

Peter N. Stearns

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Author(s): Peter Karsten

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IRISH SOLDIERS IN THE BRITISH ARMY, 1792-1922: SUBORNED or SUBORDINATE?

In 1898 the recruiting officer at the Connaught Rangers' depot in Galway received a letter from one Michael McDonough, who had enlisted the year before at an age too tender for the recruiting law.¹ He had consequently been "claimed out by my parents for not being the exact age," and had been gravely disappointed at being denied "the honour to ware [sic] the scarlet coat which Queen Victoria bestrode on my back." Now, however, he was of age, and was determined "to take the honour to be a true brave and faithful soldier for Queen Victoria, for I am consous [sic] enough that she is the want of brave soldiers now." McDonough had "read in the papers of the publick" of the movement of British troops to India and Africa, and he was

full willing to leave my manson [sic] and to go into the interiors of Africa to fight voluntarilly [sic] for Queen Victoria and as far as there is life in my bones and breath in my body, I will not let any foreign invasion tramp on Queen's land.

McDonough did, however, want the Rangers' recruiting officer to know that his enthusiasm was not unqualified or unreserved. He pointed out that "if her [Victoria] or her leaders ever turns with cruelty on the Irish race, I will be the first that will raise my sword to fight against her," and in this regard he was sure that he would have "plenty of Irishmen at my side, for they are known to be the bravest race in the world."²

Having offered this qualification, McDonough repeated his intention to enlist, asked for instructions, and, as an afterthought, implored the Rangers to supply him, upon enlistment, with "a uniform worthy of my tittle [sic] and youth."

McDonough may fall short of the archetype of Irishmen who offered their services to the British Army in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for he could read, and could write, in passably good English, something that many such volunteers could not manage. He was also possessed of parents attentive enough to retrieve him from the ranks in his minority, and there may have been recruits whose parents would not have been solicitous. But his sentiments are so similar to those of many of his peers and countrymen that his letter serves as a good introduction to the questions addressed in this essay.

McDonough was clearly of two minds. He knew Irishmen to be "the bravest race in the world," and he seems to have admired the uniforms of Queen Victoria's Irish soldiers. He was willing and eager to fight for the "Queen's land." In this regard he resembled hundreds of thousands of Irishmen. But he also bristled at the thought of English cruelty to the Irish, a sentiment shared as well by hundreds of thousands of his countrymen.

How could the British Army have accepted so many soldiers in these years from Michael McDonough's Ireland, in numbers twice those of the proportion of Ireland's population in the British Isles? How especially in years (the 1790s to the 1920s) when other Irishmen on no less than six separate occasions organized, fought and died in efforts to win Ireland's freedom from Britain? Did these Irish nationalists find the Irish soldiers and veterans of the British Army to be useful allies, or deadly foes? Who were these "green redcoats," these Irishmen willing to don British uniforms, and what if anything, did their years of service do to

them? Do the members of a subject colony who enter the ranks of an imperial army come to admire, some even to love their provider? Or do they learn to detest that power, perhaps when called upon to help suppress a rising of their own people? As ex-servicemen are they likely to be critics, perhaps enemies, of the empire or its sympathetic defenders? Scholars who have asked these questions with regard to colonial African troops, black Americans, or Irish in the service of the British military have offered conflicting or uncertain answers.³ This essay is an attempt to provide answers to these questions with regard to the Irish who served in the British army from the 1790s, when Irish Catholics were first permitted entry, until the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, a period of 130 years.

I. Irish "soldiers" and "Irish" soldiers: Variations on a Theme

The Irish soldier in the British Army is an understudied figure. In the words of one scholar, surveying recently the state of research on the nineteenth century British Army, "as a base for recruiting and as a focus for occupation, Ireland deserves more serious examination than it has so far received."⁴ Despite important studies, the questions raised at the beginning of this essay remain unanswered.⁵

Before we can speak of what *became* of the Irishman as a consequence of his service in the British military, before we can speak of his social or political views or his behavior while in the service or in retirement, we must know something of him *before* he took the royal shilling. This involves comparing him to others of his countrymen who chose not to serve at all, or who chose to serve a very different master.

There were in fact several different "Irish soldiers." Some served the British Crown and others served against it. These were not randomly drawn from the Irish population, but represented different Irish worlds with different visions. Let us examine each briefly to note any distinctive characteristics.

1. *The "Wild Geese."* The first and last decades of the seventeenth century saw the flights of the defeated Irish earls and their clans and of the "Wild Geese" who served James II and the Catholic cause. Tens of thousands of Irishmen left their isle for permanent exile in the service of the Catholic monarchs of France, Spain and Austria. Throughout the eighteenth century tens of thousands followed them, until by 1792 as many as half a million Irish may have entered European armies.⁶ They appeared to have included many of "the offspring of the best Roman Catholic families" in Ireland, as one observer put it in the 1760s:

High-spirited, intrepid, nervous youth — retaining a hankering desire after their own country, . . . and possessing a thousand (fine) qualities. . . . Every Roman Catholic service in Europe abound with this race, full of the same spirit and the same passions.

Irish cadets were frequently promoted from the ranks of French regiments, where they were to be found because, though of gentle birth, they had been unable to acquire commissions at first because of the top-heavy nature of these Irish units. After the initial migration of intact regiments in seventeenth century, service in the ranks of Catholic monarchs, some of whom occasionally willing to help Ireland secure its release from England, proved particularly attractive to members of the beleaguered Irish elite (though, of course, other more humble Gaelic "adventurers," unable to serve the more conveniently located British Army because of their Catholic faith, served continental masters too.)⁷

The same may be said of those Irish who served in Napoleon's "Irish Legion," for while the officers were virtually all Irish Catholics, the men were virtually all Europeans. Half a century later, when the Papacy felt threatened by Garibaldi's advance and Papal recruiters called in Ireland, some 1300 men offered their services, men, it was said, "of a far higher class than was to be found in an ordinary British regiment," men who were landowners, clerks, students, physicians, lawyers, and the like, led by a militia officer named O'Reilly, "a country gentleman" who raised prize cattle and racehorses, rode to the hounds, and was later elected M.P. for Longford. These volunteers received 2 & 1/2 pence per day and subsistence, well beneath the pay of those in any "British regiment" (which was 1 shilling 2 & 1/2 pence per day for an infantry private in 1890).⁸

2. *"The Patriots."* Those who fought the British on Irish soil in 1690-1901, 1798-99, 1867, and 1916 were not all as well-born as many of their "Wild Geese" counterparts, but they were disproportionately well-educated, and those of comfortable income were well represented among them. At the Battle of the Boyne (1690) and at Aughrim (1691) "the Catholic aristocracy" suffered heavily. Father John Murphy led a more motley (but ideologically inspired) band in the southeast to their deaths in 1798, but everywhere else more affluent men joined with some of their less fortunate countrymen in the republican "United Irishmen," a group that sought to win rights and ultimately freedom for Ireland. The Fenian "Brotherhood" of the mid-nineteenth century was neither Catholic nor Protestant *per se* but its leaders and ranks were ideologically inspired with an anti-British republican nationalism, and those Fenians who were captured during the planning and Rising were deemed "a higher type" of prisoner by the British.

In this regard they resembled their ideological descendants who took to the streets half a century later, in 1916. The "Irish Volunteers" drilled for two years, on Irish soil, before some of them seized Dublin on Easter Monday. None had served in France; they were committed to a different cause. Their heirs, the I.R.A. officer corps of 1919-1921, constituted an elite in three senses: one study indicates that one in four were members of families that owned the largest farms in their communities; two of three were eldest sons; and all seemed ideologically committed to "the cause," as did the rank and file. The most recent effort to assess the social composition of the I.R.A. rank and file finds them to be a cut above the lower class — small farmers, shop assistants and the like — lower middle class souls, with a modest stake, but still a stake, in their society. Only one of the Irish Republican Brotherhood's military committee planners of the Easter Rising (James Connolly) had ever served in the British Army (in the "Liverpool Irish"), but another leader, Major John MacBride, had served with the Boers, *against* the British. Not surprisingly, the "soldier's songs" composed by Sinn Féin lyricists (like Thomas Davis and Charles Kickham) invoked both the *Fianna* warrior of old and the "Wild Geese" of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, and told of the folly, "neglect" and scorn that was the fate of those who "joined the English army."⁹

The "Wild Geese," the United Irishmen of '98, the Fenians, and the I.R.A. had in common two features: well-educated and well-born Celtic-Irishmen populated their officer corps, and many possessed a devotion-to-cause, be it the Catholic religion or Irish freedom (or both). Many served not so much out of need as out of a sense of duty, a zealous self-sacrifice.

3. *Anglo-Irish "noblesse oblige."* The "Wild Geese" and "the Patriots" had something in common with those *Anglo-Irishmen* who rallied to Britain's colours in her hours of need, in the 1790s, in 1859 and in 1914, for these Anglo-Irishmen

of "land, wealth and principal" were typically also men of "courage, honor and principle." Their service was logical; they were defending Britain's glory and their own farms, families, and Protestant religion. Tenant farmers and subsistence-level farm owners, especially Catholic ones, were less willing to put their lives on the line in wartime and many vigorously resisted the efforts of the Crown's officers to administer the ballot, a late eighteenth-century equivalent of the random draft. ("Several hundred persons" stoned the king's servants in Castlereagh in 1793, and similar incidents were recorded as having transpired at Rathfryland, Skreen, Baltinglass, Swords, Clontarf, and St. Mary's, a poor area of Drogheda.)¹⁰

The Irish recruits in 1914 were admittedly a mixed lot, but the same pattern is evident. Some 500 students, graduates and faculty of the predominantly-Catholic University College, Dublin, were among them, it is true. The patriotic appeal offered by Irish Nationalist M.P. John Redmond to those sympathetic to his "Home Rule" program attracted many other such recruits. However, in time, British recruiters, largely insensitive to Redmond's pleas for a distinctively Irish division, failed to sustain the initial enthusiasm, and Irish Catholics were under-represented at the recruiting office.¹¹ The predominantly Protestant province of Ulster contained 31% of available Irish manpower in the years 1914 to 1916, but provided 51% of all who enlisted between the outbreak of war and October 1916. The predominantly Catholic province of Connaught contained 15% of available Irish manpower, and provided only 4% of all enlistments. One War Office report suggested that this discrepancy was essentially due to "the general disinclination of the farming class . . . to join the colours," and it is certainly true that Connaught was more agrarian than Ulster, with 73.9% of the former's workforce agriculturally engaged, and only 46.5% of the latter's. But the predominantly Catholic province of Munster possessed a workforce roughly comparable to that of Ulster, with 51.3% of its workforce in agriculture, and it was also under-represented at the front. Some 22.5% of available Irish manpower lived in Munster, but it contributed only 16.2% of the island's volunteers.

The Anglo-Irish gentry, on the contrary, flocked to the colors, as they had during the Boer War. Douglas Hyde, Anglo-Irish founder of the Gaelic League, wrote to a friend from Connaught in 1916:

All the gentry have suffered. *Noblesse oblige*. They have behaved magnificently.

One Government report indicated that "the bulk of the recruiting in the south and the west has been from the two classes, landlord and the lowest." "Middling" farmers and Catholics in general were somewhat under-represented among the volunteer fighting men.

A few examples of this tendency may help to illustrate the point. Late in 1915 Bishop O'Dwyer of Limerick felt it necessary to defend, or at least to explain, the decision of small farmers in Connaught not to enlist. They preferred "to be allowed to till their own potato gardens." They were without the "cosmopolitan considerations that rouse the enthusiasm of the Irish [Nationalist] Party" of John Redmond. One probably apochryphal (but popularly repeated, and consequently illuminating) story has it that a British army recruiter invited a southern Irish (Catholic) farmer's son to enlist in 1914, and that the lad answered: "Enlist? Is ut me enlist? and with a war on?" Apochryphal farmers aside, evidence regarding a more concrete group of Irish volunteers, members all of the Irish rugby football community, does exist. These men organized their own military company as a component of a regular regiment, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. They saw particularly bloody action at Gallipoli, and one of their ranks published a memoir

of the group, *The Pals of Suvla Bay*. The appendix to this tome offered brief biographies of each volunteer, including his secondary school and university, and it is evident from this that "the pals of Suvla Bay" were almost all educated in Protestant prep schools and in either (Protestant) Trinity College or (disproportionately Protestant) Queens University, Belfast.¹²

The same phenomenon can be observed of the volunteers from the Republic of Ireland for the British Army during the Second World War. Tens of thousands of Catholic Irishmen enlisted, but the ranks of those who won distinction (a virtual cross-section of the Irish volunteer population, I would contend) were disproportionately Protestant "Anglo-Irish," and this must have characterized the total volunteer population.¹³

In short, these wartime volunteers tended to be Protestant, "of parts," urbane, and motivated by "principles," traditions, sentiments. There was also a good chance that they were officers.

4. *The Irish Officer.* The Irish officer in the regular nineteenth century British Army was, of course, generally an Anglo-Irish Protestant, though there was a fair sprinkling of Catholic gentry left whose sons managed to obtain commissions. Because of the omnipresence of British regiments garrisoned in occupation and in training status throughout the island many young gentlemen in these years came to look upon a career in the British officer corps as pleasant and sensible, but this was especially true of those born into the less affluent gentry families. One gentleman whose five grand-uncles had joined the same regiment of horse (the 4th) in Ireland between 1712 and 1742, spoke of his martial forebearers as men who had not been "sons of noblemen, who chose the army, *pour passer le temps*, but sons of an Irish gentlemen who had nothing to give them but their swords. . . ."¹⁴

The Irish militia raised in the 1790s were, by law, to be "officered by the landed gentry," and appropriate property qualifications were specified for each officer rank; but by 1814 the "militia" had virtually become regulars, and, to quote a contemporary account, "the commissioned officers of the [Irish] militia regiments are no longer men of rank and fortune." The "fatigues of regular duty" had induced the more economically fortunate patriots of the 1790s "to quit," and their places had "been taken by young men who have made the service a profession. But these young men have no fortunes now to which they can retire," or so this account from the *Freeman's Journal* explained in 1814 when peace prompted the disbanding of most Irish units and many sought commissions in the regular establishment.¹⁵

A pattern of family tradition is clear with many Irish officers. Colonel Charles Ball-Action (b. 1830), for example, was the son of the colonel of the Wicklow militia. His first son died leading his men in an engagement during the Boer War, and another died similarly in France in 1916; his brother commanded a regiment in the Crimea. The father of General Sir Alexander Godley (b. 1867) had been a lieutenant colonel. One of General Godley's uncles was an officer in the royal marines; another an officer in the Navy; another an officer in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. A grand-uncle had been a major during the Napoleonic Wars. And all had been born in Ireland.¹⁶

The British establishment was quite happy to have Irishmen commanded by acceptable Irish officers, and made efforts to reserve some positions in the several Irish regiments for them. Thus when a Captain W.S. Fergusson of the Cornwall Light Infantry sought the vacant adjutancy of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in 1892, he was asked by an aide to the Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Force in

Ireland, General Wolsley, to state his "claims" to this appointment: "vis: whether he is an Irishman, or has property in Ireland, and what are his connections with Ireland and with this [Irish military unit]." Captain Fergusson responded that all his own and his wife's near relatives lived in or close to Dublin, and that his father had "considerable landed property near Dublin," which was settled on him as the eldest son, but the post went to another Anglo-Irish officer.¹⁷

The Anglo-Irish gentry of the nineteenth century (like their Scottish compeers) were slightly overrepresented in the officer ranks of the peacetime military, in comparison with the English. The ratio for Irish-born officers per capita to English-born in 1872 was about 11 to 8.¹⁸ But the ratio of Irish to English, and for that matter, Irish to Scottish and Welsh non-commissioned officers and men throughout the nineteenth century was never less than 2 to 1! If Irish-born officers were slightly overrepresented, Irish in the peacetime rank and file were grossly overrepresented.

II. "Green Redcoats": The Irish Rank and File

1. Religion. Who were these Irish in the peacetime ranks? To begin with, they were largely Catholic. Irish Catholics had been soldiers of the Crown for centuries,¹⁹ but those in the pay of Charles I garrisoned in East Anglia in the 1620s and '30s, and the support the Irish gave to James II half a century later, persuaded the Whigs to forego the hazards of a "Popish soldiery" until the 1790s, when revolutionary France seemed a greater peril.²⁰

The Irish militia units of the 1790s freely accepted Catholics, and the formal lifting in 1799 of the official ban produced a flood of Catholic recruits for the regulars.²¹ Between 1793 and 1815 some 159,000 Irishmen were integrated into English regiments. Daniel O'Connell complained in 1812 that Britain was taking "away our native army from us,"²² and so it was, but this "army" went quite willingly.

The Irish regiments (the 5th (Irish) Dragoons), the 88th Foot (the Connaught Rangers), (the 87th (the "Faughs"), the 83rd (Royal Irish Rifles), the 27th (Royal Irish Regiment), the 100th (Prince of Wales' own Leinster Regiment), the 101st (Royal Munster Fusiliers), and (in 1900) the Irish Guards) obviously attracted many,²³ but other regiments (especially those stationed for some time in Ireland) attracted many others.²⁴ In 1830 no less than 42.2% of all non-commissioned officers and men throughout the British Army were Irish, a figure far out of proportion to their numbers in the United Kingdom. By 1868 the famine and migration had cut into Ireland's population and the percentage of Irishmen in the British Army was down to 30.4% but this was still out of proportion to Ireland's numbers, and she was the only national group in the United Kingdom to be overrepresented in the Army. In that same year, 1868, the proportion of Roman Catholics in the British Army stood at 28.4%, suggesting that most of the Irish soldiers were Catholics.

Irish recruiting continued at a high level. In 1871 some 4.38% of all eligible Irishmen (15-54 years of age) joined the British Army, whereas only 2.09% of eligible Englishmen joined. By 1890, the decline in Irish population with migration of Irish youth reduced the percentage of Irishmen to 14.5%, while the percentage of Roman Catholics remained at 18.7%, suggesting that many nominally "English" or "Scottish" recruits (like James Connolly), were, in fact, Irish Catholic migrants.²⁵ In 1887 Father Stephen Hayes, a Jesuit priest writing

home from Malta, reported "a large number of Catholic soldiers" from the nearby British garrison attending Sunday Benediction. "They are mostly Irishmen, simplehearted fellows," he noted, "always very attentive."²⁶ Hence it is no surprise that regular British soldiers embarking for service in France in 1914 might sing "It's a Long Way to Tipperary."²⁷

2. *Socio-Economic Background.* The Irish soldier among Britain's "regulars," then, was typically a Catholic, but a Catholic of low income, poorer than those who took up arms against Britain from time to time, and poorer than those who did not serve. The Irish militiamen of the 1790s were described in Army Medical Board of Ireland reports in 1795 and 1801 as being of "the peasantry," and those in the Armagh regiment in 1813 must have been of that class; only 66 in the regiment could read and write. Many were weavers, as well as agriculturalists.²⁸ But agricultural laborer, or simple artisan, or both, nearly all were clearly of low income. Of several hundred Irishmen serving in regiments stationed in Scotland in 1851 some 75% had been born in rural areas, compared to 34.6% of English and Welsh troops so stationed and only 26% of Scottish troops.²⁹ In 1890, Irish recruits for the regular regiments bore features comparable to those of the 1790s. Agricultural laborers were the most common, followed by servants and "navvies," — that is to say, a host of unpropertied men.³⁰ A regimental commander in the Tralee garrison noted in 1892 that the more desirable men of some property, the "small farming class," rarely enlisted. If they left the land at all it was to emigrate.³¹ Ernie O'Malley recalled that "all trades, professions and classes were found" in the ranks shortly after Britain declared war on Germany, but he contrasted this condition to the pre-war one in which only "scapegoats, those in debt or in trouble over a girl had joined the ranks." Pre-war Irish recruits for the Irish Guards in 1914 were described by one veteran of that regiment as "mainly farm labourers, navvies and unskilled workers from the towns, some of them illiterate, most of them semiliterate."³² But O'Malley's description of the ubiquitous Irish volunteers of 1914 does not describe the situation by mid-1915. As we have seen, "middling" Catholics were less likely to volunteer after the first flush of patriotic fervor.³³ A circular letter of the Central for the Organizing of Recruitment in Ireland noted in August, 1915, that the labouring classes were overrepresented, the "farming and commercial classes" underrepresented, among recruits of 1915 and gave as explanation the view that "antiwar [Sinn Fein, and I.R.B.] propaganda has made special headway among farmer's sons and commercial assistants."³⁴ Occupational backgrounds of Irish recruits contrasted consistently with those of the United Irishmen or the Sinn Fein and IRA members. (For that matter, so did the membership of their police counterparts, the Royal Irish Constabulary; in their century of existence (1822-1922) the R.I.C. were found invariably to have been a cut above army recruits, composed of Catholic small farmers, shopmen, clerks, and of the sons of R.I.C. men themselves.³⁵)

The distinction between the socio-economic background of Irish recruits in the British peacetime army, on the one hand, and Irish "patriots" (United Irishmen, "Young Irelanders," Feinians, Sin Feiners, and I.R.A. men), on the other, is an important one. Joseph Lee has demonstrated that grave social tensions prevailed in the 1840s, which saw landless Irish laborers pitted against Irish landowning and tenant farmers, quite independent of any Irish-English tensions.³⁶ These tensions between classes of Celtic-Irish persisted on a more subdued scale throughout the next eighty years. Consequently, the class of men from which the British Army drew most of its Irish recruits was not likely to provide enthusiastic assistance to its middle-class "patriotic" counterparts.

3. *Motives for Enlisting: Penury, Adventure, and Tradition.* As our next question is “why did the men enlist,” the first half of our two-part answer will hardly come as a surprise: one reason that they enlisted was that they needed what little the British Army offered in the way of pay and allowances. The first recruiters knew this. Those active in raising levies in County Clare for West Indian service in the 1790s spoke of the “glorious prospect of returning loaded with SPANISH GOLD and DOLLARS.” Others stressed the “liberal Bounty” and “immediate pay.” In 1806 the Prime Minister used comparable language in a letter to the Irish Viceroy’s Secretary regarding the Government’s need of Irish Catholics for service with the regular army:³⁷

We want the men; Ireland wants a vent for its superabundant population; could not these two wants be reconciled?

As we have seen, to a large extent these “wants” *were* reconciled, and perhaps Lord Grenville’s other motive, “quiet in Ireland,” was served by the practice as well. In any event, the “superabundant population” responded. When in 1816 one officer warned the “poor fellows lately turned adrift from the [Irish] militia” units of the social and economic difficulties of a life as private soldiers in a regular line regiment, he reported to headquarters that “the common reply was ‘Colonel, what [else] can we do?’” The Rev. James Hall, who toured Ireland in these years, noted that enlistment rates were higher in the southwest and interior; lower “in the north, where the manufacturing of linen holds out employment, and often excellent wages.”³⁸ This tendency, of northern enlistment rates to lag behind southern ones, persisted throughout the peacetime years of our attention, as we will see.

Evidence of the attractiveness of an army career to poor agricultural laborers can be found as well in a number of nineteenth century Irish folk songs. The “Kerry Recruit” decides to enlist shortly before the Crimean War after a discouraging number of years “diggin’ spuds in Tralee.”

Another, “The Rocks of Bawn,” about the plight of another farm laborer, ends:

Oh, I wish the Queen of England
Would write to me a line,
And place me in a regiment
All in my youth and prime;
There I’d fight for Ireland’s glory
From the cold daylight ’t dawn,
And I’d never more return again
To plough the rocks of bawn.

From America in the 1860s came another ballad, explaining in comparable tones the flow of “thousands of our Irish boys without employment strong” into the ranks of another popular military force providing poor Irishmen with employment — the Union Army. It begins:

It’s since this cruel war began, most
grievous for to say,
Alas employment has declined and commerce
did decay,
Has caused our Irish boys to list for the
battle-field array.

Additional evidence of the search for economic security may be seen in the letter of one Corporal Maurice Moriarty of an East India Company regiment to his family in the Dingle Peninsula from an Indian post during the Famine, in December, 1848:³⁹

A soldier's rations in India are more than enough, and extras, like fowl, eggs, sweetmeats, and fruit are available and are not beyond the means of any soldier in India.

Corporal Moriarty's good fortune was precisely what many of his fellow Kerry men longed for in those grim days; his letter may have served to spur enlistment.

Many Irish recruits of the *fin de siècle* were also clearly inspired by economic distress, or "starvation," as one recruiter put it. D.N. Haire has found an inverse correlation between recruitment in Ireland and emigration from Ireland for the years 1868 to 1892, and it may be that when emigration opportunities looked bad (due to recession in the British, Australian or North American economies) the queen's shilling looked good. In any event, penury seemed to have something to do with the decision to enlist. The British infantry private's pay, food, clothing, lodging and medical expenses in 1886 was valued (fairly, I think) by British authorities at 40 pounds per annum; the corporal's at 51 pounds, the sergeant's at 69 pounds, and the colour sergeant's (about the highest rank our Irish soldier might attain) at 89 pounds. The typical Irish agricultural laborer in 1880-81 earned 25 pounds per annum (and this assumes that he could find 50 weeks of work!) By 1892-93 that figure had declined to 24 pounds. English and Welsh agricultural laborers earned 35 pounds and 34 pounds respectively in these same years, while Scottish agricultural laborers averaged 42.5 pounds and 45 pounds.⁴⁰ Hence the greater tendency of the Irishman to enlist is not entirely mysterious. Sergeant A.V. Palmer offered an anecdote in 1890 that made the same point. One Irish recruit in his unit had complained of the inadequacy of the army diet: "Then you didn't enlist from want," the sergeant asked. "Oh, no, sergeant," he is said to have answered. "I had lashings of that before I joined the army."⁴¹

If penury was by far the strongest reason that Irishmen took the king's shilling, there was another — we might call it a "military tradition" or a "spirit of adventure," perhaps even a "love of a good fight." I mean for these to be thought of as I think they were to some Irishmen, of one piece. The British officials and recruiters clearly sensed the importance of these motives. One wrote the Duke of Newcastle in 1748 of the "great number of Adventurous Idle Men in Ireland who would run any Risque rather than submit to a laborious life," and urged a change in the ban against Catholics in the army. Lifting the ban "would have the good effect of taking away the turbulent People. . . ." When the ban was finally lifted half a century later British army recruiters in County Clare addressed "Clare heroes," and "all spirited Young Fellows" who "prefer Honour and Promotion in the Military Life to an idle and dishonourable life at home," and offered "elegant clothing" in addition to the "liberal Bounty" and "immediate pay" mentioned before. Over a century later in 1915, a Sinn Féin leaflet complained that Irishmen were being recruited into the "enemy's" army "not by the recruiting sergeant's shilling only, but by a cunning appeal to our traditional courage and a wicked attempt to . . . fill our young men with wondering admiration [of marching men and military bands] and make them long to show their inherent [sic] valour on a real field of battle."⁴² After one such recruit did display such valour, British recruiters capitalized on the awarding of a Victoria Cross "for valour" to Sergeant Michael O'Leary of the Irish Guards to create a recruiting poster, offering a likeness of O'Leary, and urging Irishmen "to emulate the splendid bravery of your fellow countryman" by joining "an Irish regiment today."

It would have been surprising if some Irishmen had not responded to such an appeal. As an occupied island, Ireland had for long been the site of numerous

British army garrisons. The Royal Barracks in Dublin were the oldest in Europe. The Royal Hospital at Kilmainham predated the one at Chelsea. A Royal Hibernian School for orphan boys and the sons of poor soldiers, located at Phoenix Park (Dublin), graduated drummer boys and trumpeters for Irish regiments throughout the nineteenth century. Other barracks could be found in at least 18 Irish towns and cities. Young men reared in the shadows of these garrisons, in a land of faction fights and shillelaghs, may naturally have been drawn towards a military career. One man, five of whose ancestors had joined the same regiment of horse garrisoned at one such post, wryly described their mission: "to win their way through the world, like true Irishmen by fighting those whom they never saw before. . . ." Another, one Edward Costello, apprenticed in Dublin in 1806, acquired the "martial ardour" from an old pensioner's description of glory and "became red-hot for a soldier's life." Several nineteenth century Irish ballads catch the spirit of this "martial ardour." "Oh, there's not a trade that's going, worth showing or knowing/like that from glory growing," begins "A Bowld Sojer Boy." Another, "Since I've been in the Army," boasts:

In grand attack, in storm or sack,
None will than I be bolder.
With spirits gay I march away,
I please each fair beholder.

"The Irish Recruit" (reprinted in the page of *The Donegal's Own*, a magazine of "The Donegals," a battalion of The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers) begins:⁴³

Paddy O'Ryan had a valiant heart,
and to fight was mighty willing.

So also were the members of the Irish Guards left behind in 1914 when the 1st battalion embarked for France: Incensed at the notion that they might miss out on the fighting, they stormed headquarters in what was described as "a riotous fashion." At Loos, in September, the London Irish (Territorials) dribbled a soccer ball before them as they advanced shouting "Goal!" each time it reached a German trench. One Dublin Fusilier wrote home from the front in 1915: "I'm happier than ever I was; it's just the sort of life I like." Another wrote, "you can't realize what high spirits I am in when I'm fighting. I feel as if it were all one long exciting Rugger match." An English private allegedly told an Irish sergeant in an Irish unit in France in 1918: "I don't belong in the lines with all you crazy Irishmen. You *like* to fight!"⁴⁴

Even the demise of such a World War I Fusilier might provide evidence of the appeal of the British Army to "young heroes." An Irishman "recalled how military funerals" in 1915 "had wonderful recruiting powers" in Dublin: "One of the inhabitants of a slum" was "brought back wounded from France," and "when he died he was given a military funeral; the widow's pride at the display was nearly as open as her grief, and I was told that practically every able-bodied man in the area had enlisted within a fortnight." Now, we do not have to accept the hyperbole of this passage to agree that there is an element of truth in it. Pomp and fanfare, even of the sort at a military funeral, could impress the impressionable — especially, perhaps, in the land of "Finnegan's Wake."⁴⁵ It would be easy to exaggerate this trait of Irish bellicosity, but it seems to me that penury alone may not explain the high Irish recruiting rate throughout these years. Irish farm laborers, navvies and young orphans down on their luck may at least have been persuaded themselves, or may have been persuaded, that fighting was a noble profession and that Irishmen were damned good fighters.

Pugnacity and a spirit of adventure were often simultaneously to be found in the recruit, though sometimes the latter was more strikingly evident. One recruiter spoke of the typical recruit's "wish to get away from their own people and the neighborhood where they are." An account of the Connaught Rangers maintained that some had joined "to see what was on the other side of the hill."⁴⁶ But if some were *breaking* with their family's past or traditions, others were partaking in family traditions, military traditions. One widow of an Irish veteran, Mrs. Mary Geoghegan, told the Commander-in-Chief for Ireland in 1894 of her father, her brother, and her three brothers-in-law, who, in addition to her late husband, had all served the Queen. Another widow, Mrs. Norah Reardon, noted that her father, late husband, and only son had served with the colors. And when, in the spring of 1918 a company of Connaught Rangers was integrated by platoons into the Royal Leinster regiment, one sergeant remarked: "I've been a Ranger for 18 years, and my father before me. I'll always be one."⁴⁷

4. *Politics*. One more thing must be said of these "green redcoat" recruits: they were largely apolitical. That is not to say that they didn't love Ireland. Many (like the Michael McDonough whose letter introduced this essay) certainly *did* love their country. They were all Irish, and they could cheer the Harp and Shamrock, the Tom Moore ballad, or the traditional Irish air like the most determined Fenian, but most were no more political than are most of the very poor of any other land. One Sinn Féiner recalled that those who had joined "the Dubs" (Royal Dublin Fusiliers) before World War I were poor and "had no politics and took no interest in them." From the other side of the fence, Anglo-Irish Nora Robertson similarly described "the Dubs" in 1914 as men who "were not enough interested in politics to wish to stay at home." They joined to be "with their pals."⁴⁸ This is, I think, essentially correct, and it is important to an understanding of their later values and behavior.

The Irishman who joined the British army in peacetime, then, is clearly distinguishable from his counterparts who fought for Catholicism in Europe or Irish nationalism at home. He was Catholic, poor, sometimes of an adventurous, bellicose sort, apolitical, and he saw himself as a soldier by occupation. Moreover, we must remember that Irishmen generally did not view themselves as joining the British army, but as joining "the Army." Seven centuries of British rule, of one sort or another, had led most Irish people to accept the fact that, like it or no, they were part of the United Kingdom. I.R.B. leader Bulmer Hobson admitted as much:

During the nineteenth century the Irish people . . . had been really brought to believe that armed resistance to the English occupation of Ireland was both insane and immoral. . . .⁴⁹

There were, of course, some Irishmen who could *not* bring themselves to accept such a verdict, and these Irishmen, by and large, did not join "the Army" (unless it was the Irish one). But this is only to say that those who *did* serve in "the Army" were quite different in outlook, at the time they enlisted, from those who *would not*. These features are important to keep in mind as we now begin the task of assessing the effect that service in the Army had on the Irish soldier's political values and behavior, both while in uniform and thereafter, as a veteran. We begin with consideration of the Irish soldier's behavior and political values while *in* the service.

5. *Suborned or Subordinate?* In general, the "green redcoat" was faithful to his oath, despite the efforts of United Irishmen, Fenians, or Sinn Féiners to win his

loyalties. An editorial in Charles Gaven Duffy's *The Nation* in 1843 complained that service had seemed "to anglicize the Irish soldier, and make him prefer the tyrant of Ireland to Ireland's self." John Redmond's *Freeman's Journal* made the same claim in 1905 in observing that enlistment "inevitably produces an unwelcome Anglicanization."⁵⁰ Theobald Wolfe Tone in 1798 and Patrick Pearse in 1916 wished it otherwise. They hoped Irishmen in British uniforms would come to their aid. One of Pearse's Manifestos during the Easter Rising, for example, claimed that "Irish regiments in the British army have refused to act against their fellow countrymen."⁵¹ Reality tends to support the views of the editors of *The Nation* and the *Freeman's Journal* rather than those of Wolfe Tone or Pearse. Irishmen in British units fought and defeated Irishmen fighting for Ireland with the Desmonds or O'Neill in the late sixteenth century, with Wolfe Tone and Father Murphy in 1798,⁵² with Napoleon's Irish Legion in 1808, with Fenian leaders in 1867, or with Pearse, de Valera, and Connolly in 1916. Let us look at the record.

In the 1790s and early nineteenth century Irish recruits of one or another of the Irish regiments and militia units were frequently called on to fight Frenchmen and United Irishmen, to destroy poteen, or to hunt down "bandits." They did so largely without incident. A fight did break out in August of 1794, to be sure, between apprehensive Protestant householders and elements of the predominantly Catholic Longford militia units in one village, but the incident was an isolated one; in any event the Longford militia subsequently hunted down a number of their countrymen ("Defenders") and in later years willingly fought it out with their own "lower classes" when ordered to seize poteen (an illegally produced spirit). One Dublin pamphleteer suspected that the Catholic militia units remained loyal by virtue of the fact that they were kept on the move by their commanders. Thus removed from their own environs, where they might have hesitated at orders to fire on neighbors and friends, they were prevented from attaching themselves to compatriots and coreligionists in their new environs. They had been "anglicized" in the sense that they had been made more cosmopolitan, or, at least, less localistic in their outlook. By "shifting often from one place to another, their minds were enlarged." Perhaps. In any event, they did shoot insurgents at Naas, Kilcullen, Prosperous, Hachetstown, Carlow, Oulart, Enniscorthy, Newtownbarry, Tubbernerneen, New Ross, Antrim, Arklow, Ballynahinch, Vinegar Hill, Castlecomer, Kilconnel Hill, and Whiteheaps, to name chronologically but the principal engagements in 1798.⁵³ (One is reminded of the Turkish proverb that has it that when the woodsman entered the forest, the trees saw the axhandle and said: "We have nothing to fear; the axhandle is one of us.")

We must allow that these and other actions in 1798 did see some Irish soldiers turn against the Crown. About three score Irish soldiers were court-martialed for mutinous conduct or treasonous consorting with the enemy (while prisoners of the French), and their experience is clearly proof that service in a British military unit was, in and of itself, no guarantee of an Irishman's loyalty to his oath, especially if the units' leaders were not particular about whom they recruited — that is, if they were not attentive to the political outlook of the recruit. It appears that some United Irishmen (called "Croppies" by loyalists because of the habit of some of them to crop their hair after the French republican fashion) joined militia ranks (as would some Fenians sixty years later) in order to "bore from within." Six recent recruits of the 5th (Royal Irish) Dragoons were court-martialed in July 1798, for conspiring to attack a barracks at Loughinstown, and evidence

established that they were in league with others in the King's Co. Militia.⁵⁴

They had counterparts in the Longford and Westmeath Militias. In April a Wicklow loyalist wrote Lord Rossmore, warning that he had noticed a "Hatred to His Majesty's Govt." among some of the Longfords:

When a Loyal tune is play'd through the Town it is condemned by them with cancerous [?] and Scoffing disapprobation, and a Man for Singing that Burlesque on Sedition, *Croppies lie down*, was hiss'd and interrupted by the cry of *Tyrants lie down* and the Man for perservering in Singing the former was confined by them to the Guard House. Two of those [Longford] Militia having a piper in a publick House playing Disaffected Tunes, a Soldier of the [predominantly Protestant] Downshire [militia], Quartered here went into the House and desired God save the King to be play'd. The two Longford Soldiers drew their bayonets and would have run him through the Body if he had not . . . knock'd them down.

One wonders if these two irate fellows were among the score or more of the Longfords who, among the hundred odd from that regiment taken prisoner by the French in battles in County Mayo, responded favorably to a French officer's appeal "to fight for Liberty and Equality against the oppression of the British Government."⁵⁵ Several of these Longford POWs established at their courts-martial that they had (quite literally) "turned their [red] coats" around to the blue interior simply in order to facilitate escape, and inasmuch as some *had* in fact escaped and rejoined their regiment, some were acquitted.⁵⁶

Not so fortunate were some eight privates of the Westmeath militia, for uncontested evidence established that they had plotted the death of "their officers" as well as "the orange men and protestants." In their grim plan it may be that one can detect one of the central problems United Irishmen faced, that of keeping their Irish republican movement from losing its original non-sectarian character, for these privates clearly perceived a decidedly anti-Catholic cast within Southern Irish loyalism. General Cornwallis, Commander-in-Chief for Ireland, worried openly about the excesses of his Anglo-Irish (Protestant) militia officers, and promised the Duke of Portland (the Prime Minister) to⁵⁷

use my utmost exertions to suppress the folly which has been too prevalent in this quarter, of substituting the word *Catholicism* instead of Jacobinism, as the foundation of the present rebellion.

His efforts may have been intended for such men as the Westmeath's officers; in which case they appear to have had little effect.

In any event, it is clear that the resolve of these Westmeath mutineers was not tempered by shrewdly apolitical officers, sensitively seeking to defuse political or religious issues, for their unit appears to have possessed no such leadership. On the contrary, a prosecution witness noted in passing that one Major Nugent, a regimental officer, had "made a figure which was called Croppie, and used [it] as a target for the troops to fire at." Another witness referred to a regimental password: "all is well and five pounds for a croppy's head." If several young "croppy" sympathizers duly took offense and planned bloody action, were their officers faultless?

Nonetheless, the fact remains that an uncontradicted witness told the court that on the "night that was fix'd" for the mutiny, when the ringleader "levelled his piece at the officers" he "could get none of the [other] men [in the regiment] to join him."⁵⁸ Whether this reluctance was due to their fear of the consequences, or to their loyalty to their oaths, or to the fact that only a few were sufficiently outraged by "Croppy" taunts to take up arms against the Crown, is unclear. What is clear is that no more than eight Westmeath privates were tried for this abortive

mutiny, and that several of their fellow Irish comrades-in-arms testified against them. Indeed, this was the case in each of the courts-martial, and in several such trials it was clear that young Catholic Irish privates had come forward and provided their officers with such information as enabled the command to nip the conspiracies "in the bud."⁵⁹

The militia units organized in the 1790s were Britain's first major modern use of Irish Catholic troops. They were quickly deployed on Irish soil, often against Irishmen; they possessed no tradition, no battle flags, no decorated Celtic sergeant-majors, and it is not surprising that some units experienced such incidents as just described. But as the Army organized its regular Irish regiments, and integrated Irish recruits into these and other regiments of long standing, such incidents inevitably became less frequent. As time passed, British trust and confidence in the Irish soldier rose. Between 1800 and 1865 our "green redcoats" generally behaved as they were expected to. I know of but two exceptions: In June, 1829, while on duty in Limerick during elections in the Clare region, some Irish soldiers of the 36th Foot slugged it out with some men of a Highlander regiment to the cry of "O'Connell forever!" And in 1856 members of the North Tipperary militia mutinied. Two were killed before order was restored. But the Irish soldiers who "fought" for O'Connell were disciplined, and no further incidents of the kind were reported in the 36th foot. Several years later their regimental commander praised his Irishmen, comparing them favorably to his Scottish countrymen, in words worth quoting:⁶⁰

If you had been, like me, accustomed to deal with the Glasgow weavers, in the shape of soldiers, you would enter into the delight I have in commanding these lighthearted, willing, easily-managed fellows.

Needless to say this commander's view of what constituted "easy management" would not be our own. Part of the socializing his "willing" Irish soldiers experienced surely included forms of military discipline since abandoned as unduly cruel, and this dimension — the fear of punishment — must count for something in our accounting of the "anglicizing" of the Irish recruit. But Irish soldiers of the nineteenth century were better off in this regard than their Prussian or Russian counterparts, or their eighteenth-century British predecessors, and, in any event, Irish journalists and nationalists were not prompted to comment on their treatment at the hands of martinets. These "light-hearted" men may well have been "easily-managed" and "willing."

Our "green redcoats," then, went about their business of policing the poteen industry and backing up the Royal Irish Constabulary as they evicted tenants or safeguarded landlords. Colonel Horatio Shirley of the Connaught Rangers recalled that in 1848 (the year of the "Young Irelanders" Rising) "many attempts were made" by persons in the vicinity of Tralee "to tamper with the loyalty of the men, but without avail." He relates one exchange:

[A] man asked a soldier of the Depot if he would shoot his commanding officer if told to do so, to which the man replied: 'Indeed I would not — the major is too good a man to be shot; but if *he* told me to shoot *you*, I would put a hole through you as soon as look at you.'

Perhaps such a dialogue never occurred; perhaps Shirley was simply told this by one seeking to ingratiate. But such a conversation is conceivable. A Connaughtman serving with his colleagues in Kerry might well have greater loyalty to his oath or his officers than to a fellow Gael of brief acquaintance whose intent seemed hazardous to the extreme. One should not be surprised were the soldier's response to such a hypothetical to be just as Shirley reported.

And what of the fearsome mutiny of the North Tipperary? They had been embodied in 1855, during the Crimean crisis, at which time they had been promised a bounty. The Government appears to have altered its offer as the crisis abated. On July 7, 1856, the men stationed in Nenagh were ordered to return their uniforms and prepare to disband. One man, remindful of the unpaid bounty, refused to surrender his black trousers and was sent to the guardhouse, whereupon a number of his comrades came to his rescue. They all refused to surrender their trousers and (more significantly) their firearms until permitted to retain their clothing allotment and until their bounty had been paid them. Other troops (many of them Irish) were deployed about the town, and after two days of skirmishing and negotiations, the men were given some money, a few sentenced to prison, and the unit disbanded.⁶¹ The "Battle of the Breeches" (as it was called) had more to do with pay and valuable uniforms than with Irish nationalism.

Several years later the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood ("The Fenians") effectively infiltrated several British regiments stationed in Ireland and recruited members among the Irish in their ranks. "The Pagan" O'Leary, John Boyle O'Reilly, William F. Roantree and John Devoy gave the Fenian oath in 1865, according to Devoy, to over 7,000 men in various military units and several Irish garrisons. Devoy records that the Fenians gathered some 17 deserters from the British Army in Dublin to train the men suborned from the garrisons in Ireland. A third of the British forces in Ireland were, by this reckoning, Fenians, and Devoy recalled that it was only the dilatory behavior of the Fenian chief, James Stephens, the effectiveness of the British military intelligence system (spies and informers), and the timely movement of suborned units to overseas garrisons that saved Britain when the Fenians rose in March, 1867.⁶²

This, in any event, is what Devoy and his chief biographer maintain. But there are problems with this account, as A.J. Semple has demonstrated. Devoy exaggerates some things, misunderstands others, and leaves still other things unsaid. It appears that the 17 deserter-trainers were paid more by the Fenians than they had been by the British Army, a fact that may be of some significance. It appears as well that, according to police informers in Cork, soldiers complaining of low pay and the possible loss of pension right were being actively courted by Fenians. One Michael Callaghan of the Royal Artillery was tried by court-martial for saying, too publicly, "I am an Irishman and a Fenian. . . . I will fight for Ireland." But he added, in what may have been his explanatory motive, "the damned Queen is not able to support soldiers." The Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, General Sir George Brown, was ill for much of 1865, and neglected to act on the reports coming to him from police and military sources of Fenian infiltration. Thus the Fenians were virtually unfettered in their activities. Moreover, the suborned units removed from Ireland in 1866 in Devoy's account were not removed deliberately, because of any apprehensiveness regarding their loyalty. The units were moved in their normal rotation. A.J. Semple feels that bread-and-butter issues like pay and pension grievances were at the heart of Fenian recruiting successes, and he is inclined to agree with the judgment of General Sir Hugh Rose, who told the Duke of Cambridge in August, 1865, that most Fenians were "very young soldiers or recruits who were Fenian before they entered the Army." Moreover, Semple points out that spies sent by the British into the soldiers' canteens and local pubs where Fenian recruiting was said to be taking place reported either little support for the Fenians or outright condemnation of them. Semple's calculations allowed that the Fenians may in fact

have suborned some 3,000 men in a total military establishment in Ireland of 22,000. And if his figures and the military's informants may underestimate Fenian strength, the fact remains that some of Devoy's allegedly "crack Fenian regiments" (the 5th Dragoons and the 10th Hussars) were instrumental in crushing the Fenian revolt in early 1867 and in hunting down the leaders. At best 180 courts-martial between 1866 and 1869 sufficed to stamp Fenianism out of the army.⁶³

In the late nineteenth century, despite unpopular duties, there were very few instances in which Irish soldiers behaved in ways that caused their officers to doubt their loyalties. In November, 1881, some among a unit of the Royal Munster Fusiliers shouted an insult ("Buckshot!") at members of the R.I.C., but a Court of Inquiry called to hear evidence proffered no charges. David Haire, who has scanned the record systematically for such evidence in the late nineteenth century, concluded that the soldiers were quite obedient. Moreover, Haire calculates that the Land War "troubles" did not adversely affect British recruiting efforts in Ireland at any time in the late nineteenth century.⁶⁴

Irish regiments had more than their share of courts-martial in these years, but none so numerous (per capita) as the Royal Scots Fusiliers, and the overwhelming majority of the allegations were for relatively minor matters such as "disgraceful conduct," "neglect of orders," or "drunk on duty," rather than "mutinous conduct" or "disobedience of orders," or "striking an officer." Irishmen and Catholics were slightly overrepresented in military prisons of the late nineteenth century, but no more so than one might expect of a pugilistic, hard-drinking rural soldiery.⁶⁵

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, while others in Ireland organized protests, boycotts, political parties, and revolutionary associations, Irishmen in British Army garrisons exercised and drilled each morning, played a wide variety of sports in the afternoon, and gathered at one of the 46 "wet" canteens (serving beer and wine) or at one of the Masonic Lodges within the garrisons in the evening. Some might attend classes offered by their officers, their chaplain, or a local schoolteacher designed to prepare them for the third class school certificates.⁶⁶

The sergeants' messes organized "smokers," toasted "His Most Gracious Majesty, King Edward VII" and sang "Limerick the Beautiful," "The Soldiers of the Queen," "Nora Maureen" and "Good Bye, Mick." At Christmastime, St. Patrick's Day, and the monarch's birthday they organized more elaborate dinners, decorated the halls with "Harp and Crown entwined the Shamrock" or banners reading "Erin go Brath [Ireland Forever] in gold on a green background," and invited their officers in to hear toasts to the monarch's health and "success to our major." Such a toast as the latter may well have been heart-felt. The officer corps was not particularly conspicuous throughout the day; often regarding the Irish rank and file with bemusement, many officers left most of the routine military business to the able NCOs. Nonetheless, the officers were taught to take an interest in the welfare of their men and most of them generally did. The editor of the *Armach Guardian*, commenting on activities at the Depot of the Royal Irish Fusiliers during St. Patrick's Day in 1909, was "struck, as I have been before, with the interest the officers take in the comfort and enjoyment of the men, and this is not my opinion alone. . . ." as, indeed, it was not.⁶⁷ One doesn't want to overstate the significance of any single such homily, but the importance of the *sum* of a number of such observations cannot be overstated. If military service *had* "anglicized" some Irishmen, it was with routine activities as these, giving their

disorderly lives pride and stability, and by virtue of their daily reliance, especially in wartime, upon one another, upon one's Scottish, Welsh or English comrades, and upon one's officers. The *esprit de corps* of British military units in the *fin de siècle* is well established,⁶⁸ and Irishmen within those ranks were not exceptions to the rule.⁶⁹

Irish republicans of the *fin de siècle* did try to undo this pattern. "An Irishman" recalled that the Irish regiments embarking for service during the Boer War "were hooted down the Dublin quays" by Redmondite critics of the war "because they were loyal to their oath." "Any Irishman . . . who enlists under England's blood-red flag," a pamphlet circulated in 1905 read, "is one of the meanest curs in creation." Other republican handouts prepared shortly after Britain entered the World War made the same point; the Irish servant of England was a "traitor to his country and an enemy of his people." Leaders of the "Irish Volunteers" in 1914 made clear that Volunteers were unlike the "Imperial mercenaries" who served in the regular army. Nonetheless, when John Redmond urged these same Irish Volunteers to enlist for service in France "in defence of right, of freedom and religion in this war," and the I.R.B. broke with Redmond, most Volunteers followed Redmond into this National Volunteers, and most of these served in Europe. Only about 2,500 joined the I.R.B.'s Irish Volunteers in 1915.⁷⁰ Later, in 1917 Redmondites and Sinn Féiners "broke up recruiting meetings," "openly insulted British soldiers," and "by terrorism stopped enlistment" in some areas.⁷¹ But as we have already observed, these anti-enlistment efforts initially had imperfect success. As many as 300,000 Irishmen served, and some 49,000 lost their lives, fighting in British uniforms in World War I. A German prisoner asked an Irish Guardsman why he, an Irishman, was fighting for the British, and was told, "Well, they fed me for seven years; so now I'm earning my keep." The Dublin Fusiliers sang "God save Ireland" and "Wearing of the Green" while awaiting the German assault at Cambrai in 1914; the Irish Guards sported green capbands and armbands with gold harps and the words "Erin go brath" sewn on them; but those who were captured and sent to the Limburg POW camp (2500 in all) reacted bitterly to Roger Casement's efforts to recruit an "Irish Brigade" for the liberation of their homeland. Casement was "hissed" and "booed out of the camp." A Royal Munster Fusiliers POW attacked him. He managed to recruit only a handful of POWs. "These are not Irishmmen, but English soldiers" he wrote. "All they wanted was tobacco." Irish non-commissioned officer POWs signed a collective letter of protest addressed to the Kaiser on December 1, 1914, protesting the special treatment that had been accorded them in the Limburg POW camp, and noting that, "in addition to being Irish Catholics, we have the honour to be British soldiers."⁷²

During the Easter Rising, the British authorities deployed about 2500 troops against about 1000 Irish insurgents, and most of these British troops were Irish. They fought vigorously, especially those belonging to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. One such Fusilier, a private, told Ernie O'Malley's sympathetic family and neighbors: "I'd like to stick [these insurgents] up against a wall instead of taking them prisoner." (He was thereupon "hailed by many, who were anxious to shake hands. . . .")

In France Irish Guardsmen and Royal Munster Fusiliers were reported to be angered by news of the Easter Rising. Their comrades had been dying in France for two years; now their own countrymen were fighting them in the streets of Dublin. When Germans opposite the Munsters held up signs indicating that Dubliners were being shot by "British" troops, the Munsters sang "God Save the

King" to them. If the Anglo-Irish gentry officer corps could come to acquire "a deep sympathy" for their Gaelic Irish soldiers, if they could discover in the trenches of France "thousands of points on which we agreed" (as one such officer in the Connaught Rangers recalled), many of these men similarly developed some regard for their Protestant comrades.⁷³ Nora Robertson, whose Anglo-Irish father commanded the 15th (Irish) Division in World War I, recalled that "the general and unexpected affection and loyalty of the serving Irish to their Regimental Corps and officers" was "one of the unexplained contradictions which neither [Sinn Féiner nor Unionist could] fully understand." I don't think she misrepresents this "affection and loyalty," but I do think it can be explained. The British officer was no friend to Irish republicanism, but he knew his men, and his motto was "horses before men; men before officers." There were no cavalry horses to care for in the trenches of France (and few Gaelic-Irishmen in horse regiments anyway). In the trenches the officers generally put the welfare of their men before their own; the extent to which they did helps to explain some of that "affection and loyalty." Moreover quite independent of officers, the men who fought for four years beside "their pals" and who saw some of those pals die, must have found it very difficult as veterans to appreciate, indeed, to tolerate those who criticized their decision to fight in the first place and who scorned their sacrifices. One report has the wives of Irish soldiers campaigning against the Sinn Féin candidate in 1917 in the South Longford bi-election.⁷⁴ If their husbands had encouraged this course of action, it would not come as a total surprise.

Perhaps these points will be clearer if we consider the views of two Gaelic Catholic soldiers writing home from France after the Rising — Francis Ledwidge and Tom Kettle. Neither could be described entirely as typical, for both were quite articulate (one a poet, the other an orator and essayist), and both were more thoroughly involved in the Irish nationalist cause before the war than the typical Gaelic recruit. But in other ways they represent our Irish soldier well. Francis Ledwidge was a laborer, son of a landless laborer, whose initially quite crude poems were noticed by Irish literati a few years before the World War. He joined the Irish National Volunteers when they were organized in early 1914. In October he lined up with Eoin MacNeill's more militant faction, the Irish Volunteers, when that body split away from John Redmond's National Volunteers after Redmond began to advocate that Irishmen of all persuasions offer their services to the British regiments bound for France, in response to "the Prussian rape" of Belgium. Nonetheless, Ledwidge offered his own services in late 1914, to the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. In the trenches he learned of the Easter Rising. Shortly thereafter he became seriously ill and was sent to Britain to recuperate. A comrade from the Inniskillings visited him in these days and, struck by Ledwidge's distress at the executions of the Rising's leaders (among them Ledwidge's friend, Thomas MacDonagh), this comrade offered to help Ledwidge slip away and join Irish Volunteers bent on further action (something Ledwidge had said he was considering). On further consideration, however, Ledwidge told his comrade that he could not do so, as "it was against his principles to desert." He soon rejoined his unit in France and wrote a friend in early 1917 at his sense of being "a unit in the Great War, doing and suffering, admiring great endeavour, and condemning great dishonour. I may be dead before this reaches you, but I will have done my part." In June, shortly before his death in action, he congratulated a friend whose son had won some honor in the trenches: "Is not every honour won by Irishmen on the battlefields of the world Ireland's honour, and does it to tend to the glory and delight of her posterity?"

Tom Kettle held comparable views. He was the son of "Andy" Kettle, a small farmer, one of the leaders of the Land League of the late nineteenth century. He excelled in school and at the (Catholic) University College, Dublin, and was elected the first president of the Young Ireland Branch of the United Irish League. After a brief career as an M.P. from East Tyrone, he was, at the age of 29, appointed Professor of National Economics at University College. Prominent among the early Irish National Volunteers, he was secretly securing rifles for them in Belgium when the Germans invaded. He wrote angry columns for the next two months as war correspondent in Belgium for the *Daily News* and in November joined what he called the "Army of Freedom," as a junior officer in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He viewed the war as terrible and ugly, but (as he told his wife) as "God's only way to justice."

Kettle was not as sympathetic as was Ledwidge with those who led the Easter Rising; he was of two minds towards them. But after almost two years in the trenches, he had no such doubts about his comrades. "I have never seen anything in my life so beautiful," he wrote his brother in September, "as the clean and so to say radiant valour of my Dublin Fusiliers. There is something divine in men like that." Shortly before his death at the Somme he wrote a friend: "I have had two chances of leaving them — one on sick leave and one to take a staff job. I have chosen to stay with my comrades."⁷⁵

Throughout the "troubles" in 1919, 1920, and 1921, virtually all the Irish regiments remained quiet and loyal to their British commanders. Moreover, recruitment throughout Ireland for the British Army resumed after the World War had ended, and throughout the Irish War of Independence (from 15 January 1919 to 30 September 1921) some 20,000 Irishmen joined up! If one compares rates per hundred 17-year olds in the pre-war years from 30 September 1910 to 30 September 1913 with those from 17 January 1919 to 30 September 1921, and further divides the recruitment into the 5 predominantly Catholic southern regimental areas and the 3 predominantly Protestant northern ones (see Table I), then it appears that while the overall southern rate for 1910-1913 was 7.76/100 17-year-olds, in the 1919-1921 period it was 15.06/100, or *twice* the pre-war rate. Three qualifications of this remarkable fact must be offered: firstly, that the British Army *sought* twice as many men in the three post-war years as it had in the three pre-war ones, as demobilization stripped men from the ranks; secondly, that emigration had virtually ceased for Irishmen by 1919, and hundreds of jobless young Irishmen walked the streets;⁷⁶ thirdly, that while post-war southern Irish recruitment was double the pre-war rate, post-war *northern* recruitment was *four times* the pre-war rate — rising from 3.7/100 17 years olds in the 1910-1913 years to 14.6/100 in the years 1919, 1920 and 1921. Nonetheless, the southern regimental recruiting areas, which were 91% Catholic, continued to maintain a slightly higher recruitment rate during the War of Independence than the predominantly northern regimental recruitment areas, which were only 44.8% Catholic. While several thousand Irish Volunteers of Collins and Brugha fought the R.I.C., Black and Tans, Auxiliaries and regular army brigades, a larger number of young Gaels joined the British Army.

There was a notable exception to this pattern of "business as usual" in Irish depots. In mid-summer of 1920 some 61 men within two units of the Connaught Rangers stationed in India mutineed, in sympathy with those fighting for freedom in Ireland. At one point, after first surrendering their arms, men at one of the mutinous camps tried to regain their weapons and one of their non-mutinous comrades was killed. For this act one of the mutineers, Private Jim Daly, was tried and eventually executed.

TABLE 1

Average number of British Army recruits per 100 17-year-olds per year in regimental recruiting areas, 30 September 1910 to 30 September 1913 and 30 September 1919 to 30 September 1921 (with absolute figures for cities only, for 15 January 1919 to 30 September 1919).

<i>Regiment (with depots)*</i>	1910-13	1919 (Nos., for cities)	1919-21
<i>Northern</i>			
27th ("Inniskillings") (Omagh)	2.2		10.35
83rd (Royal Irish Rifles) (Belfast)	4.2	(Belfast) 2001	14.95
8th ("Faughs") (Armagh)	4.4		18.55
Average ** (Northern)	3.7		14.60
<i>Southern</i>			
18th ("Royal Irish") (Clonmel)	6.3		23.3
88th *** ("Connaught Rangers") (Galway)	2.0		6.55
100th ("Leinsters") (Birr and Mullingar)	8.3		13.15
101st ("Munsters") (Tralee and Cork)	6.9	(Cork) 1530	14.50
102nd ("The Dubs") (Naas and Dublin)	16.9	(Dublin) 1569	17.85
Average ** (Southern)	7.76		15.06

* Not all recruits joined the area regiment, though most did.

** Computed for 1910-13 by adding the number of recruits raised in the northern (and separately in the southern) recruiting areas over the three-year period and dividing by the sum of all 15, 16, and 17 year-old males in each area, based on the Irish census of 1911. Computed for 1919-21 by adding the numbers of recruits raised in the respective areas and dividing by 2/5ths of the number of 15-19 year olds in the respective areas, derived by extrapolation from the Northern Irish census of 1926 and the Irish Free State's census of 1926 (the first taken since 1911). (Use of a high age echelon from the census of 1926 might prove misleading because of the tendency of some men over 17 years of age to move about).

*** The low recruitment rates for the Connaught Rangers' area are worth a footnote's attention: They are clearly low. The Rangers themselves were at strength, October, 1909, and thereupon Ranger enlistment was ordered restricted to the Galway area at that time and was "confined to their own Special Reserve only" (H.F.N. Jourdain and E. Fraser, *The Connaught Rangers*, II [London, 1926], 392). Men might still have offered themselves in Galway for other regiments, but many may not have found the thought of service with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the Munsters or the Leinsters appealing. The fact remains, however, that the area had the lowest wartime

and postwar recruiting as well. (For that matter, recruitment rates for the Rangers in an earlier era, 1902-1906, was only 31% better than it was to be from 1909-1912.)

Why? A possible answer: Connaught is a region of small farms, 80.5% of which are under 30 acres in size. (1911 *Census*, p. 431). It could be that farmers' sons were being encouraged to stay home, and that there were few agricultural or urban laborers for the army to draw on. One man, who had considered enlisting in the Rangers in 1914 was discouraged from doing so by a more world-wise friend of the family: "Aw, they're all tinkers in the Rangers. You don't want to join the likes of them." (Conversation with Sean McCann, May 12, 1980) In any event, as Dr. Keith Jeffrey suggested to me, these low postwar recruitment figures *may* help to explain the mutiny of the Rangers units in India.

Sources: Recruits: G.B., Parliamentary Papers: General Annual Report of the British Army for year[s] ending 30 September 1911 (1912, 1913, 1919, 1920 and 1921) . . . on Recruiting (Cd 6065, Cd 7252, Cmd 1193, Cmd 1610, Cmd 1941).

Population: G.B., Parliamentary Papers: Accounts and Papers, 1912-1913 Session, Vol. CXVIII (1913): Population (Ireland) General Report, pp. 76-99, 210-211; Saorstat Eireann [Irish Free State], Census of Population: 18 April 1926: Vol. V, Pt. 1: Ages . . . (Dublin, 1929), 82-83; Government Census of Population of Northern Ireland, 1926: General Report (Belfast, 1929), 59, 411.

There is no denying the political character of this mutiny, or of the disinterested courage of those who joined it. One might note that the Connaught Rangers had far more difficulty than any other southern Irish regiment in obtaining recruits in the decade prior to the mutiny, and that its depot was sending men to India that other units might not have accepted for service. One might note, as did the regiment's commanding officer, that the mutiny had occurred after the two hottest days of the year, after hard work in heat of 120° F., or note, as does the chief historian of the event, that the officers remained curiously paralyzed throughout the first critical hours, indeed, the first days of the affair, when vigorous leadership might have averted or mitigated the scope of the mutiny. One might note that the mutinous behavior consisted (with the exception of the one attempt to repossess weapons) essentially in the men involved reporting themselves under arrest to the guardhouse and asking to be locked up. One might note that, after several unpleasant nights of arrest, when some of the men managed to slip away from their guards, they made no more use of this freedom than to walk 8 miles to a canteen, steal some food and cigarettes and return to the guardhouse! And one might note, as does the event's historian, that Private Daly's firing squad "were all Irishmen — and not one of them missed," or that another mutineer, released after several years imprisonment for his rather central part in the affair, now boasts of his son being a member of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers!⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the fact remains that great numbers of the Connaught Rangers *did* refuse to obey orders in June 1920, and that this protest was, at least in part, a political one. One can hardly be *surprised* to learn that such a thing could happen while "Black and Tans" and "Auxiliaries" were manhandling men, women and children in these men's homeland. Some of their friends and relatives *did* write to them of these acts, and some read of the more spectacular brutalities in English-language newspapers. What *may* be deemed surprising is that there were not more such mutinies among predominantly Irish units in the British military at this time.⁷⁸

On balance one *must* conclude that the typical Irish soldier was "willing," and "easily-managed," as one of his regimental commanders had written, that he was

“anglicized,” as his nationalist compatriots feared, that he served well those who paid him, that he “earned [his] keep.” Frederick Engels wrote in a Swiss paper in 1843: “Give me 200,000 Irishmen and I could overthrow the British empire.”⁷⁹ Engels may not have considered the fact that nearly as many Irishmen had already actively served to sustain that empire.

So much for the “serving” Irish soldier. How did he behave, what were his loyalties, once he had *left* the service? Before we can fairly address this question we ought briefly to examine what we know in general of the retired Irish soldier, for his world contains evidence that may help to account for those loyalties and political behavior.

6. The Irish Soldiers in Retirement: Well-Being and Political Perspectives. In the late nineteenth century a man serving for 7 years might leave the service and receive 21 pounds severance pay, a tidy sum. Were he to stay on another 14 years, he would receive a pension as well. A retired colour sergeant in 1892 received 65 pounds per year. One entering the service as a drummer boy or trumpeter at age 12 or 13 might retire at the ripe age of 31, with a pension of 25 pounds per year. These were not large sums, but they were respectable ones in Ireland, if the pensioner could supplement that income with something from a plot of land or a job as a caretaker, railroad worker, policeman, watchman, or postal worker. An average of 600 jobs per year were offered for former Irish soldiers in the Irish railroad systems in 1904-06 and 1909-11. Some 84 positions in the Dublin Metropolitan Police and Royal Irish Constabulary were provided to Irish veterans in the same years, as were 51% of all open positions in the Irish prison system. Employment Registers (units of which were located at each regimental HQ) helped over half the former servicemen who applied find jobs, mostly in the private sector or the Post Office.⁸⁰

Some, however, did have difficulty in finding decent employment. The Commander-in-Chief of British forces in Ireland, and the secretaries of several charitable funds for servicemen and their families, regularly received letters from veterans or their widows who were down on their luck. Such letters were dealt with quite seriously, and most responses to them included at least some financial assistance. When a sergeant's mess belonging to the Leinster Regiment raised 20 pounds each for the Irish Branch of the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association and the Lady Roberts Fund for the Wives and Families of Irish Soldiers in 1900, the director of the first of these thanked the men and noted that the 8 Irish regiments had by then suffered over 2000 casualties in the Boer War (or 25% of their complement). “Nearly 1800 families are on my books in Dublin alone and I am paying out on an average 100 pounds a day.” The fact that one man had been aided 6 times by the Woodman's Trust or Duke of Cambridge's Fund was noted on the occasion of his seventh request, but this one was, nonetheless, forwarded by British Army Headquarters in Ireland approvingly. Headquarters was also ready to help a pensioner gather letters of recommendation from former commanding officers, forwarded under cover of a letter from the Commander-in-Chief reporting relevant facts about the man's service record, and sometimes it would appeal specifically or generally on the serviceman's behalf to a potential employer. In 1892, for example, General Viscount Garnet Wolseley wrote to the Post Office Secretary on behalf of “Patrick Doyle, late sergeant in the Donegals,” and argued that “employment should be given to those who have already served Her Majesty in a military capacity if found eligible to be selected for a position in Your Department.”⁸¹

The veterans, then, were sometimes poor, but this most of them had always been, and many were better off both as soldiers and as veterans than they would have been without the the Service. We cannot forget that a real income of 50 or 60 pounds per annum (for a corporal, sergeant or retired sergeant) was quite respectable in *fin de siècle* Ireland. As one former Dublin civil servant recalled, throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries "individually 'the sojers' took their place in the scheme of things with dentists or bookmakers or any other skilled tradesman" (dentistry being what it was), and held a "median position in the public esteem."

The question remains: Were⁸² they open to anti-British arguments or impervious to them? Generally speaking, it appears that most were favorably inclined towards their former employer. Frank O'Connor's father, a retired army bandsman, seems to have been typical. He was proud of his army days and "would become emotional . . . about the goodness of the British Government and its considerations for its old servants" (treatment he contrasted with that displayed by private firms in the Cork area). His army pension "meant much more to him than" the money. It "gave him a personal interest in the British Government . . . [and] the prospect of a happy old age." His predecessors held similar views. When war came in 1854, 1899 and 1914, Irish veterans were among the first volunteers.⁸³

Were they "anglicized?" Not entirely; they retained an Irishness throughout. Indeed, such customs as the wearing of shamrock sprigs on St. Patrick's Day were distinctive features of the Irish regiments, sources of their pride and *esprit de corps*. But a few may have let some British customs and mannerisms rub off on them. Frank O'Connor had a boyhood friend, named O'Connell, whose father, a colour sergeant, "spoke in a cultured English voice that I tried to imitate."⁸⁴ When the Irish Free State created its own army in the early 1920s, it is clear that many of its original officer corps were former British Army NCOs, and that they borrowed some distinctively British customs, to the annoyance of those among them whose military service had been spent fighting the British, in the I.R.A.

And this brings us to our final question: how did the Irish veteran of the British Army react to Sinn Féin and the I.R.A.? This one is very hard to answer conclusively, as we do not know how Irish soldiers and veterans voted in the 1918 Irish election that saw Sinn Féin victorious, nor do we know precisely how many served with the I.R.A. We know that a *few* did so serve.⁸⁵ One has only to think of Major Emmet Dalton or of the veterans who assassinated Field Marshall Sir Henry Wilson in 1922 to know that. But we also know that several hundred Irish veterans of World War I rejoined the British Army in the years 1919 to 1921, and that while over a quarter of a million Irish veterans returned to Ireland with the demobilization, the I.R.A. never numbered more than 1,000 to 1,500 full-time personnel at any one time. We know of the decades-long tension between the I.R.A. veterans, on the one hand, and the Irish branch of the British Legion and more volatile Comrades of the Great War, on the other. And we know of individual veterans, like Frank O'Connor's father, who disapproved of his son's Sinn Féin activities; and of the veteran who complained in court in Ennis that his father and other relations were "Sinn Féiners, and since I came home they are always going on to me for joining the army." David Fitzpatrick found that many Irish veterans "hated" Sinn Féiners "for having kept out of the war and envied them their settled jobs."⁸⁶ Moreover, when W.T. Cosgrave and Michael Collins organized the Irish Free State National Army in 1922, some of the I.R.A. leadership viewed it as being (in the words of I.R.A. General Liam Tobin) "largely

officered by and recruited from ex-British soldiers, some of whom had fought against us in the War for Independence,” others of whom “were civilians when Irish freedom was fought for.” In fact, on November of 1922, another I.R.A. general, Liam Lynch, ordered the assassination of British army veterans who had joined the Free State Army.⁸⁷

Perhaps the most interesting (if only suggestive) evidence of a division between the I.R.A. and our “green redcoats” is the correlation between the post-war recruitment patterns described above, and the Irish vote on the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1922. The areas of weak support for British army recruitment (the western counties that comprise Connaught in particular) were also the areas that voted to reject the treaty and, in effect, to fight on for a republic and more Irish control over the Ulster counties. The areas where recruitment was strongest (Dublin, Cork and Leinster, in particular) were also the areas to offer the greatest support for the treaty.⁸⁸ The I.R.A.’s western ideological strongholds, regions of small farms and relatively fewer unpropertied laborers, were not the homes of the “green redcoats” of the twentieth century.

On balance, therefore, I think we can say that the Irish veteran of World War I tended to be somewhat less sympathetic to Sinn Féin and the I.R.A. than were others in the Southern Irish population.⁸⁹ Years of regimental socialization, job security and economic stability, memories of their war service, and of comrades lost in the trenches and mud of France or Gallipoli may not have been easily set aside in favor of a movement led by men, some better off than they, virtually all of whom had sat out the World War.

I do not mean either to identify with, or to criticize, the political and moral judgment of these Irish soldiers and veterans; others have voiced their sympathy or admiration, their distress or vilification. I have simply sought to show who these “green redcoats” were, what they believed, what they became, and why they remained better “regulars” than revolutionaries. If Irish soldiers and veterans of the British Army were not all transformed into non-commissioned models of the “modern major-general,” they were generally closer to that model than to the one expected of them by Wolfe Tone, John Devoy, or Patrick Pearse. They had entered upon their army careers essentially in search of economic security and status. When Irish nationalist revolutionaries, led by prominent fellow Gaels, aimed weapons at the heads of these Irish soldiers and their comrades, the gesture generally did not help to persuade our “green redcoats” that they had made the wrong choice. The Irish nationalist expected all patriots to join his comrades, but soldiers are already comrades, comrades-in arms, with their own small-group loyalties. And these loyalties are often stronger than the appeal of a nationalist fervor that no one could say will succeed and that was, in any event, no part of the daily life and hardships of most Irish soldiers in the British Army. Nationalism may, after all, be too expensive a passion for men without a clear future in the nation envisioned. Our “green redcoats” were neither the first nor the last lower class members of a British colonial system to serve in an army that was simultaneously stifling liberation impulses motivating others of their race or ethnic group.⁹⁰ I suggest furthermore, that they were characteristic of the ethnic soldiers in other colonial armies, past and present — subordinate, and not easily suborned.

FOOTNOTES

1. Lieutenant Colonel H.F.N. Jourdain, *Ranging Memories* (privately printed, Oxford, 1934), 150-51.
2. Thomas McDonough's more famous anglo-Irish compatriot, Henry Grattan, offered a similar warning in 1782: "though [we] would die in defense of British honour, [we] would first live or perish in support of Irish freedom." Padraig O'Snodaigh, "Nótaí ar Óglaigh, ar cheithearnaigh, ar Nhilisligh is ar Oráistigh Chontai na Gaillimhe [Notes on Galway yeomanry regiments of the late 18th century], *Galvia* XI (1977); 24.
3. The argument that military service may radicalize colonial or "neocolonial" troops may be seen in William Gutteridge, *The Military in African Politics* (London, 1969), 4; James Coleman, *Nigeria* (Berkeley, 1958), 254; John Helmer, *Bringing the War Home* (N.Y. 1974); David Cortwright, *Soldiers in Revolt* (N.Y., 1974); and Forrest McDonald, "The Relation of French Peasant Veterans of the American Revolution to the Fall of Feudalism in France, 1789-1792," *Agricultural History*, XXVI (1951); 151-161. The rebuttal may be seen in Kenneth W. Grundy and M. Shank, "African Ex-Servicemen and Independence Politics in British Africa," in Morris Janowitz and Jacques van Doorn, eds., *On Military Ideology* (Rotterdam, 1971), 225-243; Norma J. Wikler, "Vietnam and the Veterans Consciousness: Pre-Political thinking among American Soldiers," unpub. Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1973, 315-334; and M. Kent Jennings and G.B. Markus, "Political Participation and Vietnam-Era War Veterans: A Longitudinal Study," in Nancy Goldman and David Segal, eds., *The Social Psychology of Military Service* (Beverly Hills, 1976), 175-200.
4. Albert Tucker, "The Army in the Nineteenth Century," in Robin Higham, ed., *A Guide to the Sources of British Military History* (London, 1972), 221.
5. One who did *raise* the question, claimed that "any efforts to define the effects service in the British Army had upon the political outlook of Irishmen [in the late nineteenth century], once they had joined up and served for some time, are virtually hopeless; the variations defy simply analysis." The scholar I have quoted was answering a number of other questions in his study, which encompassed a time span less than a fifth as long as my own, whereas I have restricted my efforts essentially to those relevant to the questions at hand. In any event, I will attempt to answer these questions. David Haire, "The British Army in Ireland, 1868-1890," M. Litt. Thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 1977, p. 309.
6. Sean McCann, *The Fighting Irish* (London, 1972); Sir Charles Petrie, *The Jacobite Movement* (London, 1949), 103, 105; Maurice Hennessey, *The Wild Geese: The Irish Soldier in Exile* (London, 1973).
7. Anon., "Observations and Reflections upon the Present Military State of Prussia, Russia and France" (c. 1768), Chatham Papers, 30/8/89, Public Records Office, London; "The Gentlemen-Soldier," *Dublin University Magazine* XLVII (1856): 499.
8. LCOL Brian Clark, "Napoleon's Irish Legion, 1803-1815," *The Irish Sword* XII (1976), 165 ff; G.F.H. Berkeley, *The Irish Battalion in the Papal Army of 1860* (Dublin, 1929), 21, 23n, 220. Cf. Walter McGrath, "The Boer Irish Brigade," *The Irish Sword* V (1961), 59-60, who points out that many of the older Irishmen who fought for the Boers had been Fenians in their youth.
9. Diarmuid Murtagh in *The Irish at War*, ed. G.A. Hayes-McCoy (Cork, 1964), 69; Francis G. McManamin, *The American Years of John Boyle O'Reilly*, (New York, 1976), 21; G.A. Hayes-McCoy, "A Military History of the 1916 Rising," in *The Making of 1916*, ed. K.B. Nowlan (Dublin, 1969), 257; "The Irish Brigade" and "Patrick Sheehan" in *The Irish Soldier's Songbook* (Dublin, n.c., ca. 1917); David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913-1921* (Dublin, 1977), 202; C.D. Greaves, *The Life and Times of James Connolly* (London,

1961), 16, 23; Charles Townshend, "The I.R.A. and the Development of Guerilla Warfare, 1916-1921," *English Historical Review* XCIV (1979): 323.

10. Sir Henry McAnally, *The Irish Militia, 1793-1816* (London, 1961), 126-129; 33; D.A. Chart, "The Irish Levies During the Great French War," *English Historical Review* XXXII (1917); 506, 513. The refusal of St. Mary's residents to serve occurred in 1809, during the second ballot in Ireland.

Those Irishmen living in England who organized volunteer companies in 1859, during the French war scare, also tended to be a propertied sort. According to one account, the Liverpool Irish Volunteers of 1859 "started among the middle class and prosperous Irishmen who had come over to England long before." Entrance fees and subscriptions were required of all, and a comparable population came forward in 1900 when the Liverpool Irish sent 200 to serve Britain against the Boers. D. Mills-Roberts in *The Irish Sword* XI (1972): 231; F. Forde, "The Liverpool Irish Volunteers," *The Irish Sword* X (1971): 111, 121. Cf. H.V. Hanham, "Religion and Nationality in the Mid-Victorian Army," in *War and Society*, ed., M.R.D. Foot (London, 1973), 172-73. The London Irish Volunteers, also organized in 1859 by subscription, are described in Michael MacDonagh, "The London Irish," *The Irish Soldier* (Oct. 1, 1918), 11.

11. Paul O'Higgins, "Nationalist Recruiting in Ireland, 1914-1916," unpublished Honours Thesis, University College, Dublin, 1974-75, pp. 20-28.

12. G.B., *Statement Giving Particulars regarding men of military age in Ireland* (London, H.M.S.O., 1916), 2; G.B., *Report of Recruiting in Ireland* (London, H.M.S.O., 1916), 4; Fitzpatrick, *Politics*, 111; Henry Harris, *The Irish Regiments in the First World War* (Cork, 1968), 15-16, 30; Bishop O'Dwyer, *Catholic Bulletin*, V (December 1915), 883, cited in Mary Golden, "The Irish Catholic Church and the First World War, 1914-1918," unpublished Honours thesis, University College, Dublin, 1975, p. 11; Lynn H. Lees, *Exiles of Erin* (Ithaca, 1979), 242-43; Patrick Buckland, *Irish Unionism*, I, (Dublin, 1972), 29-31, 40; *The Pals of Suvla Bay* (Dublin, 1917), 13-17, appendix.

13. I base this judgment on a reading of a British recruiting pamphlet, *Volunteers from Eire who have won distinctions serving with the British Forces* (London, 1945), which provides the names and brief biographies of honored men. Surnames and schools are my evidence, albeit imperfect, of religious persuasion and class.

14. McCann, *Fighting Irish*, 77.

15. McAnally, *Irish Militia*, 283, Chart, "Irish Levies . . .", *op. cit.*, 505.

16. A. Godley, *Life of An Irish Soldier* (London, 1939); *Colonel Charles Ball-Action*, ed. Arnold Green (n.p., 1906).

17. Major J.S.S. Baker to Captain W.S. Fergusson, May, 1892, pp. 45-46, Volume 186, Kilmainham Papers, National Library of Ireland.

18. Derived by computing ratios from per capita figures for officers and men in D. Haire, "British Army . . .", 293-295.

19. See, for example, J.F. Lydon, "Ireland's participation in the Military Activities of English kings in the 13th and early 14th centuries," Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1955.

20. In the meantime, ban or no, Irish Catholics continued to find their way into the ranks of some British regiments. Thus in 1771 the 15th Foot was said to be almost entirely Catholic, and the private army of the East India Company, unable to find willing Protestants for the perilous service in India turned to willing Irish Catholics. Arthur Gilbert has concluded that

as many as 50% of the East India Company's recruits were of Irish extraction in the 1770s and '80s, most of them Catholics. S.H.F. Johnston, "The Irish Establishment," *The Irish Sword* I (1949): 34-35. (For evidence of the poverty of Celtic Irish recruits in the Continental Line and State Militia units see David N. Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America, 1760-1802* [Dublin, 1980], 137, 142.) Arthur Gilbert, "Recruitment and Reform in the East India Company Army, 1760-1800," *Journal of British Studies* XV (1975): 93, 99, 100.

21. Some in the British Government worried that Catholics considering service outside of Ireland, or in non-Irish regiments, might be offended by the Anglican services they would be compelled to attend. In 1806 Lord Bedford, the Lord Lieutenant for Ireland, wrote the First Lord of the Treasury, Lord William Grenville, that this had "come to the knowledge of the Irish Catholics and has very essentially impeded the recruiting service among them; so much so that I am informed not single Catholic has enlisted in the county of Kilkenny [a Roman Catholic county] for a considerable length of time." But Bedford appears to have exaggerated the problem. Long before the act that allowed Catholic troops their own chaplains and religious services was passed in Parliament, Irish Catholics had come forward in greater numbers than the Crown had sought, to offer themselves for service of long duration outside of Ireland. Bedford to Grenville, September 13, 1806, Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Vol. 107, Fortescue MSS, Vol. 8* (London, 1912), 329.

22. McAnally, *Irish Militia*, 245; Victor Hadden, "The Carlow Militia," *Carloviana*, I, No. 9 (December 1960), 20. Needless to say, a vast number of Irish joined the Royal Navy as well.

23. Thus in 1889 Roman Catholic priests in Connaught were reported to have been warning young women against fraternization with "bigoted Protestant" soldiers belonging to English and Scottish military units stationed in the Galway military district, but were offering no such warnings with regard to the Connaught Rangers, "their being almost all natives of this country and [largely Catholic] place," Lieutenant P.L. Bellamy, Officer-in-Charge, Galway, March 8, 1889, quoted in D. Haire, "British Army . . .," 255.

24. Some 35% of the rank and file of an unnamed English regiment stationed at Clonmel in 1826 were said to have been Irish Catholics. In 1839, and again in 1843, 3 of every 5 men of the nominally South Hampshire 67th foot were reported to be Irish. Of the Europeans in the East India Company's Bengal Army of the mid-nineteenth century (the future "Royal Dublin Fusiliers") fully half were Irish (prompting Rudyard Kipling to populate many of his Indian Army tales with Irish sergeants). Of the 22 East India Company winners of the Victoria Cross during the Bengal Mutiny crisis, no less than 14 were Irish by name or birth. John C. O'Callaghan, *The Irish in the English Army and Navy and the Irish Arms Bill . . .* (Dublin, 1843), 12; C.T. Atkinson, "The Irish Regiments of the Line in the British Army," *The Irish Sword*, I, No. 1 (1949): 23; Colonel J.E. Nelson, "Irish Soldiers in the Great War: Some Personal Experiences," *The Irish Sword* XI (1974): 177; Sir Patrick Cadell, "Irish Soldiers in India," *The Irish Sword* Vol. I, No. 2, (1950-51): 78-79.

25. H.V. Hanham, "Religion and Nationality in the Mid-Victorian Army," in *War and Society*, ed. M.R.D. Foot (London, 1973), 162, 176-181; Haire, *op. cit.*, 293; G.B., *General Annual Return of the British Army for the year 1889: Parliamentary Papers: 1890*, XLIII (Accounts and Papers, Vol. 111), 84.

26. Father Stephen Hayes, S.J., to Father [____], October 20, 1887, in Society of Jesus, *Letters and Notices*, XIX (1887-88), 248 (available at Society of Jesus, Prov. Hibernia, Milltown Park, Dublin).

27. Peter Verney, *The Micks: The Story of the Irish Guards* (London, 1879), 17. In 1966, according to Verney, 80% of the Irish Guards battalion stationed in Aden was Irish-born.

28. Thomas Pelham, the Irish Secretary, reported that a count of several regiments from different Irish provinces in 1796 had revealed that about 70% were "manufacturers

[artisans] and mechanics." The Duke of York expressed a similar view, and in 1802 when the Commander of the Donegal militia was directed to name the number of linen weavers in his ranks, he returned the names of 185 men, a third of the unit. McAnally, *Irish Militia*, 99n., 218, 47, 269.

29. D.R. Skelley, *The Victorian Army at Home*, (Montreal, 1977), 291.

30. D. Haire, "British Army. . . .," 284. Similarly, some 65% of the 23,000 more prestigious Irish militiamen in 1889 were recorded as being agricultural laborers, another 18% were "artisans or laborers." Once one subtracts those counted as "boys" there were few who could be described as skilled or propertied. G.B., *General Annual Report of the British Army* . . . (1889), 105. Cf. Deputy Surgeon-General W.G. Don, "Recruits and Recruiting," *Royal United Service Institute Journal* XXXIII (1899): 832, for London recruiting figures for 1885-1888, which, not surprisingly, show a higher percentage of skilled, professionals and students.

31. D. Haire, *op. cit.*, 284.

32. Ernie O'Malley, *Army Without Banners* (Boston, 1937), 21; J.E. Nelson "Irish Soldiers" *Irish Sword* XI (1974): 166. Cf. C.S. Andrews, *Dublin Made Me* (Dublin, 1979), 12; and Nora Robertson, *Crowned Harp* (Dublin, 1960), 54.

33. See the evidence encompassed by end notes 12, 13, and 14.

34. "Circular letter" reprinted in A.C. Hepburn, ed., *The Conflict of Nationality in Modern Ireland* (New York, 1980), 92.

35. G.C. Duggan, "The Royal Irish Constabulary," in *1916: The Easter Rising*, ed. O.D. Edwards and Fergus Pyle (London, 1968), 92.

As with the Irish officers and men in the army, the R.I.C. rank and file were Catholic, but the top brass (inspectors) were disproportionately Protestant. (See G.B., Parliament, *The Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, 61, p. 476 [14 July, 1898].)

36. Joseph Lee, "Rural Unrest in Nineteenth Century Ireland," in Issac Chiva's forthcoming collection of essays on European social history.

37. Angela Dillon, "Recruiting in Clare, 1790 and 1794," *The Irish Sword* (1958), 283; Lord Grenville to William Elliott, Dec. 20, 1806. H.M.C., *Vol. 107: Fortesque Mss*, Vol. 8 (London, 1912), 481; cf. p. 486.

38. McAnally, *Irish Militia*, 263; Rev. James Hall, *Tour Through Ireland* (2 vols.) (London, 1813), II, 165.

39. *Irish Sword* (Winter, 1956), 366-67. Cf. Sgt. William Crutchlow [of the Connaught Rangers], *Tale of an Old Soldier* (London, 1937), 57, for a similar account of the comfortable life, good food, and light discipline of the Connaught Rangers of 1909 in India; and see Lieutenant William Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, 1809-1814*, ed. Charles Oman (London, 1902), 84-85: "an Irish fellow [in the Army] 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.*"

40. D. Haire, "British Soldier" 287; Col. J.E. Nelson, "Irish Soldiers in the Great War: Some Personal Experiences," *The Irish Sword* XI (1974): 166; G.B., *Parliamentary Accounts and Papers: Trade: Wages* (1893-94 Session), Vol. 34, Part II, 454-55, 466.

41. Sergeant A.V. Palmer, "A Private Soldier on the private soldier's wrongs," *19th Century* XXVIII (1890): 328, quoted in Haire.

42. *Irish Sword* I (1949): 34; *Ibid.*, (1958), 283; anon., "Irishmen and the British Army," c. 1914, National Library of Ireland.

43. Henry Harris, *The Irish Regiments in the First World War* (Cork, 1968), 4ff; McCann, *Fighting Irish*, 77; Edward Costello, *The Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns*, ed., A. Brett Jones (London, 1967), 1; *The Faugh-a-Ballagh Song Book* (New York, 1903), 31, 118; *The Donegal's Own*, II (September 1901), 6. Cf. Pat. O'Donnell, *The Irish Faction Fighters of the 19th Century* (Dublin, 1975); anon., *An Appeal to the Public; or, the Humble Remonstrance of the Five-Foot-Highians against the Antichristian Practice of Using a Standard in Enlisting of Soldiers* (Dublin, 1733), 4 ("Is not Courage the Principle Qualification in a Soldier?"). See, H.F.N. Jourdain, *Ranging Memories* (Oxford, 1934), 21-22, 34, 52-54; and *The Faugh-a-Ballagh Song Book*, 34-5, 89, 132, 161, for militaristic soldiers' songs.

With regard to evidence of the views of nineteenth-century Irish youth towards service in the British Army that may be ascertained in folksong, I do not want to give the impression that this evidence points in only one direction. At least one song of the Napoleonic Era, "Arthur McBride," clearly indicates that not all poor Irishmen were willing to serve the crown.

44. Verney, *The Micks*, 37; Harris, *Irish Regiments*, 41; Michael MacDonagh, *The Irish at the Front* (London, 1916), 88; I confess that the unnamed Dublin Fusilier who wrote home of the "long exciting rugger [rugby] match" may have thereby identified himself as a Protestant, and may also have been of the upper-middle class, but Catholics did play rugby by 1915. In any event, the feistiness of Irishmen is imbedded in enough jokes, tales and legends of popular culture to bear out my general hypothesis. I add one more story, often told, of a Cork man who served as a bombardier on a RAF bomber, and while arguing one night over Berlin with his crewmates about the virtues of Ireland's Prime Minister, Eamon De Valera, remarked, while sighting the bombs, "I'll tell ye one thing — old 'Dev' did for us. He kept us out of this f---g war!"

It's also worth noting that Irish-born Americans were the recipients of over 36% of all Congressional medals of honour awarded to foreign-born soldiers in the U.S. between 1863 and 1963, years when the Irish constituted only about 18% of the foreign-born population of the U.S. William D. O'Ryan and Colonel Robert Gaynor, "Irish Recipients of Awards for Bravery in the U.S. Armed Forces, 1863-1963," *The Irish Sword* VIII (1968): 275; Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstracts of the U.S.*, Series C 218-283, p. 66.

45. "An Irishman," *My Countrymen* (London, 1929), 290.

46. D. Haire, "British Soldier . . . ," 287; Sam Pollock, *Mutiny for the Cause* (London, 1969), 97.

47. Kilmainham Papers, Vol. 225 (1894), pp. 46-47, 76, National Library of Ireland; H. Harris, *Irish Regiments*, 187. Sean McCann (b. 1896) of Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare, said nothing of penury when explaining the decisions of four of his relations who had enlisted in various regiments prior to 1914. Rather, he said: "The army, it was in their blood, in their blood . . . their fathers' before them; understand?" (Conversation with author, May 12, 1980).

48. C.S. Andrews, *Dublin Made Me* (Dublin, 1979), 12; Nora Robertson, *Crowned Harp* (Dublin, 1960), 55.

49. Bulmer Hobson in *The Irish Volunteers, 1913-1915: Recollections and Documents*, ed. F.X. Martin (Dublin, 1963), 17.

50. *The Nation* (May 13, 1843), 3; anon., *Traitors to Ireland*: (Dublin, June 1905); anon., *Irishmen!* (Dublin, 1914).

51. Hayes-McCoy, "Military History. . . ," in *Making of 1916*, ed. Nolan, 316.

52. *The Irish at War*, ed., G.A. Hayes-McCoy (Cork, 1964), 106-07. No less than 37% of England's forces facing O'Neill's Gaelic and Anglo-Norman Irish in 1598 were Gaelic Irish themselves, and another 25% were Palesmen.

In fact, the commander of French forces at the battle of Clooney later told his British captors that "the [Celtic] Limerick militia behaved gallantly" though they had been "ill-posted and ill-conducted" by their Anglo-Irish officers. *Correspondence of Charles, 1st Marquis Cornwallis*, ed. Charles Ross (3 vols., London, 1859), II, 402.

53. Henry A. Richey, *A Short History of the Royal Longford Militia, 1793-1893* (Dublin, 1894), 10, 59; McAnally, *Irish Militia*, 126-129, 324-326.

A number of captured "Defenders" and United Irishmen chose military service to court-martial in 1798. Some 1300 of "the Culprits" were still in West Indian garrisons as late as 1803, and many of those earned the praise of their commanders. Chart, "Irish Services . . .," *loc. cit.*

54. Court-Martial of Edward Power, *et. al.*, July 16, 1798, 620/3/16/13, Rebellion Papers, State Papers Office, Dublin Castle.

55. ----to Lord Rossmore, Apr. 26, 1798, 620/36/74, Rebellion Papers, State Papers Office, Dublin Castle; Edward Cooke to William Wickham, September 11, 1798, *Corr. of Cornwallis*, ed., Ch. Ross, II, 402; court-martial of Pat. Walsh, *et. al.*, 620/3/25/6, Rebellion Papers, State Papers Office, Dublin Castle. (I am indebted to Professor R.B. McDowell of Trinity College, Dublin, for telling me of the Walsh court-martial.)

56. Court-martial of Pat. Walsh, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, and report of an anonymous informer, 620/6/71/4, Rebellion Papers, State Papers Office, Dublin Castle.

57. Cornwallis to Portland, June 28, 1798, *Correspondence of Cornwallis*, II, 355.

In this regard, it is worth noting that many, perhaps *most*, of the Irish soldiers who turned against the Crown in 1798 appear to have been *Protestant* United Irishmen, often from Ulster. Thus Viscount Castlereagh, the Chief Secretary in *Ireland*, wrote to England on November 23, 1798, identifying Northern Presbyterians as those especially guilty "of the treason in which they had very deeply embarked," and Captain Henry Taylor, aide to Cornwallis, wrote to the same address on August 21, 1798, alleging that "conspiracy and desertion" in Irish military units were "confined in great measure to the northern [Ulster] regiments." *Correspondence of Cornwallis*, II, 444, 388.

"The Bold Belfast Shoemaker" of the folk song, however, who deserted his militia unit near Chapelizod (west of Dublin) in 1798 may have been a Catholic, for he joined Father John Murphy's army and fought at New Ross. (In his words: "I'd be no more a slave to them, my officer I told/For to work upon a Sunday with me did not agree./ That was the very time, brave boys, I took my liberty.") Colm O Lochlainn, *Irish Street Ballads* (Dublin, 1939), 50-51.

Professor R.D. McDowell of Trinity College, Dublin, is engaged in an extensive study of the United Irishmen that should be published soon, and that will lay to rest such questions as whether Connaught Gaels or Ulster Scot-Irish or Leinster gentry, etc., were more or less prominent among "Croppies" ranks in 1798.

58. Court-Martial of John Bray, *et. al.*, 620/2/14/5, Rebellion Papers, State Papers Office, Dublin Castle.

59. See, for example, court-martial of Edward Power, *et. al.*, 620/3/16/13; and court-martial of John Bray, *et al.*, 620/2/14/5, Rebellion Papers, State Papers Office, Dublin Castle.

60. O'Callaghan, *The Irish in the English Army* . . . (Dublin, 1843), 11-12, 14.

61. *Sir William Butler: An Autobiography* (London, 1911), I, 12, 17; Jourdain and Fraser, *The Connaught Rangers*, (3 vols., London, 1924-26), I, 145n; E.H. Sheehan, *Nenagh and its Neighborhood* (Nenagh, 1949), 91-92.

62. John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel* (N.Y., 1929), I, 60, 62, 68. Desmond Ryan largely accepts Devoy's account in "Stephens, Devoy, Tom Clarke," in *The Shaping of Modern Ireland*, ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien (London, 1960); and *The Phoenix Flame* (London, 1937), 166.

63. A.J. Semple, "The Fenian Infiltration of the British Army in Ireland, 1864-1867," M. Litt, thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 1971, pp. 25-26, 38, 56, 95, 101, 150, 162, 168, 185; D. Haire, "British Army . . .," 137, 138.

Rudyard Kipling's story, "The Mutiny of the Mavericks," in *Life's Handicap* (London, 1891), depicts the efforts of a Fenian-like group to suborn Irishmen in an Indian Army regiment, men who were "sons of small farmers in County Clare, shoeless vagabonds of Kerry, herders of Bally-vegan [sic], much wanted 'moonlighters' from the bare rainy headlands of the south coast." Kipling's Irish soldiers (the "Mavericks," or "Royal Loyal Musketeers") humor the rebel recruiter only because they are being treated to free refreshments of an intoxicating sort. Semple, correctly I think, does not venture quite so callous a motivation as this for the behavior of those who imbibed with the Fenians and took their oath. But it is conceivable, given the social significance of the small-unit drinking circle in Ireland, that some drinking comrades of oath-takers were drawn into the act themselves essentially as a consequence of the dynamics of the situation.

64. D. Haire, "British Army . . .," 116-118, 166, 291-92.

65. Some 25.4% of the Royal Scots Fusiliers faced courts-martial in 1889; only 12.8% of the Royal Irish Rifles, 10.1% of the Royal Leinster, 9.2% of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and 7.3% of the Connaught Rangers did so. G.B., *General Annual Return of the British Army for the Year 1889, Parliamentary Papers, Vol. XLIII* (London, 1890) (Accounts and Papers Vol. III), III; and G.B., *Army Courts-Martial Returns for 1891 for Each Regiment, Parliamentary Papers, Vol. LII*, (London, 1893) (Accounts and Papers, Vol. III). (But see A.R. Skelley, *The Victorian Army at Home* [Montreal, 1977], 133-34, 315, for evidence of the over-representation of Catholics in military prisons.)

66. Haire, "Br. Army . . .," 226-235; *The Maple Leaf* [monthly journal of the 1st Battalion of the Royal Leinsters] II, No. 12 (April, 1896), p. 90. See *The Faugh-a-Ballagh: The Regimental Gazette of the 87th Royal Irish Fusiliers, VIII-XI* (1909-1912), in The National Library of Ireland for evidence of the time and attention devoted to field and track, marksmanship, soccer, rugby and other sports in Irish regiments.

67. *The Donegal's Own* [monthly journal of the 5th Battalion of the Royal Inniskillings] II (1901), p. 4; *The Maple Leaf*, VI, No. 9 (January 15, 1900), 74-75. *The Faugh-a-Ballagh* VIII (1909): 18. See also *The Maple Leaf*, VI, No. 11, p. 86, for a sentimental poem concerning the death of a young Irish soldier "for England's Queen." Cf. *History of the Great National Banquet given to the Victorious Soldiers returned from the Crimean War and stationed in Irish Garrisons by the People of Ireland in the City of Dublin, October 22, 1856* (Dublin, 1858), 42-45, 47.

68. See, for example, John Bayles, *Morale: A Study of Men and Courage: The Second Scottish Rifles at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, 1915* (London, 1967).

69. Sociologist Sarah Nelson has more recently found that service in the British Army by Ulster Protestants "served to give primacy to British identity over either their potential Ulster or Protestant identities." Cited in Cynthia H. Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (Athens, Ga., 1979), 10.

70. Anon., "Traitors to Ireland" (June, 1905); Nat. Lib. of Ireland; "Irishmen" (c. 1914) Nat. Lib. of Ireland; *Irish Volunteers*, ed. Martin, 20, 168-69, 200, 53.

71. "An Irishman," *My Countrymen*, 270-71; Irish Unionist Alliance, "Under Which Flag? An Appeal to the Electors of Great Britain" (c. 1918), National Library of Ireland. See also Alan Ward, "Lloyd George and the 1918 Irish Conscription Crisis," *Historical Journal* (1974), for evidence that the recruiting shortfall in 1917 and 1918 seriously alarmed British leaders.

72. Verney, *Micks*, 133; B.L. Reid, *The Lives of Roger Casement* (New Haven, 1976), 249-250; Michael MacDonagh, *The Irish at the Front* (London, 1916), 20-30; *The Irish Soldier* [a British Army newsletter for Irishmen in British Service] (September 1, 1918), passim; (September 16, 1918), p. 7. Cf. Sam Pollock, *Mutiny for the Cause* (London, 1969), 24.

73. Hayes-McCoy, "Military History . . .," in *Making of 1916*, 267, 316; Ernie O'Malley, *Army Without Banners* (Boston, 1937), 35; Verney, *Micks*, 45-46, 73; Buckland, *Irish Unionism*, I, 38; Bryan Cooper, *The 10th Division in Gallipoli* (London, 1918), 253.

74. Nora Robertson, *Crowned Harp* (Dublin, 1960), 55-56; Mary Golden, "Irish Catholic Church . . .," *op. cit.*, p. 24. (I thank Dr. David Doyle of U.C.D. for suggesting the Robertson book.)

75. Alice Curtayne, *Francis Ledwidge* (London, 1972), 77-78, 160, 170, 183; Thomas Kettle, *The Day's Burden and Other Essays* (Dublin, 1968), 18, 22.

76. Emigration of Irish males dropped from 17,737 in 1910 to 1,137 in 1919. W.E. Vaughan and A.J. Fitzpatrick, *Irish Historical Statistics* (Dublin, 1978), 265. (I thank Dr. David Doyle of University College, Dublin, for the advice that led to this piece of evidence.)

I must also note here my indebtedness to Dr. Keith Jeffrey of Ulster Polytechnic for the useful exchange of information and ideas pertaining to recruitment in the pre- and post-war years. We are not in complete agreement regarding the significance of these figures, however; hence I invite the reader to watch for Dr. Jeffrey's own views on Irish recruitment in these years, which I expect will appear in the near future.

77. Sam Pollock, *Mutiny for the Cause* (London, 1969), 78-79, 86, 95, 97. Cf. T.P. Kilfeather, *The Connaught Rangers* (Dublin, 1969).

78. Two machineguns were smuggled to the Press Secretary of the Irish Delegation to the London Anglo-Irish Peace Conference in November, 1921, by an Irish Guard sergeant, whose trial for this act was quashed by British authorities fearful of undesirable public reaction. But I know of no other evidence of political gestures or acts by Irish soldiers during "The Troubles." (I am indebted to Dr. Keith Jeffrey of Ulster Polytechnic for the information regarding the Irish Guardsman).

To be sure, there was another mutiny of Irish soldiers in the British Army in the early twentieth century, the "Mutiny at the Curragh" (a garrison west of Dublin), in early 1914. But *this* one was not led by Gaelic-Irish privates seeking Irish freedom, but by Anglo-Irish officers who hoped to *prevent* "Home Rule" for Ireland. The plans of Asquith's Liberal Government for Irish "Home Rule" frightened Anglo-Irish "Unionists," who preferred to leave unsullied the imperial bonds. Generals Henry Wilson and Hubert Gough, Anglo-Irishmen, championed the cause their fellow Anglo-Irish officers pressed, and signalled loudly and clearly to London that the Army in Ireland would not cooperate in implementing any policy of political devolution on the island. (Officers may find it easier to organize resistance to political leadership and policies than do enlisted men in a well-run army for the obvious reasons of power, authority, and discipline.) See A.P. Ryan, *Mutiny at the Curragh* (London, 1956).

In contrast to the generally effective management of Irish troops, and the resulting high morale of most such troops, that I have described herein, Ronald Spector recently described the "utter ineffectiveness of leadership at all levels" of the Royal Indian Navy in the 1940s, and the "progressive alienation of the ratings [sailors]" as a consequence. This alienation, and not any ideological or nationalist impulses external to the Royal Indian Navy, produced

a "strike" (or mutiny) of the Royal Indian Navy in 1946. The Royal Indian *Army*, however, was equitably managed; its morale level remained high throughout the period and it was actually used to overcome its naval compatriots. Spector, "The Royal Indian Navy Strike of 1946: A Study of Cohesion and Disintegration in Colonial Armed Forces," *Armed Forces and Society* VII (1978): 282.

79. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question* (New York, 1972), 33. Engels leaves the reader in doubt as to level of sophistication of his understanding of the Irish, however, with his very next sentence: "The Irishman is a light-hearted, cheerful, potato-eating child of nature." In fifty years of writing and two hundred pages of attention to Irish issues, Engels does not mention the recruitment of Irish soldiers by the British. Marx, however, does take note of the process, briefly in *Das Kapital*, I, ch. XXV.

80. G.B., *Parl. Papers, General Annual Report on British Army for years ending 30 September 1911, Recruiting* (War Office, 1912, Cd 6065), 16-18; *The Maple Leaf*, No. 13 (May, 1896). G.B., *General Annual Report on the British Army for . . . 1906*, Parliamentary Papers, 1907 (Cd 3365), Vol. IX, pp. 27.

Pat Hurley of Sligo, interviewed by folklorists in 1937, said that his grandfather had retired in the late 1880s as a sergeant with a pension of 70 pounds per year, which seems high, but could have been inflated by the grandson's memory of what the pension could buy. Ms. Vol. 463, p. 171, Archives of the Department of Irish Folklore, University College, Dublin. Some former servicemen, especially those who left at a comparatively young age, picked up a few pounds as British Army reservists, all of whom were ex-soldiers.

81. *The Maple Leaf*, VI, No. 11 (Mar. 15, 1900), 90-91; Wolseley to Post Office Secretary, June 21, 1892, p. 25, Vol. 225, Kilmainham Papers, National Library of Ireland (See also p. 20 and pp. 35-36 of the same volume for a comparable letter to a Railroad Superintendent and *passim*); correspondence concerning Michael Neill, formerly of the Connaught Rangers, March-April, 1892, pp. 23-24, Vol. 186, Kilmainham Papers, N.L.I.

Many regiments retained a close social relationship with retired NCO's especially example, the obituaries in *The Faugh-a-Ballagh*, as in X (Oct. 1911), p. 125.

Such aid was not always decisive, and low income was too often the pensioner's plight. General Sir William Butler recalled meeting 9 Irish veterans of the Napoleonic Wars in 1858, and said of them that they were "happy if they had a bench at a cottage door to look out from in summer evenings, less happy as it too often came about, that the outlook was the blank wall of a workhouse yard." In 1905 approximately 10% of all men in 159 workhouses and nursing clinics throughout Ireland were military pensioners, evidence that as many as 1,000 retired Irish soldiers, and especially those of advanced years, were unable to manage without some public assistance.

William Butler, *The Clan and The Boats' Crew* (Cork, 1908). Figures on poor pensioners in 1905 derived from tables in *Parl. Papers, Accounts and Papers: 1906: Vol. 52: Report of Vice-Regal Commission on the Poor Law and Relief in Ireland*, Vol. I (Dublin, 1906), 16, 56-57.

82. "An Irishman," *My Countrymen*, 270.

83. Frank O'Connor [O'Donovan], *An Only Child* (London, 1961), 24-25; Harris, *Irish Regiments*, 2. Cf. Elizabeth Muener, "A National Reserve for Ireland: The Story of an Aborted Force, 1910-1914," *Irish Sword*, XIII (1977): 146.

84. O'Connor, *Only Child*, 19. This man lived in Cork, but may, of course, have been born and bred in England.

Ernie O'Malley spoke of a man with "no trace of brogue" having "a polished 'garrison accent.'" O'Malley, *Army without Banners*, 26.

85. Ernie O'Malley mentions only "a few ex-soldiers" among the ranks of the I.R.A. units he served with or led; O'Malley, *op. cit.*, 84, 115, 384.

86. H. Harris, *Irish Regiments*, 75; "An English Officer's Son" [W.F.P. Stockley], *Ireland Today Under England* (London, 1921), 10-11; D. Fitzpatrick, *Irish Politics*, 162, 163, 202; O'Connor, *An Irish Boyhood*, 202. Edward MacLysaght, quoting from one of his diary entries for 1918, says that Irishmen on home leave from the British Army were "far from antagonistic to Sinn Féin," but he does not report their joining the I.R.A. upon demobilization. (MacLysaght, *Changing Times*. [Gerrards Cross, 1978], 88). Note also that the leader of another Irish republican revolutionary group, the Triangle Dynamitards of the 1880s, Tom Clarke, had a father who was a sergeant in the British Army and who "often remonstrated with his son on his passion to overthrow British rule." D. Ryan, "Stephens, Devoy, Tom Clark," in C.C. O'Brien, ed. *Shaping of Modern Ireland*, 36.

T.P. Kilfeather reported that when the Connaught Ranger mutineers, upon being released from British prisons after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Peace, returned to the Irish Free State, they were courted by both I.R.A. and Free State factions. Several joined the Free State Army and fought the I.R.A. "because soldiering was the only trade they knew." (Kilfeather, *Connaught Rangers*, 211).

87. Major General Liam Tobin, *The Truth about the Army Crisis* (Dublin, 1924), 4, 11 (italics in original); H. Harris, *Irish Regiments*, 201-206; *Ireland in 1932* (Beverly Hills, 1975), 31. Cf. Nora Robertson, *Crowned Harp* (Dublin, 1960), 56-57, who notes that former "Dubs" were "hated" by I.R.A. veterans and that Tom Kettle's bust in St. Stephen's Green was twice destroyed by republicans.

In 1926, when the Irish Government cut back on the size of its Army, a number of its NCOs found employment (for many of them *re-employment*) in the British Army. Denis Gwynn, *The Irish Free State, 1922-27* (London, 1928), 181.

One of those whom General Tobin so castigated, a man who had been a sergeant in the British Army before joining the Free State Army as a lieutenant in 1922, told a story to his nephew (who repeated it to me) which may serve to illustrate the gap between these former British soldiers and former I.R.A. men, their new comrades in the Irish Free State Army. Lieutenant Doyle had attended regimental mess dinners while in the British Army, and he was consequently more sure of himself and his etiquette at the first such banquets of his Irish Free State regiment. On one occasion, seeing celery stalks before him arranged vertically beside a "dip," he reached out, took one, "dipped" it and began to eat, whereupon an officer of rural, I.R.A. lineage at the opposite end of the table was overheard to remark: "Would you look at him now. He's eating the flowers!"

89. While conducting research on this subject in Ireland in 1980, I spoke with four Gaelic Irish veterans of the World War I British Army. (Most Irish veterans have of course, either died or left Ireland altogether. The number I actually interviewed might have been larger had I sought out local Irish members of the British Legion, a veteran's organization, but due to the self-selective nature of that organization, the responses of such members to my questions could not have been regarded as representative. Consequently, I opted for a "happen upon" method of interviewing, wherein through random contacts obtained through conversations in pubs or with neighborhood acquaintances, I was introduced to this handful of veterans.) The questions I put to this tiny "sample" were essentially designed to gauge the extent of their support (or disdain) for the Easter Rising and their sympathy generally with Sinn Féin and the I.R.A. Theoretically, the chance of each responding negatively to "the patriot side" was 1 in 3 (negative/neutral/positive), though given the success of Sinn Féin and the I.R.A., my expectation was that they would, if only "after the fact," recall positive feelings about the heroic and ultimately successful struggle to liberate Ireland. In fact two gave "neutral" (neither particularly positive nor negative responses) and two recalled *negative* feelings. This is not to say that the findings of my "survey" were statistically significant, but only that they tended to confirm what I had discovered with other sources of information.

90. See, for example, Roger N. Buckley, *Slaves in Red Coats: The British West Indian Regiments, 1795-1815* (New Haven, 1979), 14-144; and Stephen Cohen, "The Untouchable Soldier: Caste, Politics and the Indian Army," *Journal of Asian Studies* XXVIII (1969): 460-461.