Soldiers of the King: British Soldiers and Identity in the Peninsular War, 1808 - 1814

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines identity among the British soldiers who fought in the Peninsular War from 1808 - 1814. Through a study of the memoirs, diaries and letters of the soldiers, their expressions of identity - how they defined themselves, expressed their inclusion in a community or communities based on shared similarities, and expressed their differences from those who were not part of this community - are analysed. The question of identity is a central issue in current historical debate among British historians and this thesis is a response to some of the arguments that have been advanced.

The soldiers defined themselves as Britons through their attachment to Britain, British characteristics, their pride in the accomplishments of the British army, and their othering of the French, Spanish and Portuguese. Despite many historians' claims that this British identity was founded on contempt or disdain for the French people and culture, the British soldiers did not show this same disdain, and actually had respect for and an amicable relationship with their 'enemy.' Their contempt was saved for their allies, the Spanish and Portuguese whom they viewed as racially and socially inferior.

British identity was not the only way British soldiers defined themselves, and as this thesis shows, the Irish and Scottish soldiers also had their own strong national feelings. These feelings were based on the understanding of distinct characteristics and the distinct cultures of the Irish and Scots. Despite the multiple national identities among the soldiers, this thesis also argues that the British soldiers also identified with their profession, and felt that a distinct soldiering community existed based on the

familial feeling within the regiments and the shared experience of the war. This soldiering community also extended to include the French soldiers.

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Introduction

In 1832, Philip Henry, the 5th Earl Stanhope, recalled a conversation with Arthur Wellesley, the 1st Duke of Wellington and commander of the British army in the Iberian Peninsula after 1809. Wellington had explained:

> The French system of conscription brings together a fair sample of all classes; ours is composed of the scum of the earth - the mere scum of the earth. It is only wonderful that we should be able to make so much out of them afterwards. The English soldiers are fellows who have all enlisted for drink - that is the plain fact - they have all enlisted for drink.[1]

It is apparent that Wellington did not think highly of the soldiers whom he led to liberate the Peninsula.[2] Wellington's "mere scum of the earth. . . fellows who have all enlisted for drink" form the focus of this thesis. I will examine the reminiscences of the Peninsular War written by British soldiers in order to evaluate their expression of identity: most importantly, their national identity. By identity I mean how soldiers defined themselves and how they expressed their inclusion in a community or communities based on shared similarities, and how they expressed their differences from those who were not part of this community. As Benedict Anderson explains, "nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time," and a study of identity can determine the importance nationality has or had among a group of people.[3] The examination of the expression of

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1 Philip Henry 5th Earl Stanhope, Notes on Conversations with the Duke of Wellington (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1888) 13-14; The Duke elaborated on his opinion of the British army, referring specifically to incidents he had witnessed during his command of the army in the Iberian Peninsula: Stanhope 9, 18.

2 Although Wellington's use of the word 'soldier' referred primarily to the rank and file, when I use 'soldier' throughout this thesis I mean both the rank and file and the officers. I will use the terms 'ranks' and 'officers' when I specifically refer to them.

3 Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London: Verso, 1991) 3.

national identities helps determine the power of patriotic and nationalist feeling over the individual and sheds some light on why so many people have displayed intensely loyal feelings for their nation to the point of risking their lives in war. It also helps to adjudicate the relative resonance and authority of other forms of identities for individuals, most notably those of region, race, status or class, gender, and profession.

There are several reasons why I have chosen British soldiers in this particular period for a study of national identity. Firstly, warfare had changed between the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century primarily due to the ideas of the French Revolution and Napoleon, and subsequently the emergence of nationalist ideologies. Britain's contribution to the war against France stretched from 1808 to 1814 and British forces, with the aid of Portuguese and Spanish troops as well as Spanish Guerrillas, drove the French first from Portugal , then from Spain and finally into France itself, leading to the overthrow and exile of Napoleon in 1814.

Clive Emsley describes the differences between warfare in the eighteenth century and warfare in the Napoleonic period. In the eighteenth century:

> Wars were not ideological, and aggressive nationalism was never the driving force. Armies were small; often their soldiers had little emotional attachment to the country or to the governments for whom they fought and there were contingents of foreign mercenaries in the armies of many states. Campaigns consisted largely of attempting to outmanoeuvre and wear down an opponent; pitched battles were costly even to the victor since the kind of tactics employed resulted in heavy casualties and consequently battles were often avoided. In general civilians were not involved in war, unless the area in which they lived became the

> scene of a campaign. There were exceptions and there were military men who sought ways of fighting battles which would destroy an opponent; but 'restrained' and 'limited' remain the key adjectives for describing eighteenth-century warfare.[4]

Emsley goes on to explain that the French Revolution and Napoleon changed all of this. The 'crusading' ideals of the revolution brought about a "new intensity of warfare. . .The commanders who sprang to the forefront in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars sought battles with the intention of annihilating their enemy. Nationalism became a motivating force behind the armies . . . Peoples rather than the mercenary armies of absolutist monarchs, marched to fight each other."[5] Britain's oldest enemy, France, with its mass armies under the leadership of Napoleon, stood on the brink of total dominance of Europe, and this fuelled Britain's hostility.[6] According to Emsley, "if there was a common experience shared by all Britons in the last decade of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth centuries, it is to be found less in the changes resulting from the industrial revolution and more in the demands of war."[7]

The demands of the war are evident from the number of Britons involved. The army expanded from 40,000 personnel in 1793 to over 250,0000 personnel in 1813, employing an average of 3 and 4 per cent of the population during the entire war. The British army went from being regarded as a 'derelict army' in the eighteenth century to the 'envy of Europe' after the

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4 Clive Emsley, British Society and the French Wars, 1793-1815 (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1979) 2.

5 Emsley 3.

6 Emsley 3; Also see chapters 4 and 10 in Geoffrey Best, War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1770 - 1870 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1998).

7 Emsley 4.

Napoleonic Wars.[8] Wellington's army in the Peninsula, however, was small and there were "never more than 51,000 troops effectively on the field of battle" and no more than 36,000 of them British soldiers; Britain, therefore, fought long drawn out campaigns to weaken their foe instead of facing them in large pitched battles.[9] Soldiers spent many years away from their homes fighting the long campaign in the Peninsula.

Besides the changes in warfare during the Peninsular War, the war is also the focus of this study because of the wealth of diaries, journals, letters and memoirs that were written by soldiers. Large numbers of British soldiers and officers in the early nineteenth century wrote about their war experiences. According to C. Oman, "there was more writing going on in the army during the ten years 1805-1815 than in the whole eighteenth century."[10] Emsley adds that "the campaign in the Peninsula is the first in British history to be written up by a score or so literate men from the other ranks; a fact not unnoticed by contemporaries."[11]

Because of the number of written reminiscences of the war and the development in the early nineteenth century of a new age in warfare, the Peninsular War has become a popular topic among historians. Many of these works have been useful to my understanding of the events. The most famous of the earliest works written on the Peninsular War is Sir W.F.P. Napier's History of the War in the Peninsula, and in the South of France: From the Year 1807 to the Year 1814, published in 1851 and consisting of six

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8 David Chandler ed., The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994) 133; Richard Glover, Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795 - 1809 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1963) 6.

9 Antony Brett-James, Life in Wellington's Army (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1972) 7.

10 C. Oman, Wellington's Army, 1809-1814 (New York: Longmans Green, and Co., 1913) 3.

11 Emsley 172.

lengthy volumes. The work is based on both Napier's experiences of the war as a commanding officer and information he collected on events of the war in which he did not participate. Although Napier's history has been criticised for its inaccurate report of the events in which he was not involved, generally his work has been regarded as the definitive history of the war. Other major works written on the war include Sir C.W.C. Oman's seven volume History of the Peninsular War, which was published between 1902 and 1930, and volumes VI -IX of J. W. Fortescue's A History of the British Army, published in 1910. Both these works and Napier's deal with the war in exhaustive detail, describing the campaigns, the battles, the leaders and the politics behind the conflict. Many of the sources used are dispatches, letters and biographies of the leaders and commanders of the British army, as well as government documents concerning the war. Although these works provide detailed accounts of the war, they are only concerned with the operations of the British army.

Since the publication of these histories of the war there have been numerous works written on the events and operations of the war by both military enthusiasts and historians. These include general histories of the war as well as more specific studies of certain campaigns, such as F.C. Beatson's With Wellington in the Pyrenees, which provides a narrative of only one of the 1813 campaigns. Jan Read's War in the Peninsula is an example of a work which relies on the previous literature of the war but reassesses the war with a more detailed look at the contribution made by the Spanish and Portuguese forces allied with Britain and the Spanish guerrillas who harassed the French army. Read uses Spanish and Portuguese sources in

the study and provides some revision of the previous histories of the war. Michael Glover's The Peninsular War, 1807 - 1814: A Concise Military History and David Gates' The Spanish Ulcer: A History of the Peninsular War try to fill in the gaps of the current literature by bringing this revised history together with the past literature. While Gates uses new findings and some soldiers' letters, he provides another detailed overview of the entire war, focusing on the major battles and the political atmosphere surrounding the war. Glover, however, makes more use of the diaries, memoirs and letters of the soldiers to try to bring a 'human element' to the war.[12]

The overviews of the war by Michael Glover, David Gates and other historians before them have provided me with a general background of the war but were not as important to my study of the Peninsular soldiers' identity as the works written on the soldiers' experiences during the war. The first important work written about the soldiers' experiences during the Peninsular War is C. Oman's Wellington's Army, 1809-1814, which was published in 1913. Oman's book deals with the day-to-day life of the soldier as well as the organisation of the army, and his sources include the diaries, memoirs and letters of the soldiers. Oman also spends several chapters examining the Duke of Wellington and his character, strategies, and lieutenants.

Godfrey Davies also examines the character of Wellington and his relationship with his soldiers in Wellington and His Army, published in 1954. Davies uses many of the same sources as Oman, including the diaries, letters and memoirs of the soldiers, but he is more concerned with the 'internal economy' of the army and how that influenced the relationship

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12 There are also two sourcebooks that are useful for background material on the period: Clive Emsley, The Longman Companion to Napoleonic Europe (London: Longman, 1993); Philip J. Haythornthwaite, The Napoleonic Sourcebook (London: Arms and Armour, 1995).

Wellington had with his soldiers. Although this is the main focus of his book, Davies also examines the daily routine and experiences of the soldiers in the Peninsula with descriptions of their amusement and recreation and of the families who accompanied them.

Published during the same year as Davies' book, Colonel M. de Watteville's The British Soldier: His daily Life From Tudor to Modern Times focuses on recruitment, and the education and literacy of the soldiers. These issues are also examined in Richard Glover's Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795-1809, and Michael Glover's Wellington's Army, published in 1963 and 1974. Both historians discuss recruitment, army education among the officers as well as discipline, attitudes towards the military, and army reform. Although these three books do not deal specifically with the daily routine of the British soldier in the Peninsula, their study of the types of soldiers who were recruited, as well as the organisation, discipline and education of the army, provide useful insight into why the British army had such a bad reputation before 1815.[13]

Discipline, education and literacy are also examined in Antony Brett-James' book, Life in Wellington's Army, published in 1972. These issues are among many others Brett-James addresses through his extensive use of the soldiers' writings. His book covers all aspects of soldiering life including marching, billets, bivouacs, leisure, religion, families, and what he refers to as 'fraternisation' with the enemy. Brett-James' study is much like Oman's but with the advantage of having more contemporary sources available, although

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13 Along the same lines as Richard and Michael Glover are Clive Emsley's British Society and the French Wars 1793 - 1815 and Geoffrey Best's War and Society in Revolutionary Europe 1770 - 1870. Both historians focus on the wars during the revolutionary period and their effects on society.

it often tends to become too anecdotal and short on analysis.[14]

On the other hand, John Keegan's The Face of Battle, published in 1976, is much more analytical. Although he does not examine the Peninsular War, his discussion of the physical and mental experiences of combat during the Battle of Waterloo is particularly useful for this study. Although he focuses on contemporary British sources, he also develops comparisons with the French soldiers. He analyses the effects of fatigue, hunger, smoke, noise, relationships between officers and their men, symbols of motivation and the different types of combat (infantry vs. cavalry, infantry vs. artillery etc.) on the soldiers involved in the battle to create a picture of the experience of combat during the Napoleonic Wars.[15]

As useful as much of this historical scholarship on the Peninsular War and on soldiers' experience of war is, there is little discussion of the issue which now engages the attention of many historians of modern Britain - national identity. Some historians, notably Linda Colley, have argued that the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw the emergence of a distinct national identity in Britain.[16] Colley argues that the British

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[14] Another interesting work that deals with women in the war is F. C. G. Page's Following the Drum: Women in Wellington's Wars (London: André Deutsch Ltd., 1986). Using memoirs and journals of soldiers who fought in the war, Page presents several anecdotes of soldiers' wives and camp followers emphasising their 'heroism', 'courage' and 'endurance' in the war. Page also accentuates the perception of women as nurturers and maintainers of morale. Although Page adds the only example of women's history to the literature of the Peninsular War, the book is mainly narrative with no real analysis of gender. Page tends to place value on women who displayed heroism, courage and endurance, in a way valuing their display of what were perceived during the Peninsular war as masculine traits.

[15] Similar to Keegan, Edward Coss further examines the motivation and esprit de corps of the British soldiers with a specific focus on the Peninsular War: Edward J. Coss, "Ordeal by Fire: The Combat Behaviour of the British Soldier under Wellington," The Consortium on Revolutionary Europe, 1750 - 1850 Proceedings, 1989, ed. Donald D. Horward and John C. Horgan (Tallahassee, Fla: Institute on Napoleon and the French Revolution, Florida State University, 1990)

[16] Linda Colley, "Britishness and Otherness: An Argument" Journal of British Studies 31:4 (1992); Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707 - 1837 (London: Pimlico, 1992).

development of a national identity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was closely linked to a notion of the French as the 'other'. British identity or 'Britishness' became strongest during the wars with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France when Britons established a dichotomy between their Protestant nation and the Catholic 'other' of France. Colley states that "in the presence of an alien and contemptuous culture, they [the British] felt all of a sudden intensely British, brought together, almost despite themselves, by confrontation with the other."[17] She emphasises her point with the explanation "we usually decide who we are by reference to who and what we are not."[18] Despite her assertion that 'Britishness' developed during this period, Colley also argues that regional identities remained strong. According to Colley, 'Britishness' did not remove other loyalties, and the Welsh and Scottish, for example, retained their own regional identities while also identifying themselves as British.[19] The wars with France "allowed diverse inhabitants to focus on what they had in common, rather than on what divided them."[20]

This thesis is in part a response to Colley's argument. Part of Colley's evidence comes from a study of the mass volunteer movement during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, especially when fears of French

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17 Colley, "Britishness" 311.
18 Colley, "Britishness" 311.
19 Colley, "Britishness" 315-316; Colley, Britons 6.
20 Colley, "Britishness" 316.

invasion ran high.[21] Colley argues that the mass volunteer movement arose primarily due to this fear of invasion and a strong patriotic feeling to protect the 'homeland'. She also states that the lure of adventure and the excitement of heroism were motivating factors for volunteers but these factors were closely affiliated with patriotism. She only examines the volunteers, however, many of whom dropped out of the corps after the Battle of Trafalgar and the end of the invasion threat, and did not go on to join regular regiments and fight in the Peninsula or at Waterloo.[22] Colley recognises that more work needs to be done on "the impact of military service on men" in order to show that soldiering "could serve as a political education in the widest sense."[23]

I found Colley's idea of 'othering' to be very useful for my analysis of the soldiers' national feeling. The principal flaw in her argument, however, is her emphasis on 'Francophobia' in the development of British national identity. Other historians like Raphael Samuel, Eric Hobsbawm and Gerald Newman all generally agree with Colley's interpretation.[24] Samuel contends that English national character was based on the "negative example of

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[21] In contrast to Colley's argument, J. E. Cookson argues that the primary motivation to volunteer came from the middle class that, through the volunteer movement, was able to "assert its interests within an aristocratic regime." He explains that the middle classes were now armed volunteers with some independence; this gave them their own public power in their communities, and it abated the state's military monopoly. Volunteering was linked more to the growth of 'urban consciousness' and community patriotism than any form of national patriotism. Cookson attributes the eagerness to enlist in the short-lived volunteer movement to the "greater fluidity of Britain's social system" and the acceptance of military service more than to the patriotism of the 'people': J. E. Cookson, "The English Volunteer Movement of the French Wars, 1793-1815: Some Contexts" The Historical Journal 32:4 (1989)

[22] Colley, Britons 300-307.

[23] Colley, Britons 314.

[24] See Raphael Samuel ed., Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity vol. 3 (London: Routledge, 1989); E. J. Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism Since 1780 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990); Gerald Newman, The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740 - 1830 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

France," and both Hobsbawm and Newman view early nineteenth-century British nationalism as anti-French and a reaction to cosmopolitanism and aristocratic privilege.[25] This assertion is not supported by a reading of soldiers' memoirs, letters and diaries during the Peninsular war; as I will illustrate in my thesis, and especially in chapter 2, Britishness, as articulated by British ranks and officers in the early nineteenth century was not primarily based on anti-French feeling.[26]

Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood disagree with Colley's contention that a pervading sense of 'Britishness' developed during this period based on a fear and hatred of the French. In the introduction to their book A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, c. 1750-1850, they argue that "the only Britons for whom Britishness was a primary and permanent identity comprised the small proportion of the educated and well-to-do who operated in an all-British context."[27] Brockliss and Eastwood demonstrate this by indicating that although Britons were taught to feel pride in their victory over France, they weren't taught to be Francophobic, and many Britons went back to being Francophiles after 1815.[28] Their evidence lies in Robin Eagles' contribution to the book which shows that Francophile influences returned among the Whig aristocracy after 1815. This group, however, did not represent the majority of Britons, and their Francophilism helps prove Newman's thesis that nationalism was a reaction to

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25 Samuel xxix; Hobsbawm 20; Newman 17 - 46, 55, 73.

26 Hobsbawm also argues that early nineteenth-century British nationalism was based on "common interest against particular interests" rather than on "language or ethnicity." As I will show in Chapter 2, although this was particularly true of the British soldiers' view of the French, ethnicity was an important factor in the 'othering' of the Spanish and Portuguese.

27 Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood editors, A Union of multiple Identities: The British Isles, c. 1750-1850 (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997) 3.

28 Brockliss and Eastwood 4-6.

cosmopolitanism, and therefore British or English nationalism continued to develop because of the maintenance of this aristocratic cosmopolitanism.

Despite my criticism of Samuel and Newman, their work is still relevant to this project. Particularly useful to my study of the soldiers' national identity is Samuel's discussion of national characters who were steeped in the English ideals of liberty, freedom and sincerity, particularly the chapter in Samuel's book by Jeannine Surel on John Bull and her ideas about English liberty, and Newman's discussion of the English characteristic of sincerity.[29] Hugh Cunningham's study, "The Language of Patriotism, 1750-1914," has also been helpful because it examines the ideology of patriotism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. According to Cunningham, liberty and freedom (especially from foreign domination) were the basic tenets of this patriotic language and "if tyranny or slavery threatened the reign of liberty then the 'Freeborn Englishman' would be justified in rising in opposition."[30]

Iain Pears also discusses English patriotism and the development of a national character in his chapter in Roy Porter's Myths of the English, entitled "The Gentleman and the Hero: Wellington and Napoleon in the Nineteenth Century." Pears explains that Wellington's character and qualities became an integral part of the English national consciousness after the Napoleonic Wars;

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[29] See Samuel; Jeannine Surel, "John Bull," in Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity vol. 3, ed. Raphael Samuel, (London: Routledge, 1989); Sincerity included moral innocence, honesty, originality, frankness, and moral independence: Newman 128-144.

[30] Hugh Cunningham, "The Language of Patriotism, 1750 - 1914," History Workshop 12 (1981) 11; Cunningham also disagrees somewhat with Colley as he states that the idea of a united patriotic fervour during the wars with France between 1793-1815 "is one of the enduring myths of English history." He explains that there were only 'waves' or 'bursts' of patriotism during the invasion scares and these bursts were "not a unanimous declaration of national unity" as there were those Britons such as the loyalists and radicals who did not experience the same patriotic feeling: Cunningham 13-15.

he asserts that Wellington did not create this image but he instead "encapsulated a newly-forming vision of national type."[31] Wellington's character became an amalgam of the different aspects of English patriotism or nationalism, which included characteristics such as xenophobia, sincerity, modernism, loyalty, chivalry and liberty, and thus formed a model for how the English wished to portray themselves in the nineteenth century.[32] All of these examinations of national character and patriotic language aid my analysis, allowing me to locate patriotic or distinctly 'British' language in the soldiers' writings.[33]

Another valuable analytical work for my study of the soldiers' identity is Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. According to Anderson, the nation is 'imagined' "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."[34] Anderson's definition of the nation as an 'imagined community' is helpful for both an examination of the soldier's national feeling and the sense of community they developed, and of their professional identity and their feelings of a soldiering community which I will discuss in Chapter 4. Wartime experience produced a 'horizontal comradeship' among the soldiers which in turn was objectified as the nation.

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31 Iain Pears, "The Gentleman and the Hero: Wellington and Napoleon in the Nineteenth Century" Myths of the English Roy Porter ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992) 218.

32 Pears 218, 232-233. These characteristics are of course the same characteristics indicated by Cunningham, Newman and Samuel.

33 Most of the historians agree with Colley that Britishness did not integrate the regional identities, and many Britons considered themselves as both British and Welsh or Scottish. For my study of regional identities, I have also consulted works on Welsh, Irish and Scottish identities which I will deal with in Chapter 3.

34 Anderson 6.

Gender also plays an important part in the national and professional identities of the soldiers, and I rely on several works to provide insight. In Gender and the Politics of History, Joan Wallach Scott explains that gender history is the study of how gendered hierarchies and knowledge of sexual difference are 'constructed' or 'legitimised'. It is "the need to examine gender concretely and in context and to consider it a historical phenomenon, produced, reproduced, and transformed in different situations and over time."[35] These different situations/constructions become evident through the study of various historically gendered cultural symbols, normative concepts, and political and social organisations.[36] Scott's theories are applied in the books Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800 edited by Michael Roper and John Tosh whose focus is on masculinity and its contribution to the construction of men's social power and dominance, and George L. Mosse's The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity. Mosse examines the construction of the masculine stereotype since the late eighteenth century, and how it transformed from the aristocratic masculine ideal before the late eighteenth century to a middle-class construction of masculinity.

All of these works, then, have provided a valuable framework for my study of the Peninsular soldiers' identity. I consider evidence of the articulation of identity in soldiers' memoirs, diaries, and letters. The value of these written reminiscences for this study is not in their accuracy of facts and events, but in what Oman calls their portrayal of "the spirit of the time".[37] They provide insight into the personal and national feelings of the soldiers

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[35] Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia UP, 1988) 6.
[36] Scott 42 - 44.
[37] Oman 2.

and supply an excellent source for a study of identity.

I have selected the memoirs, diaries and letters of forty soldiers who served in the Peninsular War. This group of soldiers includes both officers, and the lower ranks or rank and file. Officers and ranks referred to themselves as soldiers, so my use of the word 'soldier' is inclusive. There were social differences between the officer class and the rank and file, which shaped the opinions or perspectives of the officer or rank and file soldier. The forms of identity expressed by officers and rank and file soldiers can, therefore, not be regarded as a simple monolith but must be carefully distinguished from each other. Accordingly, I will refer to soldiers as 'officers' or 'ranks' when it is necessary to draw these distinctions; otherwise, the term 'soldier' will refer to both officers and ranks.

Although there were considerably more officers than ranks who wrote about their time in the the army, I have tried to examine every available written reminiscence by rank and file soldiers. The officers were still the majority, however, comprising twenty-seven of the forty in my group. All of the soldiers studied were literate with the exception of John Harris and William Lawrence, who dictated their memoirs to acquaintances. Out of the group of reminiscences I examined, letters, and especially memoirs comprise the majority (See Appendix A). While some of the recollections written in diary form tend to deal only with the movement of troops and the events of the day, the letters and memoirs have more introspective moments where the soldier's thoughts, opinions and feelings emerge (see figure 1).

Memoirs, however, do pose a problem in terms of veracity, since many of them were written decades after the war. The soldier's memory of events

may not have been entirely accurate, but, as I have already stated, an accurate recall of events is not the foremost consideration in my analysis of the sources. What is more important are the opinions and feelings of the soldier that he felt were important enough to discuss in his writing. These feelings and opinions illuminate what was important to the soldier, and with what issues or virtues the soldier identified. Many of the memoir writers based their memoir on journals or letters they had written during the war, so feelings they had at the time were more readily remembered.[38] The memoirs were generally written with the intention to publish, and many were published in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. Therefore, the writers contributed to the development among Britons of a general patriotic pride in the strength of the military and the Empire through their heroic embellishments. I have included as many letters, diaries or journals as possible, so that my evidence does not solely rest on the long-term memories of the soldiers. Out of the group of forty, twenty-two are memoirs (see Appendix A).

Journals and letters are also subject to criticism since even the soldier's immediate memory of events was influenced by outside sources.[39] The most noticeable influence is literature; most of the soldiers whose writing I have examined were literate and wrote their own reminiscences of the war. What they read had a prominent influence on what they wrote.[40] As Paul Fussell illustrates in his work on World War I, literature could have an enormous

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38 Cooper, Pearson, the writer of The Subaltern, Kincaid, and Verner all based their memoirs on letters, journals or notes written during the war.

39 Some of the letters from the Peninsula were written with the intent to circulate or publish them and this may have shaped their writing.

40 Harris and Lawrence were both illiterate and they dictated their stories to friends who wrote them down.

impact on the way that soldiers interpreted and shaped their wartime experiences. He writes, "It is to be expected that one's reports on experience will to an extraordinary degree lean on literature or recognise its presence and authority."[41] This was also true for the British soldiers of the Peninsular War who "leaned" on English literature, especially the then popular Romantics, for "presence and authority."[42] The emphasis on imagination, emotion and nature found in the works of the romantic poets and writers shaped the soldiers' interpretation of the events of the war.[43]

The writing style of the memoirs was also influenced by the Romantic movement. Although letters and journals were never written with the intention of publication, many of them were published along with the memoirs, since the stories of the individual and his experiences were quite

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41 Paul Fussell, The Great War and Modern Memory (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975) 164.

42 Cooper explained that he loved reading books about battles: John Spencer Cooper, Seven Campaigns, 2nd edition (Carlisle: G & T Coward Ltd., 1914) 1; Donaldson admitted that "novels, romances, and fairy tales, were my favourite books": Joseph Donaldson, Recollections of the Eventful Life of a Soldier (Edinburgh, 1847) 3; Wheeler was delighted to find a number of books in a house in Madrid: William Wheeler, The Letters of Private Wheeler, 1809 - 1828, ed. Captain B. H. Liddell Hart (London: Michael Joseph, 1951) 94; Other soldiers referred to or quoted from specific writers including Shakespeare, Cervantes, Milton, and Homer: Edward Costello, The Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, ed. Antony Brett-James (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1967) 133, 149; Charles Boothby, A Prisoner of France: The Memoirs, Diary and Correspondence of Charles Boothby, Captain Royal Engineers, During His Last Campaign (London, 1898) 66 - 67; Sir William Maynard Gomm, Letters and Journals of Field-Marshal Sir William Maynard Gomm, ed. Francis Culling Carr-Gomm (London, 1881) 286.

43 Examples of poetic descriptions of nature can be found in William Webber, With Guns in the Peninsula: The Peninsula War Journal of 2nd Captain William Webber, Royal Artillery, ed. Richard Henry Wollocombe (London: Greenhill Books, 1991) 55 - 56; William Grattan, Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, ed. Charles Oman (London: Edward Arnold, 1902) 2 - 4; The Subaltern (Edinburgh, 1845) 47 - 49; Sir Benjamin D'Urban, The Peninsular Journal of Major-General Sir Benjamin D'Urban, 1808 - 1817, ed. I. J. Rousseau (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930) 17; Robert Blakeney, A Boy in the Peninsular War, ed. Julian Sturgis (London, 1899) 75 - 76; Thomas Howell, A Soldier of the Seventy-First: The Journal of a Soldier of the Highland Light Infantry, 1806 - 1815, ed. Christopher Hibbert (London: Leo Cooper, 1975)17; James Anton, Retrospect of a Military Life During the Most Eventful Periods of the Last War (Edinburgh, 1841) 10; The soldiers' display of emotion will be further examined in Chapter 4.

popular in the nineteenth century, especially during the Romantic period.[44] Romanticism was evident in the dramatic nature of the writing in the memoirs, and the emphasis on the heroic qualities of the soldiers.[45] This is very reminiscent of the expressions of the British soldiers in the First World War, as Fussell indicates: "the experiences of a man going up the line to his destiny cannot help seeming to him like those of a hero of medieval romance if his imagination has been steeped in actual literary romances or their equivalent."[46]

Despite the literary influences, and the distortions of memory, the soldiers' opinions and feelings as expressed in the sources used in this thesis have a ring of authenticity. This is especially evident when feelings of national identity were discussed. While reminiscences were written to serve primarily as adventure tales of soldiers defending their nation from the 'tyranny' of the French, they reveal much about attitudes towards Englishness and Frenchness.[47]

Because the memoirs were written after the war, however, the writers may have also been influenced by the political atmosphere of the time. The United Kingdom was no longer at war with France, and relations with France had cooled considerably in the decades after Waterloo. The majority of the

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44 Both Ford and Gairdner's journals have not been published, and I was able to examine them at the National Army Museum in London.

45 M. H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms, 6th ed. (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1993) 127 - 128; Best 58; Costello's memoir first appeared in United Service Magazine from 1839 to 1840 and The Subaltern was first published as a series of papers in Blackwood's magazine: Costello xiv; Subaltern x. Many of the other letters, diaries and memoirs were published in the nineteenth century.

46 Fussell 135; Some good examples of dramatic writing can be found in Blakeney 264; Grattan 62, 73.

47 See chapters 2 and 4 for examples. For the majority of the soldiers studied, the Peninsular War was their first campaign. The identity of those with previous wartime experience may have been influenced by their experience, but generally the exposure still involved France as the enemy.

wartime memoirs were written during those decades, from about 1820 - 1850, and the soldiers may have had different opinions about the French at the time of their writing. This may explain in part the absence of Francophobic feelings among the majority of soldiers. But anti-French sentiment is also absent from many of the letters and journals which were written during the war. The feelings of the soldiers in the memoirs therefore coincide with the feelings found in the letters and journals, and this adds to the authenticity of the memoirs.

With the written reminiscences of the soldiers as a rich primary resource and the analytical tools provided by diverse historians, I will first examine the soldiers' notions of British identity, focussing on their patriotic feeling, and then on their 'othering' of the French, Portuguese and Spanish. I will then discuss the national feelings among the Welsh, Irish and Scots soldiers and how their regional identities relate to Britishness. Finally, I will turn my attention to the examination of the soldiers' professional identity, and the creation of a distinct soldiering community.

Chapter 1

British Soldiers and British Identity Part I: Pride

Ye living brave, whose hearts with rapture burn,
Britannia's pride to her glad arms return:
O haste to greet the soil for ever free,
And say 'We conquered, toiled, and bled for thee.'-
What eager crowds will throng with fond acclaim,
The shore re-echoing to each well-known name![1]

So a poet, whose husband served in the Peninsular War, celebrated Britain's military strength and capability. This pride was also shown by many of the soldiers who fought in the war. In this chapter I will examine if and in what manner these feelings of pride among the soldiers formed a part of their British identity. I will first determine, however, if national pride or patriotism was the sole or at least the most important reason for enlisting, and then I will examine how their perceptions of Britishness were expressed during their service.

Despite the feelings soldiers may have had after their service in the war, patriotism was not the primary, or even the most common factor for enlistment. When one Militia-man was promoted into the 95th Rifles, the reason that he was able to raise one hundred militia-men to earn his rank was because, the Rifles "were styled"; the Rifles were an attractive regiment.[2] Their novelty as a regiment was that they were specialised; they dressed in green instead of the standard red of the line infantry and the other light infantry regiments, and they used rifles instead of muskets for skirmishing

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1 From "A Sketch Written in the Year 1814": Poems Founded on the Events of the War in the Peninsula, by the Wife of an Officer, (London, 1819).

2 George Simmons, A British Rifle Man, ed. Lieutenant-Colonel Willoughby Verner (London, 1899) xii.

and guerilla-type tactics. The Rifles attracted recruits because of their appearance and their novelty, but men also enlisted into other regiments because of the novelty of being a soldier, the attraction of the uniform and what they perceived as a life of glory and adventure. As Linda Colley indicates, "with the bogey of Bonaparte hanging over them, Britons who were poor, more so perhaps even than the prosperous, were drawn into military service not just by apprehension but by the excitement of it all, by a pleasurable sense of risk and imminent drama, by the lure of a free, brightly coloured uniform and by the powerful seduction exerted by martial music."[3]

One Rifleman was certainly one of those Britons who was drawn to the life of a soldier. A shepherd and later a cobbler from Dorset, he was balloted into the Army of Reserve, and while serving in Ireland he was attracted by the appearance of the 95th Rifles. He wrote that "whilst in Dublin, I one day saw a corps of the 95th Rifles, and fell so in love with their smart, dashing, and devil-may-care appearance, that nothing would serve me till I was a Rifleman myself."[4] Another Rifleman found life as a cabinet maker dull except when he listened to the stories of a fellow employee who was a wounded veteran of the British Army. Costello explained that "from this old blade, I think it was, I first acquired that martial ardour that so frequently infects young men in time of war. There was, indeed, no resisting the old pensioner's description of glory. I became red-hot for a soldier's life, and although rejected as too young for the regulars, I 'listed', as it is technically called, in the Dublin Militia on the 17th of June 1806."[5] A year later he

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3 Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707 - 1837 (London: Pimlico, 1992) 306-307.

4 John Harris, Recollections of Rifleman Harris as Told by Henry Curling, ed. Christopher Hibbert (London: Leo Cooper, 1970) 5.

5 Edward Costello, The Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, ed. Antony Brett-James (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1967) 1.

enlisted into the 95th Rifle Brigade and on seeing the soldiers of his new regiment he wrote "I must say I felt highly delighted with the smart appearance of the men as well as their green uniform."[6]

Another Rifleman also joined the Rifle brigade in 1809 because of the allure of adventure and glory, and he wrote about his feelings during his trip to enlist in the regiment: "With the usual Quixotic feeling of a youngster, I remember how very desirous I was, on the march to Deal, to impress the minds of the natives with a suitable notion of the magnitude of my importance, by carrying a donkey-load of pistols in my belt, and screwing my naturally placid countenance up to a pitch of ferocity beyond what it was calculated to bear."[7] One Englishman had similar feelings when he left school to enlist in 1805, "about to be launched into the fascinating sphere of military life: for what youth has ever been heard of that has not been impressed with it, as the beau ideal of happiness, and the transportation from school into a red coat, and the society of a regiment, as a consummation of his fondest forebodings."[8]

These feelings of the adventurous and glorious life of a soldier developed in part from the 'romantic' imagination of the soldiers. One soldier read novels, romances, and fairy tales and he explained that "by this means, my ideas of life were warped from reality, and the world I had pictured in my imagination was very unlike the one in which I lived."[9] He first tried living as a shepherd and a sailor, which he saw as romantic ways of

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[6] Costello 2; Costello was able to recruit others into the regiment through the attraction of the uniform: Costello 2.

[7] J. Kincaid, Adventures in the Rifle Brigade in the Peninsula, France and the Netherlands, from 1809 to 1815, ed. Sir John Fortescue (London: Peter Davies Limited, 1929) 1.

[8] William Cowper Coles, Recollections of a Military Life, 1805 to 1814 (London, 1847) 5.

[9] Joseph Donaldson, Recollections of the Eventful Life of a Soldier (Edinburgh, 1847) 3.

life, before deciding on becoming a soldier. He had run away from his parents to pursue his 'romantic' life and part of the reason he enlisted in the army was because he couldn't face the embarrassment of returning home.[10] Another soldier too described a soldier's life in foreign service as very romantic: "at the period to which these Sketches refer, the war in the Peninsula was at the hottest; and from the time I had a prospect of joining the army, all the romance of my nature was called forth, by the hope of visiting that interesting country."[11] This idea of a romantic life in the army and the promise of glory and adventure is best illustrated in one officer's poem "On Entering the Army - (1806) - aged 16":

> Adieu, ye dull sequestered plains!
> Ye languid scenes adieu!
> Your peaceful clods no honour gain,
> 'Tis glory I pursue.
>
> A life unvaried shall I lead,
> Inactive and unknown?
> And pace inglorious o'er a mead
> Whilst others seek renown.
>
> To you, ye love-sick swains, I yield
> Such joys as these bestow;
> And weary of fair learning's fields,
> To other scenes I go.
>
> Lady, my laurels at they feet
> I'll lay on my return;
> What female heart can soldiers greet,
> And not with pleasure burn![12]

The desire to enlist for reasons of glory and adventure as well as for

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10 Donaldson 3-33.

11 John Malcolm, "Reminiscences of a Campaign in the Pyrenees and South of France, in 1814," in Constable's Miscellany vol. 27 (Edinburgh, 1828) 236.

12 William Swabey, Diary of Campaigns in the Peninsula, for the Years 1811, 12, and 13, ed. Colonel F. A. Whinyates (Woolwich, 1895) 207.

appearance and recognition could be associated with patriotism when one considers that glory was derived from the notion of risking one's life for one's country, and that the colourful uniforms as Colley indicates, "denoted service to the nation."[13] But the life of a soldier was also associated with a powerful 'imagined ideal masculinity.' The adventure and glory of a soldiering life was a way that many men asserted their manliness. By recording their adventures for the public, they reinforced or buttressed this 'imagined ideal masculinity.'[14] Of course, this 'imagined masculinity' became closely associated with British identity and England's power as an Empire, but as Colley explains "it seems probable that some Britons at least volunteered not so much because they were anxious to fight for anything in particular, but simply because they wanted to fight - period."[15]

The British Army tried to highlight the romanticism of soldiering in recruitment campaigns. Recruiting parties included members of the regiment dressed in their brightly coloured uniforms and sometimes accompanied by a drummer or some other form of martial music (see figure 2).[16] According to one soldier, in 1807 "there was a great demand for the army. Drums and fifes was heard almost in every street in Glasgow. If a person was walking on the street, or looking in through a window, you

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13 Colley, Britons 187.

14 See Graham Dawson, "The Blond Bedouin: Lawrence of Arabia, Imperial Adventure and the Imagining of English-British Masculinity" Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800, eds. Michael Roper and John Tosh (London: Routledge, 1991).

15 Colley, Britons 303; Although Colley refers to those men who enlisted into the volunteer regiments, the same could be said for those who enlisted into the regular army, many of whom came from the volunteer corps, militia or from the reserves (which later replaced the militia); see Richard Glover, Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795 - 1809 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1963) 223-230; Examples include Harris, Cooper, Costello, Ross-Lewin, Wheeler, Simmons, Hennell, and Anton.

16 R. Glover 219-220, 222; see Scott Hughes Myerly, British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1996): 53-66.

would not be long till there was a soldier asking you to enlist."[17]

These martial displays, however, were not the sole enticement for new recruits, and other persuasive measures were needed. Perhaps most enticing was the offer of a bounty, "a sum of money provided partly to pay for clothing and equipping the recruit, and partly to induce him to volunteer by giving him a handsome bonus out of the residue."[18] Many recruitments took place in public houses, and future recruits would welcome the offer of a bounty to pay for a night of inebriation. One soldier recalled a recruiting foray in Ireland, in which the new recruits and the recruiters "danced through the town, every now and then stopping for another pull at the whisky decanters. . . In about ten days after this, our sergeants had collected together a good batch of recruits, and we started for England."[19]

Using a public house as a recruiting centre and drink as an enticement was also a way for recruiters to trick many men into enlisting.[20] A recruiting sergeant was recorded as saying: "you must try every means in your power to get him to drink, blow him up with a fine story, get him inveigled to the magistrate in some shape or other, and get him attested; but by no means let him out of your hands."[21] The writer's reaction to this was: "I could not help thinking how many poor fellows were thus inveigled into a profession they did not like, and rendered miserable the remainder of their lives."[22]

One of these 'poor fellows' was Andrew Pearson, who wrote about

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17 John MacFarlane, "Peninsular Private," ed. Major Eric Robson, Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research vol. 32 (1954) 4.

18 R. Glover 222.

19 Harris 5-6.

20 M. DeWatteville, The British Soldier: His Daily Life From Tudor to Modern Times (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1954) 96-100; R. Glover 223-230.

21 Donaldson 87.

22 Donaldson 87.

being tricked into enlisting: "My service in the army, as will be afterwards shown, was a compulsory one; and it was not till after incessant and often vehement appeals to all the military authorities who came within my reach, that I reluctantly resigned myself to the dark fate before me, and resolved to be an ardent defender of my country."[23] Pearson had learned from his mother to read and write and he later became apprenticed to be a weaver. His master abused him so he left his apprenticeship and worked on a ship. While spending his shore leave in a Cork pub, army recruiters plied him with drink and when he awoke he found himself in the local fort; he had been tricked into joining the 61st East Gloucestershire Regiment. Because he had neither accepted the bounty or swore himself in, his enlistment was not official. He complained to a General who promised his release, but it never came about and he was sent with his regiment to the Peninsula.[24]

Sometimes enlistment provided a welcome alternative to a bad situation. Many criminals volunteered as an option to serving time in prison, and during the Irish Rebellion in 1798, members of the rebel United Irishmen who were taken prisoner were forced to join the army or face punishment.[25] One apprentice escaped from an abusive master by enlisting into the army. Unfortunately, the law forced him back to his apprentice position, but while on his way back to work he met up with a soldier in a public house who enticed him to enlist into the 40th Regiment.[26] The

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23 Andrew Pearson, The Soldier Who Walked Away: Autobiography of Andrew Pearson, a Peninsular War Veteran, ed. Arthur H. Haley (London: Bullfinch Publication, 1987) 10.

24 Pearson 11-15.

25 Michael Glover, Wellington's Army (London: David & Charles, 1977) 29 - 30; Harry Ross-Lewin, With the Thirty-Second in the Peninsular and Other Campaigns, ed. John Wardell (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., Ltd., 1904) 40; R. Glover 223 - 230.

26 William Lawrence, The Autobiography of Sergeant William Lawrence, A Hero of the Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, ed. George Nugent Banks (London, 1886) 1-14.

apprentice felt that serving in the army would be the only way to escape his situation, but he also felt some remorse for leaving everything behind:

> We passed the night before our embarkation in the town: a night to many perhaps the bitterest they had ever experienced, but to myself, on the other hand, one mainly of joy, for I felt that I had at last outwitted my pursuers. But though I cannot say that I was yet at all repentant, it must not be thought that I felt altogether comfortable on leaving my country with all my friends and relations in it, so young as I was at the time: more especially when I considered the errand we were on, and thought that I might never return to see them again, knowing that they had not the slightest idea of where I was. I naturally felt rather timid, as all young recruits must feel on entering so soon on foreign service as I then found myself obliged to do.[27]

One soldier decided to join the regular army after serving in the militia; he found the discipline too harsh and abusive. He wrote in 1809: "I have at length escaped from the Militia without being flead alive. I have taken the first opportunity and voluntiered together with the 127 of my comrades into the 51st Light Infantry Regiment... I had made up my mind to voluntier but in what regiment I cared not a straw, so I determined to go with the greatest number."[28] Another soldier came from a poor family and although his parents wanted him to become a clergyman, he left school to become an actor, but he failed as an actor and out of his despair he "rashly" joined the army.[29]

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[27] Lawrence 16-17.

[28] William Wheeler, The Letters of Private Wheeler, 1809 - 1828, ed. Captain B. H. Liddell Hart (London: Michael Joseph, 1951) 17, 21.

[29] Thomas Howell, A Soldier of the Seventy-First: The Journal of a Soldier of the Highland Light Infantry, 1806 - 1815, ed. Christopher Hibbert (London: Leo Cooper, 1975) xii-xiii; John MacFarlane's unhappiness with domestic life also led him to enlist: MacFarlane 4.

There were also soldiers, primarily officers, who were from wealthy families; they could either afford a military education, a commission, or they were given commissions through family connections. A military education at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich guaranteed a commission in the Ordnance department of the army as soon as vacancies arose.[30] One officer followed in his father's footsteps by earning a commission in the army (but first in the Limerick City Militia). He maintained that he had inherited the qualities of a soldier from his father:

> From him, among other qualities, I inherited a predilection for the profession of arms, which began to manifest itself some time before the memorable event of the donning of my first jacket and trousers. Whenever I happened to be reported absent without leave, during my father's sojourn in any garrison town, the domestics sent in search of me invariably directed their steps to the barracks, well knowing that they might be sure to find me there, watching with unwaried attention the progress of the drill, and endeavouring to imitate with my mimic gun the various motions of the manual and platoon exercise.[31]

Some men also enlisted into the regular army because of a strong national or patriotic feeling, but they tended to be a minority. One Sergeant felt that the liberties and freedom of Europe and especially Britain were

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30 R. Glover 143; Charles Boothby and Rice Jones both earned their commissions this way. Sir Benjamin D'Urban, John Aitchison and John Rous purchased their commissions, Sir William Warre received his commission and attended the Royal Military College in High Wycombe in 1807, Sir Thomas Brotherton's father bought him his commission, and Robert Blakeney was appointed to his commission: John Aitchison, An Ensign in the Peninsular War: The Letters of John Aitchison, ed. W. F. K. Thompson (London: Michael Joseph, 1994) 10; Robert Blakeney, A Boy in the Peninsular War, ed. Julian Sturgis (London, 1899) xii, 1; Sir Thomas Brotherton, A Hawk at War: The Peninsular War Reminiscences of General Sir Thomas Brotherton, ed. Bryan Perrett (Chippenham: Picton Publishing Ltd., 1986) 7; Sir William Warre, Letters from the Peninsula, 1808 - 1812 (London: John Murray, 1909) xx-xxi.

31 Ross-Lewin 1.

threatened by "the Corsican upstart."[32] At the height of the invasion scare in 1803, he joined a volunteer corps as a fifer and wrote: "having got a sword by my side, I made sad havoc of the tall thistles and nettles, slashing their heads off most furiously, trying to imagine them Frenchmen."[33] He enlisted to defend his country against this enemy - the French. Similarly, a Yorkshireman began his career as a soldier during the height of the invasion scare in 1805. He explained in a letter to his parents why he enlisted: "When I turned soldier it was not for the purpose of admiring myself like a peacock in gaudy plumage; no, it was to meet the enemies of my country and go wherever my duty called me, and merit the name of a soldier, which I now say is the greatest pleasure I ever enjoyed."[34] His reasons for enlisting were therefore influenced by his belief that the French were the enemy of his country and that it was his duty to help defeat that enemy.

Men enlisted into the army for a variety of reasons: because they were attracted to a life of adventure and glory reinforced by the visual spectacle of the military, because they were forced or tricked into enlisting, because it seemed to be the only alternative to a bad home life, because their wealth gave them rank, or because they had patriotic feelings. Despite some historians' claims that patriotism was the most powerful motivating force for men to enlist, it does not seem to be the most important factor behind men's decisions to enlist into the regular army to serve in a foreign country.[35] This

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[32] John Spencer Cooper, Seven Campaigns, 2nd edition (Carlisle: G & T Coward Ltd., 1914) 2.

[33] Cooper 2.

[34] Simmons 104.

[35] See Linda Colley's Britons. Colley deals only with the volunteer movement in Britain during the invasion scare and she indicates that men volunteered for patriotic reasons because they felt that their homes were threatened by invasion. Colley recognises that she hasn't taken into account the regular army and she suggests that further work needs to be done on this: Colley, Britons 314.

is not to say that once in the army, the soldiers did not develop patriotic feelings, or a sense of national identity. In fact, as we shall see, many British soldiers fighting in Spain and Portugal developed and articulated a strong sense of British national identity. But it does suggest that the motivation to enlist was much more complicated and diverse than a shared love of one's country.

British national identity manifested itself through the identification with and sentimentality for one's home country, the acknowledgement of distinct British characteristics, and a pride in British military strength which greatly increased after the victories of the Peninsular War and later at Waterloo. I should also specify that the British army was an institution or arm of the British state. Soldiers were indoctrinated with notions of Britishness and patriotic feeling to unify and order them against a 'common enemy,' and this would certainly have had some influence on the way they felt. Wellington's programme of soldier training led to the development of a very effective fighting machine. Martial discipline and drill indoctrinated the soldier into the national institution, and esprit de corps played an important role in the development of individual patriotism. Many officers effectively promulgated this esprit de corps, and therefore, patriotic feeling among the ranks may have been a product of an officer with whom they had close contact.

Soldiers were also conditioned by the presentation of the military spectacle.[36] Scott Hughes Myerly explains that military imagery and spectacle was one way to invoke this pride, as it was necessary to manage the army:

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36 Myerly 11; For discussions of discipline and punishment see chapters 4 and 5 in Myerly; chapter 7 in R. Glover; chapter 4 in C. Oman, Wellington's Army, 1809 - 1814 (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1913); I will also further explain this later in the chapter.

> Militaria and related features of the martial spectacle were essential in communicating to soldiers the fundamental values embedded in the military model: bravery and duty, discipline, self-control, conformity, order, and hierarchy; unity and solidarity of purpose; motivation, efficiency, and self-sacrifice for a higher goal; and above all, loyalty to those in command. This system of values thus formed the 'military virtues,' and from the perspective of the commanders, these were the concepts and values they had to instill in their subordinates.[37]

For the British soldiers fighting in the Peninsula, the 'military spectacle' included the drill, the brightly coloured uniforms, martial music, 'British' cheers, and evocations of past victories, all of which examples can be found in most of the soldiers' writings.

Despite the influence of indoctrination through the British army, many British soldiers, while on campaign in the Iberian Peninsula often longed for their home. For soldiers who were English, home was usually referred to as 'Old England.' 'Britain' was usually used by soldiers who were not from England to represent home. This is not to say that English soldiers never used the words 'Britain' or 'British' to describe themselves, as they frequently did when writing about other things besides their home. In fact, to an English soldier the terms 'British' and 'English' were often interchangeable. After the union with Scotland in 1707 and with Ireland in 1801, Britain included Wales and Scotland, and Ireland was part of the United Kingdom. The English still formed the dominant culture in Britain, and therefore home was almost always referred to as 'England'.

Many of the soldiers displayed a very emotional longing for home,

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[37] Myerly 11.

demonstrating the influence of the romantic period that I discussed in the Introduction. One soldier wrote about his return to 'Old England': "As I lay on the deck, I looked up at that splendid castle in the distance. It was identified with Old England, and many a languid eye was cheered by its sight. Men naturally love to die upon their native land, and I felt I could now do so contentedly."[38] A Subaltern explained that while listening to the waves of the ocean from the Iberian Peninsula "it is hardly possible for any man to hinder his thoughts from wandering away from the objects immediately around him, to the land of his nativity and the home of his fathers."[39] The soldiers, then, identified their home as their nation (England or Britain) rather than as their local village or county, and they developed a strong emotional attachment to this home.

This identification with Britain as home was also shared by Scottish and Irish soldiers; these soldiers would at times refer to themselves as British.[40] One Scot clearly expressed this identification with Britain, writing on his arrival at Corunna in 1809: "How shall I describe my sensations at the first sight of the ocean?. . . every face near me seemed to brighten up. Britain and the sea are two words which cannot be disunited. The sea and home appeared one and the same."[41] Here he identified his home as Britain, and in another passage he identified his people as British. On his first return to Britain he wrote: "Upon our landing [in Plymouth], the people came round

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38 Harris 116; Harris wrote earlier in his memoir that "some of the men near me suddenly recollected, as they saw the snow lying thickly in our path, that this was Christmas Eve. The recollection soon spread amongst the men; and many talked of home , and scenes upon the night in other days in Old England, shedding tears as they spoke of the relatives and friends never to be seen by them again": Harris 72.

39 The Subaltern (Edinburgh, 1845) 150; For other examples see Cooper 69; Wheeler 157.

40 In chapter 3, I will explain why I have excluded the Welsh.

41 Howell 34.

us, showing all manner of kindness, carrying the lame and leading the blind. We were received into every house as if we had been their own relations. How proud did I feel to belong to such a people."[42]

In his memoir, another Scot also identified with Britain. He wrote about Colonel Cadogan of his regiment, the 71st or Highland Light Infantry: "The brave Cadogan well knew the art of rendering his men invincible; he knew that the courage of the British soldier is best called forth by associating it with his country, and he also knew how to time the few words which produced such magical effects."[43] Most of the Scottish and Irish soldiers studied consistently referred to their fellow troops as British; a Scottish Private of the 42nd explained that "I learned in England to adapt myself to John Bull."[44] An Irish Lieutenant in the Irish regiment of the 88th Connaught Rangers wrote in 1812 about his men: "Although ferocity is by no means one of the characteristics of the British soldier, there was, most unquestionably, a savage expression in the faces of the men that I had never before witnessed."[45]

As the Irish Lieutenant showed in his surprise at his soldiers' ferocity - he perceived this to be a very un-British characteristic - the soldiers referred to various British characteristics to define themselves. One officer took time in his journal to indicate English capability and cultural superiority:

> If Englishmen were employed and properly superintended, wine might be brought to much

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42 Howell 38-39.

43 Donaldson 125; On writing about the Corunna tomb of the Scottish officer Sir John Moore, one Scot, explained that it was "the most interesting object at Corunna - to a British soldier": Malcolm 245.

44 The Personal Narrative of a Private Soldier in the Forty-Second Highlanders for Twelve Years During the Late War (London, 1821) 11.

45 William Grattan, Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, ed. Charles Oman (London: Edward Arnold, 1902) 150-151.

> greater perfection than these filthy people possibly can. I only wish grapes were natural to the soil and climate of our country, for with the delicious flavour they have, I am convinced that with the improvements which the taste and ingenuity of our people would suggest, wine would become the favourite beverage of ladies as well as men.[46]

Some soldiers also claimed that liberty was an essential characteristic of Englishness. This was a familiar and well established motif in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[47] Describing the Spanish General Charles, Comte d'Espanga's move to England during the Revolution, one officer explained that Charles "spoke to us with freedom, as Englishmen, both because he was partial to the character of our nation, and because, from our relations with the Peninsula, and with Portugal in particular, it was natural we should take a lively interest in the same cause."[48] This same recognition of English liberty as well as the perceived national characteristic of frankness were also in the mind of the officer who wrote:

> The gentlemanlike and independent opinions, so much cherished by Englishmen, that as much attached them to the institutions and liberties of their country as their professional calling, were always encouraged by the Duke of York. In no other service were such pains taken to blend the character of citizen and soldier, or to promote that social brotherhood so conducive to the

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46 William Webber, With Guns in the Peninsula: The Peninsula War Journal of 2nd Captain William Webber, Royal Artillery, ed. Richard Henry Wollocombe (London: Greenhill Books, 1991) 67.

47 Gerald Newman, The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740 - 1830 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987) 128-144; see also Hugh Cunningham, "The Language of Patriotism, 1750 - 1914," History Workshop 12 (1981) 11; and how 'liberty' was a basic tenet to patriotic language in Britain in the early nineteenth century; Raphael Samuel ed., Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity vol. 3 (London: Routledge, 1989).

48 Sir William Maynard Gomm, Letters and Journals of Field-Marshal Sir William Maynard Gomm, ed. Francis Culling Carr-Gomm (London, 1881) 222.

unanimity and harmony of a corps.[49]

Some of the soldiers then, defined their Britishness based on perceived English characteristics like liberty and sincerity.

The soldiers' writing not only illustrated their articulation of a national identity, but because many of them were published, and published in the nineteenth century, they contributed to the development of general patriotic pride in the strength of the military and the Empire. Prior to 1792, the British public had a poor opinion of the army. This judgment was legitimate because the army was inefficient. But through reforms established by the Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of York, many of the problems were eradicated and the army regained some of its efficiency.[50] The victories in the Peninsular War also helped bolster the army's image and by 1815, after the Battle of Waterloo, many Britons could take pride in the strength and ability of their army.[51] The most important reason for this was that many Britons viewed the war as what one Major called a "noble cause" against 'oppression' and the threat to 'liberty.'[52]

One officer wrote after the British victory at Talavera in 1809 that "In spite of waste, ruin, and desolation, which follow in the train of tyrants, unfading laurels shall grow and thicken over that hallowed spot where English blood flowed as a barrier against merciless oppression."[53] Another

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49 Coles 7; According to Gerald Newman, frankness, along with moral innocence, honesty, originality and moral independence all formed the ideals of 'Sincerity' which comprised national identity in England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

50 See chapter 6 and 9 in R. Glover; M. Glover 15 - 22.

51 Clive Emsley, British Society and the French Wars, 1793 - 1815 (London: The MacMillan Press, 1979) 11; The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army, ed. David Chandler (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994) 142-143.

52 Ross-Lewin 97-98.

53 Charles Boothby, A Prisoner of France: The Memoirs, Diary and Correspondence of Charles Boothby, Captain Royal Engineers, During His Last Campaign (London, 1898) 29.

felt that it was Britain's duty to fight the French as it preserved the "National Honour."[54] To the officer, the war was an extension of the individual masculine ideal of honour.

Many soldiers called the war the "the glorious cause," fought to maintain the "glory and safety" of "the land of liberty and sterling worth."[55] One officer perhaps best illustrated these feelings when he wrote: " 'England expects every man will do his duty.' These are the only feelings that can make the scene of death and destruction palatable to a Christian: King, Church, and Country to fight for."[56] This was echoed by another's claim that "my person, I felt fully aware, belonged to my King and country."[57] Because of these feelings, many soldiers developed a sense of pride in their military endeavours for the 'noble cause', and a pride in being a British soldier, of being from the nation that they felt defended 'liberty' and rose up against 'oppression.'

The British soldier was no longer viewed as inefficient or useless by the British public, and after each victory in the Peninsular War the soldiers themselves began to feel that "the British are amongst the most splendid soldiers in the world."[58] One officer felt that "whatever be our situation the British army will behave well and the French will again learn the superiority of their enemy."[59] Another exclaimed that "we enjoyed a fair opportunity of showing to the world, that, notwithstanding our insular situation, the sons of

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54 Sir Benjamin D'Urban, The Peninsular Journal of Major-General Sir Benjamin D'Urban, 1808 - 1817, ed. I. J. Rousseau (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930) 14, 113.
55 Simmons 21; Ross-Lewin 220; also see Wheeler 28.
56 Simmons 219.
57 Blakeney 96.
58 Harris 105.
59 Aitchison 86.

our sea-girt lands could fight as well on terra firma as on the briny wave - nor will many who are capable of judging venture to assert that the proposition has not been proved to a demonstration."[60]

Gallantry, strength and courage all became associated with the British soldier as battle after battle resulted in British victory. According to one officer, during the battle of Corunna in January, 1809: "they [the French] were repulsed by a valour which only English troops can possess, though exposed to a tremendous commanding fire of cannon."[61] Another officer added about the same battle: "It was shown once again that British steel was not to be resisted when wielded by British soldiers determined to vindicate the superiority of their national productions."[62] There were many comments about the gallantry and bravery of the British soldiers, and as one officer claimed: "The reputation of the English army is now firmly rooted on the Continent."[63] Many of the British soldiers, then, felt pride in being 'British' soldiers, defending British values, and contributing to the strength, power and honour of their 'nation'.

Not only were the soldiers proud of their successes in the Peninsular War but they also attributed their successes to their leader the Duke of Wellington. Wellington was viewed as the hero of the war who many soldiers admired and trusted. At the Battle of Busaco in 1810, one soldier wrote: "In the course of the day Wellington and his staff rode along the line, in view of the enemy, and were received with great cheering by each

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60 Ross-Lewin 98.

61 Warre 50.

62 Blakeney 43; He also wrote "It was that [the battle] which furnished the most unequivocal proof of British firmness": Blakeney 119.

63 Gomm 251; D'Urban 73; Simmons 211; Subaltern 42; Warre 25; Wheeler 125.

regiment as they passed."[64] As Iain Pears indicates, the Duke of Wellington became a figure of national myth. Pears explains that Wellington's character and qualities became an integral part of the English national consciousness after the Napoleonic Wars; he asserts that Wellington did not create this image but he instead "encapsulated a newly-forming vision of national type which, through his personal success and the way he could be opposed to the personification of foreign threat, provided a shorthand by which this notion could be disseminated."[65] Wellington's character became an amalgam of the different aspects of English patriotism or nationalism, which included characteristics such as xenophobia, sincerity, modernism, loyalty, chivalry and liberty, and thus formed a model for how the English wished to portray themselves in the nineteenth century.[66]

The British soldiers fighting under Wellington identified with this national myth and also helped develop this national myth by stressing the heroic qualities and 'greatness' of their Chief in their writing. Some soldiers were in awe of Wellington's appearance and presence: "I remember seeing the great Duke take his hat off in the field of Vimeiro, and methinks it is something to have seen that wonderful man even do so commonplace a thing as lift his hat to another officer in the battle-field."[67] The writer of The Subaltern, who dedicated his story to Wellington, wrote about the appearance of Wellington:

> There was in his general aspect nothing indicative of a life spent in hardships and fatigues; nor any

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64 Cooper 46.

65 Iain Pears, "The Gentleman and the Hero: Wellington and Napoleon in the Nineteenth Century," in Myths of the English, ed. Roy Porter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992) 218.

66 Pears 218, 232-233; These characteristics are the same characteristics indicated by Cunningham, Newman and Samuel.

67 Harris 58.

> expression of care or anxiety in his countenance. On the contrary, his cheek, though bronzed with frequent exposure to the sun, had on it the ruddy hue of health, while a smile of satisfaction played about his mouth, and told, more plainly than words could have spoken, how perfectly he felt himself at his ease. Of course, I felt, as I gazed upon him, that an army under his command could not be beaten.[68]

Another soldier showed his admiration for Wellington when he first saw him:

> From the moment that I joined the army, so intense was my desire to get a look at this illustrious chief, that I never should have forgiven the Frenchman that had killed me before I effected it. My curiosity did not remain long ungratified; for, as our post was next the enemy, I found, when anything was to be done, that it was his also. He was just such a man as I had figured in my mind's eye; and I thought that the stranger would betray a grevious want of penetration who could not select the Duke of Wellington from amid five hundred in the same uniform.[69]

To the soldier David Roberts, Wellington personified English sincerity:

> Thus spoke the Noble Chief; in whom combin'd
> A sportive fancy, an immortal mind -
> Who pomp repell'd, and pageantry of show,
> And scorn'd the homage which from thence did flow;
> Simply attir'd, he sought th' embattled plain,
> No studied splendour, no refulgent fame,
> Could add one bud of laurel to his name.[70]

These lines were accompanied by one of Rowlandson's illustrations, showing Wellington dressed more modestly than the soldiers who surround him (see figure 3).

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68 Subaltern 46; For similar feelings about Wellington see Gomm 290; Warre 75.

69 Kincaid 10.

70 David Roberts, The Military Adventures of Johnny Newcome (London, 1815) 121.

The appearance of Wellington also inspired the soldiers, who felt that with their "Immortal Chief" in charge they were sure of victory.[71] According to some soldiers, Wellington's "presence and manner gave that confidence to his companions which had a magical effect," and when Wellington rode up to encourage the troops to charge "the effect was electrical."[72] During the Battle of Albuhera in 1811, at which Wellington was absent, one soldier described a conversation he had with a fellow soldier named Horsefall: "Turning to me Horsefall drily said, 'Whore's ar Arthur?' meaning Wellington. I said, 'I don't know, I don't see him.' He rejoined, 'Aw wish he wor here.' So do I."[73] Another soldier had so much confidence in Wellington, that he wrote in 1816 that "if England should require the service of her army again, and I should be with it, let me have 'Old Nosey' to command. Our interests would be sure to be looked into, we should never have occasion to fear an enemy."[74]

Although the soldiers who served under Wellington had many good things to say about him, they also had many criticisms. Wellington was in favour of harsh disciplinary measures, so according to one officer: "Wellington was feared, but esteemed most highly."[75] Another soldier defended this severity:

> It has frequently been stated that the Duke of Wellington was severe. In answer to this I would say, he could not be otherwise. His army was composed of the lowest orders. Many, if not the

[71] Costello 21.

[72] Grattan 29; Subaltern 126.

[73] Cooper 67-68.

[74] Wheeler 196; "Old Nosey," "Nosey," or "Long Nose" where nicknames given to Wellington by many of his rank and file soldiers. Wheeler and Kincaid use them in their writing; Several officers also commented on the confidence that the men had in Wellington: Warre 76; Brotherton 76; Simmons183.

[75] Brotherton 76.

> most of them, were ignorant, idle, and drunken. It is true the troops were ill supplied with provisions in the Peninsula; it is also true they plundered when an opportunity occurred. But could a General, so wise, just, and brave as Wellington was, suffer the people that he was sent to deliver from the tyrant Napoleon to be robbed with impunity? No; he could not; he did not. By the discipline he enforced, the British Army became more than a match, even at great odds, for the best of Napoleon's boasted legions.[76]

Although stating that he felt that Wellington was "perhaps the greatest man of the present age", one officer also felt that Wellington had "neglected the interests and feelings of his Peninsular army."[77] He referred to how the army was behind in pay by seven months, and how Wellington had not done anything about it.[78]

Despite these criticisms, many of the British soldiers still felt pride in their leader and in their own actions in the Peninsula, which, as stated earlier, developed into a feeling of pride in British military strength and ability. Much of this pride, however, came from military conditioning. But indoctrination was not always successful, and there were some soldiers, mainly from the rank and file, who deserted from the army, and, as will be shown in the chapter on professional identity, there were also numerous cases of insubordination. Even if the soldiers identified themselves as British, many did not feel patriotic and were not willing to fight for their country. As I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, many were forced or tricked into joining the army. Richard Glover explains that desertion was constant in the British army during the Peninsular War, and this is reflected

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[76] Cooper 15.

[77] Grattan 332.

[78] Grattan 334; Kincaid felt the same way: Kincaid 143-145.

in the memoirs, letters and diaries from the campaign.[79]

One of the most interesting stories was that of Andrew Pearson, who deserted along with some other soldiers, after receiving unfair treatment from a particularly harsh officer. Publicly stripped of his medals and rank and facing the possibility of execution for defending himself against an attack from a fellow soldier, Pearson decided to desert. As I pointed out at the beginning of the chapter, Pearson was tricked into enlisting and he never swore himself in as a soldier, so in his opinion he was not a deserter. He wrote: "If I left the service I could not be considered a deserter, as I never was legally enlisted; but there was no man in the British Army better prepared to leave the service than I was."[80] He had a knowledge of the Spanish and Portuguese languages and geography and he now had contacts in the Peninsula so he went into hiding in Spain and Portugal until he returned to England disguised as a Portuguese sailor to avoid the press-gang.[81] Although he never wished to join the army, and his experience in the army was unpleasant, after he returned to England he still felt "proud of having served under such excellent commanders from first to last, and done some little to save my country from the tyranny of a foreign foe."[82]

Although desertion was common and, as I will show later, insubordination, theft and drunkenness were pervasive in the British army - reasons which may have moved Wellington to refer to his men as "the scum

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79 R. Glover 175; "Desertion cost the Peninsular army about 500 men a year, about a third of whom were enlisted foreigners (other than Portuguese)": M. Glover, Wellington's Army 71; For examples see Cooper 4; Costello 87 - 88; Grattan 14; Harris 54; Kincaid 88 - 89; Lawrence 49; Subaltern 74 - 76.

80 Pearson 117.

81 Pearson 115 - 120.

82 Pearson 121.

of the earth" - some officers and men felt that the positive characteristics of the British army outweighed the negative ones and accordingly developed a sense of pride in their accomplishments as British soldiers. One officer's words provide an example of this:

> I have to bring forward to the public eye, and the eye of posterity, too, the character of the Peninsular soldiers, whether they be shown up as men who were able to conquer the choicest legions of France, or as men who would sell the most essential part of their dress for a glass of brandy. No matter; they would have done both. Perfection is nowhere to be found; and if the British soldier equalled the Frenchman in habits of sobriety and caution, there could be no possible comparison between them . . . and I will here say, without the least fear of contradiction, that the French soldier as far surpasses the British soldier in the essential qualities requisite for general operations, as the latter excels the Frenchman in a pitched battle.[83]

These same feelings were echoed by another officer:

> That Britons will fight to the last - that is, while they can stand - is well known; and it was this determination that caused Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo to say that the English were beaten according to every rule of war, but did not know it. Long may they remain in this species of ignorance, and, whether feasted flushed or fasting, continue to maintain their true national character, a specimen of which was given at Calcabellos![84]

As the two officers illustrated, despite the faults within the British army, many soldiers still felt pride in being British soldiers and for fighting for a 'noble cause.' As I have stated earlier, much of this feeling developed from soldiers' immersion into an all-British institution which conditioned

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[83] Grattan 288 - 289.

[84] Blakeney 63.

the soldiers to understand the differences between the British and the enemy, the French: or 'Us and Them.' This would indicate that an anti-French feeling was part of the development of a British identity, and the French 'other' would have been viewed with hatred and contempt. In the next chapter, I will continue my examination of British identity among the soldiers with an evaluation of how 'othering' contributed to its development.

Chapter 2

British Soldiers and British Identity Part II: Prejudice

While reviewing a new set of recruits from Britain, Major O'Hare exclaimed: "Well then, those are the French, and our enemies. You must kill those fellows, and not allow them to kill you."[1] Edward Costello, who served under the Major and who recorded his words, wrote that "the Major's logic, although it elicited roars of laughter from the old soldiers, I believe had more effect with the recruits than if Demosthenes had risen for the purpose."[2] The French were the 'enemy' of the British during the Peninsular War, and they had long been the enemy of Britain. Some historians claim that it was this long rivalry that led to the development of a national identity among Britons during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as the French served as the 'other' from whom the British differentiated themselves.[3] In this chapter, as a continuation of my look at the development of national identity among British soldiers, I will not only examine how the soldiers, and these feelings were shared by both officers and ranks, 'othered' the French, but more importantly how they also 'othered' the Portuguese and the Spanish.

The 'frankness' of the British character which I discussed in the last chapter was most evident when the soldiers expressed their opinions of the French, the Portuguese and the Spanish. These opinions indicated that the

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1 Edward Costello, The Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, ed. Antony Brett-James (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1967) 58.

2 Costello 58.

3 See Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707 - 1837 (London: Pimlico, 1992); E.J. Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism Since 1870 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990); Gerald Newman, The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740-1830 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Raphael Samuel ed., Patriotism: The making and Unmaking of British National Identity vol. 3 (London: Routledge, 1989).

British soldiers who fought during the Peninsular War developed a sense of their own British identity when they had other cultures against which to differentiate themselves. Linda Colley asserts that the development of British identity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was closely linked to this 'othering' process.

Some soldiers viewed the French as the 'Other.' This would make sense in the all-British context of the army. This idea of 'Britishness' and 'Otherness' was part of the doctrine of the army. As Linda Colley explains, the soldiers were surrounded by 'state propaganda' in the army, and coupled with service in a foreign country, soldiers "must have acquired from this experience a heightened sense of solidarity with their own tribe, a sharpened awareness of 'Us' against 'Them.'[4]

This anti-French feeling, whether the soldiers' true feelings or a product of conditioning, surfaced throughout the writings of the soldiers. One soldier regarded the French as "their old foes," and another described the opinions of the French amongst some in his regiment: "Let us all unite, whether our officers will or not, and annihilate these French cowards."[5] He also wrote about the differences of the French, referring to them as savages:

> Down they came, shouting as usual. We kept them at bay, in spite of their cries and formidable looks. How different their appearance from ours! Their hats, set round with feathers, their beards long and black, gave them a fierce look. Their stature was superior to ours; most of us were young. We looked like boys; they like savages. But we had the true spirit in us.[6]

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4 Colley, "Britishness" 322.

5 Robert Blakeney, A Boy in the Peninsular War, ed. Julian Sturgis (London, 1899) 30; Thomas Howell, A Soldier of the Seventy-First: The Journal of a Soldier of the Highland Light Infantry, 1806 - 1815, ed. Christopher Hibbert (London: Leo Cooper, 1975) 29.

6 Howell 62.

The French were variously referred to as "the frogs," "the Infernal Pack of Bounaparte," and "Johnny" or "Johnny Crapaud."[7] This type of language was common throughout many of the memoirs, diaries and letters from the Peninsular War, but perhaps most common was the reference to the French as the 'enemy.' This did not necessarily indicate any hatred for the French - the French were on the other side of the war and were naturally the 'enemy'.

When the soldiers did show feelings of animosity towards the French, it was not so much a general dislike for French character or culture but a dislike for the actions of the French army during the campaign. In her poem The Convent Bell, the 'Wife of an officer' dramatised French oppression:

> Ye British warriors, well ye know
> How erst our dark unpitying foe
> In the fierce rage of conquest came,
> And dealt round havoc, blood, and flame.[8]

Many of the British soldiers viewed the French in a similar fashion; the French were seen as conquerors or as one officer called them, "the cursed oppressors of Europe."[9] He wrote to his father in 1808:

> The army are in the highest spirits; indeed the cause we are engaged in is the noblest a soldier could wish, and to support the liberties and independence of a country so lately our enemy. To forget all animosity and cordially join against the common enemy of Europe, the would-be Tyrant of the world, is worthy of the British name; and a soldier's heart must be cold indeed that would not warm with

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7 John Harris, Recollections of Rifleman Harris as Told by Henry Curling, ed. Christopher Hibbert (London: Leo Cooper, 1970) 62; William Bragge, Peninsular Portrait, 1811 - 1814: The Letters of Captain William Bragge, Third (King's Own) Dragoons, ed. S. A. C. Cassels (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1963) 98; George Simmons, A British Rifle Man, ed. Lieutenant-Colonel Willoughby Verner (London, 1899) 199-200; 'Crapaud' is French for 'toad'.

8 Poems Founded on the Events of the War in the Peninsula, by the Wife of an Officer, (London, 1819) 53.

9 Sir William Warre, Letters from the Peninsula, 1808 - 1812 (London: John Murray, 1909) 89.

> enthusiasm in such a cause. I am not one of the most sanguine; you know my opinion of armed mobs, though in this, from the accounts we have received, there is an appearance of system and order that promises well. May God assist the Right. It may be the crisis of the Tyrant's power. If he fails now, it may open the eyes of Europe.[10]

The officer had similar feelings about the French when he declared upon entering Spain that "we are now I hope laying the foundation of their [the Spanish] future happiness and beginning to restore them to their rights. Let the crossing of the Ebro be hailed in their annals and be the omen of the downfall of the French despotism and oppression."[11]

Part of this animosity towards what was viewed as French 'oppression' stemmed from the importance of liberty to the development of a British national identity. As noted earlier, and as indicated by Raphael Samuel, liberty, freedom and sincerity coalesced into the perception of the English national character. This was strengthened by the 'negative example' sustained by the French and by Napoleon's attempt to 'conquer' Europe.[12] Many Britons felt that Napoleon continued the illiberality and barbarism of the French Revolution, and were influenced by anti-revolutionary rhetoric that glorified British liberty and opposed French oppression.[13]

The atrocities of the French towards the Spanish and Portuguese

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[10] Warre 6.

[11] William Webber, With Guns in the Peninsula: The Peninsula War Journal of 2nd Captain William Webber, Royal Artillery, ed. Richard Henry Wollocombe (London: Greenhill Books, 1991) 169-170.

[12] Samuel xxix.

[13] Perhaps the best examples of this type of anti-revolutionary feeling could be found in the writings of Edmund Burke and the character of John Bull which was found in political cartoons of the time. See Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1986); Jeannine Surel, "John Bull," Patriotism: The making and Unmaking of British National Identity vol. 3, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge, 1989).

people only helped to strengthen the 'negative example' in the minds of those soldiers who witnessed them. In 1810, one officer wrote about how the Portuguese were left destitute by the French, and how their 'tyranny' must be brought to an end:

> Oh, happy England! May such scenes as these ever be unknown to my countrymen! The French are certainly the greatest curse the Almighty ever sent into the world. Universal conquest and ruin of everything sacred and binding between man and man is their sole aim. I hope their career will be checked sooner or later; they have long reigned almost uncontrolled.[14]

> It is beyond everything horrid the way these European savages have treated the unfortunate Portuguese. Almost every man they get hold of they murder. The women they use too brutally for me to describe. They even cut the throats of infants. The towns are mostly on fire - in short, they are guilty of every species of cruelty.[15]

The officer's description of French 'cruelty' seems exaggerated. Although the French, like the British, Spanish and Portuguese, were guilty of cruel and barbarous actions during the war, the officer's assessment of his enemy may have been a symptom of the kind of hyperbolic rhetoric used to malign the enemy that was a common feature during wartime.[16] His opinion of the French may have also been justified. The French were guilty of cruel and barbarous acts against the Iberian people which the Spanish artist Goya illustrated in his The Disasters of War. In contrast, the officer praised the British character and the many men who were willing to risk their lives to

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[14] Simmons 122.

[15] Simmons 152.

[16] This type of rhetoric was also common in the First World War, and there were stories of German atrocities such as the use of battlefield corpses in tallow factories, or the use of saw edged bayonets: Paul Fussell, The Great War and Modern Memory (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975) 116 - 117.

prevent the same threat to liberty in Britain from those who he called "the enemies of the human race":[17]

> I looked with sorrow at the poor inhabitants [of Spain], heaving a sigh, expressing at the same time delight and confidence that the happy shores of Britain would never be cursed with these detestable monsters while her gallant sons are ready to lay down their lives with eagerness in defence of the most happy land in the universe. May England ever fight her battles in a foreign land! O happy, happy country! You are ignorant of the miseries and wretchedness that one-half of Europe is continually exposed to, and may you ever enjoy the same happiness![18]

The atrocities of the French army certainly aroused anti-French feeling among the soldiers, but many of the soldiers also felt disgust for similar atrocities performed by the British army, especially for the mass looting, drunkenness, destruction of property, rape and murder exacted by British soldiers after the captures of Cuidad Rodrigo and Badajoz in 1812.[19] Although also very vocal about the atrocities of the French, one officer commented on this when he discussed the French proclamation in 1811 that made the abuse of the Spanish and their property punishable by death: "If we enter Spain something of the same kind will be necessary among us; for although I really believe we are a very well-behaved army, we are,

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17 Simmons 194.

18 Simmons 179. Similar opinions about the conduct of the French were expressed by other soldiers: See William Grattan, Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, ed. Charles Oman (London: Edward Arnold, 1902) 56-57; William Lawrence, The Autobiography of Sergeant William Lawrence, A Hero of the Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, ed. George Nugent Banks (London, 1886) 69; Andrew Pearson, The Soldier Who Walked Away: Autobiography of Andrew Pearson, a Peninsular War Veteran, ed. Arthur H. Haley (London: Bullfinch Publication, 1987) 78.

19 I will deal more with these two occasions in my chapter on professional identity.

notwithstanding, accused of making free with whatever the French leave."[20]

If the British were also guilty of threatening the liberties of the Spanish and Portuguese, then British reactions to French atrocities may not have been manifestations of general anti-French feeling as much as disgust at their behaviour. Not all of the soldiers demonstrated anti-French feeling either and this supports Hugh Cunningham's theory that patriotism occurred in 'waves' or 'bursts', and there was seldom a "unanimous declaration of national unity." [21] This interpretation is further supported by evidence demonstrating that the soldiers developed different forms of anti-French feelings.

Officers, who were generally drawn from the wealthier classes, regarded the French threat to English liberty not only as direct military force but also more offensively as the threat of revolution.[22] English liberty was associated with the 'Ancient Constitution' and 'freedom from foreign domination' as well as the protection of English institutions; it was not the same radical idea of 'liberty' espoused by the French Revolution. According to Edmund Burke, English liberty, as well as manners and civilisation, were restrained and protected by the 'natural' guardians of the nobility and the clergy. The liberty espoused by the French revolutionaries, or as Burke called them "the swinish multitude," was barbarous and anarchic and a threat to the patrons of liberty and civilisation.[23] The British officers, therefore, felt that the French army, being an institution of the revolutionary government

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20 Sir William Maynard Gomm, Letters and Journals of Field-Marshal Sir William Maynard Gomm, ed. Francis Culling Carr-Gomm (London, 1881) 210.

21 Hugh Cunningham, "The Language of Patriotism, 1750 - 1914," History Workshop 12 (1981) 15.

22 I will go into more detail on the social status of the officers in chapter 4.

23 Burke 90 - 91, 173 - 174, 194 - 197, 373.

under the revolutionary leader, was eager to spread these 'barbarous' revolutionary ideas through force and conquest. The defeat of the French meant the eradication of revolutionary principles.

A scion of a wealthy family and a high-ranking officer cautioned that revolutionary ideas posed a threat to England:

> How little does the independent happy English Peasant know how to value the peace and security in which he lives! And how would those miscreants who preach discontent and faction through the country, giving them ideas of wants and liberties which are incompatible with society and government, how would they blush if they were to witness the sufferings and oppression which these poor [Spanish and Portuguese]people undergo! They would see that in England alone the peasantry are now happy and free, and would see their own infamy in sowing the seeds of discord and civil dissension among that happy people, when every mind should be united and heart joined to resist the oppressor of mankind![24]

He was also concerned about the spread of revolutionary doctrine within the British government:

> I always felt that we had nothing to fear against our foreign enemies whilst united amongst ourselves, and have long observed the struggles of a particular and very infamous set of men, to sap the public confidence in their Government and Constitution, for it is at that they now strike direct, and neither the respectability of the King, nor the critical situation of the country, can prevent these fellows from endeavouring to create confusion and a revolution, in which the mob are to have the lead, for by that alone can such designing unprincipled miscreants be countenanced or exalted to any power. I consider the question as no longer one of opposition against Ministers; that I should not mind. It is in the very nature of our constitution.

[24] Warre 145-146.

> But the question is now whether the country is in such a distressed situation from unhappy political circumstances - whether the want of unanimity of Ministers, and the state of mind of the dregs of Society, are in such a state, that Sir F. B. [Francis Burdett] and his gang can expect to be able to overturn the constitution, and raise themselves upon the wreck of their country. I have no patience that such fellows have so long gone on without punishment, and the seeds of civil discord once sown, there is no knowing where it may end. There are never wanting factious, needy men to foment it, who, having nothing to lose but their lives, would sacrifice their country to gain something in the appearance of power. Respectability is out of the question.[25]

Another high-ranking officer from a wealthy family expressed a similar conclusion about the degenerative consequences of revolution:

> The age of chivalry is indeed gone. I do not understand it. Within a very few years, almost within our recollection, the French people seem to have traced back every step that nations make towards civilisation; and they, who a short time back were the fine spirits and cavaliers of the age, will have degenerated by the close of this campaign in Portugal into something worse than Huns.[26]

He was not anti-French, but anti-Revolution, and he likened "the restoration of France to order, and to its proper political place among the commonwealths of Europe" to "the redemption of man from a second fall."[27] This redemption could be accomplished by putting: "one volume of Edmund Burke's works into the King of France's side pocket; it will charm away the fiends, and will teach him how to govern his kingdom too."[28]

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25 Warre 129-130. Sir Francis Burdett was a radical MP in the British government.

26 Gomm 206.

27 Gomm 337.

28 Gomm 337-338.

It is difficult to determine whether the two officers' views were representative of the officer class; their memoirs and letters are the only ones I have consulted which so prominently highlight this theme. It is clear, however, that not all opinions of the French were negative. Despite frequent bursts of anti-French sentiments, there were also positive opinions among the soldiers about the 'enemy,' or as one soldier called them "our old playfellows."[29] One of the officers who disparaged French barbarous acts, none the less praised French prisoners as "a fine-looking body of men."[30]

To the officer, the French were 'worthy' opponents as they possessed the handsome appearance of the ideal man. According to George L. Mosse, the masculine stereotype in the early nineteenth century included handsomeness, as well as virtue or honour, and moral or physical 'toughness.' Roper and Tosh explain that athleticism, stoicism and courage added to the construction of manliness.[31] Another officer also admired the French because of their manly qualities when he wrote that "the French are very fine tall men, well dressed and accoutred,"[32] and that "the French are a brave and generous enemy, and their humanity to the English prisoners is generous to the extreme."[33] The entry of a French general into British society was described by a British officer: "he showed with what facility a Frenchman can insinuate himself into society as a man of spirit and gallantry."[34]

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29 Howell 89.

30 Grattan 168.

31 George Mosse, The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996) 3-23; Michael Roper and John Tosh eds., Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800 (London: Routledge, 1989) 1-4.

32 Simmons 32.

33 Simmons 33. He wrote these comments on the French in 1809, two years before he referred to them as the 'enemies of the human race.'

34 Blakeney 44.

Although he developed strong opinions about the French in his later letters due to the French army's conduct during the campaign, one officer wrote to his sister in 1808: "you will, I dare say, think me a curious being for making such a confession; but I really cannot help telling you that the lower orders of them (I mean the soldiers) appear to me very amiable; they are civil, obliging, and gallant to a degree, and I don't believe half the stories that are told of them."[35] These opinions were not limited to the officer class. A Sergeant claimed that "the soldiers of France unquestionably proved themselves worthy of their great master, [and] consequently deserve a soldier's praise."[36] Another rank and file man even tried to justify the "undersized" and "ugly" appearance of some French prisoners by explaining that they "seemed to be the refuse of their army, and looked more like Italians than Frenchmen."[37] To the British soldiers, the French soldiers occupied a similar place in the gendered social hierarchy, as the British felt that the French possessed the same traits of ideal masculinity as they did.

This is especially striking because the French had so often been characterised as effeminate and immoral in British culture. As Edmund Burke wrote about revolutionary France:

> The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its

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35 Gomm 105.

36 James Anton, Retrospect of a Military Life During the Most Eventful Periods of the Last War (Edinburgh, 1841) 134.

37 Costello 85.

evil, by losing all its grossness.[38]

The British soldiers, both officers and ranks, viewed the French as 'manly' opponents because they shared a military culture with the French and were impressed by the French army's military prowess and reputation, and its conformity to the proper conduct of war.[39] The French were also contrasted with the Spanish and Portuguese who so often proved to be poorer combatants, or relied on what were perceived as more devious tactics such as guerrilla warfare. It is difficult to say if the British soldiers would have felt the same way if the British army had not been so successful in the Peninsula, but even after the British army retired from Talavera, leaving it to the French, one officer still expressed his respect for his enemy. The officer, as well as some other soldiers, were wounded and left behind after the retreat. When the French arrived they did not attack the wounded Britons, and this surprised the Spanish inhabitants. The officer explained: "In short, nothing could exceed their [the Spanish] astonishment at the display of civilised warfare."[40]

British soldiers, then, did not express a general disdain for the French, their character or their culture. As one officer explained to his mother in 1813: "The only reason I wish for peace is that I should like going to France for 3 or 4 months."[41] The soldiers experienced waves of anti-French sentiment, but only with regard to French atrocities and to a lesser degree, to

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38 Burke 170; For a discussion of the British perception of the French as effeminate and immoral see Colley, Britons 252 - 253.

39 I will go into this further in Chapter 4 when I discuss the inclusion of the French in the soldiering community.

40 Charles Boothby, A Prisoner of France: The Memoirs, Diary and Correspondence of Charles Boothby, Captain Royal Engineers, During His Last Campaign (London, 1898) 45.

41 John Rous, A Guards Officer in the Peninsula: The Peninsula War Letters of John Rous, Coldstream Guards, 1812 - 1814, ed. Ian Fletcher (Tunbridge Wells: Spellmount Ltd., 1992) 52.

revolutionary ideals. In fact, as I have shown, they respected and liked the French and saw them as equals; this will be further explored in a later chapter on professional identity. The British soldiers, however, felt differently about the Portuguese and to some extent the Spanish. Both officers and ranks often expressed a strong dislike of their character and their culture, viewing them as socially, culturally, and racially inferior, despite the fact that they were allies of Britain, had aided Britain during the campaign, and were to be liberated by the British army.

The Portuguese were generally disliked by the British soldiers. One soldier viewed the Portuguese as a vengeful and malicious people, far different than his own. He described Portuguese peasants looting the dead on the battle-field:

> The peasantry prowling about, more ferocious than the beasts and birds of prey, finishing the work of death, and carrying away whatever they thought worthy of their grasp. Avarice and revenge were the causes of these horrors. No fallen Frenchman that showed the least signs of life was spared. They seemed pleased with mangling the dead bodies. When light failed them, they kindled a great fire and remained around it. All night, shouting like as many savages. My sickened fancy felt the same as if it were witnessing a feast of cannibals.[42]

This comparison of the Portuguese to 'savages' or 'animals' was quite prevalent in the soldiers' descriptions of them. One officer was "inexpressibly disgusted" by their appearance, referring to them as "half-amphibious animals" with "their dark eyes portraying more of the assassin then the patriot, and their teeth, white no doubt in comparison with their dark hides, was sufficient to stamp them in my eyes as the most ill-looking set

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[42] Howell 18.

of cut-throats I had ever beheld," which he felt "[gave] them the appearance of a race of bad bred North American Indians."[43] The Portuguese were described as "indolent and filthy," "dirty in their persons, filthy in their habits, obscene in their language, and vindictive in their tempers," "dirty in the extreme," and "very offensive to the nose of an Englishman."[44] One Private summed up the British soldiers' general feeling towards the Portuguese: "What an ignorant superstitious, priest-ridden, dirty, lousy set of poor Devils are the Portuguese. Without seeing them it is impossible to conceive there exists a people in Europe so debased."[45] The Portuguese were viewed not only as socially or culturally inferior, but also racially inferior to the British.

The British soldiers formed their opinions about the Portuguese based on a gendered social hierarchy. Whereas the French were considered the equals of the British, the Portuguese were seen as inferior.[46] The British dominant masculinity asserted its power and superiority over the Portuguese 'other' and negative 'unmanly' attributes were given to the Portuguese as part of this construction. This was further strengthened by the British feeling that the Portuguese were cowards. One officer called them "cowardly rascals,"[47] explaining that the "Portuguese cowards. . .won't fight a 1/16 of a Frenchman with arms, but plunder and murder the wounded, poor wretches. Had I time I could tell you such things of these countrymen of mine [Portuguese], that

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43 Grattan 3.

44 Blakeney 28; John Spencer Cooper, Seven Campaigns, 2nd edition (Carlisle: G & T Coward Ltd., 1914) 13; Costello 28; Simmons 14. Bragge 7.

45 William Wheeler, The Letters of Private Wheeler, 1809 - 1828, ed. Captain B. H. Liddell Hart (London: Michael Joseph, 1951) 49.

46 See Roper and Tosh; See Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia UP, 1988).

47 Wheeler 90.

you would not wonder at my despising them and having unpleasantly changed my opinion of their character."[48]

This British perception of Portuguese cowardice was only strengthened by the Portuguese people's vengeful acts against the French. Considering that the French had performed numerous atrocities on the Portuguese during the campaign, it only made sense that the Portuguese sought revenge. Many British soldiers did not feel this way, and felt that the vengeful actions were 'cowardly' and 'brutal', although they also understood why the Portuguese went to such extremes. One soldier wrote about how some of the Portuguese peasants killed the French wounded and kicked their dead bodies:

> Though the French were our enemies, we could not permit the peasantry openly to insult humanity in the way they had been doing, and wherever we found the brutal operation going on, it was at once stopped. We sympathised with the Portuguese, knowing that the French had behaved to them with the greatest cruelty; indeed, no tribe of Indians could have been more brutal; yet it served no good purpose to revolt the nobler feelings of humanity by openly abusing the inanimate body.[49]

Some of the British soldiers even protected the French prisoners and wounded from Portuguese attack: "The sanguinary nature of the Portuguese during the whole period of the war was notorious. When crossed or excited, nothing but the shedding of blood could allay their passion. It was always with the greatest difficulty that we could preserve our French prisoners from being butchered by them even in cold blood."[50] Although the British soldiers did not condone the vengeful acts of the Portuguese, they understood them:

> The Natives have murdered every straggler or

[48] Warre 28. Warre was born in Portugal and his family moved to England when he was young.
[49] Pearson 79.
[50] Costello 43-44. He was attacked by Portuguese soldiers while trying to protect a Frenchman.

> unfortunate Frenchman they met behind the column, and, but for very strong English guards and patrols, would destroy every person who supported them, and their houses. It is cowardly in them now, but when we hear of the ferocious cruelties and insolence, of the system of robbery and plunder and murder, almost incredible had we not seen such proofs of it, we cannot wonder at the fury of this naturally passionate and revengeful people.[51]

Most of the British soldiers accepted revenge as part of the Portuguese character because the Portuguese were considered "passionate" and not stoic like the British.

Despite the general dislike for the Portuguese, some of the British soldiers also had good things to say about them. Although one officer felt that the Portuguese were "superstitious and ignorant in the extreme,"[52] he wrote that the peasantry were "as fine a race as are to be seen" and only had faults because of the "want of example in the nobility."[53] Others felt that the Portuguese people were "very obliging, and behave[d] as they should to the English," "more hospitable and attentive to our wants [than the Spanish]," and that "the Portuguese behaved very well, if you did so to them, but they have a most forbidding aspect."[54] Although the British soldiers had these positive things to say about the Portuguese, the tone in their writing suggests that the Portuguese were acceptable if they remained in their proper place, and recognised the authority of the British.

Like the Portuguese, the Spanish were also considered the 'other' by the

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51 Warre 30.

52 John Aitchison, An Ensign in the Peninsular War: The Letters of John Aitchison, ed. W. F. K. Thompson (London: Michael Joseph, 1994) 107.

53 Aitchison 40.

54 Gomm 155; Simmons 20; George Hennell, A Gentleman Volunteer: The Letters of George Hennell from the Peninsular War, 1812 - 1813, ed. Michael Glover (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1979) 10.

British soldiers. Feelings were mixed, however, concerning the Spanish, as some soldiers disliked them while others liked them, and they were generally more liked than the Portuguese by most soldiers. According to one soldier, "passing from the Portuguese to the Spanish frontier is about equal to taking one step from the coal-hole into the parlour."[55] An officer explained that while the Portuguese had no "character" "among the Spaniards the case is very different. I have already tried to give you some account of their chief; Carrera looks like Achilles, and they say he is full as impetuous and implacable. Several others that I saw have a very gallant bearing."[56] Some of the Spanish were regarded as manly and were therefore acceptable. Another officer added that "the Spaniards are particularly clean in their dress [yet] in their persons they are not so clean, but in this respect far before the Portuguese."[57]

One soldier, who did not understand why the Spanish would not fight, still viewed the allies as "a courageous people," as did an officer who did not blame the Spanish people for their 'barbarity' but explained that it was due to the lack of a 'noble' leadership.[58] Another officer agreed with the notion that the blame for the Spanish army's 'incompetence' derived from what he perceived as poor leadership: "Not that the Spanish peasantry are deficient in personal courage (and their soldiers were, generally speaking, no other than peasants with muskets in their hands), but their corps were so miserably

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55 J. Kincaid, Adventures in the Rifle Brigade in the Peninsula, France and the Netherlands, from 1809 to 1815, ed. Sir John Fortescue (London: Peter Davies Limited, 1929) 52.

56 Gomm 177.

57 William Tomkinson, The Diary of a Cavalry Officer in the Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, 1809 - 1815, ed. James Tomkinson (London, 1894) 26.

58 Howell 37; Aitchison 61: Aitchison felt the same about the Portuguese (see above). Obviously he felt that the quality of the nobility of a country determined the conduct of its people, which isn't surprising since he was an officer from a wealthy family.

officered, and their commissariat so miserably supplied, that the chief matter of surprise is, how they came to fight at all."[59]

The character of the Spanish was defended by one officer who explained that "much has been said of the jealousy of the Spaniards, and in England it is a generally received opinion that they are a jealous race, but I never found them such - quite the contrary."[60] Although rising in defence of the Spanish character, he still perceived the Spanish as a race different from the English. While in Madrid, another officer described the history of the Spanish 'race' alluding to the "Great Men" of Spanish history and the Roman influence in Spanish architecture.[61] He felt that although the Spanish were different, they deserved respect because of their "great" history and their tie to the 'civilisation' of Rome.

One Captain perceived this 'noble' characteristic of the Spanish: "a Spanish peasant girl has an address about her which I have never met with in the same class of any other country; as she at once enters into society with the ease and confidence of one who has been accustomed to it all her life."[62] But he maintained that the Spanish women were not equivalent to British women, especially those of higher social standing; he and his comrades "ardently longed for an opportunity of once more feasting our eyes on a lady."[63]

The Spanish were not always seen in such a positive light by many of the soldiers; some contempt was felt for their character and conduct during

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59 The Subaltern (Edinburgh, 1845) 66-67.
60 Grattan 272.
61 Webber 80.
62 Kincaid 69.
63 Kincaid 69-70.

the campaign. Part of this contempt developed from the British perception that the Spanish did not want to fight the French. This was especially frustrating for British soldiers because they felt that they were being "abandoned" by the people they were trying to liberate because the Spanish troops were constantly sent into disorder or routed by the superior numbers and training of the French. One soldier explained that "the British are here to fight for the liberty of Spain, and why is not every Spaniard under arms and fighting? The cause is not ours; and are we to be the only sufferers?"[64]

Some British soldiers deemed that the Spanish lacked nobility of character, and that this was the cause of their cowardice. The Spanish were variously described as "a jealous-minded, vindictive, and cowardly race," "barbaric," "savage looking wretches," "lazy wretches," "cowards," and "the most treacherous and unfriendly set of people in the world."[65] One Private perhaps best expressed the feeling of most of the British soldiers towards the Spanish when he recounted the liberation of Madrid in August of 1812, and the mobs of citizens who greeted the arrival of the British:

> But admidst all this pleasure and happines we were obliged to submit to a custome so unenglish that I cannot but feel disgust now I am writing. It was to be kissed by the men. What made it still worse, their breath was so highly seasoned with garlick, then their huge mustaches well stiffened with sweat, dust and snuff, it was like having a hair broom pushed into ones face that had been daubed in a dirty gutter.[66]

Although ranked more highly than the Portuguese, most of the British

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[64] Howell 24. For further comments on Spanish "cowardice" see: Webber 60; John Brumwell, Letters of a Weardale Soldier, ed. William Morley Egglestone (Durham: W. M. Egglestone, Stanhope, 1912) 14; Bragge 120.

[65] Aitchison 72; Bragge 21; Brumwell 14; Donaldson 89; Rous 59; Simmons 60; Warre 74.

[66] Wheeler 91.

soldiers regarded the Spanish as inferior to themselves, partly because of their un-English and unmanly characteristics.

This deficiency was compounded by the 'alien' religion of the Spanish and Portuguese. Linda Colley indicates that part of the British 'othering' process included the formation of the idea of the Protestant British as opposed to the Catholic French.[67] Many soldiers commented on the Catholic religion in France, Spain and Portugal as they were exposed to the beliefs, images, and institutions of the Catholic church during the campaign. But although the British army was an arm of a Protestant nation state not all of the soldiers in the British army were Protestant. There were a large number of Catholics in the army, especially among the Irish recruits, but Wellington wrote in 1809:

> Any man may go to mass who chooses, and nobody makes any inquiry about it. The consequence is, that nobody goes to mass, and although we have whole regiments of Irishmen, and of course Roman Catholics, I have not seen one soldier perform any one act of religious worship in these Catholic countries, excepting making the sign of the cross to induce the people of the country to give them wine.[68]

The pervasiveness of Protestantism within the British army requires further examination beyond these primary sources which do not fully address the question.

Those soldiers who commented on the Catholic religion in France, Spain and Portugal, all believed in some form of Protestantism. One soldier, who was a devout Protestant and who claimed to be a descendant of the reformer Wycliffe wrote that "where the bible is prohibited, as in Spain and

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67 See Colley, Britons chapter 1.

68 Cited in Antony Brett-James ed., Wellington at War (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1961) 168; I will explain more about the number of Irish soldiers in the army in my next chapter.

Portugal, paganism and idolatry never die."[69] Another called Spain "the Popish country,"[70] and an officer described how the Christmas day celebration in France, a "Roman Catholic country," differed from the Protestant celebration in Britain: "For my own part, I viewed the whole proceeding, not with levity, certainly, but as certainly without devotion; for the entire scene appeared to me better calculated to amuse the imagination, than to stir up the deeper and more rational sensations of piety."[71] Another soldier further illustrated the difference between the Protestant English and the Catholic 'other' when he wrote: "It is astonishing how the term 'heretic' sticks to the English. No good office can wipe out the foul stain, if you wish to come on terms of friendship you must pass for an Irishman. You then are considered as one of themselves, a good Christian."[72]

The main criticism of the Catholic Church among the British soldiers was directed at nuns, monks and the priesthood. British soldiers pitied nuns, whom they regarded as captives of what the British felt was their "superstitious" religion. One officer called the nuns he met in Oropesa and Toledo "unfortunate girls" and "poor creatures" who "were kissing and waving their hands to us and seemed anxious to be liberated from their confinement."[73] He exclaimed: "What a shameful, ridiculous thing it is that under mistaken notions of religion so many poor girls are debarred the only comforts the world can bestow."[74] Other officers described the nuns as "neither young nor handsome, but old and sallow, from penance and vigils,

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69 Cooper 7.
70 Pearson 109.
71 Subaltern 148.
72 Wheeler 72.
73 Webber 69, 74.
74 Webber 74.

no doubt," "fair prisoners," and "poor unfortunate women, who might have lived in the world and proved an ornament to Society, but, alas! doomed by their parents from superstitious bigotry to be secluded from the world and live entombed in a vile prison, like common felons or miscreants, not fit to be at large."[75] The monks and priests, some soldiers maintained, had duped not only the nuns but the populace as a whole by "superstitious bigotry, which enables them to exercise their extortions to the greatest degree upon the deluded and infatuated multitude."[76] One soldier declared that he "was almost tempted to cry in pity for their [the people's] ignorance," and another averred that the clergy would be much more useful serving in their nations' armies.[77] The soldiers felt more strongly about the 'unfortunate' circumstance of the nuns than of the general Catholic population. The main opponents of convents seem to be from the officer class, and their strong opposition probably derived from their identification as gentlemen.[78] As gentlemen, their manly, chivalrous instincts would have been called forth to redeem the 'fair prisoners.'

The soldiers' opinions of the Catholic religion, then, formed part of the 'othering' process. The 'othering' of the Portuguese, the Spanish, and the French, as well as a sentimentality for home, and a recognition of distinct British characteristics were all part of the soldiers' formation of a British identity. But the soldiers' Britishness did not necessarily develop from an anti-French sentiment. It is true that the war with the French provided the

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75 Sir Thomas Brotherton, A Hawk at War: The Peninsular War Reminiscences of General Sir Thomas Brotherton, ed. Bryan Perrett (Chippenham: Picton Publishing Ltd., 1986) 32; Simmons 49; Swabey 13, 16.

76 Simmons 49.

77 Swabey 16; Wheeler 49.

78 For more on this see Chapter 4.

opportunity to view the French as the enemy, but as I have stated earlier, there was little expression of disdain of the French character or culture or of the people themselves.[79] The French were more often considered social equals. Military discipline and its indoctrination of British patriotism and identity through spectacle and conditioning, as well as the pride soldiers felt in the numerous British victories during the Peninsular War, and of being a British soldier remained a significant element in the articulation of Britishness.

As I indicated at the beginning of the first chapter, the terms 'British' and 'English' were used interchangeably, but many of the soldiers who wrote about their experiences in the war were not English. Aitchison, Anton, Donaldson, the Soldier of the 42nd, Hope, Howell, Kincaid, Malcolm, and MacFarlane were all Scottish, while Blakeney, Boothby, Costello, Grattan, Ross-Lewin, and Verner were all from Ireland. Despite not being English, these soldiers still voiced a sense of Britishness. The wars with France "allowed diverse inhabitants to focus on what they had in common, rather than on what divided them."[80] Colley also states that 'Britishness' did not remove other loyalties and the other nations within the United Kingdom retained their own regional identities while also identifying themselves as British.[81] Sometimes the regional identities were just as powerful as the sense of Britishness, and in the next chapter I will examine this dynamic.

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79 This is where I agree with Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood that the British were not necessarily Francophobic. See Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood editors, A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, c. 1750 - 1850 (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997).

80 Colley, "Britishness" 316.

81 Colley, "Britishness" 315-316.
Colley, Britons 6.

Chapter 3

The Welsh, Irish, and Scots

From Albion's cultivated plain,
From Erin's verdant sod,
From Caledonia's mountain reign,
Thy came to rescue falling Spain
From the Usurper's rod.[1]

So a contemporary poet illustrated the diverse composition of the British Peninsular army fighting under "St. George's banner."[2] Although it was a British army that went to the Iberian Peninsula in 1808, it was not an ethnically English army. Not only was support given to the British army by Portuguese and Spanish soldiers, German, Swiss, and Italian regiments, and the Chasseurs Britanniques which was composed of prisoners and deserters from the French army, but the British army itself was comprised of regiments raised in Wales, Ireland and Scotland, as well as England.[3] Because the focus of my thesis is British soldiers, my concerns are with the British regiments, and the men from the British Isles who fought in those regiments.

In the last two chapters I have shown how many of these men identified themselves as British, and in this chapter I will explain that although there was a pervasive British identity amongst the British soldiers, it was not always the dominant one, and many of the soldiers also developed their own regional identities which were for some, as powerful as their feelings of Britishness. Soldiers from the regions had their own distinct traditions, characteristics, and symbols which differentiated them from the

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1 From "The Convent Bell": Poems Founded on the Events of the War in the Peninsula, by the Wife of an Officer (London, 1819).

2 Poems 35.

3 For a list of regiments that served in the Peninsular War see Ian Fletcher, Wellington's Regiments (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1994); Michael Glover, The Peninsular War, 1807 - 1814 (London: David & Charles, 1974) 364 - 365.

English; this is illustrated in the above lines of poetry which geographically distinguish each region from the other. In this chapter I will not only show how the soldiers from the regions differentiated themselves, but also how the English viewed the regions as distinct communities.

What is most interesting about these lines is the omission of Wales. This was not uncommon and is shown by a similar omission in the words of an Irish officer:

> What foe could resist their united attack or penetrate the shield formed of the Rose, Shamrock and Thistle when closely bound together in a union strong and lasting? What foe could triumph over Wellington, who, born in Ireland, with the keen policy of Scotland, adopting England and combining the genius of all three, was the one appropriate chief to wield their united strength in the field? A force constituted of such moral and physical strength, and led by such a man could not long be withstood. The star of the three united nations shone victorious on the summits of the lofty Pyrenees, gilding the tall pines which capped their heads for miles and foreboding downfall to Imperial France, since it was the star of true liberty and national independence. The French on their side with broken brand and fallen crest reluctantly gave way, sullenly retiring within their national boundary, no longer invulnerable.[4]

The officer also recognised the distinct national regions that embodied the army, like the poet; however, he did not consider Wales one of the 'united nations.'

But the Welsh were not absent from the war. Regiments raised in Wales and named after their national origins, including the 23rd Royal

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[4] Robert Blakeney, A Boy in the Peninsular War, ed. Julian Sturgis (London, 1899) 321; also see David Roberts, The Military Adventures of Johnny Newcome (London, 1815) 18. Roberts refers to "John Bull", "Paddy" and "Sawney Scot" but there is no Welsh character.

Welsh (or Welch) Fusiliers and the 43rd Monmouthshire Light Infantry served in the Peninsula; the regiments also had their own distinct Welsh customs, like the celebration of St. David's Day (see figure 4).[5] Two soldiers from my study, John Brumwell and George Hennell, served in the 43rd, but they were not natives of Wales. Unfortunately I have no evidence to suggest that any of the other soldiers whose memoirs, diaries and letters I have read were Welsh, except for Rice Jones.[6]

This is surprising considering the assertion by both Gwyn A. Williams and Prys Morgan, that from the 1790s into the mid-nineteenth century the perceived threat of national extinction due to English cultural and economic domination created a cultural and literary revival in Wales, and out of this revival grew an invented Welsh tradition. Part of this invention of a Welsh cultural tradition was the distinctly Welsh culture of religious nonconformity and radical politics.[7]

The combination of the Romantic movement and Primitivism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had a significant influence on the development of a Welsh national culture and tradition, as well as on the development of the Scottish Highland tradition, which I will discuss later. Primitivism was a reaction to modernisation and urban development; primitivists recalled oral folk culture, focusing on the "margins and peripheries in the British Isles" during a time when Britain was becoming

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5 For more on these regiments see Fletcher.

6 Jones wrote to his father: "[I] trust you are all well in England and Wales": Rice Jones, An Engineer Officer Under Wellington in the Peninsula, ed. Captain H. U. Shore (Cambridge: Ken Trotman, 1986) 9.

7 See Gwyn A. Williams, When Was Wales? (London: Penguin Books, 1985); Prys Morgan, "From a Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period" The Invention of Tradition Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983).

more "metropolitan."[8] The union of Primitivist ideals with the Romantic movement, and its focus on the individual, imagination and emotion, "glorified both the isolated individual and the marginal culture, the former being often seen to greatest advantage in the latter."[9]

Despite the development of a national Welsh culture which emerged from primitivist and romantic ideals and the subsequent invention of Welsh tradition, Wales was still politically integrated into England. As Kenneth O. Morgan explains: "For formal purposes, the United Kingdom down to the mid-nineteenth century was regarded as being composed of three countries rather than four,"[10] and "there was simply no 'Welsh question', any more than there was a 'Cornish question'. Despite the vigorous survival of a Welsh society based mainly on small farms of the peasant type, the official mind still saw Wales and England as inseparable. Or, in the reiterated litany of Westminster politicians, 'there was no such place as Wales'."[11] This might explain why Wales was so often over-looked in celebrations of regional diversity, not least those quoted at the outset of this chapter. This is not to say that the Welsh were completely ignored by other non-Welsh soldiers. One English soldier referred to his Welsh friend in the regiment as a "Welshman" or "Mr. Taffy," and Costello, an Irishman, wrote about his "comrade Jones, a

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8 Murray G. H. Pittock, Inventing and Resisting Britain: Cultural Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1685 - 1789 (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997) 153.

9 Pittock 153.

10 Kenneth O. Morgan, "Welsh Nationalism: The Historical Background" Journal of Contemporary History 6 (1971) 154.

11 Kenneth O. Morgan 155.

good-looking Welshman."[12] There were no comments, however, on the Welsh character or culture and these references to Welshmen were similar to soldiers' references to fellow soldiers from other regions of England, like the "Leicestershire man", the officer from "North Briton" or the soldier from "Cockneyshire".[13]

Much more visible than the Welsh were the Irish; there were many indications of Irish identity as well as opinions of the Irish character among the soldiers. Therefore a stronger distinction was made between the Irish and the English than between the Welsh and the English. This was due partly to the fact that Ireland was not as politically integrated with England as Wales was; the Act of Union which politically bound Ireland to Great Britain had only just come into effect in 1801, while Wales was officially integrated during the sixteenth century. The counter-culture in Ireland to British hegemony was much fiercer than in Wales. There were also many more Irish than Welsh in the British army during the Peninsular War. The Irish Militia was established by the British government in the late eighteenth century and recruits were drawn from the militia to serve in the regular army, so by the time of the Peninsular War there were at least thirteen distinct Irish regiments, such as Grattan's 88th Connaught Rangers, and approximately thirty per cent of the soldiers in non-Irish regiments were

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12 'Taffy' was the generic name given to the Welsh, much like 'Paddy' for the Irish. Edward Costello, The Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, ed. Antony Brett-James (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1967) 143; William Lawrence, The Autobiography of Sergeant William Lawrence, A Hero of the Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, ed. George Nugent Banks (London, 1886) 60 - 61.

13 Costello 39; John Harris, Recollections of Rifleman Harris as Told by Henry Curling, ed. Christopher Hibbert (London: Leo Cooper, 1970) 36.

Irishmen.[14]

Not every Irish soldier enlisted into the British army however; many Irish nationalists joined the French side in Napoleon's Irish Legion. This was due to the long conflict between the British government and Irish nationalists who resisted British social, political, cultural and economic domination, and sympathised with French revolutionary ideals. This culminated in the rebellion of 1798 when French troops landed in Ireland after a nationalist invitation and, in an attempt to start a British invasion, joined in the short-lived uprising. The British government also prohibited recruiting Catholics until the mid-eighteenth century; once this prohibition was removed, the numbers of Irish enlistments into the French army declined and more Irishmen enlisted in the British army, so that by the time of the Peninsular War there were more Irishmen in the British army than in the French.[15]

Irish enlistment into the British rank and file may have been high because of poverty in Ireland which was far worse than it was in England; a soldier's wage was especially welcome.[16] But, as I indicated in the first chapter, men enlisted for a variety of reasons of which poverty was only one. Irish officers were drawn predominantly from the Irish Protestant

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[14] Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery, eds., A Military History of Ireland (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996) 257; "In 1809 34 per cent of the ranks of the Fifty Seventh (West Middlesex) were Irish. In the Twenty Ninth (Worcestershire) there were only 19 per cent, but this rose to 37 per cent in the next two years. The Scottish regiments (except the Royal Scots) had a lower proportion of Irish, but even there it was rising. The Gordon Highlanders had 3 per cent of Irishmen in 1807 and 6 per cent in 1813. The percentage of English in that regiment fell from 6 per cent to 3 per cent over the same period": Michael Glover Wellington's Army (London: David & Charles, 1977)25; The Irish officer, Blakeney, explained that his regiment, the 28th North Gloucestershire, was mainly composed of Irishmen. Blakeney 18 - 19.

[15] Bartlett and Jeffery 11 - 12, 22, 300.

[16] Richard Glover, Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795 - 1809 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1963) 225.

Ascendancy, and could afford to learn to read and write, prerequisites for becoming an officer. They also enjoyed a long tradition of military service.[17]

This long tradition of military service derived from the original settlers of the Protestant Ascendancy, many of whom were military veterans. They created a 'military caste' as a communal form of protection against those whom they perceived as the 'suspicious' native Irish. A military life was therefore socially acceptable, and a military tradition was established.[18] This military life usually manifested itself in service to the British army because the Protestant Ascendancy had closer ties with England than with 'native' Ireland.

Even though they made Ireland their home, the Protestant Ascendancy retained their English values and customs, but amalgamated these values with a "Gaelic-oriented view of the country's ancient history."[19] Irish officers occasionally identified themselves as British instead of Irish. As noted in the first chapter, Irish officers such as Grattan, Ross-Lewin, Boothby, and Blakeney all strongly identified themselves as British. Blakeney exclaimed, for example, that he belonged to his "King and Country."[20] This makes it difficult to determine whether their view of the Irish was from an Irish perspective or an English one, or a curious amalgamation of the two.

Perspective is important to a discussion of the identity of Irish soldiers, for many of the characteristics understood as distinctly Irish were in fact English views and stereotypes of the Irish. The English soldiers differentiated

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17 M. Glover, Wellington's Army 38.

18 Bartlett and Jeffery 7, 10.

19 Joep Leerssen, Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael: Studies in the Idea of Irish Nationality, Its Development and Literary Expression Prior to the Nineteenth Century (Cork: Cork UP, 1996) 382.

20 Blakeney 96.

the Irish from themselves by pointing out these characteristics. To a British soldier, the Irish character was defined by the lack of emotional control. This was perceived as exotic and "so different than English ideals of continence, reasonableness, mature control over one's emotions and similar character traits traditionally ascribed to mature masculinity."[21] Irish emotiveness was, therefore, not a masculine trait and this shows the malleability of the standards of masculinity. The Spanish and Portuguese were disdained by the British soldiers because of their lack of 'manly' characteristics, but the 'unmanly' characteristics of the Irish were acceptable if they served the interests of the army. The Irish character was attributed with the characteristics of aggressiveness and ferocity, internal religious division, humour and invention, and the fondness for drink and sentimentality which was especially manifest through their national music.

Ferocity, strength and courage made up what the English perceived as an Irish military tradition, or the natural fighting ability of the Irish which came from their violent history.[22] One English soldier expressed this feeling when he referred to an Irish soldier who "fought like a devil and would not surrender as long as he was able to lift his arm."[23] Rifleman Harris described some new Irish recruits as "hot-headed Paddies," who carried "immense shillelaghs" which they used to fight each other.[24]

The Irish military tradition was welcomed by English soldiers if Irish ferocity and courage were directed at the enemies of Britain, but it was

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21 Leerssen 378.

22 Bartlett and Jeffery 6 - 7, 13.

23 William Wheeler, The Letters of Private Wheeler, 1809 - 1828, ed. Captain B. H. Liddell Hart (London: Michael Joseph, 1951) 113.

24 Harris 6.

undesirable during peacetime and when opposed to British interests.[25] In "The Convent Bell", the poet celebrated the Duke of Wellington's Irish heritage and its link to a long and glorious military tradition: "His warlike deeds might grace / The glories of his ancient race."[26] An Anglo-Irish officer also approved of the martial tradition of the Irish and its usefulness to the British army: "the Irish are a people naturally fond of the careless, chequered, errant life of a soldier; and, as one proof of it, my corps was raised voluntarily in a single day."[27] Although the officer was from Ireland, he was also a member of the Protestant Ascendancy, and it is uncertain whether he saw himself as separate from the Irish to whom he attributed a military tradition, or if he identified with the tradition as an Irishman himself. Whether or not his opinion was from an Irish or an Anglo-Irish perspective may not matter since, according to Bartlett and Jeffery, the native Irish themselves endorsed this military tradition. It was an influential factor in Irish enlistment.

The view of the Irish as a 'martial race' stemmed in part from the division and conflict within Ireland. Protestant and Catholic as well as nationalist and loyalist disputes led to the perception of the Irish as a militant people who were always fighting.[28] This perception was sustained as soldiers saw the Irish continue this behaviour during the Peninsular War. The acceptance of this division was demonstrated in the story, told by one soldier, about Irish recruits who fought amongst themselves on their journey to and arrival in England. He described the battle between the Irish recruits as a

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25 Bartlett and Jeffery 18.

26 Poems 32 -33.

27 Harry Ross-Lewin, With the Thirty-Second in the Peninsular and Other Campaigns, ed. John Wardell (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., Ltd., 1904) 2.

28 See Kevin Whelan, The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism and the Construction of Irish Identity, 1760 - 1830 (Cork: Cork UP, 1996).

"religious row" between Catholic and Protestant. He recalled that the "poor Protestants," who were the minority among the group, were "quickly disposed of" and how the victors cried "Huzza for the Wicklow boys, Huzza for the Connaught boys, Huzza for Munster, and Huzza for Ulster!"[29] The fight soon turned into a riot in the streets and eventually the volunteer corps had to be called out to restore order.[30] His story illustrated how the English detested the Irish martial tradition when it was not under English control, but it also showed that the Irish understood that there was a violent division within their nation. As Bartlett and Jeffery point out, "the stereotype of the 'fighting Irish' or the 'martial race' was one of the few acceptable to all shades of Irish nationalists."[31] One Irish officer recognised the understanding among the Irish of their internal division, and of their martial qualities when he wrote from his quarters in Cork: "The Tipperary and Louth regiments had been there before us, and had had some desperate fighting, as one corps was called southern and the other northern; of course they were immediately separated."[32]

This is not to say that every Irish Catholic who served in the British army was an Irish nationalist or that every nationalist was a Catholic. As Leerssen explains most Irish nationalists were from the middle and upper classes and the development of nationalism "took place by and large over the heads of the native peasantry, whose main concern was livelihood rather than nationhood."[33] Most of the Irish Catholics who enlisted were from the

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29 Harris 7.
30 Harris 7.
31 Bartlett and Jeffery 7.
32 Ross-Lewin 5.
33 Leerssen 376.

poorer elements of the labouring classes, but from the soldiers' evidence, especially the story of the fight between the Irish Protestant and Catholic recruits, the Irish ranks understood the internal divisions within their country. Some of the Irish soldiers, however, were also fiercely loyal to the British army as demonstrated by one English cavalry officer's story about the capture of an Irish officer in the French army. The cavalry officer explained: "[The Irish officer] was shot by Fitz-Patrick, a Dragoon in the 16th, afterwards in my troop. This I had from Fitz-Patrick himself. The fellow said he was an Irishman, which the Dragoon could not hear and allow him to escape alive."[34] The Irish Dragoon obviously felt that the Irish officer was a traitor since he fought for the French, but there is no indication from what section of Irish society he came.

The perceptions of the divided Irish and the martial Irish were both attributed to the Irish by the English, and at least in part, accepted by the Irish. There were two characteristics that were generally regarded as distinguishing the Irish from the English, as well as the Scottish and Welsh: Irish emotiveness and Irish humour or "cheerfulness in adversity."[35]

One English soldier explained that his comrade's good humour came from the fact that he was a "thorough bred Irishman," and another English soldier commented on the "good humour and high spirits" of an Irishman in his regiment despite the experience of "the dreadful march," and how the same Irishman "had ever some piece of Irish humour upon his tongue's end, whilst he staggered under the weight of his pack."[36] On several occasions,

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34 William Tomkinson, The Diary of a Cavalry Officer in the Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, 1809 - 1815, ed. James Tomkinson (London, 1894) 115.

35 Bartlett and Jeffery 15.

36 Harris 75; Lawrence 119.

one Irish officer referred to the "rich humour" of the Irish which to him was "nowhere else to be found."[37] He explained that "neither do you find elsewhere the lively thought, the cheerful song or pleasant story, to be met only in an Irish regiment. We had a few Englishmen in my corps, and I do not remember ever to have heard one of them attempt a joke."[38]

Irish conviviality was linked by many English soldiers to an Irish fondness for drink.[39] In The Military Adventures of Johnny Newcombe, the poet's Irish character Teague (a generic name for the Irish) could not control his appetite for brandy:

> Then with the brandy fill'd the largest cup -
> 'Here's to good luck!' said he: then drank it up.
> Again replenish'd, down again it goes, -
> 'And that's,' said Teague, 'in honour of my nose.'
> Another fill'd, Teague thought it mighty clever,
> Though last, not least, 'twas 'Ireland for ever.'[40]

The lines were accompanied with an illustration by the caricaturist Thomas Rowlandson, which showed Teague with his red nose (see figure 5). An illustration from the front of the book also showed Teague with his red nose, pipe, and big belly, indicating the English perception that the Irish had little self-control (see figure 6).

Characterising Irishness by a fondness for drink, however, was also endorsed by the Irish themselves. One Irish soldier explained how he could not add water to his gin "why it is yourself you know that would never again own Doherty for a countryman, if he had been guilty of sich a thing."[41] This

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[37] William Grattan, Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, ed. Charles Oman (London: Edward Arnold, 1902) 53, 84, 85, 136.
[38] Grattan 85.
[39] Leerssen 378.
[40] Roberts 41.
[41] Quoted in Wheeler 34.

propensity for drink was also highlighted by an Irish officer who wrote that an Irishman could work for a week with "a little spirits and a biscuit," but he also indicated that this was positive because an English soldier needed a full meal to do the same amount of work.[42] To the officer it was not the uncontrolled appetite of the Irish that led them to drink, but the lack of nourishment: "An Irish fellow has been accustomed all his life to be what an Englishman would consider half-starved; therefore quantity or quality is no great consideration with him; his stomach is like a corner cupboard - you might throw anything into it."[43] The officer also defended the Irish against the stereotype of drunkenness, claiming that the English were just as fond of drink: "But there are those who think an Irish regiment more difficult to manage than that of any other nation. Never was there a more erroneous idea. The English soldier is to the full as drunken as the Irish, and not half so pleasant in his liquor."[44]

The love of drink was also associated with the sentimentality of the Irish, and this sentimentality manifested itself best through music.[45] One Scottish soldier wrote how his Irish comrade, after consuming much alcohol, burst into what he called "a true Irish song, my jewel," until the sergeant interrupted them. The Scotsman had to prevent the Irishman from hitting the sergeant with a spade because the Sergeant had imposed on the Irishman's sentimental tune.[46] One Irish officer described how an Irish tune was "sufficient, at any time, to inspire a feeling of melancholy, but on an

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[42] Grattan 84.

[43] Grattan 84 - 85.

[44] Grattan 85; In my next chapter I will discuss how the fondness for drink was common among most of the soldiers.

[45] Leerssen 378 - 379.

[46] Joseph Donaldson, Recollections of the Eventful Life of a Soldier (Edinburgh, 1847) 50.

occasion like the present it acted powerfully on the feelings of the men: they thought of their distant homes, of their friends, and of bygone days."[47] Irish music was also played by the regimental bands to inspire the troops.[48]

All of these characteristics were felt to be distinctly Irish by most of the soldiers, including the Irish ones. Irish soldiers often identified themselves as Irish; English and Scottish soldiers distinguished themselves from the Irish soldiers. These distinctions contributed to the formation of an imagined Irish community within the army which was recognised by the English, Scottish and Welsh soldiers as distinctly Irish.[49] An Irish officer, Robert Blakeney, recorded an argument between an English soldier and an Irish soldier over their ancestries, languages, and nations' histories which demonstrates this recognition of difference. Each claimed that their nation had a glorious history whereas the other had a notorious history.[50]

Similar to the Irish, the Scottish soldiers who fought in the British army also developed their own distinct regional identity. With the exception of John Aitchison, Joseph Donaldson and John Kincaid, the Scottish soldiers examined in this study were all members of Highland regiments. It was therefore the Highland tradition which was the prevalent form of Scottish tradition among these soldiers.

This tradition was invented in the eighteenth century and it reached a peak of popularity as the dominant form of Scottish identity in the early

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47 Grattan 196 - 197.

48 Blakeney 260.

49 See Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London: Verso, 1991); For further examples of identification with being Irish, see Lawrence 34; Costello 4; Ross-Lewin 40; Irish difference was also indicated by dialect: For examples of dialect see Grattan 21, 126; Harris 74; and Ross-Lewin 65.

50 Blakeney 172 - 174.

nineteenth century. Hugh Trevor-Roper explains that "the whole concept of a distinct Highland culture and tradition is a retrospective invention,"[51] and that the romantic movement and the 'cult of the noble savage' as well as the formation of the Highland regiments during the latter half of the eighteenth century led to the popularity of Highland custom among the middle and upper classes of Britain.[52] This invention of a Highland tradition was cultivated in the late 18th and early 19th centuries by writers such as Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, and David Stewart of Garth, who served in the army in several Highland regiments during the period of the Peninsular War and whose Sketches. . . published in 1822, as well as his formation of the Celtic Society in 1820, were important in the consolidation of the Highland tradition.[53] According to Christopher Harvie, "such literary entrepreneurs dictated the sort of Scotland they wanted their readership to hear about, which was more or less the same sort of Scotland that increasing numbers wanted to see."[54]

These soldiers, influenced by both the romantic movement and the formation of identifiable Highland regiments, and therefore the 'invented' Highland tradition, developed a sense of identity that was distinctly Scottish. This sense of identity was based on the costume of the Highland regiments, especially the kilt, the culture of the Highland tradition which was most apparent during the war from their music, the connection to the home

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51 Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland," in The Invention of Tradition Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Roper eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995)15.

52 Trevor-Roper 21-25.

53 John Baynes, Soldiers of Scotland (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers Ltd., 1988) 110; Trevor-Roper 28-29.

54 Christopher Harvie, Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1977 (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1977) 135.

country and to the physical geography of Scotland, the notion of a traditional Scottish character, and what Harvie calls the "Scottish soldier myth."[55] Not only did these aspects of the Highland tradition help to foster a sense of a distinct Scottish identity among the Scottish troops in the Peninsula, but they also led to the formation of a distinct Scottish community within the army.

The uniform of the Scottish soldier was what physically distinguished him from the rest of the British army; one Scot wrote about "the black ostrich feathers in [his] Highland Bonnet."[56] This was much different than the Irish and Welsh regiments who dressed the same as the English regiments (see figures 4, 7, 8). When first formed, the Highland regiments wore the kilt, but during the Peninsular War this changed as the British government tried to replace the kilt with trousers. The reasons given for this were the number of non-Highland recruits joining the Highland regiments, the discomfort of wearing the kilt in cold weather, and the lack of available tartan material to patch them.[57] The attempt to change their apparel led to reactions of outrage from Scottish troops who felt that the kilt formed part of their identity. In 1804, Colonel Cameron of the 79th Highland Regiment responded hotly to the government's plan to do away with the kilt on these grounds:

> I have to observe progressively, that in the course of the late war several gentlemen proposed to raise Highland regiments, some for general service, but chiefly for home defence; but most of these corps were culled from all quarters, and thereby adulterated with every description of men, that

55 Harvie 96.

56 John Ford, Journal and Notebook of Lieutenant John Ford, 79th (Cameron) Highlanders, 1809 - 1814 (National Army Museum, London 6807-71) 28.

57 Antony Brett-James, Life in Wellington's Army (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972) 81; Thomas Howell, A Soldier of the Seventy-First: The Journal of a Soldier of the Highland Light Infantry, 1806 - 1815, ed. Christopher Hibbert (London: Leo Cooper, 1975) 94; James Anton, Retrospect of a Military Life During the Most Eventful Periods of the Last War (Edinburgh, 1841) 121.

> rendered them anything but real Highlanders, or even Scotsmen (which is not strictly synonymous), and the colonels themselves being generally unacquainted with the language and habits of Highlanders, while prejudiced in favour of, and accustomed to wear breeches, consequently averse to that free congenial circulation of pure wholesome air (as an exhilarating bracer), which has hitherto so peculiarly befitted the Highlander for activity, and all the other necessary qualities of a soldier: whether for hardship upon scanty fare, readiness in accoutring, or making forced marches, etc.[58]

David Stewart of Garth also defended the retaining of the kilt as an important element of Highland identity. He wrote in its defence:

> It was supposed that the soldiers of the 42nd suffered from the Highland dress. Others again said, that the garb was very commodious in marching over a mountainous country, and that experience had shown that those parts of the body exposed to the weather by this garb are not materially affected by the severest cold; thus while instances are common of the fingers, toes, and face, being frost-bitten, we never hear of the knee being affected, and when men, in the Highland garb, have their fingers destroyed by frost, their knees remained untouched, although bare and exposed to the same temperature which affected other parts of the body. The warmth which the numerous folds of the kilt preserved round the centre of the body was a great security against complaints in the bowels, which were so prevalent on this occasion among troops; and it may be supposed that men who are in a manner rendered hardy by being habituated, at least from the time they joined Highland corps, to a loose cool dress, would be less liable to be affected by violent and abrupt changes in the temperature.[59]

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58 John Telfer Dunbar, History of Highland Dress (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962)161.

59 David Stewart, Sketches of the Character, Manners and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland: With Details of the Military Service of the Highland Regiments (Edinburgh, 1822) 519-520.

Despite those who contested the change, the government eventually "decided in 1809 that five Highland regiments would no longer wear the kilt. Scottish Lowlanders and Englishmen did not like bare knees so the government offered them upon joining any of these four Highland regiments, the standard grey trousers. The Highlanders were incensed but into trousers they went."[60] The 42nd Regiment was the only Highland regiment after this date that retained the kilt as part of its uniform for the rest of the war,[61] although other regiments, like the 71st, felt that they had been "deprived of their Scots identity"[62] and did maintain the use of the Highland garb among their pipers. Despite the changes made to the dress of the Highland regiments, the Highland garb still remained an important part of Scottish identity.[63] Members of the kilted 42nd considered their dress as an aspect of their identity, as a Private soldier of the 42nd noted, "kilts, not trowsers, were our dress in all seasons."[64] He wrote about the distinctiveness of the Highland uniform while with his regiment in Salamanca:

> In this city the British Army assembled; but of the various regiments that composed it, there was not one so much admired as the 42d. There were other Highland regiments: our's was perfect in the 'garb of old Gaul'. The whole attention of the inhabitants was fixed on us. We were a novel race of beings - our dress, except the red coat, bore no resemblance to that of the other regiments.[65]

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[60] Baynes 34.

[61] Anton 121.

[62] Baynes 93.

[63] See Michael Brander, The Scottish Highlanders and Their Regiments (London: Seely Service and Co. Ltd., 1971); John Laffin, Scotland the Brave: The Story of the Scottish Soldier (London: Cassell, 1963).

[64] The Personal Narrative of a Private Soldier in the Forty-Second Highlanders for Twelve Years During the Late War (London, 1821)172.

[65] Forty-Second 50-51.

Although the kilt was retained by only a few of the Highland regiments during the period of the Peninsular War, Highland music was retained by all. Music, both songs and the sounds of the bagpipes, was prevalent within the ranks of the Scottish troops in the Peninsula. This Highland music formed a part of the soldiers' identity and at times fostered feelings of national pride and identification with their home country.

Scottish folk songs were so much a part of the soldiers' identity that when they heard them or sang them they were deeply moved and felt a longing for their home country, much like the sentimentality for home I discussed in the first chapter. Before going to the Peninsula, Thomas Howell's regiment was active in South America. Here Howell's friend Donald contemplated remaining among fellow Catholics instead of returning to Europe with the regiment. Howell wrote, "Donald was still wavering, yet most inclined to stay. I sung to him, "Lochaber No More!' - the tears started into his eyes - he dashed them off. 'Na, na! I canna stay, I'd maybe return to Lochaber nae mair!'"[66] On another occasion, Howell was moved in a similar way by a Scottish song. While camped at Toro de Moro, he wrote:

> One evening, as I lay in the woods thinking upon home, sweeter than all the surrounding sweets, almost overcome by my sensations, I heard, at a small distance, music. I listened for some time ere I could be satisfied it was so. It ceased all at once; then began sweeter than before. I arose, and approached nearer, to avoid the noise of a small burn that ran rippling near where I had been reclining. I soon knew the air. I crept nearer and could distinguish the words. I became rivetted to the spot. That moment compensated for all I had suffered in Spain. I felt that pleasure which softens the heart, and overflows at the eyes. the words that

[66] Howell 10-11.

> first struck my ear, were, "Why did I leave my Jeanie, my Daddy's cot, an 'a',/ To wander from my country, sweet Caledonia. Soon as the voice ceased, I looked through the underwood and saw four or five soldiers seated on the turf, who sung in their turn, Scotland's sweetest songs of remembrance. When they retired, I felt as if I was bereft of all enjoyment. I slowly retired to the camp, to reflect and spend a sleepless night. Every opportunity, I returned to the scene of my happiness and had the pleasure, more than once, to enjoy the company unseen.[67]

Both Donald and Howell's strong sense of Scottish identity made them particularly vulnerable to the emotion of these songs.

Another Scottish soldier and his comrades were also moved by the songs that formed a part of their national identity. The soldier wrote that in Spain, he and his comrades sat looking out over the ocean and "sung the songs of Scotland while the tears trickled down our cheeks. He who has never heard the melodies of his native land sung in a foreign country, is ignorant of a pleasure that nothing can surpass."[68] Another Scot from the 42nd regiment shared similar sentiments. While in Spain, he wrote: "The festivities of the evening were concluded with some choice Scottish songs, and never before did these strains seem so exquisite to me as that night, when on a foreign shore, and in the very 'shadow of death' they breathed of the joys of love, and of my native land."[69]

While the songs provided Scottish identity with its softer more emotional sentiment, the bagpipes provided distinctly Scottish martial music

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67 Howell 66-67.

68 Donaldson 214.

69 John Malcolm, "Reminiscences of a Campaign in the Pyrenees and South of France in 1814" in Constable's Miscellany vol. 27 (Edinburgh, 1828) 248.

to inspire the troops in battle. The British government allowed the use of pipers in the Scottish regiments because it felt that pipers would maintain the courage of the troops in battle.[70] The pipers were an integral part of the Highland regiments and the music they played inspired the soldiers. The piper in one regiment was wounded in the groin during the battle of Vimiero, but "he announced 'Deil ha' my saul, if ye want music!' and continued playing."[71] An Infantry Officer of the 92nd Gordon Highlanders described the role of the pipers at the battle of Vittoria: "Colonel Cameron placing himself on the left of that company, called to the piper to play the Gathering of the Camerons. . . Animated by the presence of their chief, and the warlike sounds of their favourite bag-pipe, the men advanced with a front firm as the rocks of their native mountains, to meet the foe."[72] He also wrote about the importance of the piper to Scottish identity:

> The following little anecdote speaks more powerfully in favour of national corps, than volumes written on the subject could possibly do. The power of national music over the minds of soldiers in the field, was never more conspicuously displayed, than towards the conclusion of the action of the 25th July. Thinking that his friends would feel grateful to him for one or two of his favourite military airs, the Piper-Major of the 92nd regiment 'set his drone in order,' and made the hills and the valleys ring with the 'Gathering of the Camerons.' The effects were instantaneous. Every man was on his legs in a moment, and anxiously looking to General Stewart, who was then a few paces in their rear, wounded in the leg, for an order to advance. He, however, instead of gratifying the men, warned them of the fatal consequences that might follow a movement in advance at that particular moment,

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70 Baynes 97-98. Also see Laffin, Brander and Stewart 81.

71 Howell 18-20.

72 James Hope, The Military Memoirs of an Infantry Officer, 1809-1816 (Edinburgh, 1833) 266.

> and desired the piper not to play again till ordered. In ten minutes, Cameron, unmindful of the General's injunctions, repeated the dose, which produced exactly similar effects. Enraged at the piper's disobedience, General Stewart again stopped him, and forbade him at the peril of his life to play until ordered. On the arrival of General Barnes, soon after with the remainder of his brigade, Cameron the piper, conceiving that in common courtesy he was bound to welcome his friends to share our dangers, struck up the 'Haughs of Crumdale,' in his very best style. At the sound of that well-known national air; the Highlanders rushed down upon their numerous foes with the undaunted bravery, who, panic-struck at their audacity, wheeled to the right about, and fairly ran, hotly pursued by the whole corps.[73]

Much like the Irish soldiers, music was an important part of the Scottish soldiers' identity. It moved them to fight with bravery and it also reminded them of home.

The identification with the physical country of Scotland, or home, was another aspect of Scottish identity found among the soldiers in the Peninsula and it was especially strong since they were in a foreign land. The soldiers exhibited signs of homesickness in their writing, and the home they identified with was Scotland. Stewart wrote about this attachment with the home country: "It has often been remarked, that the inhabitants of mountainous and romantic regions are of all men the most enthusiastically attached to their country. The Swiss, when at a distance from home, are sometimes said to die of the maladie du pays. The Scotch Highlanders entertain similar feelings. . .The expatriated Highlander naturally sighs for his own mountains."[74] The romantic connection with the Highlands, referred to

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[73] Hope 317-318.

[74] Stewart 90-91.

by Stewart, formed an important part of the Scots' identification with their country. As one soldier wrote: "Being in a delicate state of health, I amused myself a few weeks in Edinburgh, and then proceeded to the country to inhale the air of my native hills."[75]

This romantic connection to Scotland fostered feelings of homesickness, that was evident in Donald's reaction to Thomas Howell's singing of 'Lochaber No More'. On New Year's Eve, Howell also thought of how his friends at home were celebrating 'Hogmanay' differently than he was in Spain. Howell's friend Donald was blinded during the war and on their regiments' temporary return to Britain, "Donald burst into tears. 'I shall never see Scotland again; it is me that is the poor dark man.' A hundred ideas rushed upon my mind, and overcame me. Donald clasped me to his breast; our tears flowed uninterrupted."[76] At the end of his service, Howell explained his feelings on his return to Scotland: "Hope and joy were my companion until I entered the firth. I was on deck; the morning began to down; the shores of Lothian began to rise out of the mist. 'There is the Land of Cakes,' said the Captain. A sigh escaped me; recollections crowded upon me, painful recollections."[77]

Associated with the romantic identification with the land of Scotland, the Highland character formed an important part of Scottish identity. The character of the Highlander was formed out of the geography, history, and economy of the Highlands. The geography was cold and bleak, the history violent and warlike, and the economy poor.[78] The connection of the

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75 Hope 47.
76 Howell 38.
77 Howell 111.
78 Baynes 1-8.

Highlander to the rugged geography of the Highlands was shown in one soldier's words: "Though the hill on my right was inaccessible to a horseman, it was not so to a dismounted Scotsman; and I therefore determined, in case of necessity, to abandon my horse, and show them [the French] what I could do on my own bottom at a pinch."[79] Highland character was also moulded by the 'traditions' of clanship and honour. Stewart explained that much of the Highland character had diminished and changed after the 1740's but this character had survived within the Highland regiments. He wrote that a Highland soldier "was taught to consider courage as the most honourable virtue, cowardice the most disgraceful failing; to venerate and obey his chief, and to devote himself for his native country and clan; and thus prepared to be a soldier, he was ready to follow wherever honour and duty called him."[80]

The Highland character thus became integrated into the military life of the Scottish soldiers and formed what Linda Colley calls "a strong martial tradition."[81] Christopher Harvie showed that through the writing of Scottish soldiers "a martial literature, which was a persuasive recruiting sergeant," was created.[82] Harvie refers to this invention as a myth, but a myth that was embraced. He stated that a reputation of Scottish bravery in battle was invented and the notion was created that "the Scottish infantry, 'the Ladies from Hell,' personified the nation at its most aggressive."[83] This martial tradition appears often in the soldiers' writing. One Scottish soldier referred

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79 J. Kincaid, Adventures in the Rifle Brigade in the Peninsula, France and the Netherlands, from 1809 to 1815, ed. Sir John Fortescue (London: Peter Davies Limited, 1929) 182.
80 Stewart 218.
81 Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707 - 1837 (London: Pimlico, 1992) 294.
82 Harvie 96.
83 Harvie 97.

to battles and a past of military heroism around an area in Scotland,[84] while another spoke of his superior officer as a "Highland chief."[85]

Another Scot also linked his identity with the martial tradition of the Highlanders. He wrote about military life; "I had the field of honour before me. To fight in defence of one's country, thought I - to follow the example of a Bruce or a Wallace - must be a glorious thing. Military fame seemed the only object worth living for."[86] He identified with the heroic martial tradition of Scottish heroes like William Wallace and Robert Bruce, and he felt that " 'death or glory' seemed very fine words."[87] When his regiment was scolded by their General for plundering, the General challenged the national pride of the soldiers. The soldier wrote: " He wound up the particular part of his speech addressed to us with, 'You are a disgrace to your moral country, Scotland!' That had more weight than all his speech. It sunk deep in our hearts. To separate a Scotsman from his country - to tell him he is unworthy of it - is next to taking away his life."[88] Other notions of the Scottish military tradition or 'myth' emerged in the writings of the soldiers. Reference to the idea of Highland bravery, Highland Blood, and the fearful 'wrath' of the Highlanders all supported the belief in the Highland martial tradition.[89]

This Highland martial tradition, accompanied with the notion of a Highland character, the emotional identification with Scotland, the music, and the dress all contributed to the formation of a Scottish identity and subsequently the formation of a distinct Highland or Scottish community

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84 Anton 26.
85 Hope 20.
86 Donaldson 43.
87 Donaldson 44.
88 Donaldson 99.
89 Forty-Second 31, 85; Hope 282.

among the soldiers. It was a community based on the 'invented' Highland tradition or on an ethnic or cultural "false consciousness"[90] as Harvie called it, but it was a community no less.

This sense of community among the Scottish soldiers was evident in Stewart's writing. He stated of the Highlander that,

> When in a national or district corps, he is surrounded by the companions of his youth, and the rivals of his early achievements; he feels the impulse of emulation strengthened by the consciousness that every proof which he displays, either of bravery or cowardice, will find its way to his native home.[91]

After Waterloo, one soldier, whose regiment was camped in Paris, met two girls from Paisley. He wrote about the sound of a familiar accent in a foreign land, an accent that was part of his community: "There is music in our native tongue, in a foreign land where it is not to be looked for, that often melts the heart when we hear it unexpectedly."[92] A sense of a Highland community also appeared in the life of another soldier when he and his companions were arrested by the police in Scotland: "The two men that were with me were Highlanders, and all the police were Highlanders; so through the use of the Highland language, we all got away."[93]

The Highland community was also recognised by those who were not a part of it. An English and an Irish soldier used Scots dialect in their writing to distinguish Scottish soldiers.[94] One Scottish soldier wrote about how he was duped out of his bounty by soldiers in his regiment claiming to be

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90 Harvie 119.
91 Stewart 218.
92 Howell 111.
93 Forty-Second 114.
94 Harris 122; Ross-Lewin 47.

Highlanders, and about a Sergeant who found it easier to recruit Glaswegians because he was also from Glasgow.[95]

This sense of community was solidified by the distinctiveness of the community from the 'other'. This distinction made between the 'other' and the community of Scottish soldiers appeared clearly in two anecdotes written by a Scottish soldier. The first story was about a new Highlander recruit who had coffee for the first time:

> When he [the Highlander] came for his allowance of coffee, which was now nearly done, the cook was skimming it off the top very carefully, to avoid stirring up the grounds. Donald, who thought this a scheme to keep all the good part to himself, exclaimed, 'Tam your plod! will you'll no gie some o' the sik as well as the sin?' 'Oh, certainly,' said the cook, (who was a bit of a wag,) and stirring the grounds well up, he gave him a double proportion. Donald came in, chuckling with satisfaction at having detected the knavery of the cook, saying, 'If she'll socht to sheat a Highlandman, she'll be far mistook;' and seeing the rest of his comrades breaking bread in their coffee, he did the same: by this time the eye of every one in the tent was on him, scarcely able to refrain from laughing. Donald began to sup it with his spoon; but after taking two or three spoonfuls, grinding the coffee grounds between his teeth, and making wry faces, he threw the tin, contents and all, out of the tent door, exclaiming, 'Tam their coffee! you might as weel chow heather, and drink pog water as that teevil's stuff. Gi'e Donal a cog o' brochan before ony o' your tea or coffees either.'[96]

The other anecdote was about a general who did not like the Scottish:

> The general of the brigade was quartered in the same village; and as he had, or seemed to have, a great antipathy to every thing Scottish, our

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95 Donaldson 37, 84.

96 Donaldson 83.

> regiment of course was included, and he found means to annoy us a good deal. Perhaps, he believed, with many people in England, that the Scots run wild about their native hills, eating raw oats like horses, with nothing but a kilt to cover their nakedness, and that they had no right to receive any other treatment, when they entered the army , than what is usually given to any wild animal when caged.[97]

Ample evidence suggests, then, that a distinct Scottish identity, based on the invented Highland tradition, existed among Scottish soldiers in the Peninsula, and that this identity led to the formation of a sense of a community distinct from other British soldiers. This was also true for the Irish soldiers who served in the British army, who had their own distinct community, based on national characteristics and cultural difference. But the Welsh were not perceived as a distinct national community because they were included with the English and not seen as a culturally distinct region. Although the Irish and Scottish had their own distinct national identities, they also identified at times with being British, as I have indicated in the first two chapters. But as I have shown, their Britishness was not the dominant identity and it did not erase their regional differences. National identities were not the only identities the soldiers' developed, and as I will discuss in the next chapter, the soldiers also identified with their profession.

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[97] Donaldson 100.

Chapter 4

The Ever-Changing Chequered Course of a Soldier's Life

Edward Costello, an Irish Rifleman who served in the Peninsula, reflected on the life of a soldier: "Nothing more unsettles a man than the ever-changing chequered course of a soldier's life."[1] Another soldier similarly mused:

> What a chequered life is a soldier's on active service. One moment seeking the bubble reputation at the canon's mouth. The next courting some fair unknown damsel, sometimes scorched alive with heat, then almost frozen to death on some snowy mountain, at one time the inmate of a palace, then for months, the sky is his only covering. Hunting the enemy like a greyhound, and in return as often hunted by the enemy."[2]

According to the two men, the life of a soldier was very different than civilian life in the British Isles. They felt that their friends and family at home would never know what it was like to be a soldier, because soldiering was such a unique profession, and war a unique experience. Because of the unique experiences of soldiering, the men who served in the British army developed a sense of a professional identity.[3] Both officers and ranks defined themselves based on their profession and the community that developed from it, and they understood that their experience was shared only by their

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1 Edward Costello, The Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, ed. Antony Brett-James (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1967) 15.

2 William Wheeler, The Letters of Private Wheeler, 1809 - 1828, ed. Captain B. H. Liddell Hart (London: Michael Joseph, 1951) 97 - 98.

3 As I indicated in the Introduction, the British army had become a professional force in the early nineteenth century. Richard Glover calls it "the regeneration of the British Army" since their were improvements made in discipline, training, and staff: see chapters 5, 7 and 8 in Richard Glover, Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795 - 1809 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1963); Anthony Kellett also stresses the importance of professional drill and training in the early nineteenth-century British army: Anthony Kellett, Combat Motivation: The Behaviour of Soldiers in Battle (Boston: Kluwer, 1982) 79 - 80.

comrades in arms. Their identity as soldiers was therefore based on the personal and familial feeling towards the regiment, their shared experience of battle and the campaign, and their perceptions of what it meant to be a soldier.

The most obvious expression of a soldier's professional identity was his devotion to his regiment and its colours, for which he was taught to feel pride. While on the march, one soldier commented: "It was a glorious sight to see our colours spread in these fields. The men seemed invincible; nothing, I thought, could have beaten them."[4] The colours represented the regiment and, as John Keegan writes, served as "a rallying-point and source of inspiration."[5] During battle, it was imperative to defend the colours, as the loss of them meant the loss of the regiment's honour. This honour which was developed from the history and the reputation of the regiment was tied to the identity of the soldier. The loss of the regiment's honour meant the loss of the individual's honour.[6] A soldier, therefore, developed a strong

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[4] John Harris, Recollections of Rifleman Harris as Told by Henry Curling, ed. Christopher Hibbert (London: Leo Cooper, 1970) 48.

[5] John Keegan, The Face of Battle (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1976) 187.

[6] One soldier was arrested for desertion and theft, and was made to walk under the 'Honourable Colours' to cleanse him of his guilt: Wheeler 41; Another soldier was offered marriage from a wealthy Spanish woman but he wrote that he could not go through with the marriage because he did not want to change his religion or desert his colours: Harris 47; Two soldiers from the 42nd Regiment wrote about occasions when their regiment was rallied and inspired by references to their past campaign in Egypt, and another soldier who was left behind when his regiment first sailed off, felt some remorse from "being prevented sharing in the glory," and therefore taking part in his regiment's history: The Personal Narrative of a Private Soldier in the Forty-Second Highlanders for Twelve Years During the Late War (London, 1821) 3, 83; James Hope, The Military Memoirs of an Infantry Officer, 1809 - 1816 (Edinburgh, 1833) 36; Also see E. W. Sheppard, Red Coat: An Anthology of the British Soldier During the Last Three Hundred Years (London: The Batchworth Press, 1952)180; Edward Coss argues that the British soldier developed a feeling of self-worth from his membership in a regiment: Edward J. Coss, "Ordeal by Fire: The Combat Behaviour of the British Soldier under Wellington," The Consortium on Revolutionary Europe, 1750 - 1850 Proceedings, 1989, ed. Donald D. Horward and John C. Horgan (Tallahassee, Fla: Institute on Napoleon and the French Revolution, Florida State University, 1990) 683 - 685.

sense of pride and attachment to his regiment as the regiment became an extension of himself. Both ranks and officers used phrases to describe their regiments, such as "there is none other that I like so much," "the 88th was a more really efficient regiment than almost any two corps in the 3rd Division," "the finest troops in the world" or "the regiment to make soldiers."[7]

It is most likely that the soldiers were "infused with a solid sense of identification with the regiment" through army indoctrination.[8] The governing elements of the army desired this loyalty in order to create a disciplined and efficient fighting force. Regimental pride was therefore internalised by soldiers through what Myerly indicates as ceremonies and rituals or spectacle, or as Coss argues: "the psychological and socialising processes of assimilation into a new society, that of the British army, gave him [the soldier] new allegiances, purpose, identity, and often, for the first time in his life, a positive sense of worth."[9]

Many soldiers also felt that the regiment was like a family. As Michael Glover explains about the rank and file:

> Most of the men who enlisted were social outcasts before they joined, and the regiment took the place of the family. It gave them a sense of security and stability which they were most unlikely to find elsewhere. Even the worst of the 'fifty to one hundred bad characters' in every battalion could be

[7] William Grattan, Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, ed. Charles Oman (London: Edward Arnold, 1902) 127; J. Kincaid, Adventures in the Rifle Brigade in the Peninsula, France and the Netherlands, from 1809 to 1815, ed. Sir John Fortescue (London: Peter Davies Limited, 1929) 11; John Rous, A Guards Officer in the Peninsula: The Peninsula War Letters of John Rous, Coldstream Guards, 1812 - 1814, ed. Ian Fletcher (Tunbridge Wells: Spellmount Ltd., 1992) 49; George Simmons, A British Rifle Man, ed. Lieutenant-Colonel Willoughby Verner (London, 1899) 108.

[8] Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707 - 1837 (London: Pimlico, 1992) 316.

[9] Coss 681; also see Scott Hughes Myerly, British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1996).

> counted upon to defend the reputation of their regiment in anything from a public house brawl to a major action, even if their own brutality and drunkenness frequently besmirched that reputation when there was no fighting to be done. In all the squalid tales of crime in the General Orders of the peninsular army there is no court martial on a charge of cowardice against a man in the ranks.[10]

This familial feeling was evident in the writing of the soldiers. One officer referred to his men as "the boys," and two rank and file soldiers referred to their regiment as home.[11] Commanding officers who were caring and paternalistic were preferred over those who were harsh and unfeeling.[12] The regiment, like a family, was a place where many soldiers felt they belonged, and it became part of their own definition of themselves. As Coss explains: "the men were dependent upon the mutual support and reinforcement provided by this group."[13]

A soldier's professional identity, however, went beyond the family feeling of the regiment and attachment to the colours, and soldiers from every regiment developed a sense of a communal identity as soldiers.[14] This feeling of a soldiering community was conceived through the shared

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[10] Michael Glover, Wellington's Army (London: David & Charles, 1977) 73; Coss also agrees with this.

[11] Forty-Second 33 - 34; Grattan 123; William Lawrence, The Autobiography of Sergeant William Lawrence, A Hero of the Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, ed. George Nugent Banks (London, 1886) 125 - 126.

[12] As one soldier wrote about General Craufurd "who, though most strict in discipline, was averse to punishment, and was beloved by the men for his justice and care for them, as well as for his bravery": Costello 83.

[13] Coss 686.

[14] There was still some competition between regiments, friction among soldiers, and between the infantry and the cavalry. According to the writer of The Subaltern: "Perhaps I need not tell the reader, that between the infantry and cavalry in the British Army, a considerable degree of jealousy exists; the former description of force regarding the latter as little better than useless, the latter regarding the former as extremely vulgar and ungenteel": The Subaltern (Edinburgh, 1845) 110.

experience of battle, the communal effort involved in battle, and through the shared experience of the campaign. The soldiers spent years away from their homes, in a foreign country, and for many, only with their peers for company.

In a letter sent to his parents in 1812, one officer wrote: "You read of the horrors of war, you little know what it means."[15] The officer was probably right, since Britain had not experienced war since 1745, a war that was confined to Scotland and the North of England.[16] His parents may not have understood "the horrors of war" the same way he did. He was immersed in war along with his fellow soldiers, who day after day endured the long marches, camp, the smoke and the noise of battle, and the gruesomeness of death. For Britons, war was limited to the soldiers (and sailors) who fought it, and it was the shared experience of war that defined the profession. Many soldiers, then, developed a professional identity based on their shared experience of war. Despite the differences that existed among soldiers, such as the national differences discussed in the previous chapter, the soldiers still felt what Benedict Anderson calls a "horizontal comradeship"[17] or an understanding that what they experienced was shared by every other soldier in the army.

Part of this shared experience came from what one officer called "a familiar[ity] with death."[18] Soldiers were surrounded with death in battle as

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15 George Hennell, A Gentleman Volunteer: The Letters of George Hennell from the Peninsular War, 1812 - 1813, ed. Michael Glover (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1979) 14.

16 Clive Emsley, British Society and the French Wars, 1793 - 1815 (London: The MacMillan Press, 1979) 11.

17 Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London: Verso, 1991) 7.

18 Subaltern 62.

well as from disease, starvation or fatigue, and it was understood to be a predominant aspect of their profession. One officer wrote:

> But you become so familiarized with death, after you have spent a few months amid such scenes as I had lately witnessed, that the thought of death loses most of its terrors, and is considered only as a blank in the lottery of which you may have purchased a ticket. It may come; and if so, why, there is no help for it; but you may escape, and then there are now new scenes to be witnessed, and new adventures to be encountered.[19]

The same officer also explained how soldiers were hardened by the frequency of death so that it no longer emotionally moved them: "It must be confessed that soldiers think less of the dead than of the living. Each man, indeed, is (shall I own it?) too happy to find himself unscathed, to waste many fruitless expressions of sorrow upon those whose fate has been different."[20] Like other soldiers, he confessed that the sight of death no longer affected him.[21] This familiarity with death was shared by every soldier who witnessed death day to day, and it served as a unifying experience. As one soldier wrote: "We lived united, as men always are who are daily staring death in the face on the same side, and who, caring little about it, look upon each new day added to their lives as one more to rejoice in."[22]

But death was only one aspect of battle that soldiers endured. Battle was also perceived by the soldiers as an experience which only they knew. One soldier described his first battle as an initiation into the life of a soldier: "I

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19 Subaltern 62.

20 Subaltern 129.

21 Lawrence 22; John Aitchison, An Ensign in the Peninsular War: The Letters of John Aitchison, ed. W. F. K. Thompson (London: Michael Joseph, 1994) 57; Subaltern 168.

22 Kincaid 69; Also see Grattan 219 - 220.

had now smelled the enemy's powder, as the old soldiers boastingly exclaimed; I had heard his bullets whistling past my ears, seen them dropping harmless at my feet, and burrowing in the ground."[23] Another soldier referred to the common experience of battle when he spoke of his General: "We could speak to him, for he was a soldier; he had been in the midst of it with us, where every man did his duty."[24] The General was considered a soldier because he had endured battle with the rest of them. A communal feeling developed among soldiers because they all shared in the same experience of battle. This was not the case for all of the officers and ranks, and those who did not do their 'duty' were derided by the other soldiers and excluded from the community.[25]

The 'art of war' in the early nineteenth century consolidated this communal feeling among soldiers during battle. Armies fought in close formations where any deviation would expose them to their enemy (see figure 9). It was therefore necessary for soldiers to keep in close order and act as a collective, firing volleys of musket balls for maximum effect, and keeping a solid front against retaliation.[26] At the Battle of Vimeiro in 1808, one soldier described the arrangement of the soldiers on the battlefield:

> As I looked about me, whilst standing enranked, and just before the commencement of the battle, I thought it the most imposing sight the world could produce. Our lines glittering with bright arms; the stern features of the men, as they stood with their eyes fixed unalterably upon the enemy, the proud

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23 James Anton, Retrospect of a Military Life During the Most Eventful Periods of the Last War (Edinburgh, 1841) 76.

24 Forty-Second 261.

25 See Coss 687; Also see Harris' account below.

26 For excellent descriptions of the 'art of war' in the early nineteenth century see Keegan chapter 3, and Philip J. Haythornthwaite, The Napoleonic Sourcebbok (London: Arms and Armour, 1995) chapter 2.

> colours of England floating over the heads of the different battalions, and the dark cannon on the rising ground, and all in readiness to commence the awful work of death, with a noise that would deafen the whole multitude.[27]

At the same battle, another soldier explained how he looked along the line of his fellow troops and how their close formation and steadiness "assured [his] heart and gave [him] determination."[28]

Any deviation from the formation upset the line or the column. Therefore the success of the unit depended on each soldier's steadiness and discipline within the formation. Men who did not stay in formation were often scorned by their comrades because their deviation would threaten the entire collectivity. One soldier explained how "a front-rank man" tried to hold back while the company advanced. He was angered by what he called the man's "want of courage": "I was a rear-rank man, and porting my piece, in the excitement of the moment I swore that if he did not keep his ground, I would shoot him dead on the spot"[29] The soldier added that, because of the man's "cowardice in the field," "such was the contempt the man was held in by the Rifles, that he was soon afterwards removed from amongst us to a veteran battalion."[30] In battle, most soldiers understood that the lives of their comrades depended on their remaining in formation.[31]

The collective nature of the early nineteenth-century army also made the soldiers feel that they were only small parts of a larger entity, and that

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[27] Harris 26.

[28] Thomas Howell, A Soldier of the Seventy-First: The Journal of a Soldier of the Highland Light Infantry, 1806 - 1815, ed. Christopher Hibbert (London: Leo Cooper, 1975) 18.

[29] Harris 9.

[30] Harris 9.

[31] Coss explains that a soldier lost status and respect if he did not fulfil the group's expectations: Coss 685.

each of them was necessary for the success of that entity. One soldier compared his profession to a "piece of machinery in the hands of his superiors;" another felt like he was "an atom of the army," and his life "only counted in the gross with hundreds."[32] A soldier was compared to a machine who was unable to think or act for himself, and he followed orders to insure the success of the whole.[33] These feelings of being part of a larger entity reinforced the soldiers' identification with their profession. Not only were they trained to act as a collective whole, but they also felt a part of it and understood that every other soldier shared the same experience.

The communal feeling shared by soldiers stemmed not only from the common experience of battle, but also from the long arduous campaigning that was involved between battles. The British army campaigned in the Iberian Peninsula and France for approximately six years, enduring long marches, harsh weather, lack of rations and proper clothing, disease, and fatigue.[34] These hardships were perceived as part of the profession, shared by every soldier.

The army ran into problems with pay, rations and equipment during the campaign, which made the soldiers' lives extremely difficult. The wage for a rank and file soldier was small compared to the average British artisan. In 1806, the weekly wage for a soldier from the ranks who had served for less than seven years was 7s. 7d., while an artisan was paid 28s. Ranks were paid three or four times less than members of the British lower classes.[35] Out of

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[32] Joseph Donaldson, Recollections of the Eventful Life of a Soldier (Edinburgh, 1847) 47; Howell 50.

[33] Kincaid 35; Subaltern 21, 44 - 45.

[34] For an excellent source on the life of a soldier during the Peninsular War see Antony Brett-James, Life in Wellington's Army (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972).

[35] R. Glover 221.

his wage came sixpence a day for rations, payment for laundry, boot repair, and the replacement of lost clothing and equipment.[36] Payment was not always on time, and many soldiers, including the officers, were owed wages that were weeks or months late.[37]

The commissariat was also late or short on providing rations for the soldiers.[38] According to one soldier, on one occasion he received his food ration after a three day wait, and an officer complained that the ration was not enough to satisfy his hunger.[39] Roberts' poem about Johnny Newcombe also revealed the problems the army had with the food rations:

> Tho' Teague's report at first made John look glum -
> ' 'Tis only half allowance, and no rum.'
> 'O damn those commissaries! what a disaster,
> 'They've brought us down, you see, to lath and plaster.
> 'But, 'vive la guerre', 'tis useless to repine.[40]

When a decent meal was available it was very appreciated, and as one officer wrote: "you in England have no idea of the enjoyment of a good tea with a chop or steak in our fingers sitting on the ground on a fine morning after a rainy night."[41] Because of the hardship he had endured on campaign, he felt that he appreciated things that his family may have taken for granted.

A new pair of boots would have also been appreciated by many soldiers, because as the campaign continued on, the boots and clothing of the soldiers wore thin. A cavalry officer wrote about how his company's helmets

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36 Michael Glover, Wellington's Army (London: David & Charles, 1977) 26 - 27.

37 Bragge wrote about this: William Bragge, Peninsular Portrait, 1811 - 1814: The Letters of Captain William Bragge, Third (King's Own) Dragoons, ed. S. A. C. Cassels (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1963) 61.

38 M. Glover, Wellington's Army 66.

39 Kincaid 8; Wheeler 53.

40 David Roberts, The Military Adventures of Johnny Newcome (London, 1815) 63.

41 Hennell 59.

had deteriorated, and how happy he was when new ones arrived.[42] Uniforms were worn through and soldiers' jackets and trousers were often patched with different coloured material. Some men removed jackets from dead Frenchmen. As one soldier stated: "It was difficult to tell to what regiment we belonged, for each man's coat was like Joseph's 'a coat of many colours.'"[43] Wellington was observed asking an officer what regiment he belonged to "for there was scarcely a vestige of uniform among the men."[44] The soldiers' uniforms were vastly different on campaign than those brightly coloured uniforms that may have enticed them to enlist, and the soldiers suffered due to the lack of warm clothing and proper boots.

These hardships constituted what the soldiers believed to be part of their profession. Almost every soldier, both officers and ranks, suffered from these setbacks, and the soldiers understood this and felt that what they endured was endured by every other soldier in the army. They identified adversity with the life of a soldier, and accepted it as part of their profession. What they suffered, however, was also considered unique to their profession, and many soldiers felt that because their family and friends back in the British Isles did not endure the same misfortunes that soldiers did, they were therefore unaware of what the life of a soldier entailed. As one officer proclaimed to his father after several years of being on campaign:

> My ideas of the world since I became a soldier are quite changed. Campaigning has inured me to hardship, and it is quite immaterial to me whether I roll myself in my blanket and sleep upon the ground or anywhere else. There was a time when

42 William Tomkinson, The Diary of a Cavalry Officer in the Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, 1809 - 1815, ed. James Tomkinson (London, 1894) 40.

43 Wheeler 74; Also see Brett-James, Life in Wellington's Army chapter 5 "Threadbare and Patched"; and Harris 28 - 29.

44 Kincaid 87.

> wet clothes would have frightened me. Here I have been wet through for weeks and slept in the fields in winter, sometimes without a cloak, enjoyed health, and been happy and proud of my situation.[45]

Even raw recruits, who did not experience the long arduous campaign in the Peninsula, were not considered by the Peninsular veterans to be part of their soldiering community until they had 'truly' experienced war. One soldier complained about the lack of reward for the Peninsular veterans' services in the Peninsula, and how men who served only at Waterloo were rewarded with medals:

> How must the heart of those thus distinguished beat at the possession of such a mark. How different is the case of the British soldier! This 'hope' in his country remains unnoticed, and he quits its service 'equally forlorn' for obscurity without distinction, save that which points him out with his empty sleeves or wooden stump limping his way to Chelsea. Some, perhaps, may argue that an improvement took place at Waterloo. That may be, if we allude to those who on that occasion performed their first and last military feat, and came away unscathed. How 'pleasant' then must it be to the old Peninsulars, whose battles fought and won outnumber perhaps the men of their company, to see whole squads of Waterloos strutting about with medals dangling on jackets which, as their first and last, had scarcely been on long enough to collect the dust of a 'donkey's trot'.[46]

The soldier felt that the 'Waterloos' were undeserving of their medals, because unlike the Peninsular veterans, they had not endured the life of a 'true' soldier.

One officer wrote to his parents about the hardships of a 'true' soldier's

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45 Simmons 269.

46 Costello 134.

life, and how it was a life they could never understand: "In England you little know the hardships a soldier endures in this country."[47] Another officer wrote about "amateurs", British civilians who came to the battlefield to observe war as a spectator sport. The officer derided them because they attempted to experience danger without endangering themselves, and therefore tried to understand the experience of soldiering without becoming soldiers:

> Amateurs, as they are called in the field, are a description of animal voted a great bore by real soldiers. They consisted of idle gentlemen who must needs try to show their pluck by poking their noses into danger in action (where they had no business to be), till it became too serious to be pleasant, when they immediately decamped, and became objects of derision. They had failed to ascertain the extent of their nerves.[48]

Unlike the "amateurs", a 'true' soldier was considered to be one who endured the hardship with all of the others. This included officers like General Craufurd who was described by one soldier as "the very picture of a warrior" and "in everything a soldier" because "he took equal shares in the toils which they [the men] were enduring."[49] One officer also described how every morning he and some of his men would have to go to their posts: "scrambling up a hill of mud and standing shivering for a couple of hours in the dark and wet was exceedingly uncomfortable, but I don't remember to have heard one single murmur; we all saw the necessity of such a line of conduct, and we obeyed it with cheerfulness."[50] Despite the discomfort, the

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47 Simmons 267.

48 Sir Thomas Brotherton, A Hawk at War: The Peninsular War Reminiscences of General Sir Thomas Brotherton, ed. Bryan Perrett (Chippenham: Picton Publishing Ltd., 1986) 28.

49 Harris 93, 102.

50 Grattan 49.

soldiers accepted their task, without complaint, as an aspect of their profession.

Of course not all soldiers accepted their tasks. As I indicated in the first chapter, men deserted. This in itself shows that the comradeship and professional esprit de corps was not ubiquitous, but to many soldiers, the ideal soldier was one who did not complain about the difficulties encountered during the campaign, and who was able to face danger with courage and determination.[51] These ideal characteristics determined who was a 'good' soldier, and many men tried to fulfil this role, identifying with these characteristics as the true characteristics of a soldier.

One officer commented about the character of the soldiers at the siege of Badajoz: "To stand before such a storm of fire, much less endeavour to overcome a barrier so impregnable, required men whose minds, as well as frames, were cast in a mould not human."[52] Like this officer, many officers and ranks felt that soldiers had to possess an almost inhuman amount of bravery in order to survive the campaign and to insure British victory and success. Soldiers would often comment on the bravery of their companions or commanding officers, and they indicated that bravery was the most important attribute for the ideal soldier.[53] One soldier wrote about how a

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51 Even Andrew Pearson, who deserted from the army wrote: "I could not but feel proud of having served under such excellent commanders from first to last, and done some little to save my country from the tyranny of a foreign foe": Andrew Pearson, The Soldier Who Walked Away: Autobiography of Andrew Pearson, a Peninsular War Veteran, ed. Arthur H. Haley (London: Bullfinch Publication, 1987) 121.

52 Grattan 202 - 203.

53 Charles Boothby, A Prisoner of France: The Memoirs, Diary and Correspondence of Charles Boothby, Captain Royal Engineers, During His Last Campaign (London, 1898) 190 - 191; Costello 3, 38; Sir William Maynard Gomm, Letters and Journals of Field-Marshal Sir William Maynard Gomm, ed. Francis Culling Carr-Gomm (London, 1881) 251; Grattan 97; Harris 9, 85; Kincaid 104; Tomkinson 44; Sir William Warre, Letters from the Peninsula, 1808 - 1812 (London: John Murray, 1909) 27, 225.

French soldier was cheered by the British for his display of bravery while his English opponent was perceived as a disgrace to his regiment:

> One of their [French] videttes, after being posted facing an English Dragoon, of the 14th or 16th . . . displayed an instance of individual gallantry, in which the French, to do them justice, were seldom wanting. Waving his long straight sword, the Frenchman rode within sixty yards of our Dragoon, and challenged him to single combat. We immediately expected to see our cavalry man engage his opponent, sword in hand. Instead of this, however, he unslung his carbine and fired at the Frenchman, who, not a whit dismayed, shouted out so that every one could hear him, 'Venez avec le sabre: Je suis prêt pour Napoléon et la belle France.' Having vainly endeavoured to induce the Englishman to a personal conflict, and after having endured two or three shots from his carbine, the Frenchman rode proudly back to his ground, cheered even by our own men. We were much amused by his gallantry, while we hissed our own Dragoon, who, it was afterwards stated, for the credit of the gallant regiment he belonged to, was a *recruit*.[54]

The perception of the courageous, ideal soldier derived from late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century notions of masculinity which I discussed in the second chapter. The ideal soldier possessed the manly qualities of bravery, as well as athleticism, physical and moral toughness and stoicism.[55] This was how one soldier described his comrade: ". . . as I have said, [he] was a strong, active, and resolute fellow as indeed I had, on more occasions than one, witnessed in Portugal."[56] Toughness, courage and stoicism were also important to one officer who had to face the amputation of

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54 Costello 66 - 67.

55 See Mosse and Roper and Tosh.

56 Harris 94.

his leg with "a manly resolution," and to the officer who explained: "I speak of British infantry, among whom no swerving takes place, each individual being well aware that his greatest safety depends on his manfully facing and strenuously opposing the foe."[57]

Soldiers who did not possess these manly attributes were considered unfit to be soldiers. One such soldier was described by an officer: "Poor Cavendish was very different from many others. He was a perfect gentleman in every respect, but he had the misfortune to have been brought up in the 'lap of luxury,' a misfortune for any man, but an irreparable one for a soldier. He was perfectly helpless, he could do nothing for himself."[58] Another soldier described the 'effeminate' actions of an officer while crossing a river, and his commanding officer's reaction:

> Presently he [General Craufurd] spied an officer who, to save himself from being wet through, I suppose, and wearing a damp pair of breeches for the remainder of the day, had mounted on the back of one of his men. The sight of such a piece of effeminacy was enough to raise the choler of the General, and in a very short time he was plunging and splashing through the water after them both.[59]

The officer's actions were considered 'effeminate' because they contradicted the imagined masculine ideal of the brave and heroic soldier.[60] Based on his actions, the officer represented the type of officer who would have been

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57 Robert Blakeney, A Boy in the Peninsular War, ed. Julian Sturgis (London, 1899) 60; Boothby 14.

58 William Verner, Reminiscences of William Verner (1782 - 1871), ed. Ruth W. Verner (London: Gale & Polden, Ltd., 1965) 21 - 22.

59 Harris 92.

60 See Michael Roper and John Tosh eds., Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800 (London: Routledge, 1989) 14 -1 5; Graham Dawson, "The Blond Bedouin: Lawrence of Arabia, Imperial Adventure and the Imagining of English-British Masculinity" Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800 Michael Roper and John Tosh editors (London: Routledge, 1991) 119.

excluded from the soldiering community.

Because of the importance of manliness to the identity of the British soldier, women were excluded from the soldiering community. Yet there were many women who accompanied the Peninsular army, including wives and camp followers. Six wives out of every hundred men were permitted to accompany their husbands to the Peninsula, and the army was also followed by Spanish and Portuguese women who did domestic work for the army.[61] Although women did not fight in the war, they still experienced many of the same hardships as the soldiers. They marched and camped with the army, sometimes astonishing the soldiers with their display of endurance:

> At half-past six the brigade was in motion, and I scarcely remember a more disagreeable day; the rain which had fallen in the morning was succeeded by snow and sleet, and some soldiers, who sunk from cold and fatigue, fell down exhausted, soon became insensible, and perished; yet, strange to say, an Irishwoman of my regiment was delivered of a child upon the road, and continued the march with her infant in her arms.[62]

On some occasions women also experienced battle. One woman was observed carrying her husband's pack in the midst of battle; others were attacked by the French while taking refuge in a barn; another group of women was captured by the French cavalry, and another woman was struck by cannon fire while in camp.[63] Women were also subject to martial law as they often took part in their husbands' plundering and drunkenness, and were

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[61] M. Glover, Wellington's Army 26; Subaltern 5 - 11; In 1813, an estimated 700 Portuguese and 400 Spanish women as well as 4,500 British wives accompanied the army: M. Glover, Wellington's Army 159 - 160; See F. C. G. Page, Following the Drum: Women in Wellington's Wars (London: André Deutsch Ltd., 1986), for interesting anecdotes about women and the war.

[62] Grattan 134 - 135.

[63] John Spencer Cooper, Seven Campaigns, 2nd edition (Carlisle: G & T Coward Ltd., 1914) 55 - 56; Harris 62 - 64; Wheeler 99, 103.

punished in the same manner as the men.[64]

Despite the fact that women shared the same experiences as the soldiers, most soldiers felt that war was a male arena. Because women did not fight the battles and because they were women, they were not considered to be part of the community of soldiers; soldiering was considered to be reserved for men.[65] The professional identity formed by the British soldiers was a masculine identity.

The physical appearance of the soldier also formed part of this masculine identity.[66] One officer described General Picton's appearance: "his appearance denoted him as a man of strong mind and strong frame."[67] Another officer was referred to as "handsome," and "brave and adventurous" by one of his men.[68] But although physical appearance was an important part of the masculine stereotype in the early nineteenth century, other soldiers were described as being ugly but brave and therefore manly. One soldier wrote about his officer: "He was never a very good-looking man, being hard-featured and thin; a hatchet-faced man, as we used to say. But he was a regular good 'un - a real English soldier; and that's better than if he had been the handsomest ladies'-man in the army."[69] In war, courage seemed to matter more than appearance.

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64 Cooper described how one woman was flogged for stealing: Cooper 105; Wheeler wrote about how a group of women joined the men in a bout of drinking and smoking: Wheeler 140; In a letter to the Marchioness of Salisbury, Wellington defended the use of corporal punishment on women who followed the army: Antony Brett-James ed., Wellington at War (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1961) 163 - 164.

65 See Harris 88; The writer of The Subaltern wrote that war "unsexes women: Subaltern 81; Wheeler 141.

66 See George Mosse, The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996).

67 Grattan 16.

68 Cooper 10 - 11.

69 Harris 31.

Stoicism, another aspect of manliness, was also important in war. Soldiers had to remain steady during battle and not allow their emotions to get the better of them. This was not always the case outside of battle, and many soldiers displayed their emotions freely in their writing. These displays of emotion went against the masculine stereotype of stoicism, but the soldiers were much influenced by the romantic period which emphasised the expression of individual emotion. To many soldiers, the expressions of sorrow and regret were natural. As one officer wrote: "The soldier who pretends that he never felt fear is a humbug not to be believed. It is his duty to conceal his feelings as much as possible, however. But there are situations in war so trying to the nerves that the stoutest must feel appalled."[70]

Many soldiers wrote freely about their sorrow, regret, and longing for home.[71] One officer wrote about the death of his friend Stuart during the Battle of Vimiero: "It appears odd to weep in the midst of an action, but I was so shocked by the friendly shake of the hand about two hours before, (when our Brigade parted from them with Genl. Bowes to turn the enemy's flank), and his dying in great pain, exclaiming to his officers to see that his young regt. did their duty, that the tears ran down my face like a child's."[72] The officer explained that after this incident he spent the evening "contemplating all the miseries and tortures war can inflict on human nature in all shapes."[73] Another officer who had lost his leg and was a prisoner of the French wrote about his feelings when he read letters from home: "My tears fell in greater

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[70] Brotherton 13 - 14.

[71] For some good examples of the soldiers' expression of their emotions see: Brotherton 13 - 14; Cooper 45; Donaldson 52 - 56; Wheeler 133 - 134.

[72] Warre 34.

[73] Warre 34.

abundance. . . These letters made me feel again of some importance in the world, and seemed to establish the reality of my fond connection with it. My tears ceased not to flow."[74] A soldier who did not feel sorrow for the loss of his companions was considered abnormal and, as one officer wrote, unsoldierlike:

> No truly brave man ever looked upon the graves of his fallen companions without a feeling of regret. A man falling in the heat of battle is quite a different thing, because there all are alike, and subject to the same chance; and it is, moreover, wrong to mourn over the death of a comrade while the strife is going on; but the strife once ended, then will the feelings be brought into play, and the man who is incapable of a pang of regret for his fallen companion is unworthy of the name of a British soldier.[75]

Many soldiers (primarily the ranks) were considered 'unworthy of the name of a British soldier' by Wellington, not because of their lack of emotion but because they had different ideas of what it meant to be a soldier. This is not to say that they did not believe in courage, steadiness and unity in battle, and success through communal effort and determination, but these soldiers felt that because they were at war in a foreign country they were allowed to take some liberties, plundering from both the enemy and from the people they were defending.

Plundering was very common among the rank and file in the Peninsular army. The memoirs, letters and diaries of the soldiers contained many examples of British soldiers stealing from the dead or captive

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[74] Boothby 136 - 137.
[75] Grattan 225.

Frenchmen (see figure 9).[76] The expectation of plunder from a defeated enemy was so common that it became a ritual among soldiers as indicated by one soldier who wrote during a skirmish with the French:

> It was during the preceding skirmish that, for the first time, I heard the words that afterwards became so common in our regiment, 'kill a Frenchman for yourself.' Its origin was as follows: two men of known daring, named Palmer and Tracey, during our approach to the bridge, seeing a French sergeant fall, ran up to claim the meed of conquest, by relieving him of any valuables he might be possessed of. They were quarrelling as to the appropriation of the spoil, when Palmer, who was a known excellent shot, told Tracey to go 'and kill a Frenchman for himself,' as he had shot this man. This circumstance afterwards gave birth to a little gasconade in the regiment, that every Rifleman could and ought to kill a Frenchman in action.[77]

Plundering was not restricted to the enemy, and many British soldiers plundered the Spanish and Portuguese countryside mainly for food because rations were often in short supply.[78] One officer wrote about how he and the soldiers took what they wanted from the Spanish and the Portuguese: "We certainly lived in clover while we remained there: everything we saw was our own, seeing no one who had a more legitimate claim; and every field was a vineyard."[79] Stealing from the Spanish and Portuguese was illegal in the army, however, and harsh disciplinary measures, including corporal and capital punishment, were taken to prevent theft.[80]

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76 Examples of this can be found in Grattan 80; Howell 54 - 55; Lawrence 134 (who actually loots a wounded Frenchman); Wheeler 119.

77 Costello 50 - 51.

78 For examples see Cooper 13; Grattan 72; Wheeler 143.

79 Kincaid 21.

80 For examples see Cooper 40, 48; Grattan 124; Hennell 95; Lawrence 81; For other information on discipline and punishment see chapter 7 in R. Glover and chapter 14 in C. W. C. Oman, Wellington's Army, 1809 - 1814 (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1913).

Perhaps the two worst excesses of plundering by the British army were during the captures of Cuidad Rodrigo and Badajoz in 1812. On both occasions, the British soldiers (primarily the ranks) burst into the town, taking whatever they pleased without anyone able to stop them.[81] One officer described the chaotic scene:

> The infuriated soldiery resembled rather a pack of hell-hounds vomited up from the infernal regions for the extirpation of mankind than what they were but twelve short hours previously - a well-organised, brave, disciplined and obedient British army, and burning only with impatience for what is called glory. . . We did not interfere with the plundering; it would have been useless.[82]

Part of the reason that the British ranks were so uncontrollable at Cuidad Rodrigo and Badajoz was because they had broken open the casks of wine and drank themselves into a state of "drunkenness and debauchery."[83] For many of them, drink was part of the soldier's life. Not only were they given a ration of rum each day, and before battle, but when given the opportunity they drank to excess like at Cuidad Rodrigo and Badajoz, and during many other times throughout the campaign.[84] Although drunkenness was unacceptable in the army, to many of the rank and file, drink became an important part of a soldier's identity.[85] Not all of the ranks participated in this aspect of the soldiering community, and some disapproved of drink, and these men sometimes found it difficult to fit in.

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81 For descriptions of the scenes see Grattan 158 - 159, 208 - 211; Gomm 247 - 248; Hennell 18 - 19; Kincaid 83 - 84, 101 - 102; Lawrence 116 - 117; Tomkinson 145 - 147.

82 Blakeney 274 - 275.

83 Lawrence 116.

84 See Blakeney 53, 55; Cooper 67; Costello 98; Lawrence 104; Wheeler 106.

85 Coss explains that drunkenness was unacceptable only if it negatively affected the group, such as drunkenness on the battlefield: Coss 688.

Similarly, if a soldier was from a good background or good education he had to hide that fact in order to be accepted among his peers. Some soldiers who were well educated or who did not drink had to 'lower themselves':

> There were few of those with whom I could associate, that had an idea beyond the situation they were in: those who had were afraid to shew they possessed any more knowledge than their comrades, for fear of being laughed at by fellows who, in other circumstances, they would have despised. If a man ventured to speak in a style more refined than the herd around him, he was told that 'every one did not read the dictionar' like him;' or, 'dinna be gi'en us any o' your grammar words na.' If he did not join with his neighbours in their ribald obscenity and nonsense, he was a Methodist, - if he did not curse and swear, he was a Quaker - and if he did not drink the most of his pay, he was called a miser, a mean scrub, and the generality of his comrades would join in execrating him. . . Thus, many men of ability and information were, I may say, forced from the intellectual height which they had attained, down to the level of those with whom they were obliged to associate; and every thing conspired to sink them to that point where they became best fitted for tractable beasts of burden.[86]

This might indicate that there were some men who were excluded from the community of the rank and file because of their social upbringing. This may have been the case, but if a soldier demonstrated the other virtues of soldiering, such as courage and steadiness, or if he endured the hardship with the rest of them then he was still included in the soldiering community. One officer explained how a rank soldier constantly bragged about his ancestors

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86 Donaldson 44-45; Other soldiers felt the same way: See Forty-Second 9 - 11; Howell xiii; the officer Blakeney also describes how he had to put up with the "rough jokes and loud repartees" of the ranks: Blakeney 72.

and how he was socially superior to his comrades. This bragging annoyed the rest of the ranks in his regiment, but what annoyed them more was also his lack of bravery in battle. As one of the soldiers remarked:

> 'Arrah! Sure it's no use,' cried out another, 'to be loosing your talk with a dancing-masther like him. Wasn't he squeezed up behind a tree, like the back of an ould Cramona fiddle, while I was bothering three Johnny Craps, when they were running down screaming like plebeens to charge the bridge? And, after all that, I'll engage with his rotten ould ancisthors that when we goes home he'll have a bether pinshun than me, or be made a sergeant by some fine curnil that always stays at home and knows nothing at all about a good soldier.'[87]

If a soldier had difficulty assimilating into the community of the rank and file because of his social upbringing or his aversion to drink, he would be able to redeem himself through his actions in battle. Despite these exceptions, however, most of the rank and file in the army considered drink to be part of the soldiering community. The Duke of Wellington, therefore, seemed to have his reasons for calling the British ranks "the scum of the Earth."[88] Plundering, drunkenness, as well as desertion and murder were very common among the rank and file. Many of the men came from the worst classes of society, like the criminals who enlisted for their freedom.[89]

This was different among the officers in the army. Officers came from every social class of society but primarily from the middle and upper classes.

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87 Blakeney 74.

88 But as Wellington indicated: "It is only wonderful that we should be able to make so much out of them afterwards": Philip Henry 5th Earl Stanhope, Notes on Conversations with the Duke of Wellington (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1888) 13-14.

89 Geoffrey Best, War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1770 - 1870 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill - Queen's UP, 1998)148; Emsley 12; M. Glover Wellington's Army 24; Richard Glover, Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795 - 1809 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1963)175; The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army, ed. David Chandler (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994) 142 - 143.

Wealth, however, was not the most important prerequisite to become an officer. The purchase of commissions had declined by the time of the Peninsular War, and men also earned commissions through merit, recruiting or brevet.[90] The only prerequisite for an officer was literacy which was usually predominant only among the middle and upper classes due to the cost of education.[91] Despite the variation of classes among the officers, there was still a community formed among the officers that was separate from the ranks.[92]

Almost every officer was considered a gentleman, and was expected to behave like a gentleman, an idea originally carried into the army by the British ruling classes.[93] This gentlemanly ideal set the officers off from the ranks, and included the previously discussed ideas of manliness which promoted men's social power. Officers also participated in their own gentlemanly activities, based on the leisure activities of the wealthy, such as horse-racing, fox hunting, dancing, and the decoration of their uniforms for

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90 There were four methods in the army of rising in rank:1. Promotion to fill a vacancy without paying purchase price; 2. 'Recruiting for rank' which only occured during wartime when the army expanded, where commissions were given to those men who raised the recruits; 3. Promotion by 'brevet' or mass promotion of a number of officers at once; 4. Purchase - A retiring officer received money from his successor. Therefore the British people didn't have to pay taxes to provide pensions for retired officers and commissions could be sold so younger officers were brought forward. Commissions were like property and were protection against the purging of the army. One could not buy or sell a commission without permission from the Commander - in - Chief: R. Glover 144 -147; In 1809,five percent of the officers were raised from the ranks, four and a half per cent of officers were from the volunteers, and four percent were from the Royal Military College. Twenty percent of new officers were from the Militia. Purchase was a major factor in the cavalry and the foot guards. Out of the 140 peers with commissions in 1809,36 were from the cavalry and 43 from the guards: M. Glover, Wellington's Army 38 - 44.

91 For more information on promotion see M. Glover, Wellington's Army 15 - 22, 36 - 44, 76; R. Glover 145 - 147; Hew Strachan, European Armies and the Conduct of War (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983) 55 - 56.

92 Officers were still included in the general soldiering community if they displayed courage and endurance, and shared the toils of their men.

93 Best 130; M. Glover Wellington's Army 37; Those officers who did not act like 'gentlemen' were not considered to be 'gentlemen.'

fashion.[94] Drink was also a favourite gentlemanly pastime among officers, and although they generally did not drink as excessively as the ranks, they still had too much on some occasions.[95] In Roberts' poem, Johnny Newcombe was told:

> Here's rum and segars;
> This is the way we carry on our wars.[96] (see figure 10)

The community of gentlemen extended beyond just the British officer class. As I discussed in the second chapter, the British soldiers generally had much respect for the French soldiers who were viewed as their social equals. This was very prominent among the British officers who identified with the French officers as fellow gentlemen and soldiers.[97] This was evident in one officer's words when he wrote:

> [Spanish] Women of the lowest grade insulted them [French prisoners], and some there were base enough to spit in their faces; yet the French soldiers bore all these insults with composed - I might say, with truth, - gentlemanly demeanour; but it is not possible for me to express the disgust I felt at seeing brave men so treated by a base rabble who, but a few hours before, were on the most friendly terms with these very men.[98]

Much of the officer's outrage was due to the lower social station of the Spanish women who had treated their social superiors in such a barbarous manner, and the duplicity of the women.

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94 Some of these activities were discussed by the soldiers. Grattan 50 - 52; Kincaid 113; Rous 61 - 62; Simmons 279; Subaltern 103; Also see Brett-James, Life in Wellington's Army; Two other officers referred to the Gentlemanly character of the officers. James P. Gairdner, Diaries of Lieutenant James P. Gairdner, 1811 - 1813 (National Army Museum London 6902 - 5): Nov., 1811; Ross-Lewin 145.

95 Blakeney 175; Hennell 128.

96 Roberts 64.

97 See Boothby; Grattan 27; Tomkinson 64.

98 Grattan 229.

This sort of opinion indicated a distinctive class feeling among the British officers, and within the British army more generally. Although officers were represented on both sides by members from different social classes, class distinctions were still made on the grounds of gentleman-like, noble, and honourable behaviour among the officers. It was a group which drew its values from the culture of the ruling elite, and which shared this cultural identity among men from different social classes. Because the French officers were also generally understood to be gentlemanly, noble, and honourable, they were included in the British officers' identification with their profession.[99] The British officers' professional identity was not limited to their nationality, but it also included their 'enemy.'

The feeling of a shared identity with the French officers was also apparent from the amicable relationship the British officers had with the French officers during the campaign. Although Wellington banned any form of 'fraternisation' with the enemy during the war, British officers continued to meet with their opponents on and off the battlefield.[100] One officer commented on this friendly relationship: "Generally, the skirmishing of the cavalry in the Peninsula used to be carried on in the most chivalrous manner, I had almost said amicable manner, sometimes even the officers of both parties shaking hands before commencing; and often have we drank a glass of wine together after the day's fight was over!"[101]

The officer was accurate in his description of the "chivalrous manner"

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99 Many officers perceived the French officers and the French army as a brave, noble, and honourable enemy; See chapter 2 and also Hennell 17 - 19; Kincaid 59, 124; Rous 53; Simmons 79; Subaltern 44; Tomkinson 64; Warre 25; William Webber, With Guns in the Peninsula: The Peninsula War Journal of 2nd Captain William Webber, Royal Artillery, ed. Richard Henry Wollocombe (London: Greenhill Books, 1991) 58.

100 Hennell 110; Kincaid 26; Subaltern 157 - 158.

101 Brotherton 35.

of combat, and this was true throughout the whole war. This is not to say that the war was entirely civil, as it was also very barbarous, but as Michael Glover writes: "The war fought between the British and the French varied between savage barbarity and civilised courtesy."[102] There were numerous occurrences when civil behaviour, a quality prized as gentlemanly, was demonstrated by the officers, such as the care and the peaceful exchange of prisoners.[103]

This civil behaviour, however, was not restricted to the officer class, and there were many similar incidents between the rank and file of both armies. During and after battle, wounded French soldiers were often cared for by the British soldiers (both officers and ranks) who shared their blankets, water, rum or food rations with the wounded, and sometimes helped them to hospitals.[104] These courtesies were returned by the French. Although this was a common occurrence during the war, as illustrated by one soldier's story, not every soldier showed the same compassion towards their wounded opponents:

> A French soldier was lying beside me at this time; he was badly wounded, and hearing him moan as he lay, after I had done looking at the cavalry, I turned my attention to him, and getting up, lifted his head, and poured some water into his mouth. He was dying fast; but he thanked me in a foreign language, which, although I did not exactly understand, I could easily make out by the look he gave me. Mullins, of the Rifles, who stepped up whilst I supported his head, d-d me for a fool for my pains. 'Better knock out his brains, Harris,' said

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102 M. Glover, Wellington's Army 174.

103 Boothby called it "civilised warfare": Boothby 45; also see Boothby 45 - 46, 57; Brotherton 26 - 27; John Ford, Journal and Notebook of Lieutenant John Ford, 79th (Cameron) Highlanders, 1809 - 14 (National Army Museum London 6807-71) 76; Kincaid 200 - 201; Lawrence 138 - 139; Warre 70.

104 Costello 49, 59, 126; Grattan 163 - 164; Lawrence 110; Warre 35; Wheeler 33.

> he; 'He has done us mischief enough, I'll be bound for it, to-day'.[105]

The 'civilised' behaviour among the soldiers extended further to a number of occasions when British soldiers spared their opponents instead of killing them or allowing them to die at the hands of the embittered Spanish and Portuguese.[106] One Rifleman explained the reason for the soldiers' civil and humane behaviour: "I am happy to say, that many of our men, knowing the sufferings of the French from what they had themselves endured, declined firing, while they called out to the others to spare them, as it was little better than murder."[107] Because the French army suffered through the same misfortunes as the British army, the British soldiers understood their suffering and therefore sympathised with them. The British army shared the same experiences of the war as the French, and to many British soldiers, their identity as soldiers was based on their shared experience of battle and the campaign. The imagined community of soldiers involved a "horizontal comradeship" and "simultaneity;" British soldiers, engaged with the French on the battlefield, knew that what they experienced was also experienced by their opponents.[108]

This cross-national professional identity further manifested itself in the friendly relationship that many British soldiers shared with their enemy. There were many instances when British and French ranks, like the officers, met before, during and after battles, had friendly conversations and shared

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[105] Harris 37.

[106] Three good examples of this behaviour include Cooper 22; Costello 49; Lawrence 160. On two occasions Lawrence and Costello both felt guilty for killing a Frenchman during battle: Costello 56; Lawrence 108 - 109.

[107] Costello 131.

[108] See Anderson 7, 24.

their food and drink.[109] French and British soldiers, especially sentries from opposing picquets, would often share in the soldierly pastime of drink, or meet in on neutral ground like in an apple orchard or house, "with as much unconcern as if they were belonging to the same service."[110] The British soldiers had a different opinion of the French than their countrymen in Britain. As I have shown in chapter two they had respect for their enemy, and as I have indicated in this chapter, because of the shared experience of war and also in the officers' case the shared class culture, the development of a professional identity among British soldiers also included their opponents. The British as well as the French were all included into the community of the martial profession.

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[109] Examples of this can be found in Anton 97 - 98; Costello 47 - 48, 109; Grattan 230 - 231; Harris 125 - 126; Lawrence 54, 70 - 71; Pearson 70; Wheeler 150.

[110] Wheeler 130; For other examples see Brotherton 60; Costello 42; Ford 37 - 38; Hennell 154; Subaltern 158.

Conclusion

Upon his return to Britain after the war, Rifleman John Harris

> marched to Chelsea to be disbanded, where we met thousands of soldiers lining the streets, and lounging about before the different public-houses, with every description of wound and casualty incident to modern warfare. There hobbled the maimed light-infantry man, the heavy dragoon, the hussar, the artillery-man, the fusileer, and the specimens from every regiment in the service. The Irishman, shouting and brandishing his crutch; the English soldier, reeling with drink; and the Scot, with grave and melancholy visage, sitting on the steps of the public-house amongst the crowd, listening to the skirl of his comrades' pipes, and thinking of the blue hills of his native land.[1]

Although the war was over, the soldiering community continued on the streets of Chelsea, the refuge for wounded and veteran soldiers who either lived as in-pensioners within the Royal Military Hospital or as out-pensioners.[2]

This was the community that I discussed in the last chapter. Although there were social and cultural divisions within the army between the officers and the ranks, and there was at times competition among regiments and departments of the army, and friction and dissent among the ranks, most soldiers felt that they belonged to a soldiering community. Both ranks and officers identified with this community based on their shared experiences of battle, campaigning, and the familial feeling of the regiment. These were experiences that they believed were not shared by the civilian population of

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[1] John Harris, Recollections of Rifleman Harris as Told by Henry Curling, ed. Christopher Hibbert (London: Leo Cooper, 1970) 124.

[2] See Joany Hichberger, "Old Soldiers," Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity vol. 3, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge, 1989); Hichberger discusses the famous painting by David Wilkie "Chelsea Pensioners receiving the London Gazette Extraordinary of Thursday June 22nd 1815 announcing the Battle of Waterloo."

the British Isles.

This feeling of inclusion in a soldiering community carried on after the war. Harris illustrates this in his description of Chelsea, but it is also evident from the lives of the soldiers. Many of the rank and file could not find work after the war, could not live on the meagre pension provided by the government, or found it difficult to assimilate back into civilian life.[3] Many officers also remained in the army after the war, or served as half-pay officers in local volunteer or militia corps. The children of others continued the military tradition by serving in the same regiment as their fathers.[4]

The soldiering community, however, was not the only distinction Harris drew in his sketch of Chelsea. Harris also highlighted the various nationalities who embodied the Peninsular army: the Irish soldier "shouting and brandishing his crutch" reflected the perception of the Irish as an emotional and aggressive 'race.' This understanding of the Irish was accepted by the Irish themselves, and was expressed in a strong sense of a national community among the Irish soldiers.

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[3] See Hichberger 51 - 52; Costello reenlisted because his pension wasn't enough to sustain him: Edward Costello, The Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, ed. Antony Brett-James (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1967) 14; Wheeler chose to remain in the army, and he was still a soldier when his letters ended in 1828: William Wheeler, The Letters of Private Wheeler, 1809 - 1828, ed. Captain B. H. Liddell Hart (London: Michael Joseph, 1951) 194 - 195.

[4] See William Tomkinson, The Diary of a Cavalry Officer in the Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns, 1809 - 1815, ed. James Tomkinson (London, 1894) viii; John Ford, Journal and Notebook of Lieutenant John Ford, 79th (Cameron) Highlanders, 1809 - 14 (National Army Museum London 6807-71); Rous' descendents still served in the Coldstream Guards as of 1992: John Rous, A Guards Officer in the Peninsula: The Peninsula War Letters of John Rous, Coldstream Guards, 1812 - 1814, ed. Ian Fletcher (Tunbridge Wells: Spellmount Ltd., 1992) 12; Warre retired from the army in 1851: Sir William Warre, Letters from the Peninsula, 1808 - 1812 (London: John Murray, 1909) xxiii; Simmons retired in 1845: George Simmons, A British Rifle Man, ed. Lieutenant-Colonel Willoughby Verner (London, 1899) 379; Swabey retired in 1825: William Swabey, Diary of Campaigns in the Peninsula, for the Years 1811, 12, and 13, ed. Colonel F. A. Whinyates (Woolwich, 1895) 2; Bragge retired in 1853: William Bragge, Peninsular Portrait, 1811 - 1814: The Letters of Captain William Bragge, Third (King's Own) Dragoons, ed. S. A. C. Cassels (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1963) 131.

Similarly, the Scot "with grave and melancholy visage. . .listening to the skirl of his comrades' pipes, and thinking of the blue hills of his native land," encompassed various perceived characteristics of the Scottish soldier. The Scots formed their own distinct national identity within the army based on cultural symbols such as the bagpipes, and national music. They believed they had their own distinct characteristics of a sentimentality for their 'native land,' and a strong connection to the physical geography of that land. Unlike the Irish, however, the Scots incorporated their cultural symbols into their regiments, such as the use of bagpipes and the wearing of the kilt.

Within the British army the Irish and Scots had their own strong sense of national identity. This was not true of the Welsh. Harris did not refer to the Welsh soldier in his description because the Welsh were not perceived as culturally distinct, despite the emergence of a Welsh nationalist movement in the early nineteenth century.

Harris portrayed the English soldier "reeling from drink," yet drink was a popular pastime among the rank and file (and to some extent the officers) of all nationalities in the army. Perhaps Harris used the Englishman to represent the entire rank and file of the army. It was a British army, under the command of the English government, so to Harris, English interests were equated with British interests because England was the dominant nation in the United Kingdom. Anglo-centric Britishness encompassed the entire army including those Scots and Irish soldiers.

Although it did not integrate or dominate the regional identities of the Irish and Scots, this Britishness was pervasive among the soldiers in the army. The soldiers identified themselves as British, "focus[ing] on what they

had in common, rather than on what divided them."[5] This commonality came about through a shared sense of pride in the strength and capability of the British army which proved itself during the Peninsular War. The soldiers felt that they defended the virtues and ideals of Britain, fighting for the 'noble cause' against France, the 'oppressors' of Europe. Although most soldiers did not enlist for these patriotic reasons, much of their patriotic feeling was influenced by army indoctrination and spectacle, and the 'horizontal comradeship' developed in the wartime experience was objectified as a national comradeship - an attachment to the nation.

Indoctrination, however, did not have the same effect on all of the soldiers' feelings of Britishness. Many of the soldiers expressed contempt for their allies, the Spanish and Portuguese. They viewed the Iberian people as socially and racially inferior, and the British identity expressed by British soldiers developed from this othering process. Although the French were their enemy during the war, the British soldiers generally did not reveal feelings of hatred for the French people and culture, as they did for the Iberians, and many actually developed amicable relationships with them. Britishness was, therefore, manifested through the othering of the different nationalities with whom the soldiers came into contact, like the Portuguese and Spanish. But contrary to the belief of some historians, Britishness did not develop among British soldiers as a result of inherent Francophobia.

The British soldiers in the Peninsular army, then, had multiple identities. They expressed themselves as Britons, fighting for the interests and ideals of the British government. Those soldiers who were Irish or Scots

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5 Linda Colley, "Britishness and Otherness: An Argument" Journal of British Studies 31:4 (1992) 316.

identified themselves as British but they also retained strong connections with their native nationalities. Most importantly, they were also soldiers. Isolated in the Iberian Peninsula, they shared the experiences of war as a community so much different than the communities they left behind in the British Isles.

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Appendix A

Details of Primary Sources used in the Thesis

Name†	Nationality *	Rank	Regiment	Type of Source	Date of
Aitchison	Scot E Lothian	Ensign	3rd (Scots) Guards	letters	
Anton	Scot	Sergeant	42nd Highlanders	memoir	
Blakeney	Irish (Galway)	Subaltern	28th N. Gloucester	memoir	
Boothby	Irish (Dublin)	Captain	Royal Engineers	memoir	
Bragge	English (Dorset)	Captain	3rd Dragoons	letters	
Brotherton	English	Cpt. to Lt. Col.	14th LD, 3rd DrGrds	memoir	
Brumwell	English	Lieutenant	43rd Monmouth LI	letters	
Coles	English (Sussex)	officer	4oth Somerset	memoir	
Cooper	English (York)	Sergeant	7th Royal Fusiliers	memoir	191
Costello	Irish	rank	95th Rifles	memoir	
Donaldson	Scot (Glasgow)	rank	94th Scots Brigade	memoir	
D'Urban	English	Major-General	unknown	journal	
Ford	English/Scot?	Lieutenant	79th Camerons	journal	unp
Forty-Second	Scot	Private	42nd Highlanders	memoir	
Gairdner	English	Lieutenant	95th Rifles	diary	unp
Gomm	English	Colonel	2nd Coldstream Grds	letters/journal	
Grattan	Irish (Dublin)	Lieutenant	88th Connaught Rgrs	memoir	
Harris	English (Dorset)	rank	95th Rifles	memoir dictate	19?
Hennell	English	officer (merit)	43rd Monmouthshire	letters	

† See Bibliography for title of work.

* City or county specified in parentheses if known.

Δ The date in the parentheses indicates when the work was originally published.

Appendix A

Details of Sources continued

Name†	Nationality *	Rank	Regiment	Type of Source	Date of Publ. Δ
Hope	Scot	officer	92nd Gordons	memoir	1833
Howell	Scot (Edinburgh)	rank	71st Highland LI	journal	1975
Jones	English/Welsh	Lieutenant	Royal Engineers	letters & diary	1986
Kincaid	Scot	Captain	95th Rifles	memoir	1929 (1830)
Lawrence	English (Dorset)	Sergeant	40th 2nd Somerset	memoir dictate	1886
Malcolm	Scot	officer	42nd Highlanders	memoir	1828
MacFarlane	Scot	Private	71st Highland LI	memoir	1954
Newcombe	English	Subaltern	unknown	poem-fiction	1815
Pearson	Eng (Northmbrd)	rank	61st E. Gloucester	memoir	1987
Ross-Lewin	Irish (Co. Clare)	Major	32nd Foot	memoir	1904 (1834)
Rous	English	Ensign	2nd Coldstream Grds	letters	1992
Sergeant of 5th	English	Sergeant	5th Northumberland	memoir	18??
Simmons	English (York)	Major	95th Rifles	letters/journal	1899
The Subaltern	English	Subaltern	unknown	memoir	1845
Swabey	English	Lieutenant	Royal Artillery	diary	1895
Tomkinson	English	Lieut.-Colonel	16th Light Dragoons	diary	1894
Verner	Irish (Armagh)	Colonel	7th Hussars	memoir	1965
Warre	Portuguese/Engl.	Lieut-Colonel	23rd Dragoons	letters	1909
Webber	English	2nd Captain	Royal Artillery	journal	1991
Wheeler	English	Private	51st Light Infantry	letters	1951

† See Bibliography for title of work.

* City or county specified in parentheses if known.

Δ The date in the parentheses indicates when the work was originally published.

Appendix B

Figure 1
Johnny writing home to his parents. Illustrated by Thomas Rowlandson (1756 - 1827). From David Roberts, The Military Adventures of Johnny Newcome (London, 1815).

Figure 2
The Brightly coloured uniforms of the British Infantry. From Bryan Fosten, Wellington's Infantry 1 (London: Osprey, 1981).

Figure 3
Johnny on duty with Wellington. Illustrated by Thomas Rowlandson (1756 - 1827). From David Roberts, The Military Adventures of Johnny Newcome (London, 1815).

Figure 4
"The Royal Welch Fusiliers: Eating the Leek on St. David's Day, circa 1814." From author's own collection. Date and artist unknown.

Figure 5
Teague (on the right) after drinking too much brandy. Illustrated by Thomas Rowlandson (1756 - 1827). From David Roberts, The Military Adventures of Johnny Newcome (London, 1815).

Figure 6
Johnny (right) and Teague (left). Illustrated by Thomas Rowlandson (1756 - 1827). From David Roberts, The Military Adventures of Johnny Newcome (London, 1815).

Figure 7
The Connaught Rangers. From Ian Fletcher,
Wellington's Regiments (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1994).

Figure 8
"Black Watch and Gordon Highlanders 1812."
Illustrated by C. Hamilton Smith (1776 - 1859).
National Army Museum, London.

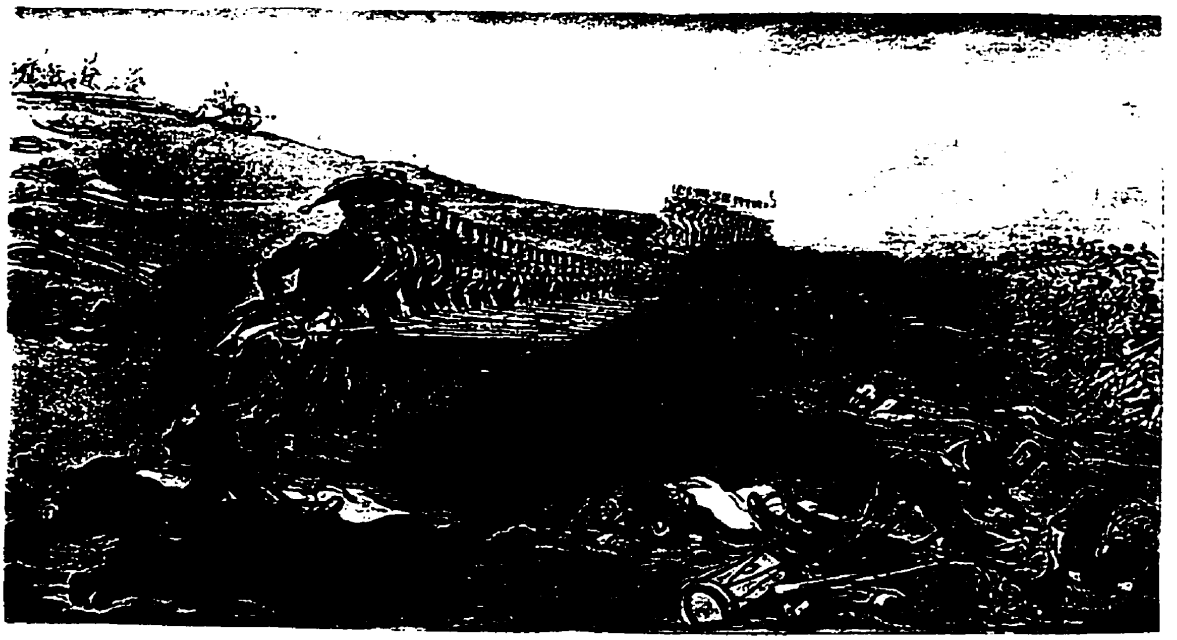
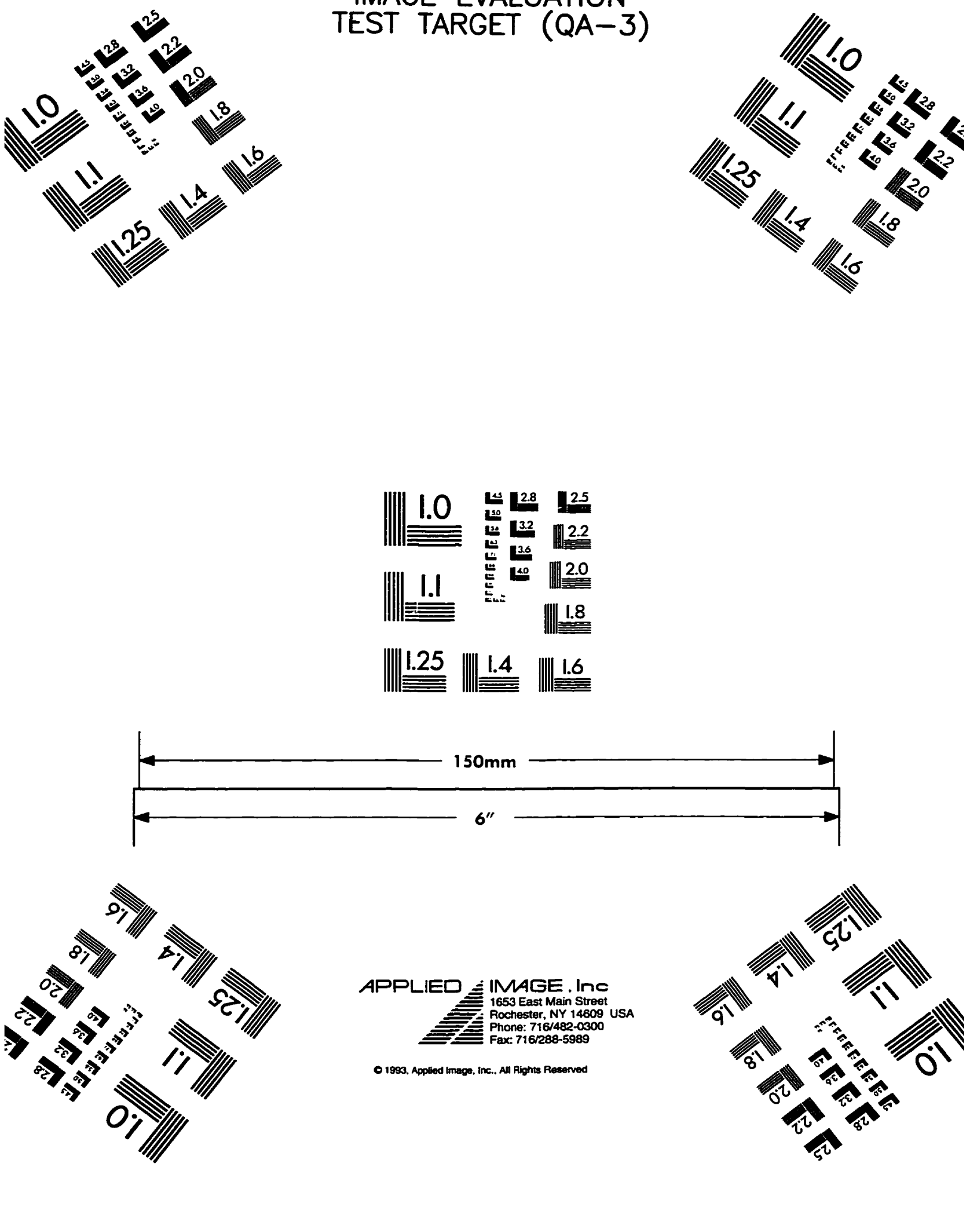


Figure 9
Army in close formation. The soldier on the right is looting a wounded Frenchman. Illustrated by Thomas Rowlandson (1756 - 1827). From David Roberts, The Military Adventures of Johnny Newcome (London, 1815).

Figure 10
Johnny (far left) has rum and cigars with his fellow officers. Illustrated by Thomas Rowlandson (1756 - 1827). From David Roberts, The Military Adventures of Johnny Newcome (London, 1815).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