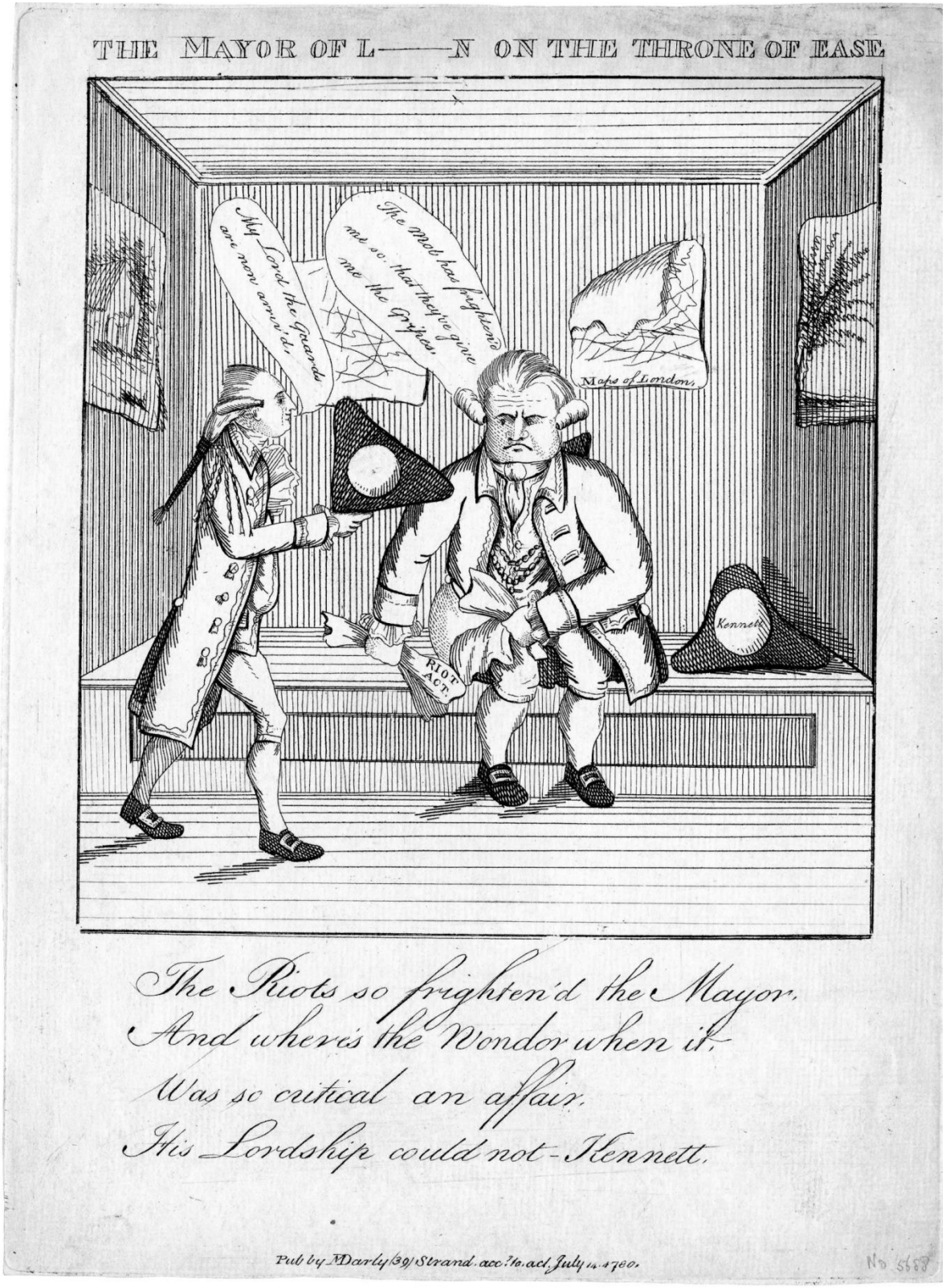
[74] *Whitehall Evening Post*, 19-21 August 1794.

[75] *Times*, 23 August 1794.

from Paris that the French monarchy had been undone by a combination of a 'Panic-struck' magistracy and an unreliable army during July 1789.[76] With such immediate examples of unchecked disorder spiralling out of control with disastrous consequences it is perhaps unsurprising that England's governors in the late eighteenth century adopted a much more vigorous approach to the suppression of protest.

[76] PRO 30/8/110/1, ff. 163-4, William Eden, Paris – Pitt, 27 August 1789.

Print 4 - BMSat 5688, Anon, *The Mayor of London on the Throne of Ease*, (London, 1780).



Lord Mayor Kennet shown defecating in fear of the mob and wiping his behind on the Riot Act.

5.3. The Military and Labour Disputes, 1791-2

Figure 8 - Showing Military Presence in Labour Disputes in England, 1791-2

Year	No. of Labour Disputes (Dobson)[a]	Additional Labour Disputes (War Office Papers)[b]	Total Reported Labour Disputes	Instances of Military Presence	% Labour Disputes with Military Presence
1791	13[c]	5	18	11	61.1%
1792	25	2	27	14	51.9%
Total	38	7	45	25	55.6%

[a] Dobson, *Masters and Journeymen*, pp. 154-70.

[b] WO 1, 'War Office In Letters', 1791, 1792. For detailed sources see Appendix II.

[c] Dobson actually records 14 strikes in England in 1791. However, two of these, the hatter's and stockingers' strikes, are recorded as occurring in Swaffham and Dareham in Norfolk. In actual fact, these dispute took place concurrently at Nottingham, and troops were sent from Norfolk to suppress them. I have chosen to record this strike as a single instance. See *Norfolk Chronicle,* 12 March 1791.

Historians are agreed that the last decade of the eighteenth-century saw a marked upswing in labour militancy.[1] While our sources for comparison are certainly imperfect, recent studies have argued that the 1790s may well have seen a greater number of strikes than in any of the preceding decades.[2] In particular, Dobson's useful index of trades disputes points us to the period 1791-2 as a moment of unusually high workplace militancy. An attempt has therefore been made to reconstruct the official responses to the labour disputes of these years and to place this in the context of what we know of earlier periods.

Dobson's list of trades disputes recorded in the London press has been used in conjunction with Home Office and War Office files to get an impression of how frequently the military were called in response to instances of industrial unrest.[3] This evidence (Figure 8) suggests that the military were in attendance at a considerable proportion locations in response to the industrial disputes recorded by Dobson. The overall figures of 55.6 per cent, however, should be treated

[1] Wells, *Insurrection*, p. 48; Dobson, *Masters*, p. 29.
[2] Chase, *Early Trade Unionism*, p. 75.
[3] Dobson, *Masters and Journeymen*, pp. 154-70; HO 42, Home Office in-Letters; HO 43, Home Office out-Letters; WO 1, War Office in-Letters; WO 4, War Office out-letters, 1791-2 have all been consulted.

with caution. While Dobson's survey remains the most complete national study of eighteenth-century trades disputes which we have, a number of historians have articulated doubts about its completeness.[4] Firstly, many labour disputes recorded in the provincial press may not have been reproduced in the sources consulted by Dobson. Secondly, as suggested by the column of 'additional labour disputes' found in the War Office papers, some disputes may not have been recorded at all in the newspapers. Thus we must consider the total reported instances of labour disputes as an extremely provisional estimate.

With regard to the War Office records, Roger Wells has cautioned against the reading-off of these sources as a 'complete corpus' of military interventions. It is possible that, as Wells suggests, some Commanding Officers operated independently of the Secretary-at-War, and that they subsequently failed to report back their movements.[5] Wells is correct to urge caution. I have found a handful of examples of regional commanders acting independently of the centre. However, this pattern of behaviour was not the norm. Officers were expected to keep their superiors informed of their activities. Moreover, the Secretary-at-War's correspondence from this period suggests that many officers – ever-concerned with promotion – were keen to gain credit for their extracurricular activities, including their involvement in riot-control duties, and were keen to communicate their movements to their superiors.[6] Although imperfect, I would suggest that the War Office papers are probably a fairly accurate representation of the military interventions which took place in these years.

Moreover, even if we concede the criticisms mentioned above, it could be argued, presuming ministers read the London press and opened their post, that the sources used here are a reasonable approximation for the information which was available to Whitehall regarding the number of major labour unrests which had occurred in the country and the resources which had been dedicated from the centre toward their control and suppression. From this statistical information it is clear that, contrary to the image presented in the secondary literature for the earlier eighteenth century, by the 1790s a large proportion of labour disputes involved some

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[4] Charlesworth, et al. (eds.), *An Atlas of Industrial Protest in Britain, 1750-1990*, p. xi; M. Chase, *Early Trade Unionism*, p. 75; Rule, *Experience of Labour*, p. 148.

[5] R.A.E. Wells, 'Counting Riots in Eighteenth-Century England', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 37 (1978), p. 69.

[6] It was not uncommon for officers seeking promotion to specifically make reference to their former contribution to preserving the peace. For example see WO 1/1020, f. 341, Lieutenant Reade – Major-General Conway, 20 October 1783.

element of military response. The growing importance of the army to the neutralising of trades disputes also comes through in the qualitative detail of the records left behind from these interventions and emphasizes the importance of the military in preventing *potential* outbreaks of disorder as well as containing actual instances of 'collective bargaining by riot'.

A minority of the military interventions in the labour disputes of 1791-2 conform to the traditional War Office policy of deploying troops only in cases of 'extremity'. In Wiltshire, for example, the cavalry were twice called to respond to machine-breaking and property damage committed by groups of woollen-spinners.[7] In both cases, the size of the crowds involved, and the highly charged circumstances from which these protests arose, suggests that they were commotions well beyond what the civil power was capable of containing. The magistrates of Trowbridge emphasised that the town's constables had been knocked down and the prisoners they had taken up for riot had been liberated by the crowd. Justice Gibbs remarked, 'of course, after such treatment, it is totally impossible they can do their Duty or [that] we [can] put Laws in force'.[8] As Adrian Randall has demonstrated, the South-Western woollen workers were at this time engaged in a protracted battle with the clothiers over the introduction of scribbling jennies.[9] It was these machines which were the focus of the crowd's attack, and it was the violence and destruction of the workers which was used as the justification for a military presence by local JPs.

In many other disputes, however, troops were brought in where no such dramatic scenes of violence existed. Indeed, a clear development from this period is the extent to which local authorities began to request military aid in anticipation of industrial disorder, at the first signs of mass walk-outs. Of course, peaceful workers' demonstrations were often accompanied by the explicit or implicit threat of violence. Especially in sectors where workers were grouped together in large numbers, such as in mining and weaving, strikes tended to represent risings of entire communities and the tactics of 'mass intimidation' were commonplace.[10] For example, when upwards of 1,000 workers from the foundries and collieries of Coalbrookdale rallied to resist changes to their rate of wages, they backed their demands with the threat of destroying

[7] See Appendix 1, Bradford-upon-Avon, May 1791; Trowbridge, August 1792.
[8] WO 1/1050, ff. 57-8, Gibbs – Yonge, 17 September 1791.
[9] A. Randall, *Before the Luddites*, pp. 81-3.
[10] Thompson, 'English Trade Unionism', p. 22; Rule, *Experience of Labour*, p. 184.

the house of Mr Reynolds, the proprietor of the works.[11] While the Mayor of Leicester inferred the threat of violence posed by a procession of 200 canal navigators from their numbers and their 'very riotous Manner'.[12] Troop movements in these instances stemmed from traditional fears of local authorities regarding certain 'ungovernable' communities and their ability to threaten large-scale disorder.

Coal miners were notoriously perceived to be one such grouping.[13] The bargaining power of the Kingswood colliers, for example, was bolstered by their numbers, their close knit patterns of work, but also by their ability to completely interrupt essential supplies of coal to the homes and industrial concerns of the inhabitants of Bristol.[14] When the colliers of the Mendip hills went on strike for a wage increase, those of Kingswood followed suit shortly afterwards, demanding pay parity.[15] In both cases pay rises of two pence a day were quickly granted to the workers at the behest of local grandees, concerned by the potentially destabilising effects of the strikes, and the miners returned 'cheerfully to work'. The Duke of Beaufort was said to have 'interested' himself on behalf of the Kingswood men while the High Sherriff of Somerset, J.H. Cox, gathered the coal proprietors in his own locale and brokered a deal with the Mendip miners.[16] At the same time, however, several troops of dragoons were stationed at Camerton, Wells, and Bath as a precautionary measure in case negotiations broke down.[17] The military involvement in these disputes was therefore fairly peripheral. The conciliatory and mediatory approach of local authorities, in the first instance, therefore demonstrates a continuation of 'tripartite' industrial relations described by Dobson earlier in the century.

In other areas, however, we can see that this analogy is less appropriate, and the military appear to have played a more instrumental role. At Coalbrookdale, there was no mediation on the part of the authorities when workers from the 'extensive' iron foundries and mines owned by William and Richard Reynolds assembled in 'a very mutinous manner'.[18] In this instance, the Reynolds brothers were attempting to introduce a new system of regulating hours and wages.

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[11] See Appendix II, August 1791.
[12] WO 1/1049, f. 83, Neal – Yonge, 28 December 1791.
[13] Malcolmson, 'A Set of Ungovernable People', pp.85-127.
[14] HO 42/21, f. 307-8, Captain Monro – Dundas, 9 August 1792.
[15] See Appendix II, August 1792.
[16] *St James's Chronicle,* 18 August 1792; *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, 25 August 1792.
[17] HO 42/21, f. 307-8, Captain Monro – Dundas, 9 August 1792; f. 323, Captain Le Marchant – Young, 15 August 1792; HO 43/4, f. 82, Dundas – Noble, 17 August 1792.
[18] WO 1/1048, f. 215, Wm Reynolds – Thomas Pardoe, 8 August 1791.

When mass resistance to these measures occurred the employers took it upon themselves to press the High Sheriff for military assistance.[19] Although some unspecified 'concessions' to 'ease the atmosphere' were made by their employers, the discontents of the workers were subdued primarily by the hasty arrival of a troop of Oxford Blues from Worcester within twelve hours of the original request.[20] The presence of the horse, who remained in the area for several days, was said to have 'had a very good effect upon the misguided Rabble'.[21] An indication of the relief of the employers is suggested by the fact that commanding officer, Sir Charles Turner, was invited to stay at William Reynold's house, at Coalpit Bank, while Richard Reynolds donated fifty guineas to the Blues for their services.[22] Personal intervention by the Shropshire magistracy seems to have been entirely absent in this instance. The High Sheriff did not make a personal appearance and was content with simply endorsing requests for military assistance to strengthen the hands of the employers.

Other instances also demonstrate the role of the army as strike-breakers as well as keepers of the peace. In April 1792, for example, two merchants of Northwich informed Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell that there was an 'insurrection' amongst the flats navigators on the River Weaver.[23] Captain Torriano was immediately dispatched with a detachment of infantry. On his arrival however:

> '[I]nstead of finding the place, as it was represented, distracted by tumult, all was Peace, nor has there been one discordant murmur to disturb the most perfect repose.'

Despite this air of tranquillity the principal inhabitants of the town insisted that the foot soldiers should remain. As the flatmen had already been on strike for over three weeks, it seems to have been the intention of Northwich's merchants to use the troops to put pressure on their workers to return to work 'at the usual price'.[24] Similarly, in 1793, Newcastle's magistrates dealt with an

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[19] WO 1/1048, f. 215, Reynolds – Pardoe, 8 August 1791.
[20] Reynold's original request is marked 8am and his thanks to CO Charles Turner is dated 7pm suggesting troops had arrived by the evening of the 8 August. WO 1/1048, f. 215, Wm Reynolds – Thomas Pardoe, 8 August 1791; f. 211, Reynolds – Charles Turner, 8 August 1791; Trinder, *The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire*, p. 229.
[21] WO 1/1048, f. 415, Edward Pemberton – Yonge, 11 August 1791
[22] WO 1/1048, f. 211, William Reynolds – Charles Turner, 8 August 1791.
[23] WO 1/1053, f. 229, Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell – Yonge, 13 April 1792.
[24] WO 1/1053, f. 227, Extract of a letter from Captain Torriano – Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell, 20 April 1792; WO 1/1052, f. 413-4, Bayley Hall, (JP for Chester) – Secretary-at-War, 27 April 1792; WO 1/1054, f. 11, Representation from Northwich – Lord Penrhyn, 24 April 1792.

assemblage of striking miners at General Lambton's pits at Harraton by 'show[ing] them the military at a distance'.[25] The Town Clerk of Newcastle, Nathaniel Clayton, reported the success of this measure. The troops were able to retire that evening after having 'frightened the Pitmen into a return to their duty'.[26]

In these examples, the local authorities were often prepared to countenance the requests of employers for armed force on the grounds that doing so early on might prevent the escalation of existing disorder and the further diffusion of labour unrest. This seems to have particularly been the case during the strike waves of 1792. In Wigan for example, the assistance of dragoons was sought from Manchester and foot soldiers were sent by 'passage boat' along newly-built canals from Liverpool, to protect steam engines from the aggressions of miners striking for higher wages.[27] As well as wishing to prevent the destruction of steam engines, the Mayor of Liverpool justified his vigorous suppression of the miners' strike on the grounds that, he was attempting to prevent the spread of a 'contagion':

> This Riot, by being taken in time … has in my opinion saved many from the Gallows and prevented much bloodshed … Many Colliers and Cannelers from distant works had come to observe the progress of our people and, had they succeeded, it would certainly have spread far over this county.[28]

Similarly, on the East Anglian coast, sailors' strikes emerged at Great Yarmouth and Lynn in imitation of ongoing disputes at Shields.[29] Although major disorder was prevented at Lynn through the raising of the seamen's wages, the Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk reported that he was concerned about the detrimental effects this example might have, and enquired about the possibility of reinforcing the military forces in the region.[30] Subsequent seamen's strikes at Ipswich were forcefully repressed by magistrates with the aid of dragoons. Soldiers assisted in breaking up assemblies of seamen, in guarding those men willing to sail on the old terms, and in arresting several ringleaders. Three men were subsequently turned over to the navy in lieu of

[25] HO 42/23, f. 768, Shute Barrington – Dundas, 25 February 1793.
[26] HO 42/23, ff. 772-5, Clayton – Brandling, 23 February 1793.
[27] HO 42/22, f. 58-9, Mayor Blundell – Dundas, 3 October 1792.
[28] HO 42/20, f. 183, Mayor Blundell – Dundas, 7 October 1792.
[29] *St James' Chronicle,* 17-20 November 1792.
[30] HO 42/22, ff. 219-20, Townsend – Grenville, 31 October 1792.

criminal charges, and the 'zeal and activity' of Ipswich's Mayor, Charles Sisted, was recognized by the Home Secretary.[31]

Although the authorities seem to have resorted to troops in this period with greater speed, and sometimes in anticipation of riot, we may note a certain continuity of the military's role in the foregoing examples. In each instance they involved conflicts among sailors, weavers, and miners. These were large workforces whose ability to organize collectively and to raise a disturbance was notorious throughout the eighteenth century. By contrast, the journeymen and artisan trades, whose numbers were usually smaller, were not generally associated with the tactics of mass intimidation.[32] Particularly in the service industries, strikes tended to consist of the orderly withdrawal of labour, and they were often accompanied by newspaper insertions emphasizing the 'reasonableness' of their demands.[33] Many trades disputes among the artisanal trades between 1791-2 adhered to this model of respectability and did not therefore elicit a great deal of concern among the authorities nor did they justify a military response.[34]

Nevertheless, there are a handful of examples in this period where the army did play a role in countering strikes among urban artisanal trades. In Nottingham, for example, the journeymen shoemakers collected together and demanded an increase in wages in May 1792. The response of the authorities was particularly forceful:

> The [6th Enniskillen Dragoons] assembled – loaded their pieces with ball, and, with drawn sabres so intimidated the heroes of the *strap*, that, after a short parley they took to their heels'.[35]

Two cordwainers were subsequently charged at the Quarter Sessions for conspiracy and for offering co-workers access to a considerable strike find.[36] While in Birmingham 'meditated riots' among the striking brass button-makers, rather than actual tumultuous assemblies, were enough for the authorities to bring out the Oxford Blues and have them parade the streets.

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[31] Suffolk Records Office, C/2/9/1/1/1/141/11, Information of Dennis Rowland, 13 November 1792; HO 42/22, f. 454, Sisted – Nepean, 20 November 1792; HO 42/24, f. 555-6, Sisted – Nepean, 18 November 1792; HO 43/4, f.188, Henry Dundas – Stisted, 20 February 1792; HO 42, f. 399-400, Nepean – Sisted, 17 November 1792.
[32] Thompson, 'English Trade Unionism', p. 22.
[33] Poole, 'Popular Politics in Bristol', p. 363-4.
[34] For example, disputes among the tailors and builders of Bristol, the scythmakers of Sheffield and the London leather dressers were not attended by troop movements.
[35] *Sheffield Register,* 18 May 1792.
[36] *London Chronicle,* 16-18 October 1792.

Newspaper editors commended the Birmingham magistrates for using 'the terror of the military' in order to 'prevent [the button makers] from becoming riotous'.[37] One editor was particularly explicit about the potential threat posed by these workers: 'There is no doubt that here would be a riot if the military were absent'.[38] The assertive response of Birmingham's magistrates may well have been influenced by the disastrous 'Priestly Riots' of the preceding year, which were, in many ways, the Gordon Riots in microcosm.[39] Likewise the Nottingham shoemaker's dispute occurred within a week of food rioting in the town.[40] Yet despite these local considerations, the evidence form these years suggests a general trend amongst local magistrates situated in northern towns and industrial regions not to mediate in industrial conflicts but to suppress them with the threat of armed force.

As further evidence of this trend, we may observe magistrates in these same locations appealing not just for temporary military aid to oppose outbreaks of labour unrest but for permanent rolling contingents of soldiers in order to prevent the possibility of disorder. The experiences of the Mayor of Liverpool in suppressing a general strike among dockside carpenters, labourers, and seamen in 1791, coupled with his successful use of troops during the Wigan miners' strike of 1792, persuaded him that it would be 'absolutely necessary in future to have a Regiment of Horse & Two of Infantry *always* in this County'.[41] Likewise in Leicester, the fear of a future 'rupture' between the stocking weavers in their employers ('which is not improbable from the present mutinous Disposition of them') convinced the Mayor that the Leicester could not be considered 'quite secure without military'.[42] Even in Ipswich, Charles Sisted urged the Home Office to consider providing 'an armed Boat ready at the call of the Magistrates' to ensure that 'nothing could ever happen in this small Port again'.[43]

However, the most persistent cries for a permanent garrisoning of troops came from the magistrates and employers situated in the weaving districts of Somerset and Wiltshire and in the coal ports of the North East. In the South West, the continuing battle over the introduction of machinery ensured that the clothiers lived in constant fear of attacks upon their property.

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[37] *Lloyds Evening Post*, 15-17 February 1792.
[38] *Diary of Woodfall's Register*, 16 February 1792.
[39] Rose, 'Priestley Riots'.
[40] *Sheffield Register,* 18 May 1792.
[41] HO 42/22, ff. 58-9, Mayor Blundell – Dundas, 3 October 1792; See Appendix 1, Liverpool, August 1791.
[42] WO 1/1049, f. 83, Neal – Yonge, 28 December 1791.
[43] HO 42/22, f. 421-2, Sisted – Dundas, 18 November 1792.

Requests for permanent detachments of troops to prevent such incidents therefore came from Bradford-upon-Avon, Taunton, and from Trowbridge.[44] In the latter town there was perhaps the strongest cause for concern:

> [W]e beg leave to observe, such a large populous Town as this (perhaps the first in the Kingdom of the Woollen Manufactory) ought not to be without a military assistance, especially at this time, when the Minds of the People are ripe for Riots and Mischief.[45]

These fears were proven to be justified. When the troops were removed from the town in September 1791 in order to assist in the Mendip miners' dispute. Five hundred woollen-spinners collected, in order to intimidate the clothiers, and were only dispersed by the arrival of a reinforcement of dragoons from Frome.[46]

Likewise in the North East, it has been well documented that the coal trade was regularly interrupted by strikes amongst sailors, keelmen, and pitmen.[47] The fact that any stoppage in the North East affected London's supply of coals placed each of these groups in a strong bargaining position. The coal proprietors were particularly keen to explore any means for the curtailment of these regular outbreaks of collective bargaining and felt they had a strong case for the permanent stationing of troops. After a particularly fractious crop of seamen's strikes in 1785, for example, government received a petition with 100 signatories lobbying for the erection of barracks in Sunderland. Both local justices and employers argued that barracks were required in order to prevent damage to property in the town (ships in particular), to secure the 'very valuable Collieries adjoining thereto', and to counter the 'the turbulent Spirit of the Seamen, Keelmen and Labourers belonging to the said Town and Port'.[48] In 1792, when the seamen repeated their wage-bargaining campaign, the ship-owners of South Shields again argued that 'Government ought to be at the expense of Barracks here … it is the earnest wish of all people

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[44] WO 1/1051, f. 223, Bethis, Bush and Jones – Yonge, 7 December 1792; HO 42/25, f. 492, Inhabitants of Taunton –Franklin, London, 2 June 1793.
[45] WO 1/1050, f. 55-6, Philip James Gibbs and acting magistrates of Trowbridge – Yonge, 13 August 1791.
[46] Randall, Before the Luddites, p. 82.
[47] J.M. Fewster, *The Keelmen of Tyneside: Labour Organisation and Conflict in the North-East Coal Industry, 1600-1830* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011); N. McCord, and D. E. Brewster, 'Some Labour Troubles of the 1790s in North East England', *International Review of Social History*, 13 (1968), pp. 366-83;
[48] HO 42/6, f. 420, Petition of the Magistrates, Merchants, Owners of Ships and Principal Inhabitants of the Town and Port of Sunderland, 10 June 1785; *General Evening Post*, 17 May 1785; *Gentlemen's Magazine*, (1785), p. 397.

here, to have the Mob quelled'.[49] While from Newcastle, the Secretary-at-War was informed that, 'all Descriptions of Persons interested in Collieries' were themselves prepared to meet the expense of building cavalry barracks in the town in the hope that having a couple of troops of horse constantly on hand would assist in counteracting the 'tumultuous spirit' of the pit men and sailors.[50]

5.4. Pitt's Barrack-Building Programme and the Growth of Armed and Auxiliary Forces, 1792-1801

Pitt's barrack-building programme, initiated in 1792, established the country's first network of inland barracks. A number of historians have emphasized the importance of this moment, which represented a decisive break from earlier policy driven by constitutional rhetoric. Fortescue, for example, described the introduction of barracks as a 'revolution' in the lodging of soldiers.[51] Although coastal forts had been permitted as a defence against invasion, 'inland fortresses' for the vast majority of the eighteenth century, were resisted as inimical to the constitution. Judge Blackstone's argument ran that a tyrannical executive power, when equipped with barracks, could hide from public view the true size of their forces and make a 'distinct order of the profession of arms' by separating them from civil society. Thus, according to Blackstone, 'in a land of liberty … no barracks, no inland fortresses should be allowed.[52] As Emlsey has demonstrated, in the early 1790s, this doctrine was entirely inverted. [53] With the arrival of republican doctrines to England's shores in the aftermath of the French Revolution, it was deemed a positive virtue, and essential to the survival of the constitution, to separate the soldiery from discontented individuals who might wish to subvert the troops for revolutionary purposes. This fear was based upon reports received at the Home Office, that radicals were actively attempting to circulate the *Rights of Man* among the soldiery.[54]

In response to these reports, in May 1792, the Deputy Adjutant General, Colonel De Lancey, was sent on a clandestine mission to visit troops stationed in the major manufacturing towns.

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[49] HO 42/22, ff. 263-4, Bulmer - Burdon, 3 November 1792.
[50] WO 1/1054, f. 9, Clayton – Lewis [?], 10/03/1792; HO 42/25, f. 201, Petition of Mayor and Magistrates of Newcastle – Dundas, 28 March 1793.
[51] Fortescue, *A History of the British Army* Vol. 4, p. 903.
[52] W. Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England in Four Books*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1773), pp. 408-14.
[53] Emsley, 'The Military and Popular Disorder', p. 21.
[54] Reports came into the Home Office of this activity happening at Leeds, Leicester, Sheffield and Manchester in 1792 Emsley, 'Political Disaffection and the British Army in 1792', pp. 232-3.

He was tasked with both examining the reliability of the soldiery, and with assessing the political state of those places.[55] In Manchester De Lancey unearthed evidence of a small but dedicated group of a dozen or so soldiers among the Scots Greys who gathered every Saturday to read and discuss the works of Paine. The Colonel was convinced Manchester's middle-class radicals had provided the troops with the pamphlets and invited the soldiers to socialise with them.[56] While at Sheffield, a considerable confrontation had occurred between the soldiers of the 6th Enniskillen Dragoons – led by their officers – and the town's large and committed radical population. The troops had been pinned down to their quarters by an angry crowd who pelted the windows of the Tontine pub. In the absence of the magistracy, the officers ordered their men to 'repulse' the crowd causing injury to fifty-two persons.[57] The Colonel's report makes it clear that the dragoon officers and the crowd were at variance over the attempts by the town's radicals to 'gain the soldiers over to their party'.[58]

On the basis of this rather patchy evidence of subversion, De Lancey made a case for the dangers of leaving soldiers in quarters in the manufacturing towns and pressed for the erection of barracks as a means to preserve their political allegiance.[59] In the autumn of 1792, Prime Minister Pitt secured a Royal Warrant to begin the building of barracks. The first were commissioned to be built in many of the towns where De Lancey had been sent to investigate – Coventry, Manchester, Nottingham, Norwich, and Sheffield.[60] The political significance of this move has been closely attended to by historians.[61] Emsley and Wells, for example, have argued from the evidence of sedition found in De Lancey's correspondence, that it was the danger of radical subversion of the soldiery which convinced Pitt of the need for barracks.[62] Undoubtedly this was an important factor. In all of those towns where the first barracks were thrown up there was some degree of radical influence which could prove dangerous to the discipline of the

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[55] HO 42/20, f. 274-7, Col De Lancey– Dundas, 22 May 1792.
[56] HO 42/20, f. 386, Colonel De Lancey – Dundas, 13 June 1792.
[57] J. Harrison, *A Letter to the RH Henry Dundas*, (London, 1794), p 6; *Sheffield Register,* 11-18 May 1792.
[58] HO 42/20, f. 390-1, Colonel De Lancey – Dundas, 13 June 1792.
[59] 'It is a dangerous measure to keep Troops in the manufacturing Towns ... unless Barracks could be established for them where they could be kept under the eyes of their officers'. HO 42/20, f. 394, Colonel De Lancey – Dundas, 13 June 1792.
[60] HO 42/22, ff.110-11, 'Report of Colonel De Lancey Relative to the Placing of Troops in Barracks in and near some of the Manufacturing Towns', 12 October 1792.
[61] Fortescue, *A History of the British Army* Vol. 4, p. 903.
[62] Wells, Insurrection, p. 80; Emsley, 'The Military and Popular Disorder', p. 21.

troops. In Parliament, Pitt himself justified the policy on the grounds that barracks would serve 'as a preventative of the seduction of the army'.[63]

However, we should be careful not to overplay the evidence of the 'seduction' of the soldiery. Radicals may well have been interested in educating soldiers – and working men in general – in their 'rights' but there is little evidence of radical attempts to involve the soldiery in insurrectionary activities at this particular time. Even among the Scots Greys, De Lancey concluded that, 'the body of the men is yet dependable' – an assertion backed by the regiment's 'firm determination' in the suppression of the Wigan miners' strike and in their steadiness at the Newcastle-under-Lyme election disturbances.[64] Furthermore, while Sheffield's radicals may well have tried (and failed) to politicise the dragoons, De Lancey found that in Nottingham, Liverpool, Leicester, and Birmingham there had been no such approaches made to the troops who were 'in good order and very well disposed'.[65] What he did find in these towns, however, was large labouring populations 'extremely prone to Riot' due to the high money wages and the 'Dissipation' which this independence entailed.[66]

Emsley has suggested that, in addition to preventing the subversion of the soldiery, barracks were equally designed as a 'police measure'.[67] Likewise, Radzinowicz is correct to assert that barracks could not have been built without the approval of the local leaders most affected.[68] However, few historians have examined the letter books of the Secretary-at-War and considered closely the duties which the army was called upon to perform in the period immediately before these barracks were commissioned. In many of the locations where cavalry barracks were first built, we find that magistrates were anxious about being left, for even short amounts of time, without such forces. The magistracy in Coventry referred to the 'turbulency'[sic.] of the common people[69], while removing the cavalry from Manchester could not be complied with without 'endangering the quiet of the place'.[70] Pitt was surely making reference to these kinds

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[63] See Pitt's comments in *Cobbett's Parliamentary History*, (London, 1817), Vol. 30, col. 495.
[64] HO 42/22, ff. 625-6, De Lancey – Dundas, 30 November 1792.
[65] HO 42/20, ff. 386-395, De Lancey – Dundas, 13 June 1792.
[66] HO 42/20, f. 392, De Lancey – Dundas, 13 June 1792.
[67] Emsley, 'The Military and Popular Disorder', p. 17
[68] Radzinowicz, *A History of English Criminal Law*, Vol. 4, p. 121
[69] WO 1/1051, f. 279, Town Clerk of Coventry – Yonge, 11 April 1792.
[70] WO 1/1054, f. 173, Major Ramsay – Yonge, 3 October 1792. See similar concerns from Sheffield and Birmingham: WO 1/1055, f. 239, Captain Wheelock – Yonge, 24 January 1792; HO 42/20, f. 289, Joseph Carles and Dr Benjamin Spencer– Dundas, 25 May 1792.

of communications, and the important role that the army had played during the strike waves of 1791-2, when he stated to Parliament that a 'spirit had appeared in some of the manufacturing towns which made it necessary that troops should be kept near them'.[71] Moreover, after the first barracks were built in the industrial cities of the north, infantry barracks were also erected in Sunderland (1793), and cavalry barracks in Trowbridge and Taunton (1793-4), precisely the locations where, as we have seen, industrialists and magistrates had both been calling loudly for their introduction.[72] Thus the evidence for radical subversion of the troops should not be overstated. Pitt's barrack building programme was primarily a response to the industrial unrest of these years.

5.5. Impact of Barracks and the Growth of Coercive Force Available to the State.

In addition to their constitutional novelty, the impact of barracks, in regards to the policing of large industrial towns of the north, should not be understated. As we have seen, soldiers were usually quartered in public houses. They therefore tended to be thinly spread across a given settlement and it could take an officer a considerable amount of time to gather up his men when called upon to perform riot-duties. Troops in barracks, by contrast, could be mobilised with much greater speed. We can see this in action in Manchester, where the country's largest cavalry barracks, capable of holding six troops of horse, were built. In 1795, for example, a crowd intercepted a cart carrying meal at the New Cross. The crowd set about opening the sacks and distributing the contents but troops from the barracks arrived 'before they could complete their business'.[73] While in 1798, an attack was launched by disgruntled cotton spinners against the premises of factory owners who had attempted to lower their wages. They gathered in 'many thousands' and broke the windows of the factories. However the business owners praised the swift arrival of the magistrates and the Ross-shire Fencibles from the barracks – as there was 'no doubt, if it had not been for the assistance of the Civil Power and the Military that the said factories … would have been demolished and destroyed'.[74]

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[71] *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England: from the Norman Conquest in 1066 to the year 1803*, (London, 1817), Vol. 30, col. 495.
[72] BL Add. MSS 87891, 'List of Barracks', July 1794; Barracks Return from Each barrack in the Untied Kingdom, *Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. 169, (1874), pp. 321-405.
[73] *Chester Courant*, 4 August 1795.
[74] WO 5/74, f. 23, Quarters of Cavalry in Great Britain, 12 March 1798; PL 27/7, Information of James Shaw, 22 March 1798.

Barracks may also have had a symbolic value. These were large and imposing buildings, placed on the outskirts of towns, in the least built-up areas, where ground was relatively cheap, and where troops could be housed far enough away to 'prevent too free an intercourse between the soldiery and the inhabitants' (Print 5).[75] In Sheffield, for example, the barracks were built three quarters of a mile from the town on the Halifax Road, while in Manchester they were situated in the then sparsely populated region of Moss Side, half a mile from the city.[76] The separateness of the barracks made it hard for townspeople to judge how many soldiers were available for riot-duty, and therefore made it harder to calculate the chances of success of any given collective action. In Nottingham, for example, a food riot broke out when the troops quartered in the town were seen to be marching to Loughborough. The crowd, 'conceiving that the whole Regiment was gone', were given a rude surprise when three remaining troops of dragoons appeared from the barracks and 'prevented any material mischief being done'.[77] Further, the erection of cavalry barracks at Trowbridge has been rather overlooked by Adrian Randall. By 1797, Eden reported that, 'by degrees', a number of scribbling jennies had been successfully introduced in the town. It may well have been the permanent stationing of troops in the newly-erected cavalry barracks which gave the Trowbridge clothiers confidence enough to attempt to overcome local opposition to machinery.[78]

In 1790 there was enough room to quarter 21,000 troops in barracks. By the end of the Napoleonic War this figure had grown to 100,000.[79] Although many of the newly-built barracks were erected on the southern coast as a defence against invasion, and as a means of housing infantry waiting to board transport ships, the impact on the countryside was palpable.[80] When the LCS radical John Gale Jones, toured the southern coast of England in 1796, he remarked on the changed landscape, and the 'numerous barracks and fortifications which everywhere surrounded us'.[81] The Hammonds too commented on the militarisation of the Midlands and the North, describing the manufacturing districts as akin to 'a country under military occupation'.[82]

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[75] HO 42/20, f. 528-9, De Lancey – Yonge, 19 July 1792.
[76] *Ibid*; HO 42/20, f. 531, 'Plan of the Barracks at Manchester', 7 August 1792.
[77] WO 1/1089, f. 163, John Jones, Major 29th Reg Lt Dgns, Nottingham, 21/07/1795
[78] Eden, *State of the Poor*, Vol. 3, p. 802.
[79] Spiers, *The Army and Society, 1815-1914*, p. 55.
[80] Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland*, p. 62.
[81] J.G. Jones, *Sketch of a Political Tour Through Rochester, Chatham, Maidstone, Gravesend*, (London, 1796), p. 39.
[82] Hammond and Hammond, *The Town Labourer*, p. 85

While Edward Thompson argued that the growth in the coercive force available to the state, ensured that by 1815, 'the English people were held down by force'.[83] Thompson's emphasis has been vigorously denied by Perry Anderson. Anderson stresses that in 1815, 'with an army of 25,000 – the total troop force available for domestic repression – was scarcely sufficient to pin down a society of 12,000,000'. In Ireland Thompson may have had a case, but in England, Anderson argues, the power of the *ancien regime* rested on a combination of the 'bloody code' and a powerful culture of nationalism.[84]

Thompson's claims may well be overstated for the year 1815, and we should not underestimate the propaganda value of British victory at Waterloo.[85] However, in the 1790s, there is a stronger case to be made for a country held down by force. Social historians have tended to avoid quantifying in any detail the extent of the forces available to the state. The total 'establishment strength' of the army, voted by Parliament, can be easily ascertained[86] yet the historian is presented with a number of difficulties in forming precise statistics for the actual number of soldiers in the home garrison at any given time. The problem of finding like for like sources with which to compare over time presents a further difficulty. Nevertheless, an attempt to draw together a range of sources has been made in order to establish figures for the overall military forces available in England and Wales over the course of the eighteenth century (Figure 9). These figures (although imperfect) demonstrate that, as the strength of Britain's military might grew with each eighteenth-century conflict, the presence of troops in the country itself also increased. The introduction of the new Militia (1757), the volunteers (1778), and the yeomanry (1794) dramatically increased the coercive capacity of the state in proportion to the population as a whole. By 1801 the number of soldiers to civilians was three to four times what it had been in the reign of George I. Moreover, at the close of the Revolutionary Wars, we can see that the proportionate strength of the military in England and Wales was not far from the ratio which was dedicated by the government to the suppression of the 1798 Irish Rebellion. Government's fears of a Napoleonic invasion after the crowning of the First Consul in November 1799 explains

[83] Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, p. 663
[84] P. Anderson, *Arguments within English Marxism* (London: Verso, 1980)., p. 38, fn. 57.
[85] Colley, *Britons*, 327.
[86] See J. Gregory and J. Stevenson, *The Routledge Companion to Britain in the Eighteenth Century, 1688-1820* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 162-4.

why half of Britain's regular forces were stationed in England and Wales by January 1800.[87] However, we must concede, that a secondary effect of anti-invasion measures was to equip the state with an unprecedented degree of coercive force which could be turned toward domestic repression. Contrary to Anderson's dismissal of the Thompsonian argument, there was a dramatic militarisation of English society over the late eighteenth-century.

[87] For invasion fears see Dundas' speech in the Commons 3 February 1800 in *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 3- 5 February 1800. For the distribution of the army and militia see *Observer*, 5 January 1800.

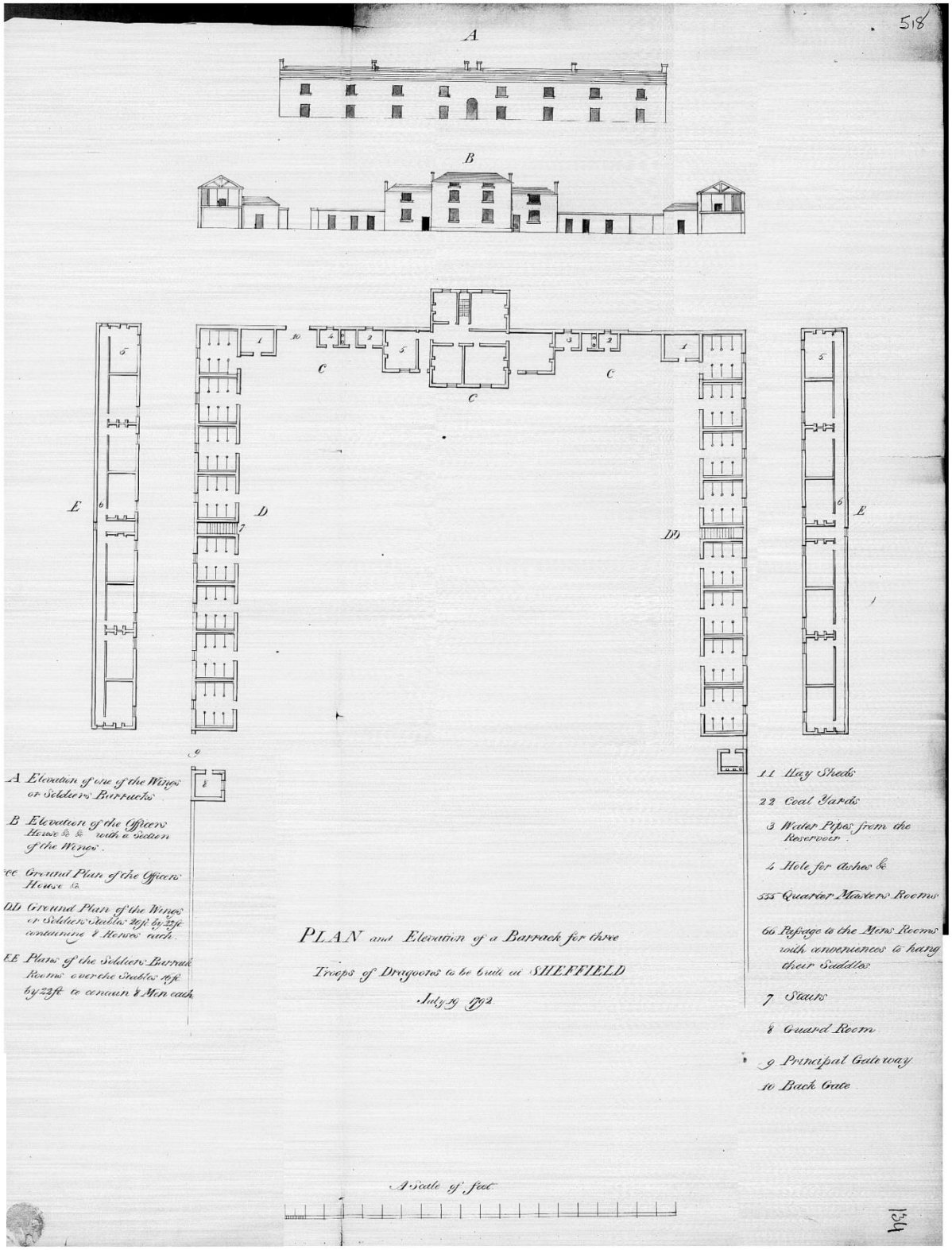
Figure 9 - Showing the Strength of Military Presence in Comparison to Populations of England and Wales, 1715-1801, and Ireland in 1798.

Year	Region	Type of Force	Number of Soldiers	Population	Soldiers per 1,000 of Population	Conflict
1715	England and Wales	**Total**	40,000	6,000,000	6.7	Jacobite Rebellion
1741	England and Wales	Reg. Cavalry	5,941	6,200,000	5.2	War of Jenkins' Ear
		Reg. Infantry	26,475			
		Total	32,416			
1757	England and Wales	Army	39,066	6,600,000	10	Seven Years' War
		Militia	27,000			
		Total	66,066			
1783	England and Wales	Army	c.30,000	7,500,000	14.1	War of American Independence
		Militia & Fencibles	46,000			
		Volunteers	30,000			
		Total	106,000			
1796	England and Wales	Army	60,765	8,750,000	12.9	Revolutionary French War
		Militia	35,333			
		Volunteers & Yeomanry	17,000			
		Total	113,098			
1801	England and Wales	Reg. Cavalry	14,898	9,200,000	18.6	Revolutionary French War
		Militia and Reg. Infantry	51,972			
		Yeomanry	21,800			
		Volunteers	82,437			
		Total	171,107			
1798	Ireland	Army	47,500	5,000,000	21	Irish Rebellion
		Militia	22,500			
		Yeomanry	35,000			
		Total	105,000			

Sources for Size of Military: **1715**: *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England* (Commons), Vol. 32, 2 November 1796, cols. 1242. **1741**: SP 41/13, f. 148, 'Disposition of Troops', 4 June 1741. **1757**: Hayter, *Army and the Crowd*, pp. 22, 95. **1783**: Conway, *The British Isles*, p. 24 (army at home has been estimated). **1796**: (Regulars), *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England* (Commons), Vol. 32, 21 October 1796, col. 1224; (Militia), HO 50/25, u.f, 'State of Militia', 18 April 1796; (Volunteers and Yeomanry), Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, p. 114. **1801**: WO 30/65, No. 28 - General Disposition of the Army in Great Britain, February 1801. **Ireland, 1798**: Ferguson, 'The Army and the Irish Rebellion 1798', p. 97.

Size of Population in England and Wales: Gregory and Stevenson (eds.), *Routledge Companion*, p. 244. **Ireland**: K.H Connell, *The Population of Ireland, 1750-1849*, (Oxford, 1950), p. 25

Print 5 - Plan and Elevation of the Barracks at Sheffield (1792).



Source: HO 42/20, f. 528-9, De Lancey – Yonge, 19 July 1792.

6. Military Interventions in Food Riots, 1795, 1800-1.

Continuing from the Chapter Five, this chapter will examine the central and local government's response to the food riots of 1795 and 1800-1. As we may expect, given the considerable amount of coercive force at the hands of the state in this period, military interventions became more widespread and reflexive from the mid-1790s. This chapter will therefore seek to demonstrate this point, by examining the way in which military resources were directed towards the suppression of food riots, and considering how this differed from earlier periods. However, as the use of armed force was never universal, an attempt will be made to analyse the geography of military deployments. The second half of the chapter will therefore seek to consider which factors were decisive in determining whether labour unrest and food rioting, in a given locale, was met with armed repression, and why the 1790s represented such a clear moment of discontinuity.

It will be argued firstly, that the changing social structure of the industrialising regions of the country was of key importance, both to the manifestation of protests, and to way in which they were resolved. Secondly, it will be suggested that the perceived influence radical ideology affected the ability of local magistrates to negotiate with a crowd, while simultaneously encouraging central government to take a firmer stance against protest. Thirdly, the growing intellectual influence of political economy will be emphasized. The economic convictions of the government provided powerful justification for the vigorous suppression of food rioting and 'collective bargaining by riot'. However, once *laissez faire* economics were adopted and enforced, they provided fuel for plebeian disorder while simultaneously denuding local authorities of the traditional means of extinguishing popular discontent. This heady concoction of factors apparent in the 1790s ensured that, for the first time, many magistrates in urban and industrial districts, had to admit their dependence upon unformed military force for maintaining the peace.

6.1. Nature of Military Interventions in Food Riots

In accordance with the dramatic increase in the coercive force at the hands of both the central and local government, historians have noted that official responses to the food riots of 1795 and 1800-1 were qualitatively different to those in earlier periods of intense food rioting. E.P.

Thompson, for example, has stressed that the 1790s bring us into 'new historical territory'.[88] While Bohstedt's work suggests that we can witness a 'a substantial and significant change in governance' when we consider the degree of military intervention in the food riots of 1795 and 1801.[89] Using an impressive evidence base of over 700 food riots between 1500 and 1800, Bohstedt has recently provided some compelling statistical evidence which suggests that that one in six food riots in the mid-eighteenth century resulted in a 'deployment' of troops, but that by 1795 this proportion had gone up to one in two, and that by 1800, two thirds of all food riots resulted in a military response.[90]

A number of historians, notably Wells and Poole, have coherently set out some of the major difficulties for compiling reliable statistics on the total number of food riots in any given year. Firstly, there are definitional problems. It is hard to delineate what activities one means by the term 'riot' or on what scale such an incident has to take place before it is counted. Secondly, rioting often went unreported or is obscured in some way by our sources. We are, therefore, cautioned by these historians, not to lay too much analytical weight on any statistical evidence taken from these phenomena.[91] Such advice is wise. However, the absolute number of recorded military interventions in the late eighteenth century, even if we take into consideration these evidential problems, does seem unusually high. While it is true that we are unable to gain a complete view of the extent of food rioting, I would argue that those riots which elicited a military response of some sort tended to leave a greater mark on the historical record than those which did not. This evidence therefore warrants further investigation.

Thus an attempt has been made to reconstruct from secondary sources, online newspaper archives, and the Home Office papers as full a list as possible of military interventions in the food riots of 1795. In addition, for the year 1795, we have thirteen volumes of the Secretary-at-War's letter books and evidence from these sources have been incorporated into the study.[92] In terms of defining 'military intervention' I have looked for occasions where there has been a stand-off between the protesting crowd and the armed or auxiliary forces. My criteria have been

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[88] Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd', p. 129.
[89] J. Bohstedt, *The Politics of Provisions*, p. 230.
[90] *Ibid.*, pp. 157, 230.
[91] Wells, 'Counting Riots in Eighteenth-Century England', pp. 68-72; S. Poole, 'Popular Politics in Bristol', Appendix C, Counting Riots.
[92] WO 1/1082-94, Secretary-at-War In-Letters, 1795.

firstly that a food riot can be demonstrated to have taken place, i.e. a crowd action involving the seizure of foodstuffs, the forced sale of goods, attacks upon middlemen, or demonstrations over the price of food. Secondly, that an armed and uniformed force was sent into the same vicinity to assist the magistracy, or, if forces were already stationed in a disturbed town, that they were drawn out of their quarters or barracks in order to do so.

It should perhaps be made clear that many of the military interventions I have included in my count involved little or no exchange of violence between the crowd and the soldiery. Often it was enough for the authorities to simply provide a 'show of force'. In May 1795, for example, when a body of Kingswood colliers were reported to be seizing control of wagons loaded with provisions, the Gloucestershire authorities sent the whole of the East Devon Militia, headed by General Rooke and a county magistrate, to meet them. In response the majority of the miners fled on the appearance of the troops.[93] It is the physical presence of the armed or auxiliary forces, at the behest of the authorities, and at the scene of a food riot, which I have sought to find evidence of before recording an incident as a military intervention.

From a thorough search of the above sources, seventy-six military interventions in food riots can be established for the year 1795. Further, as two or more separate units were sometimes sent to deal with a single riot, we can establish a second total of ninety-three instances of military 'deployment', in which orders to attend a disturbance were received and executed (Figure 10).[94] These figures coincide with the recent findings of Bohstedt. If we accept both his estimate of roughly 150 food riots in 1795 and his suggestion that one in two riots resulted in a military response, then around seventy-five interventions in food riots is what we would expect to see.[95] An attempt to repeat this national study for the years 1800-1 has been rejected on the grounds of insufficient evidence. Unfortunately, the crucial Secretary-at-War's in-letters are not extant for this period. While the Secretary of State for War's papers are available, they run to just two volumes per year and do not contain the same level of detailed communication from commanding officers on the ground.[96] Instead a detailed reconstruction of the food riots of the

[93] *Chester Courant*, 19 May 1795.
[94] For example, if both the regular cavalry and the yeomanry were sent to suppress rioting in a town on a given day this would be counted as two 'deployments' but one instance of military intervention in a food riot.
[95] Bohstedt, 'The Pragmatic Economy', p. 59-60
[96] WO 1/1104-5, Secretary of State for War's In-Letters, 1800.

West Midlands, one of the most disturbed areas of 1795, has been made.[97] Roger Wells' data has been used as a starting point, and has been cross-referenced with Home Office, and local newspaper sources.[98] Here it has been found that out of a total of fifty recorded food riots, well over half were met by a military intervention (Figure 11). This evidence suggests that the traditional local responses to food riot, with magistrates intervening on a personal level to appease the crowd, or simply turning a blind eye, were in many areas being supplanted by a much firmer stance towards riot.

[97] 'West Midlands' has been defined throughout as the following counties: Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Warwickshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Worcestershire.
[98] HO 42/49-56, Home Office In-Letters, 1800-1; *Staffordshire Advertiser*; *Derby Mercury*; Wells, *Wretched Faces*, Tables 1-12, pp. 357-369.

Figure 10 - Military Interventions in Food Riots in England, 1795.

Type of Force	No. Food Riots Attended	%
Reg. Cavalry	39	41.9%
Yeomanry	20	21.5%
Volunteers	17	18.3%
Fencibles	11	11.8%
Militia	6	6.5%
Total Deployments	93	100.0%
Total Food Riots Resulting in a Military Intervention		76

Sources: see Map 3 below
NB. Some food riots were attended by two or more units hence we see a higher number of 'deployments' than 'interventions'.

Figure 11 - Military Interventions in Food Riots in the West Midlands, 1800-1

Type of Force	No. Food Riots Attended	%
Reg. Cavalry	24	48.0%
Yeomanry	12	24.0%
Volunteers	14	28.0%
Militia	0	0.0%
Fencibles	0	0.0%
Total Deployments	50	100.0%
Total Food Riots Resulting in a Military Intervention:		30 (60%)
Total Recorded Food Riots:		50 (100%)

Sources: Wells, *Wretched Faces*, Tables 1-12, pp. 357-369; *Staffordshire Advertiser; Derbyshire Mercury;* HO 42/49-55.

The data presented in the above tables points us to the importance of cavalry. Seventy-two per cent of deployments in the West Midlands were of mounted units and both the national and regional data presented here evidences the pre-eminence of the regular cavalry as the preferred agent of riot control. Regular cavalry, and particularly the light dragoons, were highly mobile and tended to have a wider tactical repertoire than the infantry. In Manchester, for example, the local authorities ordered the 28th Light Dragoons first to ride 'gently' through a protesting crowd, and then to retreat to a distance. After the Riot Act was read, and peaceful attempts to persuade the crowd to depart were shown to have failed, the troops charged 'at a full gallop through the midst of them' and the crowd was successfully dispersed.[1] Similarly, the Town Clerk of Nottingham, praised the cavalry for their skill at rounding-up ringleaders.[2] Likewise, the Mayor of Liverpool stated from experience that, 'one Troop of the Horse is better than *half a Regiment* of Foot for avoiding bloodshed, which is always much to be desired'.[3]

[1] *Chester Courant*, 4 August 1795.
[2] HO 42/49, f. 216-18, Coldham, Town Clerk of Nottingham – Portland, 25 April 1800.
[3] HO 42/20, ff. 181-2, Blundell, Mayor of Liverpool – Dundas, 5/06/1792. See similar remarks from Yarmouth; WO 1/1089, f. 179, J. Johnston – Secretary-at-War, 7 August 1795.

Foot soldiers, by contrast, were considered to be particularly disadvantageous and were rarely deployed in 1795.[4] The cavalry could use their horses and the 'flat part of their swords' to great effect.[5] By contrast, the infantry were relatively immobile and were equipped only with the potentially lethal weapons of the musket and bayonet. This made them poorly suited to riot-control. The magistrates of Trowbridge offered a further reason to avoid the use of infantry: 'Most of the lower class of people in the neighbourhood have been in the Militia, and do not dread or heed the Foot so much as the Horse'.[6] In the spring of 1795 it was not just the efficacy but the reliability of the militia which was in question. As we have seen, between March and April, militiamen incited and joined in with civilian food protests in towns right across the south coast of England.[7] Militia regiments were thereafter considered to be 'abettors' of food riots and were rarely called upon to assist in their suppression.[8]

By contrast to the minor contribution of the regular infantry and militia, the importance of the auxiliary forces should be stressed. Gee exaggerates when he claims that the volunteers (in which he also includes the yeomanry) 'were much more frequently used against food riots than the regulars'.[9] This claim is based on the work of Roger Wells, which, as this study has found, does not adequately distinguish between the different types of armed force deployed in these years. To give just one glaring example, the famous Barrow-upon-Soar food riot, in which the Leicester Yeomanry Cavalry shot dead several individuals, is recorded in Wells' tables as a having been attended by 'regular' troops.[10] Nevertheless, careful reconstruction of the types of forces involved in the suppression of food riot does bear out the importance of the auxiliary forces who were deployed in around half of all military interventions.

In particular the yeomanry played a role out of all proportion to their numerical strength. In 1795 the War Office received returns from individual yeomanry regiments which totalled some 4,000 troops, however, we know that not every regiment sent in returns, so the true figure is

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[4] Only a handful of Fencible infantry regiments and an equally small number of militia units were deployed against food rioters in 1795. The regular infantry appear not to have been used at all.
[5] HO 42/52, ff. 13-4, Alexander Haden – Portland, 1 October 1800; White-Spunner, *Horse Guards* (London: Macmillan, 2006), p. 255.
[6] WO 1/1050, f. 61-2, J.Ps for Trowbridge – George Young, 21 August 1791.
[7] See Chapter 3.3.
[8] HO 42/34, ff. 291-92,Sir William Elford, Banker of Bickham, near Plymouth – Portland, 6 April 1795.
[9] Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, p. 248.
[10] Wells, *Wretched Faces*, Table 8, p. 365. For a more detailed and accurate account of the 'Barrow butchery' see Bohstedt, *Riot and Community Politics*, pp. 1-3.

probably more like 5,000 for that year.[11] By 1798, Henry Dundas' calculations suggest a yeomanry of 20,000 had emerged.[12] To put this in context, in the West Midlands, where the population was some 1,250,000, the yeomanry amounted to just 3,500 in 1800, yet they attended over a third of the recorded food riots in the region.[13] The eagerness of the yeomanry has frequently been correlated with the social status of the men who made up these units.[14] Under the Yeomanry Cavalry Acts, men joining these troops had to provide their own horses and uniforms.[15] They were therefore socially exclusive units. The Duke of Richmond described the Sussex Yeomanry as the 'younger, brothers, sons and servants of [the] Farmers' while the Marquess of Buckingham characterized them as the 'young idle gentlemen of the country, foxhunters and sportsmen'.[16] In Oldham the members of Yeomanry were the 'principal inhabitants' – factory owners and churchwardens.[17] The Yeomanry tended to represent the interests of industrial or agrarian capital depending on where they were formed. They were therefore understandably reliable when it came to resisting crowds attempting to force down prices or to seize stocks of grain and were frequently praised for their 'readiness to give their assistance'[18]

As local soldier-civilian groups, the yeomanry could be deployed with much greater speed than the regulars. During a food riot in Yaxley, for example, Earl Fitzwilliam's troop of Gentlemen Cavalry were assembled at Peterborough and travelled five miles to the scene of the disturbance within the space of twenty-five minutes.[19] The advantage of yeomanry was also proven during the Militia Act riots. In 1757, when anti-militia riots broke out in the countryside,

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[11] WO 17/1015-23, Yeomanry Cavalry Returns, 1795; P. Mileham, *The Yeomanry Regiments: 200 Years of Tradition*, (Cannongate: Edinburgh, 1994).
[12] PRO 30/244, ff. 237-239, Volunteer Corps of Cavalry and Infantry accepted by HM between 14 April 1794 and 14 July 1798 specifying the number raised in each of the counties in England, Scotland and Wales, 1798.
[13] *Ibid.*; Population taken from E.A. Wrigley, *The Early English Censuses*, Table 4.1 'Estimated County Population Totals, 1600-1851'.
[14] Archer, *Social Unrest and Popular Protest in England*, p. 80; Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics*, p. 50.
[15] P. Mileham, *The Yeomanry Regiments*, p. 10.
[16] HO 42/28, f. 197, Buckingham –Grenville, 2 February 1794; HO 50/88, u.f., Richmond – Hobart, 8 August 1802.
[17] Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution*, p. 34, n. 55; 'Return of Dates During the Last ten years at which any volunteer of yeomanry troop was clled out for actual service, *PP* 1828, XVII (273); and Derby – Dundas, 18 Sep 1803 (HO 50/76) and for 1808 (HO 50;196).
[18] HO 42/51, ff. 286-287B, Monckton – Portland, 19 Septmeber 1800.
[19] *Oracle*, 18 July 1795.

the government had been 'sluggish' in sending regular forces.[20] In 1796, by contrast, the Lords Lieutenants of Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire were able to deploy the yeomanry, and thereby curb protests in their infancy. Additionally, the mere existence of yeomanry troops was seen as 'invaluable' in terms of preventing rural disorder.[21] In Derbyshire for example, although there is no evidence of direct confrontations with riotous crowds, the yeomanry were paraded in several locations where there were fears of disorder. Demands for this service in the summer of 1795 were said to be 'incessant'.[22] In Norfolk and Essex, local authorities also praised the yeomanry's suppressant effect; 'in those parts where there is Yeomanry Corps they are quiet'.[23] Particularly in rural areas, where they were most in evidence, the yeomanry evidently played an important role in minimising overt acts of protest.[24]

The contribution of the volunteers to riot duty is much less clear cut. As Gee has recently demonstrated, the social composition of the volunteer infantry was heterogeneous and specific to local communities.[25] In the market towns of Devon, the strong 'corporate' identity of volunteer corps, who elected their own leaders, and the inclusion of large numbers of artisans and labourers in the ranks, ensured that Devon's volunteers were as likely to join with food rioters as they were to resist them.[26] By contrast, the corps of the industrial towns of the North made a considerable contribution to public order. These urban corps tended to be outshoots of the loyalist clubs of the early 1790s.[27] Several loyalists who corresponded with John Reeves in 1792 advanced the concept of 'armed associations' for the purpose of 'dispersing rioters' and preventing the 'seditious assemblies of the people'.[28] Many of the northern volunteer units that

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[20] Hayter, *The Army and the Crowd*, p. 101.
[21] For the Buckinghamshire yeomanry as 'invaluable' to public order see HO 50/26, Marquis of Buckingham – Portland, 17 and 18 December 1796. For use of yeomanry in suppression of rioting of 1796 see HO 50/26, Northampton – Portland, 9 December 1796; Neave, 'Anti-Militia Riots in Lincolnshire', p. 22.
[22] M. Thomas, 'The Rioting Crowd in Derbyshire in the 18th Century', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 95 (1975-6), p. 44; WO 1/1090, f. 441-2, Mundey – Windham, 4 August 1795.
[23] HO 42/50, ff. 365-6, Ruggles – Portland, 6 July 1800.
[24] R.A.E. Wells, 'The Development of the English Rural Proletariat and Social Protest 1700-1850', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 6 (1979), p. 127.
[25] Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, Chap. 3.
[26] Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics*, p. 50; Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, p. 245.
[27] Western, 'The Volunteer Movement', p. 606; Dozier, *For King Constitution and Country*, p. 153; O'Gorman, 'English Loyalism Revisited', p. 227.
[28] For just two examples among many see Add. MS 16,921, f. 117, Anon. – Reeves, 10 December 1792; Add. MS 16,920, ff. 129-30, 'Pacificus' – J. Reeves, 5 December 1792. See also, M. Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism, 1792-3' , p. 49.

emerged in 1794 shared the counter-revolutionary concerns of the APLPRL.[29] In Leeds, the banker John Beckett hoped that by mobilizing the town's wealthy middle classes, the government would be supported and 'our necks kept from the Guillotine'.[30] While Reverend Russel of Dronfield, a fierce anti-Jacobin, launched the Loyal Independent Sheffield Volunteers in May 1794, with the backing of JP Reverend Wilkinson. Both men hoped that the volunteers would assist in 'repressing the Insolence of the disorderly, turbulent and seditious Spirit apparent in some People among the Multitude'.[31] Similarly, in Birmingham, it was the Loyal True Blue Society, headed by the staunchly conservative Justice Joseph Carles, which oversaw the formation of an armed association in the town.[32] In both Sheffield and Birmingham membership was contingent upon demonstrably loyalist politics.[33] Likewise in Bradford, the allegiances of each new recruit were investigated 'minutely' and only those men who were 'unquestionably staunch in his political principles' were accepted.[34]

It was these closely-monitored urban volunteer corps, tinged with counter-revolutionary fervour, that made the most considerable contribution to public order in 1795. Volunteer units in Wakefield, Leicester, Stockport, and Rochdale all assisted in riot-control. Their local status, as with the yeomanry, meant they could be called out quickly and summarily by JPs who needed only local approval from the Lord Lieutenant or the High Sherriff in order to place them on active duty. Volunteers were mobilized to escort grain barges along canals, to prevent blockading, and were frequently drawn up in the marketplace, in the hopes of preventing price fixing.[35] Subscriptions were even raised to recompense the Stockport Volunteers for loss of earning after they were called upon to 'stand under arms [for] whole nights together'.[36] Like the Yeomanry and the regulars, in addition to confronting crowds, urban volunteers played an important preventative role in 1795. Undoubtedly, the staunchly loyalist principles of the volunteer commanders in these places ensured that such corps were particularly zealous in coming forward to assist in suppressing the food riots.

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[29] Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 27.
[30] SCA, WWM/Y17/5, Beckett – Fitzwilliam, 22 April 1794.
[31] HO 50/346, James Wilkinson, Sheffield – Dundas, 7 May 1794; HO 42/30, ff. 52-3, J. Russel – Dundas, 12 May 1794.
[32] HO 42/30, ff. 21-22, Brooke– Dundas, 6 May 1794 (with enclosures).
[33] *Ibid.*; HO 42/30, ff. 52-3, J. Russel – Dundas, 12 May 1794.
[34] HO 50/346, u.f., Busfield, Bradford – Dundas, 10 June 1794.
[35] *Star*, 7 August 1795; *Courier*, 2 May 1795.
[36] WO 1/1094, u.f, Holland Watson,– Windham, 2 and 5 September 1795.

However, Gee has cautioned us against John Western's interpretation, which sees the volunteer movement as an devoted counter-revolutionary force.[37] According to Gee, many of the rank and file volunteers joined from broader patriotic motives and were 'loyal but not loyalist'.[38] Moreover, the fact that the volunteers could not be subjected to military discipline, and the existence of many artisans and labourers at the core of their membership, meant that volunteer units had their limits in terms of repressing food riots, even in urban locales.[39] Occasionally, corps might outright refuse to act against their 'neighbours' while those working men who were known to have played an active role in suppressing popular protests might become victim to hostility or even reprisals.[40] Given the evidence of volunteer involvement in the south-western food riots in 1800-1, and in light of the widespread absenteeism, and even the folding of some volunteer regiments over the same period, Wells has even suggested that local and national government experienced a 'crisis of confidence' in the volunteer movement at the close of the decade.[41]

The evidence from the West Midlands corroborates Well's findings. Popular hostility towards the volunteers became particularly acute in the latter part of 1800. In March of that year, the Duke of Portland issued a circular, in anticipation of food riots due to unusually high prices, calling upon Lords Lieutenants to make use of the volunteers to protect the 'free circulation of corn from one part of the country to another'.[42] The volunteers and yeomanry of the West Midlands were therefore called upon extensively particularly in April to suppress the outbreak of food rioting. The appearance of disturbances once more in the late summer led to the publication of a Royal Proclamation demanding that 'ample Security be afforded to all Farmers and other lawful Dealers of Corn' and enjoining local authorities to make use of the Riot Act and the military forces at their disposal.[43] Both communiqués were poorly received by the public and focused popular resentment upon the volunteer forces.

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[37] Western, 'The Volunteer Movement', p. 612
[38] Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, p. 8
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 234; Wells, *Wretched Faces*, p. 275.
[40] Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, p. 235.
[41] Wells, *Wretched Faces*, 265, 275, 268.
[42] HO 42/49, ff. 449-50, Portland - Circular to Lord Lieutenants, 4 March 1800.
[43] 'A Proclamation for Suppressing Riots, Tumults and Protecting and Encouraging the Markets', *London Gazette*, No. 15295, 20-23 September 1800, p. 1081.

In the landlocked region of the West Midlands, where there was no direct access to the international grain trade, and where the proportion of arable land compared to the size of the population was relatively small, price increases were acute.[44] Rumours that grain prices were artificially inflated by farmers, and that the King and Government were complicit in a *pacte de famine*, were widely disseminated through the West Midlands. At Birmingham, the magistrates reported that:

> The Proclamation, so well intended to check the spirit of Riot, has been made to produce a very opposite effect and to excite in the minds of the lower and middle classes indignation and resentment against government … Conversations in Public houses and other places and in many where the Company were formerly remarkable for their Loyalty and Attachment to Government is truly afflicting … The [Volunteer] Associations and Yeomanry corps which were formerly so popular here and are of such immense national importance now find themselves as unpopular and perpetually exposed to insults.[45]

This state of affairs was repeated across the region. At Kidderminster, anonymous handbills directed popular animosity towards the King and the Duke of Portland who, it was claimed, had engineered the 'famine' with the help of the volunteers:

> Aided by a Set of Rouges that do infest the Nation
> They are the Famine Guards or the Devil's Association[46]

With popular hostility to the volunteers growing rapidly in 1800, their reliability as a police force was, in many places, thrown into question. The Stafford Military Association, for example, was dissolved despite local evidence of 'formidable preparations for riot'.[47] Similarly, the Newcastle-under-Lyme Volunteers continued a precarious existence. The journeymen and labourers in the corps were feared to be 'corrupted' after local friendly societies vowed to expel any of their members who acted as volunteers.[48] Nor were these isolated incidents. It is clear that in the West Midlands there was a crisis of confidence in the ability of the volunteers to act

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[44] HO 42/53, ff. 24-5, Leveson-Gower – Portland, 2 November 1800; HO 42/50, ff. 70-2,Legge – Portland, 13 May 1800.
[45] HO 42/52, ff. 47-8, Magistrates of Birmingham – Portland, 3 October 1800.
[46] HO 42/55, f. 119, Copy Anonymous Handbill, Kidderminster, 14 December 1800.
[47] HO 42/53, ff. 299-302, Sparrow – Gower, 14 November 1800.
[48] HO 42/53, ff. 194-5, Massey – Gower, 5 November 1800.

against protestors. The Earl of Warwick suggested at the close of 1800 that 'few if any of the Volunteer Corps can be depended upon [and] on the contrary most of them will refrain to act'.[49]

At the same time, reports were received at the Home Office that 'a most dangerous spirit of Insurrection not to say of Rebellion has taken root in a great many places'.[50] Specifically there were claims that the colliers around Wolverhampton were making pikes and had declared 'their firm resolution to rise in a body', that the disaffected artisans at Birmingham were making pike-heads to send into the potteries, while the framework knitters of Nottingham were said to be 'perpetually propagating whispers of a revolution to be expected before Christmas [and] of Pikes being prepared'.[51] Concerned by these developments, the government dispatched stipendiary magistrate Aaron Graham to investigate and, in addition, provided 'a very large amount of military force', in the form of three regiments of infantry, thereby doubling the amount of soldiers in the region.[52] Graham found that the claims of a rebellion were overdrawn, as the colliers were lacking leadership and a 'regular plan'. However, the magistrates he met with did 'confess that their chief defence is on the Kings Troops (for the Volunteers here and everywhere, I am afraid, must be employed with a certain degree of caution)'.[53]

Thus, while the hands of government were considerably strengthened in this period they did not have at their disposal a perfect solution to disorder. As we can see from the West Midlands, a minority of food riots occurred unopposed. At Birmingham in February 1800, crowds successfully set the price of potatoes seemingly with impunity.[54] While in Chesterfield , 200 miners from Ashover marched with a petition pledging to lower the price of grain to the home of Justice Sitwell Sitwell. Although he refused to sign their paper, Sitwell Sitwell agreed to set up a subscription in order to buy stocks of foreign wheat from Hull. As one historian has commented, the magistrates of Derbyshire remained the 'prisoners of the people'.[55] Disorder was much more closely watched than in former decades and much greater efforts were made to prevent and suppress food rioting than in earlier periods of dearth. However, although

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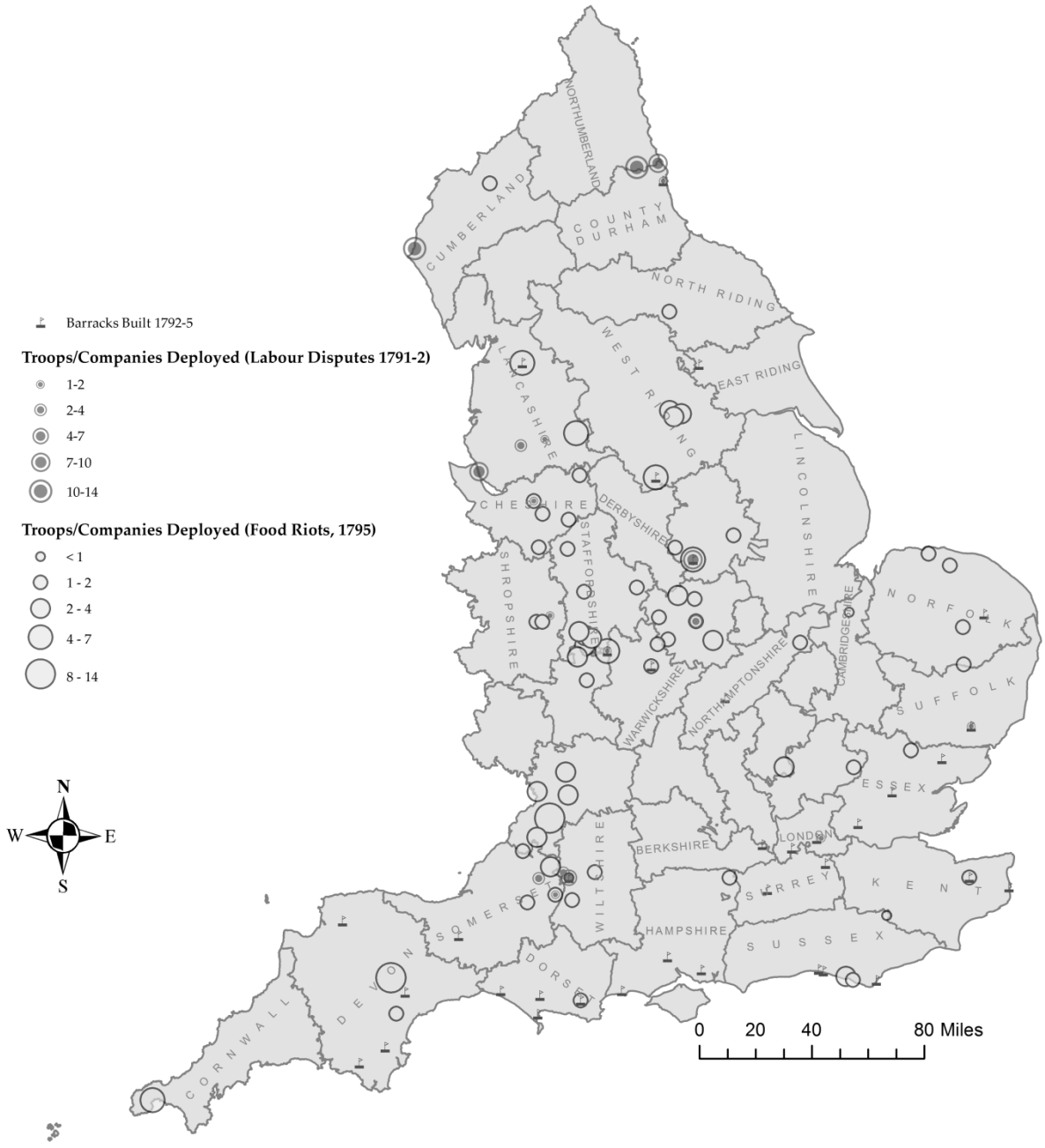
[49] WO 1/1105, ff. 581-5, Warwick – Dundas, 14 December 1800.
[50] HO 42/52, ff. 36-9, Warwick – Portland, 7 October 1800
[51] HO 42/53, ff. 314, Bingham – Portland, 15 November 1800; HO 42/52, ff. 154-6,Warwick – Portland, 5 October 1800; HO 42/54, ff. 468-73, Draft Portland – Gower, 29 November 1800.
[52] HO 42/54, ff. 269-74, Draft Circular to Lord Lieutenants of Derby, Stafford, Chester, Shropshire, Leicester, Lancaster, Warwick, Worcester, 12 November 1800.
[53] HO 42/55, ff. 223-4, Graham – King, 29 December 1800; ff. 227-8, Graham – Portland, 28 December 1800.
[54] *Hampshire Chronicle*, 17 February 1800; *Derby Mercury*, 20 February 1800.
[55] Thomas, 'Rioting Crowd in Derbyshire', p. 43.

responses to food riot were changing they were not transformed beyond all recognition in this period . At least in the West Midlands, paternalism and the old moral economy persisted even within this climate of increased repression.

6.2. Analysis

The findings presented above, in relation to military interventions in both the strike waves of 1791-2 and the food riots of 1795 and 1800-1, suggests an increased reliance of both the local and national government on military force for maintaining the peace. Several key factors can be put forward in order to explain this development. The remainder of this chapter will look at these in detail. Firstly, structural change wrought by the Industrial Revolution, and the effect which this had upon public order, requires close consideration. Secondly, the rapid growth of English radicalism and the perceived threat of revolutionary ideology will be highlighted. Thirdly, and finally, the important influence of the new political economy upon central government's responses to disorder will be outlined.

Map 3- Showing Military Interventions in Labour Disputes (1791-2) and Food Riots (1795) in England



Secondary Sources: Dobson, *Masters and Journeymen*, pp. 165-7; *Wells*, *Wretched Faces*, Tables 1-12, pp. 357-369; Wells, 'Militia Mutinies', p. 52; Trinder, *The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire*, p. 230; Wingfield, *An Historical Record of the Shropshire Yeomanry, 1795-1887*, pp. 87-9; S. Poole, 'Popular Politics in Bristol, Somerset and Wiltshire, 1791-1805', (Unpublished PhD, University of Bristol: 1992), pp. 512-6; A. Booth, 'Food Riots in the North-West of England 1790-1801', *Past & Present*, 77 (1977), pp. 84-107. **Primary Sources (Food Riots)**: WO 1/1082-94, Secretary-at-War In-Letters, 1795; HO 42/34-6, Home Office In Letters, 1795. Online Newspaper Sources: Gale NewsVault; The British Newspaper Archive. **Primary Sources (Labour Disputes):** See Appendix II.

6.3. Industrialisation and Structural Change

When we map late eighteenth-century military engagements in food riots and strikes it becomes clear that they fell extremely unevenly across the country. This geography requires some explanation. Firstly, it should be noted the extent to which there is an urban-rural divide. It has been observed by historians of protest, that food riots and industrial disputes tended to be urban, or at least non-agricultural, phenomena.[1] Whereas townspeople and wage-earners were reliant upon the market for their food supply, most rural labourers had privileged access to foodstuffs, even at times of high prices, through 'pilfering', subsistence farming, and preferential rates from local producers. Farmworkers were therefore less likely to instigate protests over food prices.[2] Furthermore, the collective capacity of farmhands to organize in this period was severely limited by their dependence upon their employers and by their geographical dispersal.[3] We may note, therefore, a distinct bias towards urban and non-agricultural protest in the period. Having said this, not every town which saw food rioting in 1795 made use of military force against its protestors. We must therefore examine more carefully the social structure and economic context in those localities to which the military were sent.

Writing in rural Herefordshire in 1797, Uvedale Price argued that English society was distinct from other nations because 'there are more gradations of property' and all are 'equally secured and equally favoured by the laws'. According to Price, this fact promoted 'intercourse between highest and lowest' and 'happiness and security of individuals, and of the state at large'.[4] Certainly, in some parts of the country, strong 'vertical relations' between socio-economic groups were apparent. Bohstedt, for example, has argued that this was the case in Devon's 'small and stable' borough towns.[5] When food rioting broke out in these localities, it tended to have a high level of community consensus, and we see middle-class and elite complicity in

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[1] J. Stevenson, 'The "Moral Economy" of the English Crowd: Myth and Reality', in A. J. Fletcher and J. Stevenson (eds.), *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 233, 236; Randall, 'The Gloucestershire Food Riots of 1766', p. 82; R.W. Malcolmson, 'Workers' Combinations in Eighteenth-Century England', in J. Jacob and M. C. Jacob (eds.), *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism* (Hemel Hempstead: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), p. 150.
[2] Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances* 2nd ed., pp. 124-5; Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics*, p. 171.
[3] Randall, 'The Gloucestershire Food Riots of 1766', p. 83
[4] U. Price, *Thoughts on the Defence of Property Addressed to the County of Hereford* (Hereford, 1797), p. 17.
[5] Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics*, p. 40-1.

protests, rather than forceful repression.[6] According to Bohstedt 'mildness and conciliation' characterized magisterial responses in Devon.[7] With a degree of caution, we might venture to suggest that this was also true in much of the southeast of the country. Despite the availability of troops, many south-eastern market towns saw food riots go on unopposed by the military in 1795.[8]

A rather different scenario can be seen elsewhere in the country. In areas where industrial growth and regional specialization were in evidence, the resulting social structure tended to be much more polarized than in the market town. In the western woollen trade, for example, we find large merchant capitalists employing both domestic handicraft workers, through the putting-out system, and skilled weavers, in small workshops. The economic growth of the industry, through the seventeenth century, encouraged population expansion, particularly along the Wiltshire-Somerset border.[9] By the 1720s, the clothier-employer had emerged as a distinct class, culturally and socially distanced from their workforce.[10] At the same time, the weavers became increasingly divorced from the land and dependent upon their wages. This gave them a degree of social independence unknown to the live-in farm-servant. Yet wage-dependency also made the weaver vulnerable to the effects of market forces. According to Randall, the structure of employment in the western woollen industry encouraged the growth of a 'community consciousness'. Weavers shared a common experience of being both textile producers and marketplace consumers. The social cohesion found among the weavers is demonstrated by their capacity for collective action in the eighteenth century.[11] While the mutual alienation between worker and employer is suggested by the use of troops to contain

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[6] See middle-class and elite sympathies with Devon's food rioters in R.A.E. Wells, 'The Revolt of the South-West, 1800-1801: A Study in English Popular Protest', *Social History*, 6 (1977), pp. 720-1.
[7] Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics*, p. 58.
[8] Compare Map 3 with A. Charlesworth (ed.), *An Atlas of Rural Protest in Britain*, Map 27, 'Food Riots 1794-6', p. 98-9.
[9] See Wrigley, *Early English Censuses*, Figure 1.2 'Growth of Population by Hundred, 1761-1851', pp. 28-9.
[10] M. H. Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 1963), p. 143; D. Rollinson, *The Local Origins of Modern Society: Gloucestershire 1500-1800* (London: Routledge, 1992).
[11] A. Randall, 'Work, Culture and Resistance to Machinery in the West of England Woollen Industry', in P. Hudson 1948- (ed.), *Regions and Industries : A Perspective on the Industrial Revolution in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 186.

industrial disputes in both 1726 and 1738, as well as during period of machine-breaking in the early 1790s and 1800s.[12]

Similarly, sustained food rioting and industrial disturbance between 1700-1800 can be seen in the mining communities of Cornwall, Gloucestershire, the West Midlands, and on the Tyneside.[13] Here again, we can see a highly polarized social structure which took root even before the eighteenth century. In the North East, for example, Levine and Wrightson suggest the colliers of Whickham were landless, geographically concentrated, and 'thoroughly industrialised' by the late seventeenth century. Over time ownership of the local coalfields was increasingly concentrated into the hands of a small cartel of Newcastle lease-holders.[14] It has been suggested that mining communities derived their collective strength from their homogeneity and physical separateness from society.[15] Certainly, the authorities saw miners and their families as 'ungovernable people', who lived beyond the reach of the squire and the parson, and therefore outside of the traditional networks of deference and social control.[16] Malcolmson has demonstrated that this view was an oversimplification. The Kingswood colliers, for example, sought to (forcefully) negotiate with authority rather than to overturn it.[17] Likewise in Whickham, the parish continued to exercise some control over its inhabitants. Nevertheless, the pitmen developed a strong sense of their own collective industrial power.[18] Moreover, due to the large numbers of miners who could turn out during food riots and trades disputes, employers and local magistrates could usually play upon the perceived disorderliness of these workforces.[19] Throughout the eighteenth-century, and particularly in our period, the central authorities consented to sending troops to oppose protests emanating from tin mines and collieries.

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[12] Dobson, *Masters and Journeymen*, pp. 31-3; Randall, *Before the Luddites*, pp. 149-185.
[13] Hammond and Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer*, p. 10-16; T.S. Ashton, and J. Sykes, *The Coal Industry of the Eighteenth Century* 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964), pp. 115-125; R. F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Epworth Press, 1945), pp. 32-85.
[14] Levine and Wrightson, *Making of an Industrial Society*, p. vii-ix.
[15] Dobson, *Masters and Journeymen*, p. 30 citing C. Kerr, and A. Siegel, 'The Interindustry Propensity to Strike - an International Comparison', in R. D. Kornhouser and A. M. Ross (eds.), Industrial Conflict (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), pp. 189-211.
[16] Randall, Charlesworth 'Morals and Markets', p . 205.
[17] Poole 'Popular Politics in Bristol', p. 398; R.W. Malcolmson, 'A Set of Ungovernable People: The Kingswood Colliers in the Eighteenth Century', pp.85-127.
[18] Levine and Wrightson, *Making of an Industrial Society*, 404.
[19] Poole, 'Popular Politics in Bristol', p. 378.

In both weaving and mining districts, we see early industrial communities, well-established in the seventeenth century, continuing to grow during the eighteenth, and presenting a sustained problem of order for the authorities. However, the late eighteenth century also saw the emergence of new sites of conflict. Population growth and rapid urbanization was evident throughout the century but became particularly pronounced after 1740.[20] By 1800 thirty per cent of inhabitants lived in towns of 2,500 or more.[21] In some areas, particularly in the Midlands and the North, boom towns sprang up so quickly as to leave substantial settlements completely devoid of J.Ps. In South Shields, for example, the 'spirit of commerce' and the growth of the North-Eastern coal trade produced a town of 14,000 citizens, 'without a single Magistrate to control it'.[22] Similarly, in the early nineteenth century, the populous Lancashire towns of Oldham, Middleton, and Ashton were all said to be 'entirely without magistrates' while the sprawling pottery district surrounding Stoke-upon-Trent shared the same difficulty, despite a population of some 50,000 inhabitants.[23]

Even in towns where the traditional structures for maintaining the peace were in place, population growth could threaten to undermine the efficacy of the 'civil power'. In Sheffield, for example, there was just one resident magistrate and thirty parish constables to oversee a town of 46,000 souls.[24] Colonel De Lancey characterized Sheffield as existing in a 'turbulent and ungovern'd state'.[25] While in Manchester, Bohstedt has argued that 'the scale of urbanization' was the crucial factor in dissolving the more traditional 'negotiative process' between magistrates and the crowd.[26] Certainly, there was a large influx of migrant workers, drawn by the opportunities for unskilled labour provided by emergent cotton factories, and Manchester's population trebled between 1774 and 1801.[27] For Bohstedt, this growth swamped out the

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[20] The years c. 1740 to 1820 are rightly described by Bohstedt as a 'high pressure century'. Bohstedt, *The Politics of Provisions*, p. 59; E.A. Wrigley, 'The Growth of Population in Eighteenth-Century England: A Conundrum Resolved', *Past & Present*, 98 (1983), pp. 121-50.
[21] This was in contrast to just twenty per cent of the population living in towns in 1700. P. J. Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns 1700-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 2.
[22] HO 42/22, ff. 261-3, Burdon – Pitt, 3 November 1792; Landau, *The Justices of the Peace*, p. 201-2.
[23] J. Stevenson, 'Social Control and the Prevention of Riots in England, 1789-1829', in A. P. Donajgrodzki (ed.), *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), p. 30; Hammond and Hammond, *Town Labourer,* p. 82.
[24] PRO 30/8/165, f. 72, Pinkin – Pitt, 8 December 1792; HO 42/20, f. 245, 'Printed Resolutions at Sheffield', 9 May 1792.
[25] HO 42/20, f. 388-9, Colonel De Lancey – Dundas, 13 June 1792.
[26] Bohstedt, *Community*, p. 99.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

vertical ties of deference and patronage. Manchester's authorities were confronted by an anonymous mass of 'unconnected inhabitants' and thus they resorted to a firmer stance towards food rioting. Soup kitchens and cavalry became the dominant response in the 'city of strangers'.[28]

However, Bohstedt has been criticized for placing too much emphasis upon urbanization and in overlooking economic developments.[29] The Manchester region saw profound socio-economic change in the late eighteenth century. According to Walton, the Lancashire woollen trade was fully 'proto-industrial' by the third quarter of the century. Lancashire's woollen workers were dependent upon the putting-out system and through this form of organization the county's merchants and clothiers accumulated substantial capitals.[30] While from the 1770s, cotton spinning was becoming increasingly mechanized both in Manchester and in the surrounding towns.[31] This provided more work for domestic cotton weavers. However, it also ensured that wages were kept low and reduced the need for highly skilled craft workers. Throughout the region then there was a palpable movement towards proletarianization with the life chances of a much larger proportion of the population determined by the market.[32] At the same time, positions of authority in towns such as Manchester and Oldham, where increasingly held by successful merchants and industrial capitalists.[33]

This polarization of social relations in Lancashire is essential to our understanding of the difficulty which local authorities had in resolving conflict peacefully. In Rochdale for example, a number of female weavers gathered in August 1795 to protest over the high price of oatmeal and to demand an advance in wages.[34] Their complaints were heard by two local magistrates, including the textile merchant, John Entwistle. [35] However, the magistrate's poorly calculated

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[28] *Ibid*., pp. 72-3.
[29] A. Charlesworth, 'From the Moral Economy of Devon to the Political Economy of Manchester, 1790-1812', *Social History*, 18 (1993), p. 211.
[30] J.K. Walton, 'Proto-Industrialisation and the First Industrial Revolution: The Case of Lancashire', in P. Hudson (ed.), *Regions and Industries: A Perspective on the Industrial Revolution in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 57.
[31] Hammond and Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer*, p. 39-51. Bohstedt, *Community Politics*, pp. 70-1.
[32] Berg and Hudson , 'Rehabilitating the Industrial Revolution', p. 42.
[33] Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution*, p. 33-4; Bohstedt, *Community Politics*, p. 79-80.
[34] A. Booth, 'Food Riots in the North-West of England 1790-1801', *Past & Present*, 77 (1977), p. 90.
[35] TNA, IR 26/303/379, Abstract of Will of John Entwistle, Merchant of Manchester, Lancashire. Proved in the Court of Chester, 22 March 1799. The following account of the protest in Rochdale is based upon the

offer, of supplying the town with subsidized potatoes, enraged the protestors rather than subduing them. The women beat pots and pans in the marketplace and the crowd was swelled by workers arriving from the countryside and by local 'mechanics' at the end of their shift. The authorities found that issuing verbal requests to disperse was merely 'talking to the air'. The volunteers, headed by Colonel Entwistle, were called out and, after the Riot Act was read, were ordered to fire over the heads of the crowd, killing two bystanders. Thereafter the volunteers were forced to retreat, ironically to the town's Cloth Hall, to await the arrival of dragoons. It is clear from the Rochdale example that the deference and reciprocity, which characterized traditional plebeian-patrician interactions during food rioting, was breaking down in Lancashire. The incident is also suggestive of the extent to which food protests over temporarily high prices were becoming increasingly interlinked with the more intractable grievance of low wages in the textile trade.[36]

A similar scenario existed in Nottingham, where troops were sent to defuse both food riots and trades disputes in the 1790s. In 1791, the Town Clerk justified the need for a rolling contingent of troops in Nottingham, on the grounds that, 'the lower and more disorderly class of people are, I believe, greatly more numerous than in any other Town in England, compared to the whole number of Inhabitants'.[37] The local economy in Nottingham was dominated by the stocking trade. Between 1727 and 1782, the number of stocking frames in the vicinity of Nottingham more than doubled.[38] At the same time, independent framework knitters were increasingly being replaced by workers renting frames from their employers.[39] While there was a growing presence of wage-earning framework knitters in the town, the local bench tended to be dominated by merchants and employers. This had profound consequences in terms of public order. In 1783, for example, mayor Henry Fellows – a prominent hosier – was at the very epicentre of violent protests among the framework knitters after he decided to lower the wages of the men in his employ and to lock-out workers who refused the new wage-regime. When hostile crowds gathered outside his town-house, Fellows chose not to negotiate but to fire upon the crowd, leaving the Horse Guards to disperse the enraged knitters. This was one of the

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following sources. *Chester Chronicle*, 14 August 1795; *Chester Courant*, 8 August 1795; *Leeds Intelligencer,* 10 August 1795; WO 1/1086, f. 101, John Entwistle – Windham, 5 August 1795.

[36] For further evidence of this overlap see Stevenson, 'Food Riots in England 1792-1818', p. 62.

[37] WO 1/1049, f. 333, R. Enfield – Yonge, 28 February 1791.

[38] Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances* 2nd ed., p. 150. Rising from 8,000 to 17,350.

[39] Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, p. 147.

bloodiest labour protest witnessed in the final decades of the eighteenth century.[40] In 1800, Nottingham's new mayor, Joseph Oldknow, a successful grocer, was also a target. Inflammatory handbills accused him of being a 'Corn factor' and of forcing up the price of grain.[41] The inclusion of employers and merchants on the Commission of the Peace, in borough towns like Nottingham, removed the possibility of 'disinterested' magisterial mediation, which was commonplace during the mid-eighteenth century.[42] Thus, the structure of authority and employment within a given locality, and the interactions between the two, had important ramifications both in terms of the scale of protests which emerged, and the manner in which local authorities sought to deal with them.

6.4. Radicalism and Revolution

While structural change was hugely important in fuelling popular disorder and in foiling traditional responses thereto, the effects of industrialisation were often compounded in this period by shifting elite attitudes towards disorder. Overseas explosions of popular rebellion, such as the American Revolution and the French Revolution served as potent reminders, to both government and local rulers, of the potentially disastrous effects of allowing popular disorder to go unchecked. Additionally, the intellectual debates unleashed by the French Revolution, the publication and 'phenomenal' commercial success of both parts of Paine's' *Rights of Man* (1791-2), and the emergence of English working-class political clubs, such as the London Corresponding Society (founded January 1792), focused the minds of the elites on the potential threat posed by popular dissent.[43] As Thompson suggests, 'the acute anti-Jacobinism of the gentry led to a new fear of any form of popular self-activity'.[44] After 1789, signs of sedition were read into forms of protest that had formerly raised little concern. Hence the newfound readiness to deploy troops in instances of popular unrest can, in part, be explained by this shift in elite mentality.

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[40] See Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances in England* 2nd ed., p. 151-2.
[41] TNA, IR 26/430/92, Abstract of Will of Joseph Oldknow, Grocer and Alderman of Nottingham, 19 September 1808; HO 42/51, f. 363, 3rd Placard, 'Citizens arm yourselves', 20 September 1800.
[42] For an in-depth discussion of the role of merchants and industrialists in borough towns see Randall, *Riotous Assemblies*, p. 33. For third-party mediation in trades disputes and food riots see respectively Dobson, *Masters and Journeymen*, p. 77; Randall, 'The Gloucestershire Food Riots of 1766', pp. 76, 79-80.
[43] Thompson, *Making*, p. 115; M. Thale (ed.), *Selections*, p. xvii.
[44] Thompson, 'Moral Economy', p. 129.

However, elite fears of sedition and revolution, though often exaggerated in this period, were not merely paranoiac. A number of historians have argued that there was indeed a 'politicisation of discontent' in this period. From the evidence of the food riots and trades disputes presented here this seems to be well-founded. The mere scale and proliferation of protests in the 1790s was, in itself, something of a novelty. Bohstedt's estimates of annual rates of food rioting suggests that from the 1740s food riots 'grew into a sturdy and nationwide tradition' with levels of disturbance peaking in 1800-1.[45] Similarly, Dobson's data for eighteenth-century labour disputes also points us to the final two decades of the century as a heightened period of labour militancy with strikes penetrating into new sectors and geographical locations.[46] Moreover, when we examine the nature of the food riots and strikes which provoked a militaristic response from the authorities, we can see that it was often those protests in which the crowd expressed a degree of political consciousness or voiced a new kind of oppositional language which were perceived to be of the greatest challenge.

During the strike waves of 1791-2, troops tended to be directed towards those workers who were amongst the most advanced both in terms of labour militancy and in terms of political engagement. In Bradford-upon-Avon, for example, the town's magistrates believed the rash of unrest following the introduction of labour-saving machinery was not merely economic in character. They suggested the temper of their wool spinners had been increased by the 'speculative opinions which have been brought forward for the public consideration in respect to the Government of the Country.'[47] Stronger evidence of the alliance between labour protests and radical politics can be seen in the North East. The magistrates of Newcastle complained that in the vicinity of the town there was a general 'dissatisfaction prevalent among the labouring ranks arising from Principles industriously propagated among them'.[48] Specifically the keelmen of Shields were reported to have confronted General John Lambton, the owner of substantial coalfields, stating 'they had read Paine's little book and liked it and they would soon divide

[45] Bohstedt, 'The Pragmatic Economy', p. 59-60
[46] Forty per cent of all eighteenth-century labour disputes recorded by Dobson occurred in the period 1781-1800. Dobson, *Masters and Journeymen,* p. 22, Table 1.1.
[47] WO 1/1051, f. 223, Manufacturers? Betheis, Bush and Jones – Yonge, 7 December 1792.
[48] HO 42/23, f. 768, Copy of Magistrate of Newcastle – Barrington in Barrington – Dundas, 25 February 1793.

Lambton's estate among themselves'.[49] One ship-owner complained that 'Pitmen, Keelmen, Waggonmen and other Labouring men' were all 'hardy fellows strongly impressed with the new doctrine of equality, and … composed of such combustible matter that the least spark will set them in a blaze'.[50] Thus, in those places where radicalism was seen to be infusing the labour movements of large industrial workforces, local authorities tended to regard these developments as particularly threatening and, on receiving such information, central government was certainly more likely to sanction the deployment of the army.

Whether these workers were truly committed to radical revolutionary politics remains an open question. The keelmen of Shields may simply have invoked the name of Paine in a theatrical manner to add weight to their attempts at mass intimidation. Indeed there is considerable historical debate about the precise role which trade unionism played in terms of raising the political consciousness of the labouring classes. Christie has suggested that, as workers' combinations tended to have in view the essentially conservative goals of preserving traditional patterns of work and standards of living, and considering that they often met with success in this regard, trade unions may have actually retarded the politicisation of the poor by blunting the detrimental economic effects of the Industrial Revolution.[51] Interestingly, John Foster came to similar conclusion when investigating the non-emergence of a 'mass political movement' in South Shields in the mid-nineteenth century. The appeal of radical politics, according to Foster, was lessened in the northeast primarily because Tyneside unionism was unusually successful in protecting workers against the worst effects of the Industrial Revolution.[52]

However, it is difficult to deny that in those towns where we have strong evidence of radical organisation - in places such as Norwich, Sheffield and London - there was significant overlap between membership of a trades unions and membership of radical clubs.[53] As Thompson has

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[49] Thompson, *Making*, p. 112 citing R. I. Wilberforce (ed.), *The Life of William Wilberforce* Vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1838), p. 2; Wilberforce stated this episode happened during 'the keelmen's strike' of 1792. However he may have confused this with the seamen's strike at Shields for which see Appendix II, October-November 1792.

[50] HO 42/22, ff. 247-251, Powditch - Pitt, 3 November 1792.

[51] Christie, *Stress and Stability*, p. 124.

[52] Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution*, p. 106-7.

[53] J. Stevenson , 'Early Trade Unionism: Radicalism and Respectability', in C. Cook and B. J. Pimlott (eds.), *Trade Unions in British Politics: The First 250 Years* (London: Longman, 1991), p. 10; J. Rule, 'Trade Unions, the Government and the French Revolution, 1789-1802', p. 126.

suggested, those active and articulate enough to form local unions and to organise strikes were likely to be 'no strangers to the rights of man'.[54] It also seems plausible, as Malcolm Chase suggests, that the increased collective confidence of workers, seen in the more numerous strikes of the early 1790s, owed something to the widening of workers' political awareness in the wake of the French Revolution.[55]

Whether or not the connection between unionism and radicalism was universal, the government certainly became convinced that labour organisations were a means through which Jacobinism could be propagated.[56] London magistrate Patrick Colquhoun, for example, advised the government that there were 100,000 journeymen and labourers - 'linked together' in friendly societies - who met seventeen times a year. In the event of an invasion, Colquhoun stated that these men could not be trusted with arms. One fifth were 'seduced and proselyted to disaffection by being Members of Corresponding Societies' and the remainder, through their membership of the friendly societies, were 'open to Seduction'.[57] Similarly the Home Secretary, the Duke of Portland, stated that all workers' 'associations' with elected presidents and delegates should be considered as containing 'within themselves the means of being converted at any time into a most dangerous instrument to disturb the public tranquillity'.[58] It was partly elite fears about the spread of revolutionary politics via industrial organisations which lead to the passage of the Combination Acts, prohibiting all trades unions in 1799.[59] Thus, if workers combinations were increasingly viewed as politically dangerous it is hardly surprising that overt acts of labour militancy should be repressed more vigorously in this period.

Similarly, the tougher stance of the central and local authorities towards food rioting, may also be attributed to the fear of the politicization of these disturbances. A number of historians have noted the sharp growth in membership enjoyed by working-class political clubs, such as the

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[54] Thompson, *Making*, p. 546.
[55] Chase, *Early Trade Unionism*, p. 81.
[56] A. Charlesworth and A. Randall, 'Industrial Protest, 1750-1850' in *An Atlas of Industrial Protest in Britain, 1750-1990*, p. 5; Chase, *Early Trade Unionism*, p. 82.
[57] PRO 30/8/254, ff. 192-3, Colquhoun, 'Suggestions favourable to the public Security in case of Invasion or in Cases of Tumult or Disorder … ', May 1797.
[58] Chase, *Early Trade Unionism*, p. 82; Quoting, HO 43/11, ff. 22-3, Portland – Bolton JP, 8 August 1799.
[59] J. Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution: Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns* (London: Methuen, 1974), p. 38; A. Charlesworth and A. Randall, 'Industrial Protest, 1750-1850' in *An Atlas of Industrial Protest in Britain, 1750-1990*, p. 5.

LCS, during the subsistence crises of 1795.[60] In many urban centres inflationary prices were used to recruit popular support for the radical cause. In London and Sheffield, large-scale public meetings, to petition for the end of the war, and to lobby for a reform of parliament, were held at the height of the food crisis of 1795.[61] At the St George's Fields meeting, chaired by John Gale Jones, the connection between food and politics was palpable. Embossed biscuits were handed with the slogan 'Freedom and Plenty, or Slavery and Want'.[62] Even in rural Norfolk, Justice Fellows reported that 'the very high price, not only of bread corn but of every other necessary of life, gives to every ill-disposed person but too plausible ground to harangue the common people'.[63] Additionally clandestine attempts were made by radicals to harness popular protests for their own ends. In Birmingham for example, 'alarming' revolutionary handbills appeared in advance of an attack upon a corn mill, arguing not just for more affordable prices, but a 'different form of relief of the poor'. [64] After two of the assailants were shot dead by the military, further seditious literature appeared in the streets the following day, criticising the magistrates for the bloodshed.[65] This incident was said to have resulted in an increase in membership among the Birmingham Constitutional Society, suggesting that radicals had some success in marrying economic with political grievances.[66]

Furthermore, there seem to have been a general feeling among many of the local authorities who called upon troops in 1795 that the influence of radical politics had undermined the traditional 'negotiative process' by sharpening latent hostilities between ruler and ruled. The High Sherriff of Gloucestershire, Sir George Onesiphorus Paul, for example, led a party of dragoons against a crowd blockading barges on the Stroudwater Canal in July 1795. Paul later explained he had been induced to act in this manner because:

> [T]he Cry of Want of Bread … forms a Body of Insurgents, and amongst these are mixed a number of seditious persons whose

[60] E. Royle, *Revolutionary Britannia?*, p. 23.
[61] Stevenson, *Artisans and Democrats*, p. 31; Shoemaker, *London Mob*, p. 150.
[62] M.D. George, Catalogue of Personal and Political Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum Vol. 7 (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1942)., p. 185.
[63] HO 42/36, ff. 189-192, Robert Fellowes [Shotesham, Norfolk] – Portland, 19 October 1795.
[64] HO 42/35, ff. 36-39, Spooner - Mordaunt, 23 June 1795.
[65] HO 42/35, ff. 32-3,Magistrates of Birmingham – Portland, 23 June 1795.
[66] Money, *Experience and Identity*, p. 232, 267-8.

> business it is to excite the number to mischief, and make them *deaf to reason*.[67]

The MP for Chester, John Crewe found himself similarly unable to parlay with a protesting crowd at Nantwich:

> [The crowd] told him they knew him well, but that he had better take care and recollect the fate of France … Tom Payne's book has been long the favourite study of many here… I have heard today that some families in this county are so alarmed as to think of removing to London.

Crewe's political sympathies lay with Charles James Fox and he had formerly been convinced that 'no Towns in England could ever require troops'. After his experiences in Nantwich, however, he anxiously awaited the arrival of the soldiery along with the other 'sober' townspeople.[68] The permeation of radical critiques of aristocratic hegemony, therefore, may have had the effect of destabilising the magistrate's ability to negotiate effectively with the crowd.

Furthermore, evidence from the West Midlands food riots of 1800-1 also suggests protests were becoming markedly less deferential. 'Symptoms of insurrection' were reported from Wolverhampton, where the crowd hoisted a red flag and marched about 'with two half penny rolls on iron spikes, and blowing a horn' and, in the vicinity of the Cosely Ironworks, crowds of 'several thousand' blockaded grain barges armed with 'about thirty pikes'.[69] At Stafford, protesting crowds outside the house of a baker, Mr Thompson, exchanged gunfire with those inside and at the Nine Locks, near Dudley, bricks from the brick-kiln were used as missiles, and bulldogs were unleashed, against the local yeomanry.[70] Elsewhere we can also find evidence of crowds attempting to lame the cavalry 'by Chains drawn across different places' or by throwing down 'Cats' (small iron spikes).[71] The evidence confirms that, in the late eighteenth century, crowds of the West Midlands were becoming more heavily armed, and that protests were

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[67] WO 1/1091, u.f., George O Paul,– Windham, 21 July 1795. My emphasis.
[68] Nottingham University Library, Pw F 3176/1, FA Crewe – Portland, 12 October 1795.
[69] *Hampshire Chronicle*, 17 February 1800; HO 42/52, ff. 13-4, Haden – Portland, 1 October 1800; HO 42/55, ff. 40-43, Deposition of Thomas Amsden before Richard Ford, Middlesex, 9 December 1800.
[70] HO 43/12, f. 153, Portland - Mayor of Stafford, 23 September 1800; *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 20 September 1800; *St James' Chronicle*, 6-8 May 1800; *Chester Courant*, 6 May 1800.
[71] HO 50/26, Banks – Portland, 14 November 1796; HO 50/6, f. 227, Grey–Fox, 21 February 1797.

becoming more violent. This is consistent with recent findings relating to the London 'mob'.[72] Whether crowds became less deferential as a result of the increasing use of troops, or whether the increasing use of troops was a response to growing crowd violence, is difficult to discern.

However, it is clear that local authorities associated the intensity of food rioting in these years with an increased political consciousness amongst the mass of the people. Regional studies of food riots in the South West and the North West suggest that there was a greater level of sophistication in their organization with evidence of 'inter-regional co-operation' and handbills advertising and directing protests more noticeably in 1800 than in 1795.[73] In the Midlands we may also note the same trends. Placards appeared in Worcester inviting [inhabitants] to disturb the public peace by open acts of Violence' and the Earl of Warwick believed that 'the Chief Cause of Riots [was] the Artful Instigations' of Jacobin agents.[74] The volume and tenor of the anonymous threatening letters received by magistrates in this period should also be considered. Williams suggests that those threatening letters received during the 1766 Midlands riots had a 'myopic' concern with local issues and personalities.[75] By contrast, the majority of those forwarded to the Home Office in the 1800-1 disturbances had strong political overtones and blended local with national issues. Particularly after the publication of the Royal Proclamation in September, anonymous authors blamed 'Billy Pitt' and 'that old 'ellborn tyrant the King' for the scarcity and dearness of corn.[76] Copies of the Proclamation itself were said to have been 'sprinkled all over with blood', 'defaced and abused in the most shameful manner'.[77] Magistrates also received persistent threats of a nation-wide 'general insurrection' planned for mid-November.[78] While John Massey reported from Newcastle-under-Lyme that 'five sixths of

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[72] Shoemaker, *London Mob*, p. 142.
[73] Booth, 'Food Riots in North-West England', p. 100; S. Poole, 'Popular Politics in Bristol', p. 459.
[74] *London Gazette,* 15301, (11 October 1800), p. 1173 ; HO 42/52, ff. 36-9, Warwick – Portland, 7 October 1800.
[75] D.E. Williams, 'Midland Hunger Riots in 1766', *Midland History*, 3 (1976), p. 289.
[76] HO 42/51, f. 127, Anonymous Address, 'Brother Brittons', n.d. [September 1800]; HO 42/52, f. 36, Anonymous Handbill, 'People Arouse', c. 7 October 1800.
[77] HO 42/51, ff. 291-2, 'A Birmingham Manufacturer' – Portland, 1 October 1800; HO 42/52, ff. 36-9, Warwick – Portland, 7 October 1800.
[78] HO 42/51, f. 127, Anonymous Address, 'Brother Brittons', n.d. [September 1800]; HO 42/53, ff. 24-5, Leveson-Gower – Portland, 2 November 1800.

the labouring people would join these plans' and that 'the word revolution is almost in every mouth as if already entered into'.[79]

As noted above, it was on the basis of these reports, and the evident concern which they raised amongst the West Midlands authorities, that the government dramatically increased the amount of military force available in the region at the start of November. By increasing the troop numbers in the vicinity of Birmingham ('cramming such a set of bloody soldiers, into that Town') government was said to have dampened the ardour, not just of the Jacobins in Warwickshire, but also those in Lancashire. Plans of a general rising were thus said to have been suspended.[80] Whether the claims of rebellion were overdrawn, and whether those men and women who participated in the food riots of 1800-1 shared the revolutionary and republican sentiments of the anonymous letter-writers and handbill-drafters, is extremely difficult to assess.[81] As John Stevenson has pointed out, just because we have riots, strikes and radical handbills 'running together' this does not necessarily 'indicate the presence of an incipient 'working-class movement''.[82] Food rioters had always made 'theatrical' claims of levelling. Talk of a 'revolution' in the 1790s and 1800s may simply have been a development of this tradition.

However, the evidence presented here suggests that, for the authorities of the West Midlands, such threats had a much greater immediacy in the wake of the French Revolution and in the midst of a food crisis. The more frequent resort to armed force by local authorities during the food riots of the 1790s and 1800s was therefore strongly linked to the perception that radical politics was infusing protest. The spread of 'Jacobinism' was perceived, by the authorities on the ground, to make crowd actions more violent, more difficult to assuage by personal presence alone, and more threatening to the *status quo*.

6.5. The Influence of 'New Political Economy'

The increasingly firm line taken against striking workers and food rioters was not merely a reaction to the perceived influence of radical politics or to the rapid growth of unruly industrial populations. Intellectual debates shifted considerably in the eighteenth century in regards to the

[79] HO 42/53, ff. 194-5, Massey – Gower, 5 November 1800.
[80] HO 42/55, ff. 89-90, Bancroft – Portland, 15 December 1800.
[81] For evidence of which see: HO 42/52, f. 211, J.W, 'Vive Le Republic', 27 October 1800.
[82] J. Stevenson, 'Early Trade Unionism', p. 13.

proper modes of economic relations. Under the old 'paternalist model', as outlined by E.P. Thompson, government had sought to regulate exploitative practices in dealing and milling, to prevent the export of corn, and to impose price ceilings in times of scarcity.[83] The rating of workers' wages by magistrates was a further element of the paternalist practice of regulating the economy.[84] With the striding advances of capitalism over the course of the eighteenth century, however, these traditional interventions in the economy to protect wage-earners and consumers increasingly seemed outmoded. As early as 1757, two decades before the *Wealth of Nations*, the clothiers of Gloucestershire had successfully deployed *laissez faire* arguments to ensure the repeal of statutory legislation for the rating of wages in the weaving trade.[85]

However, it is really in the last quarter of the century that we can see free market doctrines really gaining ground within Parliament.[86] Right up to the food riots of 1766 government had periodically responded to times of dearth by posting up proclamations condemning the immoral practices of forestallers and regrators. In 1772, however, these statutes were repealed. Although Lord Kenyon argued in 1795 that these marketing offences remained punishable at Common Law, this moment marks the beginning of a significant dismantling of the old paternalist model.[87] We can see, from the same time-period, Parliament granting to employers more legislative powers for the closer supervision of their workforces. Workers were increasingly criminalised for taking customary (and formerly tolerated) perquisites and penalized under the growing number of 'master and servant' Acts.[88] By 1814 all the Elizabethan statutes regulating apprenticeship (and thereby preserving the property-in-skill of artisans) were repealed and the Combination Acts (1799-1800), prohibiting trade union organisation across all trades, were in force.[89] While the efficacy of the Combination Acts in deterring and

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[83] Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd', p. 83
[84] Malcolmson, 'Workers' Combinations', p. 152.
[85] J. Rule, *Experience of Labour,* p. 161-2; Malcolmson, 'Workers' Combinations', p. 152; W.E. Minchinton, 'The Petitions of the Weavers and Clothiers of Gloucestershire in 1756', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 73 (1954), p. 226.
[86] Aspinall (ed.), *Early English Trade Unions*, p. ix.
[87] Thompson, 'Moral Economy', p. 88.
[88] A. Randall, 'Peculiar Perquisites and Pernicious Practices', pp.193-2; J. Rule, *The Experience of Labour*, pp. 124-146; Recent research by Douglas Hay on the 'master and servant' laws demonstrates that increasing numbers of workers were prosecuted for workplace irregularities and that sentences of imprisonment were lengthening over the last quarter of the century. D. Hay, 'England, 1562 - 1875: The Law and its Uses', in P. Craven and D. Hay (eds.), *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 82, 95.
[89] Hay, 'England, 1562 - 1875: The Law and its Uses', p. 81.

prosecuting trade unionists has been debated[90], many historians are agreed on the symbolic impact of these legislative moves.[91] By the end of the century, a still largely gentry-dominated Parliament stood much nearer to the employer and the large farmer than was the case formerly, with profound affects upon the social and industrial relations of the period.

The influence of the new political economy upon central government must also be acknowledged. Many of the leading figures in Pitt's ministry, including Foreign Secretary Grenville, Home Secretary Portland, and the Prime Minister himself, had read Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) and had been converted to the merits of free trade.[92] In addition to Smith's work, endorsements of *laissez faire* economics were made in the 1790s by Burke's *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity* (1795) and Malthus' *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798). Both publications asserted the immorality of 'meddling' in the supply of foodstuffs and emphasized the 'natural' system of 'checks' which rationing-by-price placed on undue population growth.

Indeed the growing intellectual capital of *laissez faire* economics had an important impact upon the Home Office response to strikes and food riots. The traditional 'area of licence', which was once afforded by those in authority to the riotous crowd, was increasingly seen as incompatible with the interests of trade and therefore the nation. So too was the notion of paternalistic compromise. As the Shields ship-owner, Thomas Powditch, expressed it, 'tampering with a Mob, treating with Rioters, or offering terms to people illegally assembled for the purpose of extorting high wages from their employers are Crimes little inferior in magnitude to rioting itself'.[93] The government agreed with Powditch in his essentials. Undue interference in economic relations, as well as disruptions to the peace, were to be prevented by the interposition of the military. It is for this reason that we see government consenting to the

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[90] A number of historians have suggested that the Combination Acts were of little importance and that employers continued to invoke older 'master and servant' legislation and the common law of conspiracy to bring prosecutions. The Act certainly failed to outlaw unions altogether as many, particularly those well-established in the artisan trades, continued to operate unhindered. For a good summary of the literature see; J.V. Orth, 'The English Combination Laws Reconsidered', in D. Hay and F. Snyder (eds.), *Labour, Law and Crime: An Historical Perspective* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987), pp. 123-49.

[91] Malcolmson, *Life and Labour*, p. 151; J. Rule, 'Trade Unions, the Government and the French Revolution', p. 116, Thompson, *Making*, p. 594; Hammond and Hammond, *Town Labourer*, 79-80.

[92] E.P. Thompson (ed.), 'The Moral Economy Reviewed', in *Customs in Common* (London: Merlin Press, 1991), p. 276; Wells, *Wretched Faces*, p. 88; D. Wilkinson, *The Duke of Portland: Politics and Party in the Age of George III* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), p. 117.

[93] HO 42/22, f. 251-3, Copy of Thomas Powditch's address to the Chairman of the Meeting at the Trinity House, Newcastle, 31 October 1792.

sending of troops to attend the nonviolent demonstrations of workers, and why government was prepared to dedicate large numbers of regular troops for riot-duty during the crisis years of 1795 and 1800-1. A new firmness is discernible from Portland's many out-letters from 1800 which depart from the traditional Home Office stance of allowing magistrates on the ground to form policy. Troops were sent unsolicited to Nottingham and Oxfordshire, over the heads of Justices, and Portland repeatedly urged soft-pedalling magistrates to take 'prompt and effectual measures' emphasizing that 'resort cannot be too soon had to the assistance of the Military'.[94] Furthermore, at least two unfortunate magistrates who failed to prevent disruptions to the free market, through the use of armed force, were brought before the King's Bench for neglect of duty.[95]

Wilkinson has recently argued that we should not overstate the influence of *laissez faire* economics and present Portland as an 'ideologically motivated moderniser'.[96] Wilkinson suggests that Portland's efforts to protect of the free circulation of corn was rooted in traditional view that 'liberty and property' were sacrosanct and upon the pragmatic belief that attacks on farmers and dealers was a discouragement to future production and would therefore worsen scarcity in the long term.[97] Similarly, Bohstedt has also argued that Home Office policy was born of 'pragmatism' – Portland was primarily concerned with ensuring the tranquillity and survival of London and the boom towns of the North by ensuring that 'steady provisioning' was maintained.[98] Thus, the argument goes, Portland was not waging war upon the traditional values of the moral economy and the paternalist model. Both historians raise a fair point. The preservation of public order was never entirely about maintaining *laissez faire*. Upholding the security of property rights had long been integral to the exercise of authority.[99] However, the growing intellectual weight of free market ideology surely gave a renewed urgency to the vigorous protection of private property. Moreover, Portland's 'profound conviction that price

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[94] Wells, *Wretched Faces*, p. 259.; HO 43/12, f. 154-5, Portland – Mayor of Stafford, 22 September 1800, f. 604, Portland – Homfray, 27 September 1800.
[95] For J.P George Donisthorpe of Somerton see S. Poole, 'Popular Politics in Bristol, Somerset and Wiltshire', p. 466; *Bath Herald*, 6 August 1796; For J.P Thomas Thomas of Glamorganshire see *Times*, 6 February 1801.
[96] Wilkinson, *The Duke of Portland,* p. 113.
[97] *Ibid*.
[98] J. Bohstedt, *The Politics of Provisions*, p. 229-30.
[99] D. Hay, 'Property, Authority and Criminal Law', in D. Hay, et al (eds.), *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Allen Lane, 1975), pp.17-64.

rises reflected genuine deficiencies in supply' was surely strongly influenced by his reading of Smith and Burke.[100] On the basis of this conviction, Portland argued that attempts by the crowd to interfere in the marketing of goods in one location would be detrimental to the supply of those elsewhere and thus should be vigorously repressed. Likewise, magistrates who temporized with the mob, and who promoted 'the most pernicious doctrine of establishing a [price] Maximum' were said to hold out encouragement to 'the lower orders of the people in other districts to have recourse to the same means of persuasion'.[101]

Many local authorities who communicated with the Home Office in 1800 remained unconvinced by Portland's reading of the scarcity. In the West Midlands the landlord- and clergy-dominated Bench unanimously claimed that the high prices of 1800 were linked to the 'avarice' of the farmers who were now 'above all control'.[102] Magistrates complained that farmers and dealers withheld stocks of grain from the market and pushed up prices in the confidence that they would be protected from the odium of the people by government and the volunteers.[103] The Earl of Warwick agreed and stated that the poor were 'actually starving not from the visitation of God but by the adoption of an Erroneous Theory':[104]

> Water, it is true, always finds its level, but it may be so artificially obstructed as to bring destruction on thousands by rising above the level of those places which it destroys, such I think is the present state of the Corn'[105]

Local authorities accepted that it was their role to keep the peace and agreed with Portland that it was 'an end to all Government when the mob can dictate'.[106] However, given the prevailing view in the West Midlands that the scarcity was artificial and that farmers were 'sacrificing [the poor] at the shrine of avarice', JPs continued to blend repressive measures with paternalistic interventions.[107] Local authorities implored government to intercede by placing an absolute price-ceiling on grain, while others prevailed upon local millers and farmers to bring flour and

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[100] Wilkinson, *The Duke of Portland,* p. 113
[101] HO 42/53, ff. 468-73, Draft Portland – Gower, 29 November 1800.
[102] HO 42/51, ff. 266-9, Abraham Bracebridge – Portland, 19 September 1800; HO 42/55, ff. 9-10, Heneage Legge – King, 3 December 1800;
[103] HO 42/50, ff. 48-50, R. B. Haden, Bilston - Portland, 10 May 1800.
[104] WO 1/1105, ff. 581-5, Warwick – Dundas, 14 December 1800.
[105] HO 42/52, ff. 36-9, Warwick – Portland, 7 October 1800.
[106] HO 42/51, ff. 175-176, Monckton – Portland, 16 September 1800.
[107] *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 20 September 1800.

wheat to markets at pegged prices.[108] Portland invariably admonished those responsible for such interventions where he found them to have occurred. Magistrates were directed to raise charitable subscription for the relief of the poor but they were not to interfere in market prices.[109]

Many local authorities resented the position they were placed in by the Home Secretary and Parliament.[110] The most vocal of the West Midlands magistrates was Reverend Haden:

> Alas. No step has been taken except a Proclamation from the throne strictly commanding us to do what in my opinion would be almost an Impossibility…to protect the inhuman, barbarous, cruel oppressor to the utmost extent, at the same time that he must order perhaps thousands of his fellow creatures to be mowed down with the Edge of the sword, because they ask only for a morsel of Bread to satisfy their hunger!!![111]

The sense of impending danger and rebellion, which we have noted in the winter of 1800, derived in part from the vulnerability magistrates felt once they were denied the ability to fix prices at local markets and to force farmers to bring in their produce. Indeed, it is plausible that the alarms raised by the West Midlands magistracy were part of an effort to put pressure on government to intercede in the grain market: 'Something, if possible, must be done for now all ranks are dissatisfied with the Ministry and Magistrates, they say the king is kept in the Dark'.[112]

However, the Pitt ministry was unerring in this regard. Portland responded to the magistrate's concerns primarily with troop reinforcements. The West Midlands, a landlocked region which faced no threat of invasion, became one of the most heavily garrisoned in the country. By November 1800, fifteen percent of the country's cavalry were stationed in the region and the newly-built barracks at Coventry and Birmingham were filled with cavalry. In addition six

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[108] HO 42/51, ff. 175-176, Monckton – Portland, 16 September 1800; ff. 493-4, Haden – Portland, 27 September 1800; ff. 266-9, Bracebridge – Portland, 19 September 1800; HO 42/52, f.144, Printed Resolutions of the Inhabitants of the City of Worcester, 9 October 1800

[109] HO 42/53, ff. 468-73, Draft Portland – Gower, 29 November 1800; HO 43/11, f. 500, Portland – Coventry, 21 May 1800.

[110] '[A]lmost every individual in either house of Parliament' was said to agree that the scarcity was real. WO 1/1105, ff. 589, Dundas – Warwick, ? December 1800.

[111] HO 42/51, ff. 493-4, Reverend Alexander Bunn Haden – Portland, 27 September 1800

[112] HO 42/52, ff. 146-7, Monckton – Portland, 3 October 1800.

regiments of foot were also sent.[113] As we have seen, many magistrates, fearful that food riots would turn into rebellion, made use of the increased coercive forces at their disposal, and took comfort in their presence. However, the repressive agencies of the state were not used 'to the utmost extent' in order to ensure the absolute freedom of the market.[114] Magistrates remained too committed to the old paternalist model to make a complete transition to *laissez faire* and, though sensible they were 'treading on tender ground', they continued to exceed the bounds of their authority by pressing producers to lower their prices.[115]

6.6. Conclusion

The evidence presented here demonstrates that, in comparison to earlier periods, military responses to food riots and trades disputes became more reflexive and increasingly central to the maintenance of public order in the 1790s. The external factor of warfare was important in allowing a dramatic extension of the coercive force available to the state over the eighteenth-century. However, this additional strength was thought to be especially needed in the 1790s. Many local authorities, and government ministers, were perturbed by the possibility of an English sequel to the French Revolution. The evidence suggests that even familiar disturbances, such as the food riot, were becoming tinged with radical politics and that protestors were becoming markedly less deferential. Thus radical critiques of the *ancien régime* played an important role in destabilizing the old 'negotiative process' between ruler and ruled. However, of more considerable weight was the changing social structure in the industrialising areas of the country. The unevenness of military deployments reflects the jagged pattern of industrialisation in late eighteenth-century England. Troops were sent most frequently to those parts of the country where regional specialisation, proto-industrialisation, and industrialisation, created large groups of single-industry wage-earners. In these areas the labouring poor gained an increasingly strong sense of collective identity as a result of their shared work and their dependency upon the movements of the market. At the same time, employers were increasingly seen to dominate positions of authority, and the notion of the magistrate as 'neutral arbiter', became more difficult to sustain.

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[113] Thirty-four troops of cavalry (fifteen per cent of total in England); HO 42/53, ff. 269-74, Draft Circular to Lord Lieutenants of Derby, Stafford, Chester, Shropshire, Leicester, Lancaster, Warwick, Worcester, 12 November 1800; WO 17/2785, Monthly Return of Quarts of HM Forces in GB, 1 September 1800.
[114] See Figure 11 where forty per cent of food riots in the West Midlands went on unopposed by military force in 1800-1.
[115] HO 42/51, ff. 1-2, William Watson – Portland, 1 September 1800.

In the industrialising districts of the country, government's lack of confidence in the 'civil power' to maintain the peace can be read into the establishment of barracks. Many of those inland barracks built between 1792-5 were a direct response to the strike waves of 1791-2, which saw local authorities calling loudly for permanent garrisons of troops. Government was willing to accede in these demands in part because of the possibility of radical fraternization with the soldiery. However, the Home Office increasingly felt itself justified in extending the role of the army and encouraging the use of the volunteers on the grounds of economic reasoning. Striking workers and food rioters were seen, from the centre, as a menace to the constitution, to the proper ordering of 'commerce', and therefore, they were considered to be 'destructive of all the sources which have contributed to our present prosperity'.[116] This outlook undoubtedly led to the closer policing of protest even though, as we have seen, the gentry and the clergy continued to show a determined paternalism.

The experience of the 1790s, in which the regular cavalry repeatedly demonstrated their utility in repressing disorder, appear to have had long-lasting consequences. Workers in the industrial districts became more and more accustomed to a uniformed response to their collective actions. Food rioters, in particular, faced a point of diminishing returns, as magistrate's hands were increasingly tied, in terms of price-setting. This certainly had an impact upon the decline of the food riot in the early nineteenth-century.[117] Furthermore, this experience was also important for England's industrial capitalists and ruling elites. It is worth noting that in 1779 the Peel family were the victims of machine breaking when their spinning jennies were thrown into the River Calder at Altham.[118] In 1783, however, when the 'Peel and Yates' print-works were threatened by a mob from Burnley, dragoons were dispatched to protect their factories.[119] By 1798, when the future Home Secretary – Robert Peel – was ten-years-old, his father was Lieutenant-Colonel of the Bury Military Association consisting of 300 infantry and 40 cavalry.[120] In 1808 Robert Peel Senior's effigy was burned by the Lancashire cotton weavers demanding a minimum-wage bill,

[116] HO 42/53, ff. 468-73, (draft) Portland – Gower, 29 November 1800.
[117] Stevenson, 'Food Riots in England 1792-1818', p. 68.
[118] N. Gash, *Mr. Secretary Peel: The Life of Sir Robert Peel to 1830* (London: Longman, 1985), pp. 20-1.
[119] WO 1019, f. 999, Magistrates of Manchester – Fitzpatrick, 10 June 1783; f. 1005, Livesay and Hargreaves – Major Taylor, 10 June 1783; WO 4/122, Fitzpatrick – Magistrates of Manchester, 12 June 1783.
[120] *Star*, 29 October 1798.

and troops were sent to break up the weavers' numerous demonstrations.[121] It is worth speculating that Robert Peel senior intimately understood the value of a uniformed force, for both the maintenance of good order and free trade, and that he passed his experiences on to his son. In any case, the seventeenth-century constitutionalism, which had once dominated high political discourse, and which sought to place checks on the influence of the army in society, was largely abandoned by the Pitt ministry in this period of industrialisation, heightened anxiety, and *laissez faire*. The newfound reliance upon armed force, so redolent in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, surely helped to clear the ideological path for the first serious discussions of a centrally-controlled English police in the 1820s.

[121] K. Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire, 1798-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 202; Manchester *Mercury,* 14 June 1808; *Morning Post*, 7-10 June 1808; *Hibernian Journal*, 8 June 1808.

7. Conclusion

This thesis has sought to offer a response to Linda Colley's *Britons*, or, at the very least, to offer a qualification of her argument. It must be admitted, however, that it does not meet Colley on equal terms. Geographically it examines England and not Britain or the wider empire. Chronologically, it terminates at Trafalgar (1805) rather than Waterloo (1815). And in terms of scope, it has been concentrated solely upon interactions between the army, the militia, and civilian society. This narrowness, in part reflects the pressures, both temporal and financial, upon the research student to provide a coherent self-contained argument. Within this limited field of operation, it is perhaps inevitable that a different narrative emerges to that which seeks to take the 'long view', and which explores important changes over time, such as the growth of modern nationalistic society. The intention here has not been to libel Colley's project or to deny its importance. The value of long-term or 'big history' is increasingly evident within eighteenth-century history.[1] However, this thesis has sought to question some of the key assumptions, and the evidential base, upon which the 'Nation-in-Arms' thesis rests. It has sought to question whether we can interpret the mass mobilizations of the French Wars as a unitary and unifying experience, for all classes of Britons. It is hoped that the research offered here has contributed to this debate, and particularly the argument put forward by Nicholas Rogers, that the regular armed forces do not slot neatly into the rather panglossian narrative, presented by Colley and others, of the French Wars.[2] Furthermore, by studying the relatively neglected tropes of the army and militia in England, it is hoped that a number of contributions and additions have been made to the fields of military history, labour history, and the history of protest.

One of the key themes of this work has been to emphasize that men enlisted for economic reasons. While this suggestion is hardly a novel one it is hoped that any doubts on this head can now be swept away. As Conway has argued for the earlier period, only a minority of soldiers were criminals or vagrants impressed into the army from the country's goals. Likewise, very few militiamen were balloted and compelled to serve as 'primaries'.[3] The vast majority of soldiers were, nominally, 'volunteers'. However, surprisingly few, even among the self-

[1] See P.J. Corfield, 'British History: The Exploding Galaxy', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34 (2011), pp. 517-26.
[2] Rogers, *Press Gang*, pp. 15, 125-6.
[3] Conway, 'The Recruitment of Criminals into the British Army', p. 56; See Chapter 2.1.

selecting group of military autobiographers examined here, gave an indication that it was a strong sense of nationalist sentiment which drew them to engage in patriotic martial endeavour.[4] What lay behind the decision to enlist was almost always an amalgamation of personal reasons in which economic distress featured extremely prominently. It is in detailing this dynamic which this thesis has had something original to contribute. The research presented in Chapter Two has demonstrated just how closely the fate of the recruiting service was tied to the health of the wider English economy. During the French Wars, rural-born 'labourers' enlisted in those years when their real wages were detrimentally affected by inflation, and, at those times of year when their options for seasonal work were slimmest. While urban 'manufacturers' tended to enlist when their trade was hit by recession or when they found their skills had been devalued by machinery or proto-industrial reorganization.[5]

Thus, war had a contradictory impact upon working-class experiences of the Industrial Revolution. On the one hand, war disrupted trade and threw large numbers of workers out of employ. On the other, wartime demand for soldiers was such that the army became something of a refuge for the under- and unemployed. While there were many disadvantages to soldiering, armed service did at least offer a minimum of subsistence, free lodging, and medical care. In this manner, the army and militia cushioned many working-class men from the long term effects of the Industrial Revolution. Enlistment might also be used by men as a way of escaping familial responsibilities.[6] However, this thesis has found evidence to support the work of Jennine Hurl-Eamon, who argues that married men often enlisted as part of a 'family survival strategy'.[7] Family men, in the industrialising North of England, took the 'King's shilling' in the knowledge that their dependents were likely to find unskilled work in their absence. While married men everywhere might calculate that, through enlisting to serve 'King and Country', even the most parsimonious parish officials would be forced to look more favourably upon their kin. Entry into the land forces, therefore, reflected a matrix of personal economic calculations.[8]

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[4] See Appendix I.
[5] See Chaper 2.3.
[6] Kent, ''Gone for a Soldier'', pp. 27-42; Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, p. 362.
[7] Hurl-Eamon, 'The Fiction of Female Dependence', p. 483.
[8] See Chapter 2.2-4.

A second contribution has been to demonstrate that the act of enlistment was popularly viewed as a voluntary engagement contingent upon the provision of bounty money, food, accommodation, and leisure time. Protests were quick to erupt whenever any aspect of this equation was infringed upon. The crimp riots of 1794-5, for example, were a forceful popular rebuttal against attempts by the independent regiments to coerce and inveigle would-be recruits. 'Crimping' was understood by contemporaries to mean, not just illegal impressment, but also aggressive recruitment tactics, trickery, fraud, and deception. Such methods were an affront to law but also to popular morality. This thesis has demonstrated that such practices were more widespread, during the early years of the wars, than has often been recognized. The recruitment process was also more urban and more fraught than the bucolic scenes, depicted by Rowlandson and other printmakers, would have us believe. The use of crimps and aggressive recruitment tactics by the independent regiments became notorious between 1793 and 1795. While the approval which these corps received from the state, in its desperation for men, provided powerful material for metropolitan radicals seeking to build a case around the notion of 'old corruption' and offering the remedy of reform. Indeed, constitutionalist notions of the 'freeborn Englishman' were exploited by radicals in the capital to critique the recruitment process and to channel popular aggression towards the government. While internationalist arguments were used to question the justice of the war itself. In a variety of ways then, radicals sought to impede working-class enlistment. However, even in Sheffield, the 'storm centre of English political unrest'[9], members of the reform societies accepted that unemployment and wartime recession would inevitably draw large numbers of their 'fellow citizens' into the conflict against the French.[10]

Understanding that enlistment was perceived as a contractual engagement is the key to unlocking many of the protests evident in the courts martial records and in the Home Office files.[11] This thesis has sought to survey those mutinies which have been well-known to historians, such as the militia mutinies[12], and to elaborate upon those less well-known instances,

[9] F.K. Donnelly, and J. L. Baxter, 'Sheffield and the English Revolutionary Tradition, 1791-1820', *International Review of Social History*, 20 (1975), p. 400.
[10] See Chapter 1.1.
[11] For similar conclusions, reached in other historical and geographical contexts, see Dziennik, 'Imperial Conflict and the Contractual Basis of Military Society in the Early Highland Regiments', pp. 17-36; Way, 'Rebellion of the Regulars', p. 789.
[12] See Wells, 'The Militia Mutinies', pp. 57-63 and Chapter 3.3.

such as the independent regiment mutinies.[13] In both sets of protests, soldiers sought to uphold elements of their enlistment-contract, which they felt had been breached. The violent outbreaks of mutiny noted in the independent regiments underscores the importance of bounty money to the would-be soldier. New recruits expected to receive a healthy prize for enlistment and were unwilling to serve obediently without it. Furthermore, the fact that the full balance of bounty money was so frequently denied enlists in the independent regiments, demonstrates the shoddy administration and dubious recruiting sergeants, to be found within those 'crude and hasty levies'.[14] While the food riots which broke out almost exclusively among the militia regiments is evidence of the weaker form of discipline in those corps.[15] They are suggestive of the militiaman's strong attachment to civilian society and his adherence to the 'moral economy'. Indeed, some of the most effective instances of 'price-setting', seen in the eighteenth century, occurred across the south coast, at the point of bayonet, in the spring of 1795.[16] The militiamen resented the unaffordable prices of that year and were determined to retain their customary, though elementary, diet of bread and meat.[17] Wells is correct to assert that the militia mutinies therefore put enormous pressure upon the government to consider the men's case.

Indeed, this thesis has set out the complex and changing material conditions of the rank and file over the period. It has been demonstrated that the standard of living of the common soldier was allowed to fall far below that of the rural labourer by 1790.[18] However, Chapter Three has shown that the French Revolution dramatically shifted the government's outlook on this issue. Chase has argued that the success of the Parisian *sans culottes* granted a degree of self-confidence to English workers' combinations and trades unions in the 1790s.[19] In a similar fashion, the well-publicised role of the *Gardes Françaises* in the storming of the Bastille, dramatically improved the bargaining-power of the English soldiery post-1789. Whether the rank and file themselves were aware of this fact, or could sense the government's sensitivity, is unclear. Regardless, this vulnerability quickly became self-evident. Even the hitherto unnoticed

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[13] See Chapter 2.5.
[14] The words of Adjutant General Sir William Fawcett. See WO 3/13, f. 118-21, Fawcett – Hewitt, 24 March 1795.
[15] One food riot was seen among an Irish independent regiment at Wells. Otherwise all of the major outbreaks of food rioting in 1795, which featured soldiers, can be traced back to militia regiments.
[16] Thompson, 'Moral Economy', pp. 112-3.
[17] See Chapter 3.3.
[18] See Chapter, 3.1.
[19] Chase, *Early Trade Unionism*, pp. 75, 81.

(and admittedly small-scale) riot among the Queens Dragoons in 1791, caused huge waves among military commanders, and set in train a series of reforms to provisioning and pay.[20]

Indeed, each of the reforms noted in Chapter Three flowed directly from either outbreaks of mutiny or, as in 1797, the serious threat of mutiny in the land forces. This fact throws considerable doubt upon the interpretative framework adopted by many traditional military histories. It is certainly inadequate to limit the question of military reform solely to the actions and programs of 'great men', such as the Duke of York or the Duke of Wellington.[21] Over the important issues of pay and conditions, at least, the government and its military commanders were forced to respond to changes on the ground and to offer solutions which often ran contrary to their better instincts. The alterations made to the soldier's pay and conditions during the 1790s were the most comprehensive military pay reforms of the century. It should be more widely acknowledged that these improvements were the product of negotiations between ordinary soldiers and a government deeply concerned about losing the loyalty of its armed forces.

To be sure, the government reacted quickly, efficiently, and with increasing generosity, to the military protests it encountered in the 1790s. One wonders what would have happened had they not done so in either 1795 or 1797. The image of Pitt, awoken on 26 May 1797, with news of a disturbance in the Royal Artillery barracks at Woolwich, while the red flag was still being flown by the naval mutineers at the Nore[22], gives credence to Thompson's instinct that this was a potentially revolutionary moment, if not handled with great care.[23] Certainly, as we have seen, ultra-radicals in England were poised to take advantage of disaffection among the rank and file arising from a pay dispute. Moreover, we know from subsequent events, that the Foot Guards were hardly impervious to politicization.[24] However, the Pitt ministry knew these details well and responded appropriately. The unprecedented rise in wages granted to the soldiers in 1797, in combination with the earlier concessions of pegged food prices, and the provision of free 'necessaries', elevated the soldiery to something of a privileged group in English society. Very few occupational sectors in England can claim to have improved their material conditions

[20] See Chapter 3.2.
[21] See in particular, Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*; White-Spunner, *Horse Guards*, p. 273.
[22] N.A.M. Rodger, 'Mutiny or Subversion? Spithead and the Nore', p. 553.
[23] Thompson, *Making*, pp. 182-4.
[24] M. Elliott, 'The 'Despard Conspiracy' Reconsidered', *Past & Present*, 75 (1977), pp. 46-61.

during the course of the French Wars, and fewer still were protected from wartime inflation. The stabilising effects of these moves can be gauged by the lack of food rioting among the militia during 1800-1 and the army's reliability in the suppression of civil disturbances during the same period. The military was perhaps the only sector of the economy not to feel the bite of dearth in those years.[25] It seems reasonable to assert that, at the core of soldierly loyalty in this period, lay the sanctity of the soldier's basic diet which, from the summer of 1795, was carefully protected by government.

Certainly, historical claims which emphasize the unconditional loyalty of the soldiery, and which argue that military service was a conduit for national sentiment, should be approached with a degree of caution. There is some basis to the concept of a 'military melting pot'.[26] Soldiers from different backgrounds were undoubtedly intermixed in the armed forces. However, there was also a degree of segregation via the army's 'regimental system' and though the militia's county-based organization. Furthermore, it has been observed that ethnic identities generated conflict both between regiments and between soldiers and civilians. This was particularly apparent during the Irish Rebellions of 1798 and 1803, where Irish soldiers and their regiments were consistently abused by civilians as 'rebels'. Regardless of their service records, the Irish in the ranks remained 'Other'. Moreover, the trumpet of state nationalism, according to Colley, was the Anglican clergy.[27] Yet attempts to expose the rank and file to Protestantism were very sparing in this period.[28] With so many Catholics and Dissenters in the ranks, commanders were loathed to enforce a Protestant version of Britishness upon their men. All shades of religion, and private worship, were generally tolerated in the interests of avoiding a sectarian backlash. Similarly, political opinions, were to be compartmentalised as far as was possible. At least one officer tried to impress a sense of Reevesite loyalism onto his men. However, for the ruling elite, even loyalism was too rich a cocktail for the common soldier to imbibe.[29] The redcoat was to remain politically inert at all costs. Hence, the few soldiers who voiced republican sentiments tended to be punished *and* relieved of their duties. It would appear that the officer's prerogative was to tolerate a degree of religious sectarianism, to suppress political engagement of any kind,

[25] For civilian experiences of 1800-1 see Wells, *Wretched Faces*.
[26] See Conway, *British Isles and the American War of Independence*, p. 196; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, pp. 309-10.
[27] Colley, 'Whose Nation?', p. 107.
[28] See Snape, *Redcoat and Religion.*
[29] For discussion of the politicising effect of loyalism on wider society see Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism'.

and to encourage identification, first and foremost, with the regiment. In this regard, this thesis supports the work of both Kennedy and Cookson.[30]

Within the 'regimental world', this thesis has emphasized that the experience of soldiering was not dissimilar to civilian waged labour. Mansfield and Way are right to highlight this continuity.[31] Soldiers laboured officially as military artificers, as overseers of convict labour, as prison guards, and as *ad hoc* riot police. They were set to work digging entrenchments, clearing ground, and were drilled tirelessly. However, soldiers were also released from their 'ordinary duties' to do harvest work, to tailor the regiment's uniforms, and to mend the company's shoes. We must therefore be careful of assuming, as Cobbett implied in his recollections, that all privates were slovenly layabouts. Cobbett was not unique in finding a path to self-betterment within the military. As many as one-fifth of private men could expect to be promoted to corporal while others learned or honed civilian trades. Undoubtedly, where soldiering differed dramatically from factory- or workshop-labour was in the irregularity of work. Soldiers could be called at a moment's notice to quell protests, which might require several days of marching, and hours of exacting confrontation. Yet equally, in the winter months, there were prolonged periods of relative inactivity. Soldiers filled this time, it would seem, primarily with drinking and gaming. Protests among militia units over foreshortened curfews, seen at Warley camp and Yarmouth barracks, demonstrate quite how important the privilege of leisure-time was. Indeed for at least one military autobiographer, it was the perception that soldiering was a relatively easy life which drew him to enlist in the first place.[32]

However, the reality of life in the ranks could be shocking to the uninitiated. Soldiers were not tied to the plough, or to the loom, but neither were they free. New recruits complained of being subjected to a repetitive training regime, they were demoralised by the use of physical correction, and shocked by the frequency and severity of floggings. Moreover, even in England, the soldier's living quarters were found to be cramped and insanitary in the extreme. Unsurprisingly, many men sought to escape such conditions. Chapter Four has set out to demonstrate just how common desertion was. Contrary to Cookson's suggestion, that the

[30] C. Kennedy, 'True Brittons and Real Irish'; Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds'.
[31] Way, 'Class and Common Soldier', pp. 457-8; Mansfield, 'Exploited Workers Or Agents of Imperialism? p. 9.
[32] Anon., *Memoirs of a Sergeant in the Late 43rd*, pp. 12-14

armed forces were raised with little difficulty during the early Napoleonic Wars[33], it has been shown that the authorities were confronted with a serious desertion problem between 1803 and 1805. A minority of men sought to turn a profit from bounty-jumping. However, thousands more sought to escape the military in search of less exacting and better-paid forms of labour. Moreover, the fact that runaway soldiers were welcomed by various civilian support-networks suggests that desertion was something of a 'social crime'.[34] Plebeian folk understood both enlistment and desertion primarily as economic choices. This suggests that the mass arming of the period was less significant, in terms of nationalistic sentiment, than the propaganda of the period would have us believe. Furthermore, Thompson's view, that the popular outlook on the French Wars was probably one of ambivalence, remains tenable.[35]

At the very least, the evidence presented here supports Semmell's argument that, during the late 1790s and early 1800s, the ruling elite carried with them a nagging uncertainty about the basic allegiance of the common people.[36] In 1797, workers from the Pennines played upon this vulnerability when protesting against the Militia Acts. The magistrates at Ulverstone were met with shouts of 'No Militia! Why should we fight … if the French come they will not hurt us – they will only plunder those who have too much'.[37] In the same year Uvedale Price predicted that marauding bands of British bandits would materialise in the event of a French invasion.[38] Even in 1803, at the height of invasion fears, the magistrates of Birmingham were busy *selectively* arming the reliable one per cent with pikes and cutlasses, in order to 'secure the town from Riot and Plunder', should the regular cavalry be drawn to the coasts.[39] Similarly, in the West Riding Yorkshire J.Ps reported that the 'the evil spirit of sedition is by no means laid'. Pamphlets appeared in the town of Bingley hailing Napoleon as a social leveller and welcoming an invasion.[40] This dissonance was perhaps isolated only to a few select groups. The majority of

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[33] Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 100.
[34] For other examples of popularly tolerated forms of criminality see J. Rule, 'Social Crime in the Rural South in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', *Southern History*, 1 (1979), pp. 135-53.
[35] Thompson, 'The Making of a Ruling Class', p. 378.
[36] Semmel, *Napoleon and the British*, pp. 54-5, 68.
[37] HO 42/40, ff. 373-6, Sunderland – Portland, 11 February 1797. See also Chapter 1.4.
[38] U. Price, *Thoughts on the Defence of Property. Addressed to the County of Hereford* (Hereford, 1797) pp. 10-13
[39] HO 50/345, H. Legge, Aston Hall – J. King, 5 December 1803. Eight hundred special constables out of a population of 'fourscore thousand' [80,000] were armed in this manner.
[40] SCA, WWM/Y/16/154a, Busifield – Fitzwilliam, 13 August 1803; WWM/Y/16/154b , Anon. Handbill from 'A Friend to Poor', Bingley, 12 August 1803.

English radicals denounced Napoleon as a tyrant after he became First Consul in 1799.[41] However, the depths of the 'revolutionary underground' during the Napoelonic period remain under-explored and demand further detailed research. From the evidence presented in this thesis, it is clear that many civil authorities, in the urban and industrial parts of the country, and many military commanders, dealing with the desertion problem, would have been sceptical of Colley's claim of a nation galvanised through mass arming. The historian is therefore entitled to share this scepticism.[42]

This thesis has also raises questions about the stability of England's '*ancien regime*'. In his influential monograph, *Stress and Stability*, Christie identified several crucial bulwarks against revolution; Britain's relatively generous poor relief system, her relatively porous ruling elite (which was open to successful merchants and industrialists), and the pervasiveness of deference and paternalism throughout the country. For Christie, these factors prevented revolutionary aspirations from taking root among the populace.[43] However, as we have seen, in the urbanising and industrialising areas of the country Christie's analysis seems out of place. In these areas, the deference and reciprocity integral to the peaceful resolution of protests was clearly breaking down.[44] Furthermore, radical critiques of aristocratic hegemony were gaining ground. Protestors were therefore less inclined to negotiate with magistrates, while the perceived threat of revolution, made the ruling elites predisposed to stifle popular commotion at its outset. Protests also became more frequent and more trenchant as regional specialisation concentrated workers, and bound them together, in single-industry wage-labour. Simultaneously, the same economic processes dissolved the finely-grained society, described by Christie, and forged more polarized social relations. Employers became more distanced from their workers and their interests became increasingly well-represented by a government committed to curbing price-setting and workers' combinations in defence of the free market.[45]

Concurrent with the slow dismantling of the old 'paternalist model' we see the rise of new modes of maintaining public order. This thesis has shown that the eighteenth century witnessed

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[41] Semmel, *Napoleon and the British*, p. 41.
[42] Philp (ed.), *Resisting Napoleon*, pp. 2-5.
[43] Christie, *Stress and Stability.*
[44] Brewer and Styles (eds.), *An Ungovernable People*, p. 17; Thompson, 'Moral Economy', pp. 76-136.
[45] See Chapter Six.

a cumulative increase of the military force available to the state for domestic repression.[46] This process was primarily a response to the growing demands of warfare and was thus a by-product of the extension of the 'fiscal-military state'.[47] However, these military resources were also perceived by the local authorities to be necessary for the growing task of maintaining public order. This thesis has demonstrated that, during the strike waves of 1791-2, and the food riots of 1795, urban magistrates openly admitted their dependence upon armed force for the security of their jurisdictions. This was a clear break from the past. Likewise, local officials, contrary to constitutionalist political traditions, actively lobbied for the building of barracks, and the Pitt ministry satisfied these claims. It has been shown that in 1800-1, sixty per cent of recorded food riots in the West Midlands were met by an armed response.[48] The mid-century formula, of calling for troops in the 'last resort', was being rewritten in this period.[49] Portland demanded 'the immediate application' of military force 'the moment occasion calls for it'.[50] While the Royal Proclamation of September 1800 urged the authorities to use the yeomanry to protect farmers' grain in transit.[51] Similarly, over the winter of that year, troops were poured into the unruly industrial regions, such as the West Midlands, when fears of a popular rebellion were communicated by local grandees.

While much of this story is already well-known, the details presented in this thesis add something to the 'revolution debate'. If we accept that 1800-1 was one of the worst food crises of the century[52], that the politicization of the food riot reached something of a high water-mark[53], and that English workers' combinations became alienated by Pitt's Combination Acts[54], then this year looks as good as any for an English Revolution. Yet, at this same critical moment, the state had at its disposal an unprecedented degree of force. Proportionately, almost the same number of troops as were needed to crush the Irish Rebellion of 1798, were present in England

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[46] See Chapter 6, Figure 9.
[47] Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, Table 2.1, p. 30.
[48] See Chapter 6 Figure 11.
[49] For mid-century protocols see Hayter, *Army and the Crowd*, pp. 52-3.
[50] HO 43/12, ff. 147-8, Portland – Villiers and Price, 19 September 1800.
[51] 'A Proclamation for Suppressing Riots, Tumults and Protecting and Encouraging the Markets', *London Gazette*, No. 15295, 20-23 September 1800, p. 1081.
[52] Wells, *Wretched Faces.*
[53] Thompson, 'Moral Economy', p. 128; Booth, 'Food Riots in the North-West of England', pp. 101-4; Poole, 'Popular Politics in Bristol', p. 478-81.
[54] Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution*, p. 38; J. Rule, 'Trade Unions, the Government and the French Revolution', pp. 123, 131; Thompson, *Making*, p. 546.

in 1800-1.[55] While we may doubt the steadiness of the volunteer forces, in terms of riot-control, the regular troops were better fed and better disciplined than they had been in previous decades. In the cities they were housed in barracks from whence they could be deployed with greater speed. Moreover, in the large towns of the Midlands and the North, the armed cavalryman had repeatedly proven his efficacy in preventing and containing popular protests. These details tend to support the analysis offered by Edward Royle in *Revolutionary Britannia*: It was not that there was no *desire* for a revolution in England, merely that the strength of the British state precluded any realistic *hope* of a revolution succeeding.[56] It should be acknowledged that the state's strength during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars was, at least in part, underwritten by a military whose welfare the government had been forced to attend to closely, between 1790-1805.

[55] See Chapter 6, Figure 9.
[56] Royle, *Revolutionary Britannia?*, p.10.

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Appendix I: Enlistment Motives from Soldiers' Autobiographies, c. 1790-1805.

Name of Soldier		DoB.	Year Enlisted	Enlistment Age	Regiment	Reasons for enlistment (in order of importance)	Push	Pull	Ref
George	Fraser	1774	c.1793-5	c.19-21	3rd Regiment Foot Guards	Failure of business, debts, alcohol abuse.	1	0	i
Allen	Davenport	1775	1794	19	Windsor Forresters (Fencibles)	Restlessness, desire for adventure, loyalism, nationalism.	0	1	ii
Thomas	Jackson	1775	1802	27	Staffordshire Militia then Coldstream Guards	Poverty, slackness of trade, attraction of bounty money.	1	0	iii
Robert	Flockheart	1778	1797	19	81st Regiment	Dislikes trade of a nail-maker.	1	0	iv
Benjamin	Harris	1781	1803	22	Army of Reserve later 95th Regiment	Drawn by ballot to serve in Army of Reserve.	1	0	v
Joseph	Mayett	1783	1803	20	Buckingham Militia	Disagreement with master's wife, uniform and music of soldiers.	1	1	vi
John	Shipp	1784	1797	13	22nd Regiment	Orphaned at young age, physically abused by master, 'finery and shrill music' of recruiting party.	1	1	vii
Edward	Costello	1788	1806	18	Dublin Militia then 95th Regiment	Restlessness, desire for glory, 'martial ardour'.	0	1	viii
Anon.	Sergeant	1790	1806	16	43rd Regiment	attracted by soldiers freedom and 'holiday life'	0	1	ix
John	Brown	1796	?	?	?	Wartime inflation leads to strike and puts Brown out of work as shoemaker. Penniless.	1	0	x
						Total	7	5	

[i] Fraser, *Memoirs in the Life and Travels of George Fraser*, pp. 17-18

[ii] Chase (ed.), *The Life and Literary Pursuits of Allen Davenport*, p. 3-7

[iii] Jackson, *Narrative of the Eventful Life of Thomas Jackson*, pp. 1-4

[iv] Guthrie, (ed.), *The Street Preacher*, p. 3
[v] Curling (ed.), *Recollections of Rifleman Harris*, p. 2
[vi] Ann Kussmaul, *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett*, pp. 23-5
[vii] Manners (ed.), *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Military Career of John Shipp*, pp. 8, 23-31
[viii] E. Costello, *Adventures of a Soldier,* pp. 1-2
[ix] Anon., *Memoirs of a Sergeant in the Late 43rd*, pp. 12-14
[x] Brown, *Sixty Years' Gleanings*, pp. 36-49

Appendix II: Showing Military Involvement in Labour Disputes, 1791-2.

Date		Location	Trade(s)	Cause	Action	Response	Regiments	Outcome	Dobson?	Ref
Mar	1791	Nottingham	hatters, stockingers	wages	demonstrations	military called as precaution.	15th Reg Dgns	?	1	xi
May	1791	Bradford-Upon-Avon	weavers	scribbling jennies	machine breaking	Clothier fires on crowd. military called to restore order.	54th Reg Ft, 1st Kings Dgn Gds, 2nd Queens Dgn Gds	jennies destroyed.	1	xii
Aug	1791	Coalbrookdale and Ketley	colliers, ironworkers	alterations to rate of wages	demonstrations	ironworks proprietor negotiates with crowd, military ensure men return to work.	Oxford Blues	Settlement. 4 arrested and fined for riot.	1	xiii
Aug	1791	Frome	weavers	carding machines	?	military called as precaution	3rd Prince Of Wales Dgn Gds	machine breaking prevented	0	xiv
Aug	1791	Trowbridge	weavers	carding machines	?	military called as precaution.	3rd Reg Ft	machine breaking prevented	0	xv
Aug	1791	Newcastle	keelmen(?)	?	arson attacks	military called as precaution.	37th Reg Ft	no further arson attacks	0	xvi
Aug	1791	Liverpool	carpenters, seamen, labourers	wages	demonstrations	strike breakers protected by inhabitants and military disperse crowds.	1st Royal Reg Dgns,	?	1	xvii
Sep	1791	Whitehaven	colliers, sailors	suspension of work at Lonsdale's mines	demonstrations	military called in as precaution	31st Reg Ft, 4th Queens Reg Dgn Gds	works are re-opened by Lord Lonsdale	1	xviii

Sep	1791	Trowbridge	weavers	labour-saving machinery	demonstrations	military used to disperse crowds	3rd Reg Dgn Gds	troops restore order	0	[xix]
Sep	1791	Newcastle and Sunderland	keelmen	wages	demonstrations	military and navy called as precaution	31st Reg Ft, *Martin* And *Flint* Sloops	?	1	[xx]
Dec	1791	Leicester	navigators	outstanding pay	demonstrations	military used to disperse crowds	Oxford Blues	wages granted	0	[xxi]
Jan	1792	Leicester	stocking weavers	wages	demonstrations	civil power disperse crowds. military called as precaution	1st Royal Reg Dgns(?)	men return to work.	1	[xxii]
Feb	1792	Birmingham	button-makers	wages	strikes and threats to destroy the 'brass house'	military called as precaution	Oxford Blues	men return to work.	1	[xxiii]
Feb	1792	Westminster	tailors	wages	protests over arrests for combination	military disperse crowds.	Life Guards	21 journeymen committed but released on appeal	1	[xxiv]
Apr	1792	Bolton	manufacturers (?)	wages	menacing advertisements	military called as precaution	2nd Reg Dgns	?	0	[xxv]
Apr	1792	Northwich	navigators	wages	demonstrations	military called as precaution	30th Reg Ft,	reports appear exaggerated.	0	[xxvi]
May	1792	Nottingham	shoemakers	wages	demonstrations	military disperse crowds.	6th Reg Dgns	2 shoemakers convicted at quarter sessions	1	[xxvii]
May	1792	Liverpool	carpenters	wages	demonstrations	military called as precaution	30th Reg Ft		1	[xxviii]
May	1792	Liverpool	flatboat men, carpenters	wages	demonstrations	military requested as precaution.	30th Reg Ft	men return to work.	1	[xxix]

Aug	1792	Kingswood and Camerton	colliers	wages	demonstrations	military called as precaution and attend magistrates	2nd Dgn Gds, 1st Dgn Gds,	settlement agreed	1	[xxx]
Aug	1792	Trowbridge	weavers	machines	machine breaking	military disperse crowds.	2nd Dgn Gds	machines destroyed	1	[xxxi]
Oct	1792	Wigan	colliers	wages	demonstrations	military disperse crowds.	30th Ft, 2nd Dgns	men return to work	1	[xxxii]
Nov	1792	Ipswich	sailors	wages	demonstrations	military disperse crowds.	? Dgns	3 men arrested and turned over to navy	1	[xxxiii]
Nov	1792	North Staffordshire	potters	wages	demonstrations	military called as precaution	Oxford Blues(?)	?	1	[xxxiv]
Nov	1792	Shields	sailors	wages	demonstrations	military and navy called as precaution	57th Reg Ft, 6th Dgns, *Martin, Hind* And *Racehorse*	settlement agreed	1	[xxxv]

[xi] *General Evening Post*, 15-17 March 1791; *Norfolk Chronicle,* 12 March 1791; Wrongly labelled as 'Dareham and Swaffham' in Dobson's table – actually troops were sent from Norfolk to Nottingham.

[xii] WO 1/1049, f. 39, Captain Lane – SaW, 15 May 1791; f. 41, George Bethell – Lane, 15 May 1791; ; WO 1/1048, f. 87, Bradford Inhabitants – SaW, 15 May 1791; WO 1/1050, f. 275, Major Waller – SaW, 16 May 1791; WO 1/1050, f. 223, Magistrates[?] of Bradford – SaW, 7 December 1791; *Gloucester Journal*, 31 May 1791. Randall,

[xiii] WO 1/1048, f. 215, Reynolds – Pardoe, 8 August 1791, f. 415, Pemberton – SaW, 11 August 1791; *London Chronicle,* 11 August 1791; Trinder, *The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire*, p. 229; *Shrewsbury Chronicle,* 12, 19, 26 August 1791.

[xiv] WO 1/1048, f. 391, Inhabitants or Magistrates of Frome – SaW, 9 August 1791; Randall, *Before the Luddites*, p. 81

[xv] WO 1/1050, f. 55-6, Gibbs – SaW, 13 August 1791; Randall, p. 81

[xvixvi] WO 1/1049, f. 175, Clayton – SaW, 21 August 1791; *Times,* 24 August 1791.

[xvii] WO 1/1048, f. 491, Goldworthy – SaW, 26 August 1791; WO 1/1049, f. 67, Mayor Sparling – SaW, 25 August 1791; *London Chronicle,* 30 August 1791

[xviii] WO 1/1050, f.297-8, Innkeepers of Whitehaven, 22 September 1791; *London Chronicle,* 1-4 October 1791; *Lloyd's Evening Post,* 23-26 September 1791; See *Sheffield Register* Feb 1791 for allusions to the subsidence there –mines are situated underneath properties in the town of Whitehaven.

[xix] WO 1/1050, f. 57-8, 59-60 Gibbs – SaW, 17, 27 September 1791, f. 73-4, Inhabitants of Trowbridge – SaW, 17 September 1791; Randall, p. 82.

[xx] *London Chronicle,* 8-11 October 1791; *World* 24 September 1791 ADM 1/1713/8, u.f, Duff – Stephens, 8 October 1791.

[xxi] WO 1/1049, f. 83, Mayor Neal – SaW, 28 December 1791; *Sheffield Register*, 6 January 1792.

[xxii] *Sheffield Register*, 13 January 1792; *Public Advertiser*, 9 January 1792.

[xxiii] *Star,* 15 February 1792; *Sheffield Register,* 24 February 1792.

[xxiv] *Star*, 25 February 1792; *Morning Chronicle,* 9 April 1792, *London Chronicle,* 3-5 April 1792. The initial indictment was described as '*summary* to the last degree', they should not have been committed to Newgate but to House of Correction, there was little evidence of the combination itself and they had been taken up by Justice's warrant without any previous summons or preparation for defence.
[xxv] WO 1/1052, f. 407, D'Home – Young, 25 April 1792; WO 1/1054, f. 173, Major Ramsay – Young, 3 October 1792 – two troops of Greys remain at Bolton where everything has been perfectly quiet for months.
[xxvi] WO 1/1052, f.413-4, Bayley Hall, Young, 27 April 1792; WO 1/1053, f. 225, 229, Maxwell – Young, 13, 21 April 1792; WO 1/1054, f. 11, 'Representation from Northwich, 24/04/1792.
[xxvii] *Sheffield Register,* 18 May 1792; *London Chronicle,* 16-18 October 1792; WO 5/68, f. 172, Lewis – CO 6th Reg Dgns, 14 May 1792.
[xxviii] HO 42/20, f. 177-8, Blundell – Pitt, 14 April 1792; HO 42/20, f. 181-2, Blundell – Dundas, 5 June 1792; HO 43/4, f. 9, Dundas – Mayor of Liverpool, 17/04/1792.
[xxix] HO 42/20, f. 181-2, Blundell – Dundas, 5 June 1792.
[xxx] *Public Advertiser,* 16 August 1792; *St James' Chronicle*, 21 August 1792; *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal,* 25 August 1792; HO 42/21, f. 307-8, Captain Monro – Dundas, 9 August 1792; f. 323, Captain Le Marchant – Young, 15 August 1792; HO 43/4, f. 82, Dundas – Noble, 17 August 1792.
[xxxi] *Evening Mail*, 31 August 1792; WO 1/1052, f. 465, Hubert – Young, 21 August 1791.
[xxxii] HO 42/20, f. 183, Blundell – Dundas, 7 October 1792; HO 42/22, f. 29-30, Blundell – Dundas, 1/10/1792; f. 58-9, Blundell – Dundas, 3 October 1792; WO 1/1054, f. 173, Major Ramsay – Young, 3 October 1792.
[xxxiii] *St James Chronicle,* 17-20 November 1792; *Ipswich Journal*, 17 November 1792; SROI, C/2/9/1/1/1/141/11, Information of Dennis Rowland, 13 November 1792; HO 42/22, f. 454, Sisted – Nepean, 20 November 1792; HO 42/24, f. 555-6, Sisted – Nepean, 18 November 1792; HO 43/4, f.188, Henry Dundas – Stisted, 20/02/1792.
[xxxiv] Greenslade and Jenkins (eds.), *Victoria County History of Stafford* Vol. 2, (OUP: Oxford, 1967), p. 54; *Lloyds Evening Post,* 26-28 November 1792.
[xxxv] HO 42/22, ff. 247-251, Powditch - Pitt, 3 November 1792; ff. 261-3, Burdon – Pitt, 3 November 1792; ADM 1/1713/8, u.f., Duff– Stephens, 11 November 1792; ADM 1/1617/1, u.f., Cochrane – Stephens, 16, 19 November 1792. There were actually orders for four troops of horse to proceed to Newcastle but two troops were held at Durham upon the conclusion of the strike. Similarly there were also orders for the *Niger* Man of War and *Drake* sloop to proceed to Newcastle from Portsmouth – neither arrived until after the strike had terminated so both have been omitted.