

**Pragmatism, Politics, and Popish Recruits: Irish Catholic recruitment and service  
in the British Army, 1775-1783**

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I, Sadie Alexis Sunderland confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation explores the mechanisms by which Irish Catholics were quietly integrated into the British Army in the late eighteenth century for service in the American Revolution, as well as their experiences during service. This recruitment was illegal due to the penal law which prevented their service, but much like the other penal laws in Ireland, this policy was consistently ignored when it was beneficial to do so. This project uses military history through a social lens, focusing on the identity, treatment, and loyalty of Irish Catholic recruits in order to generate a more substantial picture of their involvement in the British Army during this period. This research provides a reconstruction of their military lives and the social and political contexts in which they were recruited through use of the official record, focusing mostly on the War Office Papers and the State Papers Ireland. Analysis of the official record illustrates that despite restrictions from service and general stereotypes that they would not be effective or loyal soldiers, Irish Catholics were recruited and generally served without significant desertion or disciplinary issues. This analysis is split into three main sections: political and social landscape of Irish Catholic recruitment, elite involvement in this process, and finally three case studies of regiments or corps in which Irish Catholic recruits were present. These case studies show that Irish Catholics were able to use the army as a site of belonging within the British Empire in which soldiering provided a unifying identity which proved more significant than their Catholic identity. This suggests that ideas of belonging within British subjecthood were necessarily becoming more malleable during the late eighteenth century due to pragmatic concerns within the empire, but consistent pushback to trusting Irish Catholics and integrating them into the army illustrates the continued lack of uniform toleration.

## Impact Statement

The research uses the British Army as a site of interaction between British and Irish studies, fields which overlap but are sometimes dealt with as separate entities. This work attempts to integrate these together by discussing the British Army as a British institution, but one which people defined as 'others' could navigate and utilise. As such, research has significant conceptual implications for the discussion of Britain's treatment of Ireland in the eighteenth century, as well as the conversation about the definition of Britishness and British institutions during this period. This is also material to the discussion of the type of relationship which existed between Britain and Ireland in the late eighteenth century as both colonial and sister-kingdom dimensions are clear in the findings presented here. It also provides significant detail to the connection between the Catholic toleration policies implemented by the British State in the late eighteenth century and pragmatism relating to imperial maintenance and military recruitment which both helped bring about this change in policy. Further, it makes a strong case for the intersection of military fraternity, the development of Britishness, and conceptualization of subjecthood and belonging in the late eighteenth century, bringing individual identity and ability to navigate multifaceted loyalty, allegiance, and sites of belonging during this period.

More pragmatically, the methodology employed in this dissertation of tracking soldiers from recruiting returns, which hold more identifying information, through the muster lists taken during their service generates a way to establish a service record for early modern soldiers. This is not generally available unless a soldier applied for a pension, in which case their various service locations and regiments or corps they served in were presented. This methodology allows for more substantial analysis of the common soldier during this period, allowing for understandings of the geography, duration, and other details of their experiences during service if they were noted as sick, injured, deserted, etc. This helps bring the experiences of individual actors to the forefront through use of the official record, which usually serves to obscure them as simply names on a page. Further, this methodology necessitated the transcription of many muster lists of the regiments and corps being assessed into a digital format order to make tracking the men through their service possible. As such, I have transcribed 91 muster lists for 46th Regiment of Foot from 1775-1783, 25 for Dalrymple's Loyal Irish Corps from 1780-1782, 20 for the Roman Catholic Volunteers from 1777-1778, and 106 for Volunteers of Ireland from 1778-1782, all of which could be of use to other researchers either in terms of academic history or genealogical research. I am happy to make these accessible to other researchers and will be seeking a repository in which to do so.

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### **Abbreviations (archives and databases)**

BL	British Library
TNA	The National Archives of the UK
BNC	Burney Newspaper Collection
BOA	British Online Archives
BP	Barrington Papers
COJ	Colonial Office Jamaica
CP	Carleton Papers
DML	Dalrymple Muster Lists
INA	Irish Newspaper Archive
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
OIALS	Online Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies
PRO	Public Records Office
PRONI	Public Records Office of Northern Ireland
SPI	State Papers Ireland
WCL	William Clements Library, University of Michigan
WO	War Office

### **Abbreviations (regiments and corps)**

LIC	Loyal Irish Corps
RCV	Roman Catholic Volunteers
VOI	Volunteers of Ireland



## Introduction

After almost a century of persecution under the Penal Laws which limited the authority, power, and social mobility of Irish Catholics, the end of the eighteenth century saw the removal of almost all of these restrictions, save for total emancipation. This was part of wider systematic changes that became necessary as the British Empire expanded during the early modern period in which it became more and more necessary to establish ways of integrating subjects into the empire that did not fit the existing definition of 'Britishness'. People of different races, cultures, and religions found themselves subjects of this wider entity where they did not necessarily have a clear way to integrate, but began asserting themselves as British subjects who belonged within this system, or at least existed within it and were entitled to its benefits.<sup>1</sup> The eighteenth century, then, can be seen as a turning point in Irish history where, as Thomas Bartlett has argued, the 'Irish question' and the looming need to deal with the relationship and status of Irish Catholics within the British empire became central to politics in Britain and Ireland.<sup>2</sup> Due to pragmatic imperial concerns and a growth of tolerance for Catholicism in the British Isles, Catholic relief in Ireland became an imperial necessity, a tool for both pulling Ireland more deeply into the infrastructure of the Empire as well as allowing access to a previously restricted pool of potential recruits which could be used to maintain and police the Empire. This spurred new discussions related to concepts of trust and loyalty in relation to Irish Catholic recruits in terms of their reliability as soldiers and the ways in which they could or should belong within the British Empire and British institutions.

This project looks at military history through a social lens, focusing on the identity, experiences, treatment, and loyalty of the Irish Catholics recruited for service in the British Army during the American Revolution (1775-1783). This conflict occurred before Catholics were legally permitted to serve, but significant numbers were recruited nonetheless. Though a general increase in Catholic toleration, at least at the government level, made this recruitment possible, its consistent obscuration illustrates that toleration was not uniformly embraced. Irish Catholics serving in the British army was nothing new. Though Sir John Dalrymple, 4th Baronet of Scotland wrote that Irish Catholics were a "weapon yet untried"<sup>3</sup> by the British, historians

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<sup>1</sup> P J Marshall, *The making and unmaking of empires: Britain, India, and America c.1750-1783*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Bartlett, *The rise and fall of the Irish nation: the Catholic question*, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Dalrymple to Lord Barrington, 1778, in *Three letters from Sir John Dalrymple, Bart. One of the Barons of the Exchequer in Scotland, to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Barrington, late Secretary at war, on his lordship's official conduct*, (London: printed, for J. P. Coghlan, 1778), letter 1, p. 10.

agree that they had been present in the British army since at least the 1750s.<sup>4</sup> However, with mounting concerns about the American colonies and the need for extensive military expansion to hold territory in North America and across the globe, the English turned to Ireland as a “nursery of soldiers”<sup>5</sup> and recruited heavily from its populace, whether Protestant or Catholic. Despite existing pushback to this process and fear of arming and training Catholics, Catholic recruitment became appealing both to generate large recruitment numbers and to mitigate fears that recruiting exclusively Irish Protestants would also cause problems. This would have severely limited the amount of qualifying recruits, as Catholics made up around 80% of the population, and additionally Irish Protestants feared that if they were exclusively recruited their already small proportion of the Irish population would shrink and their position would become even more precarious.<sup>6</sup> Thus Irish Catholic recruitment provided a solution to several problems; it would mean access to more recruits, it would send a Irish Catholics abroad where they would not be a threat to local Irish stability and Protestant dominance, and it would help maintain the Irish Protestant population at a level which allowed them to continue to hold control over political and social life in Ireland.

This work explores how Irish Catholics were quietly integrated into the British Army during this period through continued use of ‘soft legality’ relating to the Penal Laws in which they were not enforced when it was beneficial to ignore them. Current scholarship agrees that large numbers of Irish Catholics were recruited, but lacks analysis both on the mechanisms and figures involved in their recruitment, as well as personal dimensions in which recruits are focused on as individuals.<sup>7</sup> In his analysis of the Parliament of 1775, William Hunt states that “Catholics responded eagerly” to calls for recruitment during this period, referencing both the Catholic elites who offered extra bounty money to encourage recruitment and stating that Catholic “recruits came forward in large numbers”.<sup>8</sup> This was stated as fact, with no sources cited as evidence. The former claim about Catholic elites is easy to assess given that several Catholic elites left archival collections which confirmed their involvement, which is further

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<sup>4</sup> Darragh Cannon, “Irish Catholic service and identity in the British armed forces 1793-1815” (Master’s thesis, National University of Ireland Maynooth, 2014), 1; Bartlett, *The rise and fall of the Irish nation*.

<sup>5</sup> Dalrymple, *Three letters*, letter 1 p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Rigby to Secretary at War, Dublin Castle, 13 Nov 1757, SP 63/418, f 15, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>7</sup> Almost every source which talks about recruitment mentions this was happening. See Bowen, *Heroic Option*; Catriona Kennedy and Mathew McCormack, eds, *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of Arms* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Stephen Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> William Hunt, ed, *The Irish Parliament 1775 from an official and contemporary manuscript*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1907), xxxi-xxxii.

confirmed by discussion of this in the State Papers Ireland.<sup>9</sup> The latter claim about Irish Catholic recruits volunteering in large numbers is harder to assess and requires a breadth of analysis of many sources to prove they were recruited and in what quantities. Further research is also needed to personalise this process and understand the motivations of Irish Catholic recruits. Specifically, what role did these recruits see themselves playing? Did they see themselves as loyal British subjects, impressed soldiers, honorable servicemen or mercenaries? Or rather, was service in the British army simply seen as a career and a continuation of the Irish soldiering tradition? These are hard questions to answer given the available source material, or lack thereof.<sup>10</sup> However, this research attempts to get at these answers by tracking Irish Catholic soldiers through what is most available: the official record. As these men existed within the British military framework, they were necessarily referenced in many documents generated by the War Office. Further, discussion of Irish Catholic recruitment in political documents also is available, as development of a more substantial system of Irish Catholic recruitment became necessary during this period.

Analysis of the official record makes it clear that despite restrictions from service and general stereotypes that they would not be effective or loyal soldiers, Irish Catholics were recruited and were as unproblematic as any other group. Further, Irish Catholics were able to use the army as a site of belonging within the British Empire in which soldiering provided a unifying identity which proved more significant than religion as a limiting one. Despite General Cunningham's claims that Irish recruits were "the very scum of the earth" who would "do their utmost to desert, the moment they are clothed", the Irish Catholic soldiers identified here were both effective and well-disciplined during their service, and seem to have integrated well into the various regiments or corps they were assigned to without any sort of expected resistance from either them or their fellow soldiers.<sup>11</sup> This is related to Stephen Conway's argument that British soldiers "seem to have regarded their service in contractual terms" during this period.<sup>12</sup> If treated as advertised and expected, meaning fed, clothed, and treated fairly, soldiers would remain

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<sup>9</sup> For specific sources and analysis of this topic, see chapters one and two.

<sup>10</sup> Most of the Irish Catholics recruited would have been illiterate, and a language barrier potentially existed between them and the English-speakers in charge of them as bilinguality or conformity to speaking English was not widespread in Ireland during the eighteenth century. Kirby Miller, *Emigrants and exiles: Ireland and the Irish exodus to North America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), Ch 2.

<sup>11</sup> Major-General Cunningham to Lord Barrington, 19 May 1776, PRO WO 1/991, f 9, War Office Papers, TNA, Kew.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Conway, "The eighteenth-century British Army as a European institution," in *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715–1815*, edited by Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), 17–38, 29.

effective, but if that trust was breached, more instances of resistance would emerge. Though the British Army is sometimes viewed as a homogenous entity, it was certainly internally diverse, utilizing German, English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish recruits, as well as natives from lands throughout the Empire and slaves.<sup>13</sup> It was a place within the British Empire in which they could belong based on their merit as a soldier, providing the same opportunities for pay, travel, and adventure as it did for any other recruit. This was the case for Irish Catholics, so long as their religious identity remained obscured or unaddressed, they could integrate similarly to any other 'other' within the British Army.

The Irish Military Establishment was to facilitate this recruitment, and ready many regiments which were currently serving in Ireland for service in the war in America, though this was to be paid for by the British Establishment.<sup>14</sup> The constitutional dynamics of this relationship of authority relating to the Irish Establishment were considered by G J Hand in the 1960s, and its structure has been outlined and discussed by Kenneth Patrick Ferguson, but there remains little work on this topic overall.<sup>15</sup> What is clear from the available discourse is the Irish Establishment differed materially from the British Establishment in purpose. The Irish Establishment was maintained during peacetime, during which it functioned as both a "strategic reserve" from which soldiers could be sent elsewhere, and also a force for local security to discourage both invasions of England through Ireland and local rebellion.<sup>16</sup> The continued service of men on the Irish Establishment meant that Britain could send experienced soldiers to conflicts as they arose, rather than drafting entirely new levies. Ferguson asserted that this had been "expected of it from the beginning, the Irish military establishment contributed generously when men were needed elsewhere", and further argued that this was not treated only as a strategic reserve, but a "freely disposable" one.<sup>17</sup> Further, though called the Irish Establishment, this force was under the authority of the British parliament and monarch for most of the eighteenth century, until control was given to the Irish parliament in 1782. Even then, as argued by G J Hand, the control of the Irish parliament was limited in practice, and remained in the

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<sup>13</sup> This diversity was present in the British Army both during and after the American Revolution. For discussion of during the Revolution, see Marshall, *The making and unmaking of empires*, ch 2; for discussion of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century see Kevin Linch, *The British Army, 1783-1815*, (Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military: 2024), Ch1.

<sup>14</sup> Harcourt to Rochford &c, Dublin Castle, 16Jun1775, SP 63/447, f 177-180, SPI, TNA, Kew; Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 19Jul1775, SP 63/447, f 228-230, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>15</sup> G. J. Hand, "The constitutional position of the Irish Military Establishment from the Restoration to the Union: An introductory note," *Irish Jurist* 3, no. 2 (1968): 330–35; Kenneth Patrick Ferguson, "The Army in Ireland from the Restoration to the Act of Union," (PhD diss, Trinity College Dublin, 1981).

<sup>16</sup> Hand, "The constitutional position of the Irish Military Establishment," 333; Ferguson, "The Army in Ireland," 101-103.

<sup>17</sup> Ferguson, "The Army in Ireland," 99 & 60.

hands of members of the Irish parliament “whose constitutional responsibility lay to the King and the British parliament”.<sup>18</sup> British control over the Irish Establishment meant that it was sent wherever Britain deemed there was a threat which needed to be fought, either internally within the British Isles, or elsewhere in larger European or colonial conflicts.<sup>19</sup> Given this, the recruitment of Irish Catholics which occurred during this period can be viewed as a natural extension of this relationship, as the process of Catholic recruitment continued the pattern of treating Ireland as a garrison to be tapped for imperial military concerns, this just now meant integrating recruits from a previously excluded group to cope with new pressures.

The historiographical discussions of Irish Catholic soldiering during this period mainly focus on the motivations behind Catholic relief and how recruitment was tied to that process, rather than the process of recruitment itself. The motivations which made Catholic relief and recruitment possible at this juncture can be broken down into three main factors; growth of tolerance, military strategy, and a perceived loyalty of Catholics, specifically Catholic elites. Historians such as Jacqueline Hill and Robert Burns have argued that an increase in toleration of Catholics was present during this period, but both offer criticism against the idea that toleration was the main reason Catholic relief occurred. Hill argues that an increase in toleration across Europe significantly influenced this process, but that historians have endeavored to moderate the significance of this factor and that “even in the 1790s...there were limits to ‘the growth of toleration’ and to the emergence of ‘non-sectarian nationality’.”<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Burns agrees that an increase in toleration was a contributing factor but argues that this tolerance was not universal, stating that displays of tolerance caused “both suspicion and alarm” among the Irish Protestant parliament.<sup>21</sup> Pushback to Catholic relief from the public was illustrated in a letter written by an anonymous Scotsman in 1778 in reaction to talk of Catholic relief in which the author argues that those showing public support of Catholic relief should be “disgraced to be called Protestants.”<sup>22</sup> The Gordon riots of June 1780 also illustrate that the British public was not prepared to accept bills relating to Catholic toleration. Brad Jones argues that these toleration measures had been proposed in reaction to the American alliance with France as a “pragmatic

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<sup>18</sup> Hand, “The constitutional position of the Irish Military Establishment,” 335.

<sup>19</sup> Ferguson, “The Army in Ireland,” 99-100.

<sup>20</sup> Jacqueline Hill, “Religious Toleration and the Relaxation of the Penal Laws: An Imperial Perspective, 1763-1780.” *Archivium Hibernicum* 44 (1989):98-109. 99.

<sup>21</sup> Robert E Burns, “The Catholic Relief Act in Ireland, 1778.” *Church History* 32 no. 2 (Jun 1963): 181-206. 181.

<sup>22</sup> Gentleman in the Country, *A letter from a gentleman in the country, to his friend in Edinburgh. Occasioned by the late act for repealing the penal laws against Papists* (Edinburgh: Printed by D. Paterson, 1778) 1.

response to a dramatically expanded war”, but that the response of Britons reaffirmed British identity as necessarily Protestant, stating that the protesters argued “the relief acts threatened to undermine a widely shared Protestant British patriotism that defined itself against Catholicism and France”.<sup>23</sup> Jones also comments that “the specter of Catholic relief” had also sparked similar riots in Scotland the preceding two years.<sup>24</sup> Because of this clear lack of uniform Catholic toleration, the Catholic relief which occurred during this period cannot be described as solely the result of enlightenment ideals. Thus the more convincing motivation for Catholic relief to occur at this juncture was the need to expand the British military establishment to keep pace with the scope of the conflict in Britain’s American colonies, rather than this having stemmed from widespread acceptance of religious toleration. The military motives for Catholic relief are more substantial and less idealistic, showing the British government saw relief as a means to an end, larger recruitment for their military establishment. The number of soldiers required for meeting the needs of a foreign war and local defense would not have been obtained had Catholics been excluded from recruitment.<sup>25</sup> .

The pragmatism of recruiting Irish Catholics provided a solid reason for doing so from a numbers perspective, but concerns about how these men would behave as soldiers and how loyal they would be to the British Army remained. There was a prevailing assumption in this period that Irish Catholics were inherently hostile toward the British and thus they were not to be trusted in social and political life, let alone as trained soldiers. Linda Colley argues “irrespective of their real strength and of how they were treated as individuals, Catholics as a category remained in popular mythology an omnipresent menace”.<sup>26</sup> This is also addressed by Ian McBride in his discussion of the creation and implementation of the penal laws against Irish Catholics. He argues “the religious and political leaders of Protestant Ireland subscribed to a pessimistic reading of Irish history as a recurrent, unending cycle of rebellion and deliverance, perhaps predicated upon a fundamental incompatibility between the two populations.”<sup>27</sup> This opinion is from the early eighteenth century, but was still the prevailing propaganda during the end of the century. As Jessica Harland-Jacobs has argued, anti-Catholicism waned on the governmental level in favor of “policies of accommodation”, but “popular anti-Catholicism

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<sup>23</sup> Brad A. Jones, “‘In Favour of Popery’: patriotism, Protestantism, and the Gordon Riots in the revolutionary British Atlantic,” *The Journal of British Studies* 52, no. 1 (2013): 79–102, 79.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 85.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Kent Donovan, “The Military Origins of the Roman Catholic Relief Programme of 1778”, *The Historical Journal* 28 no 1, (Mar 1985): 79-102; Jean and Desmond Bowen, *The Heroic Option: The Irish in the British Army*, (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military, 2005)

<sup>26</sup> Colley, “Britishness and otherness”, 317.

<sup>27</sup> Ian McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland: the isle of slaves* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2009), 197.

remained strong”.<sup>28</sup> Vincent Morley has also investigated this to some degree, arguing that the British hierarchy recognised the loyalty of Catholic elites by the 1770s but recognised the “implacable hostility of the bulk of the Catholic population.”<sup>29</sup> The protestant ascendancy feared the Irish Catholic masses because they recognised the precarity of their own position as a minority within Ireland. This fear only grew with the rise of the Whiteboys, an organization which was founded to defend the rights of farmers, but in practice performed acts of agrarian violence.<sup>30</sup> Though the Whiteboys were not a mass movement, the organised violence they perpetrated against landlords had Irish Protestants on edge. However, despite the contemporary view that the Catholic majority was hostile, this research illustrates that this was not true in terms of the Irish Catholics serving in the British Army during this period. Hostility in this group would imply increased disciplinary issues or elevated desertion rates amongst this group, but in practice Irish Catholic soldiers were very loyal during their military service. Analysis of the service records of Irish Catholic soldiers identified through this research shows this group had low rates of desertion when they were mixed into regiments in the regular army. Further, when desertion or disciplinary issues did occur, there were a variety of other factors which proved to be more influential than the religious status of a recruit such as composition and treatment of the corps, climate issues, and experience level of the officers. This suggests, as Catriona Kennedy has argued, that it “is not so evident that Irish soldiers would have understood their service as a paradox, or as an inevitable source of cognitive dissonance” but that in “this rapidly shifting political and military landscape, to be Irish and Catholic and loyal to the crown were by no means in tension”.<sup>31</sup> These different labels were central to a recruits identity, but did not provide a limiting factor in either efficacy or loyalty during service.

Addressing conceptions and questions about Irish Catholic loyalty and allegiance to the British Empire, or within the British Army as an institution more specifically, during this period bridges together three conceptual historiographies; military fraternity or occupational solidarity, the development and maintenance of Britishness and British identity, and the shifting definitions of British subjecthood, both at the metropole and throughout the global empire. This recruitment

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<sup>28</sup> Jessica Harland-Jacobs, “Incorporating the King’s new subjects: accommodation and anti-Catholicism in the British Empire, 1763-1815”, *Journal of Religious History* 39, no 2, (Jun 2015): 203-223, 223.

<sup>29</sup> Vincent Morley, *Irish Opinion and the American Revolution, 1760-1783*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). 63.

<sup>30</sup> S. J. Connolly, “Jacobites, Whiteboys and Republicans: Varieties of Disaffection in Eighteenth-Century Ireland.” *Eighteenth-century Ireland* 18 (2003): 63–79.

<sup>31</sup> Catriona Kennedy, “‘True Britons and Real Irish’: Irish Catholics in the British Army during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars,” in *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of Arms*, eds Catriona Kennedy and Mathew McCormack, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 37-56, 39-40.

and subsequent loyal service relied on the attractiveness of the British Army as an institution, and one in which 'others' could belong through proving themselves to be effective soldiers who were loyal to this institution. Conway has posed this as a characteristic of European armies in the eighteenth century, arguing that "Britain's army shared with other European armies the international (or perhaps transnational) tendencies of eighteenth-century military life that united soldiers of many nations in an occupational fraternity".<sup>32</sup> Michael Hechter has made similar observations regarding job specialization during industrialization by exploring sociological underpinnings of this concept, concluding that "occupational specialization could contribute to national solidarity by promoting the interaction of status equals within group boundaries, as well as by increasing the commonality of members' economic interest".<sup>33</sup> This would be especially appropriate among soldiers, as the cohesion of their company or regiment was materially significant in determining their shared reputation, their continued economic benefits as soldiers, and of course their lives were at stake. Sara Caputo also addressed this in her recent volume on foreigners in the British Navy during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. She argues that the need for high numbers of naval recruits led to the acceptance of a diverse recruiting pool and thus a large variety of types of people, but that this was a decision rooted in pragmatism and that this worked because it had to. She states this was viable due to a "collective, pragmatic attitude which was only possible when each man was conceptualised as a useful pair of hands".<sup>34</sup> When considering men based on their skill as a seaman, or in our case in the army as a numbers game where the goal was to recruit as many effective soldiers as possible, things like religious status became less significant than the utility of the men recruited. Wayne Lee suggests that their role "as labor in a uniform military system" allowed Irish Catholics to become "progressively more acceptable" by performing their role as effective soldiers.<sup>35</sup> Thus soldiers of different backgrounds, whether national or religious, needed to

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<sup>32</sup> Conway also argues that it was this established professionalism which made the British look down on the American Continental army for its lack of adhering to the established social norms and respect which European armies tended to assert more consistently. Jon Chandler, while recognizing that this argument was used by contemporaries to exclude the Continental Army from this European fraternity, asserts that the Continental Army "endeavoured to demonstrate that their institution was, in fact, an extension of 'Military Europe'". Stephen Conway, "The British Army, 'military Europe', and the American War of Independence," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2010): 69-100, 70; Jon Chandler, "The Continental Army and 'Military Europe': Professionalism and Restraint in the American War of Independence," *War in History* 29, no. 2 (Apr 2020): 323-340, 324.

<sup>33</sup> Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, xix.

<sup>34</sup> Sara Caputo, *Foreign Jack Tars: The British Navy and transnational seafarers during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023) 235.

<sup>35</sup> Wayne Lee, *The Cutting-Off Way: Indigenous Warfare in Eastern North America, 1500–1800*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2023), 159.



develop some level of camaraderie, trust, and toleration of individual differences to work together as a cohesive force, and to meet the high recruitment quotas. This is not to say that this military fraternity or occupational solidarity wiped away all other loyalties nor did it erase existing prejudices, such as anti-Catholicism, from manifesting within the ranks. In terms of competing loyalties, Conway posits that “local and personal loyalties still mattered, not least in securing recruits, yet identification with a particular locality or officer was not necessarily incompatible with a sense of national allegiance”.<sup>36</sup> In this way, layers of loyalty were possible so long as they did not hinder national allegiance, efficacy as a soldier, or ability to interact with fellow soldiers or officers.

Study of belonging within the British Army during this period also relates to the development of Britishness in the late eighteenth century and the degree to which this was malleable based on circumstance or geography. Analysis of Irish Catholics, an historic ‘other’, being recruited and serving in the British Army during this period illustrates that military and political allegiance in eighteenth century Ireland was not a dichotomy of English versus Irish interest, or indeed Protestant versus Catholic interest but rather multi-faceted or potentially fluid depending on the circumstance or motivation of those involved. It also emphasises the place of Ireland within the contemporary discussions of the development of the idea of ‘Britishness’ and what it meant to be British or a British subject. Colley’s argument asserts that Britishness was not culturally or politically homogeneous, as groups within Britishness could retain some of their individuality, but that all signed on to a broader set of themes regarding their national identity.<sup>37</sup> This work agrees with Colley as far as that statement is concerned; retaining an identity as an Irish Catholic while existing within Britishness did require their Catholic identity to be suppressed or downplayed at times, but the maintenance of Irishness was not an exclusionary factor. Where this work diverges from Colley’s definition and methodology is that she argues that it is unnecessary to consider Ireland in the development and maintenance of ideas of Britishness in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as it did not have significant impact on the concept of Britishness.<sup>38</sup> Kennedy has criticised this approach, arguing that Colley fails to consider the impact of the army when arriving at this conclusion. Kennedy argues that “the army can be viewed as a crucial arena in which national identities were formed and articulated”, as well as that the structure of the regimental system offered a way of acknowledging and maintaining different “component patriotisms” while building a sense of what multifaceted British

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<sup>36</sup> Conway, “The British Army, ‘military Europe’,” 72.

<sup>37</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons*.

<sup>38</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons*, 8.

identity looked like in practice.<sup>39</sup> If the army is to be considered as Kennedy suggests, Irish experience in the British army becomes central to discussions of the development of the more fluid Britishness I suggest here.

Recruitment of Irish Catholics as well as the process of their recruitment illustrates that the British Empire, and indeed ideas of Britishness, were necessarily becoming more malleable during the late eighteenth century. The official definition of Britishness certainly remained very tied to Protestantism, as Colley has asserted.<sup>40</sup> This is illustrated by various negative reactions to integrating Irish Catholics into the army and empire in a more substantial way. That said in practice rather than in rhetoric, Britishness and belonging within it seems to have grown more fluid and less restrictive as the definition of subjecthood within the empire became more about subscribing to subjecthood status than being a copy of the ideal form of Britishness. This supports Claydon and McBride's assertion of "Protestant nationality as an unrealised objective" rather than as an actualised feature of British society.<sup>41</sup> Caputo asserted similar conclusions in her study of foreigners in the British Navy during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. She identifies the Navy as a site of blending of foreigners and different types of British subjects where it was possible to integrate people of different religious, cultural, racial, or national backgrounds. Caputo argues that the integration of these people into the Navy "challenges the very notions of Britishness and foreignness" and allows for a wider interpretation of Britishness which relates more to subscribing to Britishness or participating in British institutions.<sup>42</sup> In this way, sailors could both act within these institutions and benefit from them while still maintaining a foreign identity or outside loyalties. Similarly, Irish Catholics were able to function within the British Army during the late eighteenth century by subscribing to the army as an institution and manifesting their loyalty to this institution through effective, long-term service. This suggests that Britishness and British identity in the late eighteenth century was navigable and usable by those who did not check all the boxes of the idealised version of Britishness through participating in and being loyal to British institutions such as the army and navy. In this way, they could integrate into a British Empire which was "Protestant, commercial, maritime, and free" by

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<sup>39</sup> Kennedy, 'True Brittons and Real Irish', 38.

<sup>40</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: forging the nation 1707-1837*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

<sup>41</sup> Tony Claydon and Ian McBride, "The trials of the chosen peoples: recent interpretations of Protestantism and national identity in Britain and Ireland", in *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c. 1650–c. 1850*, eds Tony Claydon and Ian McBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 199), 83-30, 28.

<sup>42</sup> Caputo, *Foreign Jack Tars*, abstract.

participating in the latter four categories and showing loyalty to the Empire and its institutions either regardless or in spite of their Catholic identity.<sup>43</sup>

Further, consideration of the role of Ireland in the development of the idea of Britishness and subjecthood within the Empire provides utility within Colley's own framework, as her model for the growth of Britishness is built around the definition emerging by 'othering' groups that did not fit into the coalescing idea of Britishness. This can be seen in William Crawford's account of his time in serving the British Army in which he navigated the supposed dichotomy of Irish and British identities. Crawford was a Protestant Irishman who volunteered for service in the British Army and subsequently sent to the American colonies where he served in the 20th Regiment of Foot. Throughout his narrative Crawford discussed his Irishness and Britishness, assigning components to each. He called Ireland "a land of sport and fun" and a "free and social kingdom" where he "omitted no opportunity of seizing every pleasure that offered itself...to a young and spirited soldier". He asserted that before his enlistment he tended to run wild, taking delight in gambling, engaging in sports of "bucks and bloods", and allowed himself to get very distracted by women.<sup>44</sup> However, once he had decided to be recruited he wrote "I raised my views and laid aside my shillelah for a sword".<sup>45</sup> This was a turning point at the beginning of his narrative, as he constructed it in a way that shows he rejected the previous circumstances to become more decorous, and not subtly, more British. Indeed throughout the narrative when he stated that he did things that he knew to be somewhere between immoral and criminal, he blamed this on his growing up in Ireland.<sup>46</sup> However Crawford's identity seems to have been quite malleable, as he employed whatever national loyalty suited his circumstance. Don Hagist, editor of this narrative, states that at the end of Crawford's career he was "proud of his British origins" and was so loud about it that he earned the nickname 'Old Britannia'.<sup>47</sup> Crawford's beginnings as an Irishman then subsequent navigation of his various identities illustrates the need for Ireland to be considered within the development of Britishness, especially in terms of military service. In Crawford's account these identities received different characterizations and utilities, but each

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<sup>43</sup> David Armitage, *The ideological origins of the British Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 173.

<sup>44</sup> William Crawford, "A narrative of the life and character of William Crawford" in *British soldiers, American war: voices of the American Revolution*, ed Don Hagist (Yardley: Westholme, 2012), 60-71, 61.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> For example he tried to attract and manipulate a woman during his time as a prisoner in order to escape and states he learned such tactics during his youth in Ireland. His endeavors are successful, Lydia helped him escape and they later married. Crawford, Crawford, "A narrative of the life and character of William Crawford" 68-71.

<sup>47</sup> Don Hagist, *British soldiers American war: voices of the American Revolution*, (Yardley: Westholme, 2012).

were framed in comparison to each other. Further, Crawford ultimately deciding to be “proud of his British origins” shows that he certainly felt there was a place for an Irish born man within Britishness.

Stepping back from this micro example and onto a larger scale, these discussions of Britishness and loyalty also relate to the development of the idea of what it meant to be a British subject. The wider imperial context required ideas of British subjecthood to be more broad, and to include a variety of peoples, geographies, and religions. Managing this diversity became a necessity if an empire was to be stable, let alone expand further.<sup>48</sup> Ideas of multi-faceted British subjecthood in the eighteenth-century British Empire have been explored extensively by Hannah Weiss Muller who argues “in seeking to integrate these increasingly varied communities and to consolidate imperial control during peacetime, administrators necessarily confronted and renegotiated the boundaries of British subjecthood”, as did the inhabitants of these areas.<sup>49</sup> In terms of this project, the most significant change was the need to address the place of Catholic subjects. During the Seven Years War anti Catholicism proved to be both a uniting factor and a helpful recruiting strategy for the British, posing the war as a “new crusade against popery”.<sup>50</sup> The end of this conflict changed the footing of Catholicism in British politics, with the treaty of Paris and the acquisition of Quebec “the British changed their official policy toward Catholicism in the empire almost overnight, from one of active persecution to accommodation”.<sup>51</sup> This manifests most clearly in the Quebec Act which provided several concessions to Catholics living there and sparked negative reactions from fellow subjects in America, England, and Ireland alike.<sup>52</sup> The works which discuss the Quebec Act do so both in terms of how the British government sought to integrate them, as well as how these new subjects leveraged their position as subjects of the British Empire.<sup>53</sup> In this way, and in line with Muller’s approach, this work defines British subjecthood as an active process in which both “natural-born and adopted British subjects” assert themselves as such in order to obtain the corresponding rights, respect,

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<sup>48</sup> Jessica Harland-Jacobs, “Incorporating the King’s new subjects: accommodation and anti-Catholicism in the British Empire, 1763-1815”, *Journal of Religious History* 39, no 2, (Jun 2015): 203-223.

<sup>49</sup> Hannah Weiss Muller, *Subjects and sovereign: bonds of eighteenth century belonging in the eighteenth century British Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 8.

<sup>50</sup> Stephen Conway, *A short history of the American Revolutionary War*, (London: I.B. Tauris: 2013), 37.

<sup>51</sup> Owen Stanwood, “Catholics, Protestants, and the Clash of Civilizations in Early America”, in *The First Prejudice*, eds Chris Beneke and Christopher Grenda (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 218-240, 238.

<sup>52</sup> Hill, “Religious Toleration”.

<sup>53</sup> Harland Jacobs, “Incorporating the King’s subjects” and Hannah Weiss Muller, “Bonds of Belonging: Subjecthood and the British Empire”, *Journal of British Studies* 53, no 1 (2014).

and privileges belonging to this group entailed.<sup>54</sup> This does not necessarily associate the participants in British subjecthood, the Irish Catholic recruits, with needing to feel a sense of patriotism or nationalism toward the British state, but rather with assertions of belonging within the framework of the empire and the privileges of existing under British rule.

The interactions of Irish Catholic recruitment with military fraternity, Britishness, and British subjecthood illustrate that Catholic recruitment was tied up in larger questions about the social composition of belonging in the British Empire during this period. Significantly, this research shows that rather than needing to be offered, such belonging could be earned or asserted through participation in British institutions, professions of loyalty, and willingness to work within the established mechanisms of the Empire. This could be dictated by individual actions, such as volunteering for recruitment in the case of the lower classes, or in the case of Irish Catholic elites more direct assertions of belonging through addresses of loyalty to the British crown. This is similar to the argument of Wayne Lee who asserts that “one way for an outsider to be included in that imagined community”, meaning the conceptual boundaries and identity of the British state, was “through military service” in his work which seeks to identify a framework, or multiple frameworks, in which to place the military labour of indigenous soldiers.<sup>55</sup> In this way, military fraternity and occupational solidarity would then lead to, if not acceptance of Catholicism, at least the recognition of the utility and loyalty of Irish Catholic soldiers. This sentiment is clear in Lee’s assertion that “while fear of Catholicism slowed their full incorporation until the late eighteenth century, the long-term convergence of Irish subject with British soldier was clear”.<sup>56</sup> This illustrates a significant interaction of Irish subjecthood, British subjecthood, and participation in British institutions and identity, all of which converge in discussion of Irish Catholic service in the British Army.

Analysis and discussion of Irish Catholic soldiers during this period also helps make Irish Catholic soldiering a continuous discussion, which is important because it was indeed a continuous process. Much work has been done on the Irish Catholics who served in regiments for different powers in continental Europe, before and during this period. Irish Catholic service is also consistently discussed in relation to service in the British armed forces after 1800, such as their service during the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>57</sup> In both cases, it was not against the law for Catholics to join these forces during this later conflict. Catholic service in the British army at the

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<sup>54</sup> Muller, *Bonds of belonging*, 8.

<sup>55</sup> Lee, *The Cutting-Off Way*, 180.

<sup>56</sup> Lee, *The Cutting-Off Way*, 179.

<sup>57</sup> Kennedy, “True Britons and Real Irish,” 39-40., and Caputo, *Foreign Jack Tars*.

end of the eighteenth century, while acknowledged by historians as something which occurred, is not discussed at length. This seems mostly due to the lack of available source material. However, much can be gleaned from the official record to show that Irish Catholics were present during this period and will demonstrate the changing attitude of the British administration becoming, if not more tolerant of Catholics, more willing to realise their value as soldiers for imperial security.

This topic is in keeping with several recent attempts to personalise military history with an eye toward focusing on the experiences of individual soldiers rather than on the broader military organization, politics, or battle structure in which these men are numbers rather than people.<sup>58</sup> Ilya Berkovich in particular has uncovered many significant narratives generated by the soldiers themselves. Despite efforts to look for direct perspectives of Irish Catholic recruits such as diaries or correspondence, none have as yet been identified. This lack of sources is likely due to low rates of literacy among the Irish Catholic population. Kirby Miller has argued that the Irish Catholics were “not illiterate but preliterate”, as they used oral medium to communicate “a rich, robust traditional culture”, but most could not read or write.<sup>59</sup> This is illustrated by their rich oral tradition of songs, poetry, ballads, and storytelling which did persist into the 18th century, but was overtaken by anglicization.<sup>60</sup> Even by 1841, statistics showed that less than half of the population of Ireland could read or write, and only about a quarter could do both. Illiteracy also varied per location, urban areas tending to be more literate than rural ones, but was also highly variable depending on province; 40-44% in Ulster and Leinster, 61% in Munster, and 72% in Connaught.<sup>61</sup> Literacy rates among Irish Catholic recruits would also have been low because most recruits came from the lower classes, many listing their occupation as ‘labourer’ when recruited.

This lack of documents from the soldiers themselves led to the development of a methodology which uses the official record to identify Irish Catholic recruits and generate an idea of their service and experience by following them through the records of the War Office. My work identifies these soldiers through officer correspondence, troop returns, muster lists, courts martial, pension applications, and any other paperwork that would have been generated in the British military establishment which would mention them. Analysis of the official record has

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<sup>58</sup> Ilya Berkovich, *Motivation in war: the experience of common soldiers in old-regime Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Bowen, *Heroic Option*.

<sup>59</sup> Miller, *Emigrants and exiles*, 71.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 71-75.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 70-71.

provided a surprising amount of information about the experiences of these Irish Catholic recruits, as well as the toleration of their presence and patterns and continuity of Irish Catholic service.<sup>62</sup> There are definitely pitfalls to relying on the official record, namely the lack of concrete perspective of the Irish Catholic recruits, as well as what the official record may leave out, such as court martials that were not recorded or even just lack of completeness of regimental records which were supposed to have been required. Additionally, the records being written by different people over time provide logistical problems such as inconsistent spelling of names which can make it hard to track individual soldiers over time. That said, there is still much we can glean from what is present in the official record in regard to piecing together the experiences of Irish Catholic soldiers through critical analysis of the information which is present.

The main source of information for the case studies of sites of Irish Catholic integration into the British Army for this project are the muster lists of four regiments or corps; the 46th Regiment of Foot, William Dalrymple's Loyal Irish Corps, the Roman Catholic Volunteers, and the Volunteers of Ireland. These muster lists provide information about the consistent presence of Irish Catholic soldiers, as well as any accompanying notes about transfers, sickness, desertion, promotion, or retirement which can be used to track the careers of Irish Catholic recruits to determine their experience as soldiers and their reception by their officers and peers. Recruiting returns include biographical information which can be used to determine the likelihood an Irish recruit was Catholic. The birth county or parish of a recruit, when used in tandem with census data which provides religious proportions in these areas, is the main method used in this work to determine the likely religious status of these recruits. Both the Irish censuses of the 1760s and the 1834 census required reporting on the religious status of Irish residents.<sup>63</sup> By using these census records as bookends for the period being discussed here, 1775-1783, the biographical data from recruiting returns provides a useful tool for determining the religious status of the recruits. Use of this method shows significant (over 90%) Catholic presence in many of the counties the recruits were from.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> A similar method was suggested by Arthur Gilbert related to substantial analysis of recruiting returns, which will be used in this work in tandem with the muster lists and other War Office documents and correspondence. Arthur Gilbert, "An analysis of some eighteenth century army recruiting records", *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 54, no 217 (1976), 38-47.

<sup>63</sup> Brian Gurrin, et al, *The Irish religious censuses of the 1760s: Catholics and Protestants in eighteenth-century Ireland*, (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 2022); Gregory Ian N., Niall A. Cunningham, Paul S. Eil, Christopher D. Lloyd, and Ian Shuttleworth, *Troubled Geographies: a Spatial History of Religion and Society in Ireland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), ch 3.

<sup>64</sup> Gregory et al, *Troubled Geographies*, ch 3.

The other War Office records being considered, court martial reports, pension applications, and correspondence, provide more insight into individual soldiers. Records of courts martial, when present, help generate case studies of the level of discipline or loyalty of individual soldiers. Pension applications, filed at the end of service, contain a variety of paperwork which is helpful in personalizing the individual soldiers such as personal narratives, commendations or notes from officers, and a service record of where and in which regiments a soldier has served. They also generally indicate the individual in question was a career soldier, as they would be filed at the end of a long military service. The pension applications which contain recommendation notes from officers are especially significant, as this would show their personal opinion of Irish Catholics during service. Where possible, correspondence from officers and War Office officials will be used to provide context and a contemporary perspective. Analysis of all these documents in tandem constructs a substantial record of a soldier's service and allows for discussion and inferences about their experiences as a soldier.

This research is organised into five chapters, the bulk of which will be focusing on the regiments mentioned above as case studies for Irish Catholic recruitment and service. The first chapter will outline the contextual information about the penal laws and the military motivations behind Catholic relief. This will provide readers with the necessary framework to understand why this process occurs at this moment in history, as well as the contemporary debates on Catholic toleration and the class-based dimensions of this process. This chapter will also outline the systematization of the obscuration of Catholic recruitment and why this was necessary. Catholic recruitment was consistently discussed in correspondence during this period as illegal, unwanted, and at best controversial, but recruitment of large numbers of Irishmen was both desired and necessary. Due to these competing interests, a language was developed which allowed for Catholic recruitment without referring to it as such. The need for this vernacular is illustrated in reactions to what I have termed 'loud' Catholic recruitment, meaning open recruiting efforts which targeted Catholic recruits and did not adhere to the established system of obscuration. Generally whenever loud Catholic recruitment was used, the immediate reaction was officials and military figures claiming to be appalled at the affront to Britain's policies, asserting themselves solidly as loyal, British, and Protestant and distancing themselves or their actions from Catholic recruitment despite their clear involvement in facilitating it. This chapter thus illustrates that while Irish Catholic recruitment was significant, necessary, and consistent, it still needed to be handled with care due to existing laws and biases.

Chapter two discusses the process of recruiting Irish Catholics in practice, expanding on the participation of officials and particularly Irish Catholic elites. Much of this chapter will focus



on Lord Kenmare, a member of the Irish Catholic elite whose title was originally bestowed by King James II. Thomas Browne, the Lord Kenmare during the late eighteenth century, offered to recruit his tenantry into the British service as a show of Irish Catholic loyalty to King George III and the British government.<sup>65</sup> This was not without a quid pro quo, it is recognised by both historians and Kenmare's contemporaries as a deliberate effort to trade Irish Catholic recruitment for further relief from the penal laws against Irish Catholics. It would later become apparent that Kenmare was only concerned with relief for the upper class, causing a schism in the main body lobbying for relief, the Catholic Committee.<sup>66</sup> Kenmare's motivations aside, his recruiting efforts were approved and successful, with many of the recruits ultimately sent to William Dalrymple's Loyal Irish Corps, which will be discussed in chapter four.<sup>67</sup> Though Kenmare's recruiting efforts were ultimately not very successful, they illustrate Kenmare's willingness to assert his belonging within the political and social structures in Ireland and Britain. His methods for recruitment did not differ materially from those being pursued by more 'legitimate', ie Protestant, elites in the British Isles during this period, and in doing so he asserted his role as a member of the British elite, showing both the willingness of the British government to work with Irish Catholic elites at this time as well as Kenmare's personal views on allegiance and participation in the British Empire.

The subsequent three chapters will discuss Irish Catholic recruitment and participation in three regiments; the 46th Regiment of Foot, William Dalrymple's Loyal Irish Corps, and the Roman Catholic Volunteers. Each of these case studies show that Irish Catholic soldiers were present in different types of regiments during this period, as well as if and how their Catholic status affected their treatment and integration into their various postings. Chapter three will focus on the 46th Regiment of Foot which will show Irish Catholics were being recruited into regular regiments, not just put into niche corps which were designed for them. Additionally, the 46th foot already had some clout as an effective regiment and experience serving in the American colonies from their involvement in the Seven Years War.<sup>68</sup> While there is no mention of the religion of each recruit in the records of the 46th regiment of foot, this is in and of itself indicative of the fact that the religion of the recruits was being ignored or even swept under the

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<sup>65</sup> See Robert E Burns, "The Catholic Relief Act in Ireland, 1778." *Church History* 32 no. 2 (Jun 1963): 181-206.

<sup>66</sup> Richard Burke to Edmund Burke, c January 29 1792, in *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke Vol. 7*, ed Thomas W Copeland (Cambridge, Chicago: University Press; University of Chicago Press, 1958), 47.

<sup>67</sup> "Sir Boyle Roche his General Recruiting account with the War Office", 6 Mar 1778, T 1/542/270, TNA, Kew.

<sup>68</sup> Richard Cannon, *Historical Record of The 46th or South Devonshire Regiment of Foot*, (London: Parker, Furnivall, & Parker, 1851), ebook.

rug in order to fill the demand for soldiers. Using the official record, this chapter will show that Irish Catholic soldiers were integrated into the 46th foot unproblematically, and that many in fact embraced military life and became career soldiers.

Chapter four will discuss William Dalrymple's Loyal Irish Corps, a regiment with Scottish officers and Irish recruits. The Loyal Irish Corps is of interest for several reasons. First, as the name of the corps suggests, the rank and file of this group was to be made up entirely of Irishmen, though it must be noted that this does not mean entirely Catholic as well. Second, this corps was sent to serve in Jamaica, not the American colonies. Sir John Dalrymple, William's brother, argued with Lord Barrington for having deceived his brother by approving the corps for service in the American colonies, but then going back on his word and sending them to Jamaica instead, which was a less prestigious post where sickness due to the climate was very common.<sup>69</sup> Sir John's opinions will be discussed at some length in this chapter, as this clearly shows that there was still a feeling present that Catholics were being discriminated against. Irish Catholics were to be deliberately integrated into the corps, and their initial recruiting efforts deviated from the acceptable quiet Catholic recruitment in a way that was loud, public, and could not be ignored. It must be said that John Dalrymple was obviously biased, as this pertained to the treatment of his brother's corps and he had a vested interest in the success of Williams's military career. However investigation of the Loyal Irish in terms of how the drama of their initial loud Catholic recruitment shaped both their treatment and impressions of them is significant in illustrating why obscuration of Irish Catholic recruitment remained necessary. The Loyal Irish is also of interest because it received recruits from Lord Kenmare's recruitment scheme through the efforts of Sir Boyle Roche, showing the fruit of the recruiting efforts covered in chapter two.<sup>70</sup> Loyal Irish recruitment and experience will be explored using the same method employed with the 46th Foot in order to get a sense of the treatment and service of Irish Catholic soldiers, as well as the overall discipline of the corps. Colonial office correspondence which mentions William Dalrymple or the Loyal Irish Corps will then be used to get a wider narrative of the experiences and reception of the Loyal Irish Corps.<sup>71</sup> This case study illustrates that though Catholic recruitment certainly impacted the treatment of the LIC, the corps' lack of discipline cannot be viewed as confirmation of negative stereotypes of Irish Catholic loyalty due

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<sup>69</sup> Dalrymple *Three letters*.

<sup>70</sup> "Sir Boyle Roche his General Recruiting account with the War Office", 6 Mar 1778, T 1/542/270, TNA, Kew.

<sup>71</sup> A few examples include Fuller to Germain, Southampton St, 8 Mar 1781, CO 137/80, f 5-9, COJ, TNA, Kew; "Memorial from late Governor Dalling regarding Omoa," N.D., CO 137/82, f 393-394, COJ, TNA, Kew; Alex Leith to Keating, St John's, 22 Jul 1780, CO 137/81, f 247-249, COJ, TNA, Kew, 247.

to several factors which had more impact on its cohesion such as the behavior of William Dalrymple, the lack of experienced officers, and the location of service.

The final chapter will discuss provincial recruitment of Irish Catholics in the American colonies through discussion of the Roman Catholic Volunteers and the Volunteers of Ireland. The Roman Catholic Volunteers was a loyalist regiment recruited in Philadelphia which was to be made up entirely of Catholic men. This included both the officers and the rank and file.<sup>72</sup> It is worth noting that this regiment did target the recruitment of Catholics, not Irish Catholics as a sub-group. This regiment was known to have had a bad reputation and indeed only lasted for about a year before being disbanded. Based on the muster lists for the regiment, anecdotal evidence from the officers, and the court martials of two officers, this chapter will discuss the merits of the argument that this regiment was ineffective and undisciplined, and to what degree if at all that reputation relates to the ability and loyalty of the Catholic men of the corps. This analysis will show that the negative memory of the Roman Catholic Volunteers, as well as most of its disciplinary issues, are not due to the religion of the men, but rather to lack of experience of the officers. There certainly was some degree of discrimination against this corps because it was Catholic, but this seems to have emerged in terms of people looking for there to be problems with this corps *because* it was a Catholic and focusing on these issues to get it disbanded when in the case of other provincial corps such issues did not lead to such severe consequences. The end of the chapter will discuss the Volunteers of Ireland, another provincial regiment recruited around the same time as the Roman Catholic Volunteers which received some soldiers from the Roman Catholic Volunteers when it was disbanded. This regiment celebrated its Irishness, and was eventually made a royal regiment.<sup>73</sup> The Volunteers of Ireland proved to be successful and effective, which shows that it was not problematic to be an *Irish* recruit, which supports the idea that the mistreatment or at best negative representation of the Roman Catholic Volunteers was due to their religion, not their Irishness. Further the integration of Irish Catholic soldiers into the Volunteers of Ireland, a regiment that is remembered as more Protestant and Presbyterian, once again did not cause significant disciplinary issues or upheaval of regiment cohesion. This illustrates that once the Catholic identity had been obscured again, and in this case taken a back seat to the Irishness of the men, Irish Catholics could serve without issue.

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<sup>72</sup> Mackenzie to Clifton, "approval for raising corps", 7 Oct 1777, PRO 30/55/698, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>73</sup> Newspaper discussions of the Volunteers of Ireland celebrating St Patrick's Day in New York shows how their Irishness was celebrated and embraced. See "St Patrick Celebration", *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*, 20 Mar 1779, OIALS

The three case studies focusing on Irish Catholic recruitment and service in three different contexts during this period shows how prevalent this phenomenon was. Certainly there are more places to look for Irish Catholic service during this period, so more work is needed to show a systematic analysis of their participation and experience throughout this period, and indeed throughout the British Empire. Though Irish Catholic recruitment had occurred in the historical shadows and lacks specific reference in the historical record, they were present in these and many other regiments throughout the British empire. This project sets up a methodology in order to find these soldiers within the official record and generate their story, if in broad strokes. This helps combat elite-dominated narratives of this process and indeed this period, bringing the non-elites to the forefront of the discussion. This methodology of a close reading of the official record helps show that Irish Catholics were present in the British army during this period and overall showed themselves to be an effective addition, many of them going on to become career soldiers.

## Chapter One: Using and Obscuring Irish Catholic Recruitment

Ireland played an important role in the augmentation of the British army which began in the mid 1770s, during which it was a significant contributor to recruitment for regiments on the British establishment. Through a use of “soft legality” in which the penal laws restricting their service were ignored when it was useful to do so, Irish Catholics were quietly recruited into the British army throughout the 1770s and 1780s for service abroad. This policy diverged from that of preceding conflicts when Irish Catholic recruitment was occurring, but was likely to be rejected en masse from any form of consistent application or tacit permission.<sup>1</sup> Service at home remained controversial, as arming Catholics to fight elsewhere was one thing, but doing so locally was another matter entirely. That said, it is not as if recruiting Catholics for service abroad was not also a sensitive subject. However, the broader context of the empire and the brewing conflict with the American colonies made the need for Irish Catholic recruits apparent. The British government implemented a program of augmentation of the British army for service in the American Revolution which would require more recruits than could be obtained were Irish Catholics to continue to be excluded from eligibility. Lord Rochford, the British southern secretary of state, put it succinctly in a letter to Harcourt, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, writing that His Majesty was “desirous to draw all the advantages He can from every part of his Dominions” of which it was clear Ireland was an important part.<sup>2</sup>

Though the inclusion of Irish Catholics in the army was paramount to the success of this augmentation, the social and political climate in Ireland was not suited, nor entirely prepared to embrace, this change in policy. This led to the development of a language of obscurity for Catholic recruitment, allowing Catholic recruits to be enticed and recruited without being forthright or loud about this taking place, and generating a plausible deniability on behalf of the involved officials. This allowed officials to sidestep potential controversy about Catholic recruitment and quietly fold Catholic recruits into both existing regiments and new corps, which greatly improved the chance that the army augmentation being called for could be carried out.

This chapter will outline the process, structure, and expectations for recruitment in Ireland, as well as how this led to the need to recruit Irish Catholics and how this was carried out

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<sup>1</sup> Bartlett, *The rise and fall of the Irish nation*, ch 4.

<sup>2</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 16 Mar 1775, SP 63/445, f 265, SPI, TNA. Kew.

in practice through political discourse to make it as palatable as possible. This necessitates a discussion of how, if at all, Irish Catholic recruitment occurred before the American Revolution in order to illustrate that recruitment for the latter was handled in a way that was materially different than during the former. This shift certainly was derived from the growth in Catholic toleration and the pragmatic concerns for empire outlined in the introduction, which set up a set of circumstances in which Catholic recruitment became more palatable, but implementation of this plan also required assessment of the trustworthiness and loyalty of Irish Catholics in particular, rather than Catholics as a whole. Discussions of Irish Catholic loyalty took into account local circumstance and sentiment, making its conclusions lack uniformity and vary greatly depending on who was being asked if Irish Catholics could be trusted at all, let alone as soldiers. The variety of answers to questions of Irish Catholic trustworthiness and loyalty demonstrates that this was by no means a settled issue and that discussions of loyalty were both multifaceted and complex. Further, though Catholic recruitment was being carried out, the British and Irish governments were not willing to remove the official restriction against Irish Catholic service at this time, showing that if recruitment of them was to occur, it needed to be discussed and recorded with caution and obscurity. An example at the end of the chapter of the consequences of recruiting Irish Catholics without subtlety will show that all the smoke and mirrors were indeed necessary to carry out Catholic recruitment without controversy, and importantly, with all possible haste.

### **Irish Recruitment Before 1775**

Recruitment in Ireland for the British army for service at home and abroad before the outbreak of the American Revolution followed a very set pattern in which the laws were more adhered to in full. Recruitment of any sort of Irishman was limited in the first half of the century, even among Irish Protestants. This was both to limit potential instances of Catholic recruitment, “lest Catholics sneak in by this route”, as well as to maintain Protestant interest in Ireland.<sup>3</sup> Once Irish recruitment became more necessary and active this limitation was removed, but recruitment in Ireland still maintained a rigid structure in which Catholic recruitment was not legal, though was certainly happening. This rigid structure included more autonomy or control

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<sup>3</sup> Bartlett, *The rise and fall of the Irish nation*, 57.

over recruitment for the Irish government, or it at least appeared that way, and was characterised by mentioning 'Protestant' as part of the criteria a recruit was required to meet.

If recruiting on behalf of Britain in Ireland was to occur during this period, it was more uniformly required to follow the established structure as prescribed by the relationship between British and Irish authority. The Irish parliament was not an independent legislature, it was subordinate to the British parliament as per the system outlined in Poynings Law from 1494-1782 which had been enacted to draw Ireland "into closer dependence to the crown".<sup>4</sup> However, the Irish government did maintain some agency over Irish matters, and military recruitment in particular. Those who wanted to recruit in Ireland must first appeal to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland for approval, who would then issue the necessary paperwork and orders to legitimise officers recruiting in Ireland. If not approved by the Lord Lieutenant, recruiting efforts in Ireland were not legal and the officers participating could be told to leave, or be subjected to court martial. An example of this in the late 1750s can be seen in letters exchanged between Richard Rigby, secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Lord Barrington who was representing the British War Office. Rigby wrote to Barrington expressing concern that officers from English regiments had been spotted in Ireland and were recruiting men without the necessary permission and orders to do so. He wrote:

His Grace doth hereby signify His Pleasure to all such officers and their Parties that they do immediately desist from raising any Men in this Kingdom, and doth strictly charge and command them that they do on no account whatever presume to take away any Men from hence, whom they have already inlisted, but that they do discharge all such Men forthwith as they will answer to the contrary at their Peril.<sup>5</sup>

This clearly established that these men were acting outside of the established structure and implied some sort of harsh consequence would befall them if they refused to cease their recruitment efforts. The Lord Lieutenant was keen to establish that recruitment within Ireland was in his jurisdiction, that power did not lie with the British government.<sup>6</sup> Barrington's response

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<sup>4</sup> Hunt, *The Irish Parliament 1775*, ix.

<sup>5</sup> Rigby to Barrington, Dublin Castle, 23 Dec 1757, SP 63/418, f 15, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>6</sup> This is also against a backdrop of discussions between the Irish and British governments, as the Irish parliament tried to assert its place in the structure of authority. This relates to Ireland's murky position within the British system, the Irish government saw itself as a 'sister kingdom' to the British crown, allies and partners but not inherently lesser than. The British government placed Ireland in a more subordinate role. This relates to wider discussions in the historiography about approaches to this relationship during this period, ie Ireland as a colony, and ancien regime, an allied kingdom, or a subordinate kingdom. See Bartlett, *rise and fall of the Irish nation*, chapter 3. The odd place Ireland occupied was not unknown to contemporaries as well. The Earl of Shelburne commented on the potential awkwardness of discussing issues of authority between Ireland and Britain in 1767, writing that such discussions "might draw into Question the Nature of the Connection between Great Britain and Ireland, which it has always been

to the above complaint acknowledged that the Lord Lieutenant was right to assert that this was a breach of established policy. He recognised that the officers in question had no authority to be recruiting in Ireland, and stated he had since sent orders for them to desist, at least until they had received the proper approvals. Barrington also emphasised that he was aware he did not have the authority to make decisions about who could recruit in Ireland and where, that was reserved for the local government and the Lord Lieutenant.<sup>7</sup> Though, as it will become clear in the 1770s, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland having final say in recruiting orders in Ireland was more of a formality than a requirement when the pressure for military expansion was more significant.<sup>8</sup>

In line with attempts to follow policy more to the letter, recruitment before the 1770s also consistently used the word 'Protestant' when discussing potential Irish recruits, making certain to reference this term in order to be clear that Catholics were excluded from recruitment. This was asserted in discussions of recruitment in Ireland in the 1750s in which expressed concerns that recruitment in Ireland would decrease the local Protestant population, which would hinder the political stability and economic potential of Ireland. Politically, there was anxiety that reducing the number of Protestants would weaken the already precarious position of the Protestant minority in Ireland, making their control less secure and heightening the likelihood of a potential Catholic uprising.<sup>9</sup> Economic fears stemmed from the idea that removing Protestants from Ireland would have ramifications on Irish business and trade. Rigby expressed this concern to Barrington in November 1757, arguing "that more of the Protestant Hands cannot be taken off, without very great Detriment to their Trade and Manufactures".<sup>10</sup> This is part of the larger assumption that it was Protestants which were keeping Ireland afloat, as they were not limited from trades, social activities, or political service like Catholics were. To ensure the safety of the region and the economy, and again assert the authority of the Lord Lieutenant over such matters, Rigby suggested that "His Grace would be glad that the Parties now recruiting here from Great Britain might be recalled, and no more permitted to come over for the Present."<sup>11</sup>

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thought sound Policy to avoid". Earl Shelburne to Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 18 Nov 1767, SP 63/425, f 117-125, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>7</sup> Barrington to Richard Rigby, War Office, 17 Nov 1757, SP 63/418, f 19, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>8</sup> For discussion of the changing landscape of British authority in her colonies during this period see Marshall, *The making and unmaking of empires*, ch 5.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Rigby to Secretary at War, Dublin Castle, 13 Nov 1757, SP 63/418, f 15, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Rigby to HM's Secretary at War, Dublin Castle, 13 Nov 1757, SP 63/418, f 17, SPI, TNA, Kew. Rigby was writing in reaction to further recruitment being sought after the battalions had been augmented from 50 to 70 men per company, and that 24 additional companies had been raised on these numbers in Ireland in 1756.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



Given this concern about the removal of more “Protestant Hands”, it is clear that the English recruiters were targeting the Protestant Irish. Further, there was no hint of any sort of proposal to recruit non-Protestants as a potential solution to this problem, rather just that the recruiters needed to leave without garnering Protestant recruits. This suggests that official assent to Catholic recruitment was not on the table at this time, and that if recruitment in Ireland was being discussed, it meant recruitment of Protestants.

Recruitment in the 1760s followed suit, continuing to assert that recruits from Ireland were to be specifically Protestant.<sup>12</sup> This was also true of foreign forces being recruited during the Seven Years War, as this recruitment was to focus on ‘foreign Protestants’ from continental Europe.<sup>13</sup> The necessity of recruits in Ireland being Protestant was referenced in a letter to the Earl of Egremont in January 1762 from George Montagu-Dunk, who was the Second Earl of Halifax and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at the time. The letter discussed recruitment that was to take place in Ireland in order to fill in gaps in a number of Irish regiments which had contributed a large number of drafts to the English Establishment in recent years. The Lord Lieutenant was notified that “the strictest Orders are issued, that the several Corps be as soon as possible compleated to the Establishment by Protestant Recruits to be raised in this country.”<sup>14</sup> This recruitment effort also seems to be for home service, in which the religious requirements for service were more stringently enforced, even through the American Revolutionary period. Bartlett has made this clear in his discussion of the Irish Army in the 1760s, arguing that since “the prime purpose (and indeed justification) for having a large army in Ireland was to keep an eye on Catholics, it would have been absurd to enlist papists” as they were the threat being suspected.<sup>15</sup> Marshall agrees with this, arguing that Irish Catholics had been “long regarded as a fifth column ready to aid any invader”.<sup>16</sup> The enforcement of Protestant-only recruitment in the 1760s was also enforced in terms of recruitment for the East India Company during this period, exemplified by an incident described by Andrew MacKillop in his discussion of the participation of Irish, Scottish, and Welsh soldiers in the East India Company. MacKillop states that Lieutenant Robert Fraser had been given permission to recruit Protestants in Ireland, but suspicion of his recruits led fifty to be “detained and questioned”, the result of which was the

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<sup>12</sup> For more on the composition and reputation of the British Army in America during the period before the American Revolution see Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British soldier and war in the Americas 1755-1763*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2002).

<sup>13</sup> Marshall, *The making and unmaking of empires*, 62.

<sup>14</sup> Halifax to Earl of Egremont, Dublin Castle, 28 Jan 1762, SP 63/421, f 49-51, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>15</sup> Bartlett, *The rise and fall of the Irish nation*, 57.

<sup>16</sup> Marshall, *The making and unmaking of empires*, 62.

discovery that thirty of those fifty were Catholics. MacKillop asserts that this was a concern both because the Lord Lieutenant had not assented to this recruitment, and because those recruited were legally “subject to exclusion from public and military life”.<sup>17</sup> This and the previous example both show that suspicions or fears of Irish Catholics were taken more seriously during this period which meant more effort, at least outwardly, to maintain the policy of Protestant only recruitment in Ireland.

This is not to say that the recruitment efforts before the 1770s successfully policed Catholic recruitment entirely, nor that officials uniformly tried to do so. Catholic recruitment was certainly happening during this period, though more quietly and less systematically at a governmental level than would be present during the American Revolution. Despite the concerns about them, Irish Catholics were certainly being recruited unofficially during the Seven Years War.<sup>18</sup> There were certainly ways of getting around the prohibition on recruiting Irish Catholics, such as trying to pass as Protestants or even as English. A news article from September 1775 claimed that it was common for Irishmen in the army to claim to be “from Chesire or Lancashire” to get around the restrictions, and that this had been the “constant and uniform way of recruiting for more than a century”.<sup>19</sup> While such efforts are interesting, they seem to indicate a social system rather than any substantial political or government system of tacit permission to recruit Irish Catholics. The need for soldiers brought on by the Seven Years War had led the British government to at least entertain the suggestion of Irish Catholic recruitment in an official capacity when it was proposed by Lord Trimelston, but this was ultimately rejected. This rejection has been explored by Thomas Bartlett, who concluded that while this proposal did not result in dismantling the restrictions on Irish Catholic recruitment and service, it did show “that English ministers were prepared at least to reconsider old policies when such policies came in conflict with the demands of war”.<sup>20</sup> Thus while Irish Catholics could certainly serve via the socially established system the newspapers referenced, slipping into the British army if they did not advertise their Catholicity and thus passing as English or Protestant, this does not seem to indicate a larger political apparatus which enabled and encouraged Catholic recruitment prior to the American Revolution.

### **Irish Recruitment for the American Revolution**

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<sup>17</sup> Andrew MacKillop, *Human capital and empire: Scotland, Ireland, Wales and British imperialism in Asia, c.1690–c.1820*, (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2021), 132.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 62.

<sup>19</sup> “London”, *St James Chronicle or British Evening Post* #2278 (London) 19 Sep 1775, BNC.

<sup>20</sup> Bartlett, *The rise and fall of the Irish nation*, 58.

If that was the state of affairs in the preceding conflict, what changes were made for the American Revolution, and why? From an imperial standpoint, moving forward from the 1770s it became inarguably necessary to integrate Catholic subjects into both the British Army and the Empire. This period was characterised by the British tightening the reins on their colonial holdings, attempting to become a more centralised and standardised empire rather than holding a group of colonies which were handled on a case by case basis.<sup>21</sup> The need for soldiers to secure and police the British Empire and implement this further control meant that disallowing Irish Catholic service was a luxury that the British government could no longer afford. The acquisition of Quebec resulting from the British victory in the Seven Years War also highlighted the need to develop some sort of system for integrating Catholics into the empire. Much of the population of this new territory was French Catholics, making a system “based on representative institutions, English law, and Protestant churches – highly problematic”.<sup>22</sup> Further, as Bartlett has argued, “it could not be claimed that Irish Protestants were flocking to the colours” during the preceding war.<sup>23</sup> This meant that changes needed to be made which would allow for a more substantial system of tacit permission for recruiting Irish Catholics, both for security of the empire as a whole, as well as to address the American Revolution in particular.

The goal was to assemble a force large enough to crush the rebellion and immediately end the conflict without an extended war.<sup>24</sup> This is a similar strategy the British had employed previously to deal with rebellion or unrest in Ireland; come in strong, tear up the resistance, and move forward.<sup>25</sup> The British government turned to several places to fulfill this recruitment, both locally and sourcing foreign soldiers. They increased Highlander recruitment, paid for German mercenary forces, raised loyalist regiments in the American colonies, utilised slaves and native peoples in the colonies for additional manpower, and set off on a very aggressive recruiting campaign in Ireland. Increased Highlander recruitment was certainly helpful as well, but this

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<sup>21</sup> See Marshall, *The making and unmaking of empires*; Martyn J Powell, *Britain and Ireland in the Eighteenth-Century Crisis of Empire*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

<sup>22</sup> Stephen Conway, “The Consequences of the Conquest: Quebec and British Politics, 1760–1774,” in *Revisiting 1759: The Conquest of Canada in Historical Perspective*, edited by Phillip Buckner and John Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012) 141–65, 142.

<sup>23</sup> Bartlett, *The rise and fall of the Irish nation*, 58.

<sup>24</sup> Conway, *A short history*, 62.

<sup>25</sup> Can see this in the Cromwellian conflict, Williamite wars, the goal was to crush Ireland quickly to be able to go back to England to focus on more pressing political stability and concerns. Raymond Gillespie, *Seventeenth century Ireland: making modern Ireland*, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2006), part II; McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, ch 4.

alone could not sustain the numbers needed for the planned augmentation.<sup>26</sup> It also became clear that recruiting only Protestants in Ireland was problematic; it would not get them the number they needed, and the concern about diminishing the already small Protestant minority in Ireland persisted. This concern and the need for large numbers, and fast, meant that Irish Catholic recruitment provided a necessary solution to the problem, if not an entirely socially or legally acceptable one.

The correspondence related to recruitment during this period consistently references the need for speed, rapid recruitment, and the large numbers required to help quell the rebellion in America. It is this pressure which led to the inclusion of Irish Catholics, it was the only way to accomplish the task at hand. This situation is referred to in many ways in correspondence between Lord Lieutenant Harcourt and the King's secretary which would impress the need for urgency. Terms such as "the present emergency"<sup>27</sup> emphasised the urgency with which the recruits needed to be provided, as the rebellion applied pressure on the British Empire and its resources. Such terms were generally accompanied with encouragement to fulfill all recruitment being requested as soon as possible, highlighting the need for speed in this process. In a letter to Rochford discussing the use of Irish recruitment and how that was to be implemented, Barrington wrote that it was "extremely desirable at this Juncture that the Augmentation lately ordered ... should be made with the utmost dispatch to which the raising a part among the King's Subjects in Ireland would greatly contribute" and further that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland should issue beating orders to any and all recruiting parties which applied for them, "and to give every further Assistance in his Excellency's Power to the speedy completing of those Corps".<sup>28</sup> This letter shows that it was expected that Ireland would provide a significant portion of the recruits for augmenting the British establishment in America and established blanket permission for recruiting parties to be given the necessary orders to recruit in Ireland. This is a divergence from previous policy in which recruitment in Ireland was far more restricted and in which the Lord Lieutenant had far more authority to push back against recruiting parties being given permission to recruit in Ireland. The pressure for recruitment reinforced that the relationship between Ireland and Britain was a colony to a metropole, not a partnership.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Robert Kent Donovan has argued that Highlander recruitment was initially high, but decreased in efficacy a few years into the American war, making recruiters for these regiments turn to Scottish Catholics and Englishmen. Donovan also talks at some length about the recruitment of Scottish Catholics, and reactions to that. See Donovan, "Military origins," 90-92.

<sup>27</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 1 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 11-13, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>28</sup> Barrington to Rochford, War Office, 20 Feb 1775, SP 63/445, f 169, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>29</sup> Marshall, *The making and unmaking of empires*, 161-170.

It is convenient that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at this time, Lord Harcourt, agreed so readily to carry out this rapid recruitment, as it is clear in the correspondence that he had no choice in the matter. According to William Hunt, Harcourt, “though not exempt from the prevailing habit of excessive drinking, was a man of high character; he had a fair amount of ability and was courteous in manner, but he was shy and retiring”.<sup>30</sup> Hunt also argued that Harcourt was very reliant on his secretary, Colonel John Blaquiere, whom Hunt described as “trustworthy and adroit, well skilled in the management of men, convivial in his tastes, and a good public speaker”.<sup>31</sup> Previous to this appointment as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1772 Harcourt had been serving as British ambassador to Paris. Harcourt remained Lord Lieutenant of Ireland until 1776, when he resigned his position, which means he was in this role during the outbreak of the American Revolution, as well as for the initial calls for augmentation of the British Army.

The pressure for recruitment had certainly been made apparent to Harcourt. He was ordered early in the first wave of recruitment that he should “be particularly attentive that there be no delay in the embarkation at Corke”.<sup>32</sup> This pressure continued to fall on Harcourt throughout the augmentation process, leaving him little to no agency on how recruitment was to be carried out.<sup>33</sup> He received word from Rochford that he should “give the most precise and pressing orders for the execution of this Augmentation” and that His Majesty was “relying on your Excellency’s Zeal and Activity to quicken and accelerate this important service”.<sup>34</sup> Harcourt passed this along to Commander in Chief Irvine, who then confirmed his understanding that it was “His Majesty’s earnest desire that His Army in this country should be compleated with all possible expedition”.<sup>35</sup> Harcourt commented that he would “issue all such Orders and Directions as will best conduce to the effectual and speedy Execution of this Service”.<sup>36</sup> That said, he did push back on several occasions because he was concerned that the army in Ireland was not being replenished as quickly as it was feeding recruits and drafts to the British Establishment for service abroad. He consistently voiced concerns about keeping Ireland’s Establishment complete to the 12,000 men they were entitled to have. This concern was validated by British

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<sup>30</sup> Hunt, *The Irish Parliament 1775*, xxi.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 19 Jan 1775, SP 63/445, f 17-20, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>33</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 1 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 11-13, SPI, TNA, Kew illustrates some agency, but as the year progressed, this became more confusing as Harcourt was given more orders rather than being asked for his thoughts. See Harcourt to unknown, private, Dublin Castle, 8Mar1775, SP 63/445, f 240-249, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>34</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 3 Aug 1775, Sp 63/448, f 19-21, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>35</sup> Irvine to Harcourt, Dublin Castle, 12 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 82, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>36</sup> Harcourt to Rochford, Dublin Castle, 23 Mar 1775, SP 63/446, f 107, SPI, TNA, Kew.

officials, who gave some ground, but ultimately the war in America superseded these concerns. Despite his concerns for the army in Ireland, Harcourt would, for the most part, fall in line and use his authority to carry out the orders for speedy augmentation throughout his tenure during this period.<sup>37</sup>

The main method which was chosen for this swift recruitment was not to raise new regiments, at least for the most part, but instead to augment existing Irish regiments and prepare them for service abroad. Many elites and officers throughout the British Isles wrote to officials such as Harcourt and Barrington offering to raise regiments to help with the war effort, but almost all were rejected.<sup>38</sup> Lord Rochford made it clear to Harcourt that augmentation was the policy which would be used in a mid 1775 letter in which he wrote that His Majesty praised the “Zeal and commendable Spirit” shown by those who have volunteered to raise new corps “yet their offers cannot be accepted as the present Plan is solely to augment the Regiments of Infantry now on foot without there being the least Intention of raising any new Corps; so that the recruiting Service is the chief and only Object now in view.”<sup>39</sup> Harcourt was told to tell those who had volunteered this service that it was appreciated, but would not be pursued at this time. Instead, the British forces in America would be augmented through recruitment and drafting.

Fulfilling the recruitment quotas for the planned augmentation did not mean generating an unreasonable amount of new recruits, but the small time frame which was given to procure them generated pressure which led to the mechanisms of recruitment and who was recruited changing.<sup>40</sup> One of the first plans to obtain these numbers was through drafting from regiments currently serving in Ireland. As per orders sent to Harcourt in January 1775, regiments for American service were to “be in part completed by drafts from the Infantry in Ireland, and by recruits to be raised there; and it is therefore His Majesty’s pleasure that your excellency should give orders for the Drafts there to be made of one man in each company in all the regiments of foot in Ireland” with exception for those regiments which had been ordered to be sent abroad.<sup>41</sup> This meant transferring men who were trained and experienced soldiers who were currently serving in Ireland into the regiments being sent abroad. The last part of the letter was to explain that regiments which were being ordered to be sent abroad were exempt from providing drafts,

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<sup>37</sup> See Harcourt to Rochford, Dublin Castle, 2 Jun 1775, SP 63/447, f 156-157, SPI, TNA, Kew; Harcourt to Rochford, Dublin Castle, 16 Jun 1775, SP 63/447, f 177-180, SPI, TNA, Kew; Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 19 Jul 1775, SP 63/447, f 228-230, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>38</sup> Many such letters can be found throughout Add MS 73627, BP, BL, London.

<sup>39</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 4 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 96-97, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>40</sup> Hagist, *British soldiers American war*, 53.

<sup>41</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 19 Jan 1775, SP 63/445, f 17-20, SPI, TNA, Kew.

as they as a whole were already being sent abroad and needed to be brought up to the required augmented numbers. Drafting as a strategy was utilised for two reasons. Firstly, speed, as it meant moving men already involved in the military around to other regiments which could be potentially faster than recruitment. Secondly and more importantly, this also meant that experienced soldiers would be mixed into the regiments going abroad, not just raw recruits.<sup>42</sup> Recruiting new bodies to serve was certainly helpful, but also meant they were untrained, unaccustomed to military life, and did not have the skillset of a soldier. The drafts therefore could help balance the regiment with skilled and currently new soldiers to increase the efficacy of the company or regiment.<sup>43</sup> Use of drafting was also more likely to add Protestants to the regiments going abroad, as those drafted were from regiments serving in Ireland, which generally means this would not include Irish Catholics. Drafting would continue to be a facet of the augmentation of regiments headed abroad, as well as those already serving in the American colonies, throughout the American Revolution, but this alone would not be sufficient enough to provide all required augmentation, causing Irish Catholic recruitment to become an uncomfortable necessity to fulfill the requested augmentation.<sup>44</sup>

This augmentation was carried out in four waves in which Irish regiments ordered abroad were brought up to the numbers comparable to those on the English establishment. Each of the regiments were ordered to prepare for foreign service and were to be made complete by way of Irish recruits. According to orders from Lord Barrington, this meant that each regiment was to have “477 Men, Officers included, 60 Women, and 12 Servants are allocated to each Corps, and 60 Tons will be wanted for the Baggage of each Regiment, exclusive of the Tents and Camp Equipage.”<sup>45</sup> What this meant in terms of how many people would be added to each regiment was explained more clearly in a later letter which stated each regiment ordered for service abroad should be augmented by “an addition to each company of one Serjeant, one Drummer and 18 Private, as also by two additional Companies, each consisting of one Captain, one Lieutenant, one Ensign, 3 Serjeants 3 Corporals, two Drummers and 56 Private Men”.<sup>46</sup> To

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<sup>42</sup> There was concern that the Irish drafts lacked quality. A letter from Rochford to Harcourt stated that he was to acquaint Harcourt that the King wanted him to tell him of “the badness of the Recruits and of some of the Draughts last sent to America”. In this way it could have been the poor quality drafts, which would have been Protestant, which partially led to the assumption that Irishmen, and therefore Irish Catholics, were poor quality soldiers. See Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 8 Sept 1775, SP 63/448, f 177-178, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>43</sup> Hagist, *British soldiers American war*, 53.

<sup>44</sup> For more on drafting overall, the problems, and the historiographical arguments, see Hagist, *British soldiers American war*, ch 2.

<sup>45</sup> Barrington to Rochford, War Office, 31 Jul 1775, SP 63/447, f 257, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>46</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 25 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 98-99, SPI, TNA, Kew

accomplish this, recruiting parties were sent out throughout Ireland in order to enlist the necessary number of men as quickly as possible.

The four waves of augmentation occurred throughout 1775.<sup>47</sup> The first was in January when Harcourt was informed by Rochford that His Majesty had ordered the “35th, 49th, & 63 Regiments of Foot & 17th Regiment of light Dragoons, now in Ireland, be ordered immediately to be in readiness to embark from Corke for Boston in North America on the first of March next.”<sup>48</sup> This first effort is different than the others as the orders also included that these regiments should be “compleated and augmented in Ireland to the exact number of a troop of a Regiment of light dragoons on the British Establishment, and that the completing and Augmentation thereof should be by Drafts of horses and Men from the other two regiments, (12th & 18th) of light dragoons now in Ireland”.<sup>49</sup> During this first wave, drafting was more utilised. That said, later in the same letter Harcourt was told that to accompany these regiments being sent to America “that it is intended that the regiments in General Gage’s army should be in part compleated by drafts from the Infantry in Ireland, and by recruits to be raised there”.<sup>50</sup> This means that the regiments being sent from Ireland in this wave were to be augmented with drafts but that the regiments already in America were to be sent additional soldiers from Ireland to be augmented as well. To accomplish this, the recruiting parties of the 35th, 49th, and 63d Regiments were ordered to gather “as many recruits as they can as supernumeraries, till they can be proportioned afterwards to each Regiment in North America”.<sup>51</sup> Thus while these three regiments in the first wave were being brought to strength by drafts, they were still involved in gathering Irish recruits for American service.

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<sup>47</sup> Data is presented in the graphic. First wave is the 35th, 49th, & 63 Regiments of Foot & 17th Regiment of light Dragoons in January 1775, see Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 19Jan1775, SP 63/445, f 17-20, SPI, TNA, Kew ; second wave is the 22d, 40th, 44th, and 45th regiments of infantry in Ireland in February 1775, see Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 10 Feb 1775, SP 63/445, f 94, SPI, TNA, Kew; Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 27 Feb 1775, SP 63/445, f 179-180, SPI, TNA, Kew; third wave is the 55th, 17th, 27th, 28th, and 46th Regiments of Foot from Ireland in July 1775, see Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 1 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 9, SPI, TNA, Kew; the fourth wave is the 15th, 37th, 53d, 54th, and 57th Regiments of Foot from Ireland, see Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 19 Oct 1775, SP 63/449 f 129-131, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>48</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 19 Jan 1775, SP 63/445, f 17-20, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 1.1: Waves of Augmentation**

Wave #1 (Jan 1775)	Wave #2 (Feb 1775)	Wave #3 (July 1775)	Wave #4 (Oct 1775)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 49<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 63<sup>rd</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 45<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 17<sup>th</sup> Lt Dragoons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22<sup>nd</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 40<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 44<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 45<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 27<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 28<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 46<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 55<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 37<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 53<sup>rd</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 54<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> <li>• 57<sup>th</sup> Foot</li> </ul>

During the third wave of augmentation we can see the anxiety setting in more clearly, and the pressure for recruitment being thrust in large part at Ireland. The orders for the third wave of augmented regiments for service in the American colonies were sent in July 1775.<sup>52</sup> Rochford signified to Harcourt that the “55th, 17th, 27th, 28th, and 46th Regiments of Foot now in Ireland should be ordered to compleat their respective Corps to the present Establishment of 477 Men Officers included and prepare for Foreign Service”.<sup>53</sup> Accompanying these orders was a separate letter to Harcourt from Rochford of a more personal nature in which he more informally discussed the need for as many soldiers as possible. Rochford stated that he had confined his other letter to the orders needed for the embarkation of the regiments, but that he felt the need to further emphasise the situation to Harcourt. It reads:

I cannot avoid accompanying those Instructions with this separate Letter to acquaint your Excellency that the most weighty Considerations render it highly advisable to strengthen The King’s Army in America with all the Reinforcement that can possibly be sent thither. This Matter has been the subject of several serious Meetings of His Majesty’s most confidential Servants, and they all have humbly submitted to the King their unanimous Opinion that two or three thousand Men are essentially requisite to be sent with the utmost Expedition to America, and that every means must be used, every Effort made to add a very considerable and effectual Body of Troops early next Spring to the Army in America.<sup>54</sup>

Rochford made it clear later in the letter that given other imperial concerns, “Ireland alone can supply what is now so necessary towards resisting the unnatural and open Rebellion” now unfolding in America.<sup>55</sup> This illustrates that at least in Rochford’s view, while other avenues for recruitment were being pursued, the success of the augmentation was reliant on Irish recruitment.

<sup>52</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 1 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 9, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

The British government was keen to keep a close eye on the drafting and recruiting efforts in Ireland. This seems to have both been to track the numbers being obtained as well as to watch for potential problems or pushback to this recruitment. Irvine emphasised to those under his command the need for all paperwork such as recruiting returns to be filled out consistently, as well as that officers were to be sure to be where they were assigned at all times. He wrote that each of the recruiting parties he had sent to Munster, Leinster and Connaght were to report their progress to him “three times a week; by which means your Excellency will know exactly how the Service goes on, & we shall be sure that the several officers are at their Stations; which, especially in this country is very material”.<sup>56</sup> This serves as a recognition that Irvine knew that recruiting in Ireland was to be given particular oversight both in terms of reporting to the Lord Lieutenant on the numbers being recruited, but also making sure officers were indeed manning their posts and participating in the recruiting efforts as ordered. Protestant officers could have been less willing to interact with the populace where they were being sent, which were majority Catholic, or unwilling to recruit Catholics. Consistent reporting would help mitigate this concern. It also would help ensure that Irvine was immediately aware if Catholic recruitment was proving ineffective or worse, causing upheaval. These reports would then be passed on to Rochford, so His Majesty could stay up to date on Irish recruiting efforts, and the War Office, so Lord Barrington could plan accordingly.

### **Trust, Loyalty, and Irish Catholic Recruits**

Through a close reading of material in the State Papers Ireland, we can see that Irish Catholic recruits were integral to the success of these augmentation efforts. Though never encouraged directly as such, Catholic recruitment became a necessary facet of recruiting in Ireland in order to obtain the numbers being asked for. That said, given the political climate of the time it was necessary to obscure these recruitment efforts. If going strictly by the book, Catholics were legally unable to be recruited, but the main issue was rather the social system in place in which discrimination against Catholics was general social policy rather than following the letter of the law. In Ireland, there was still a very clear animosity towards Catholics on behalf of Irish Protestants, which could be weaponised through reference to the penal laws when deemed necessary. Robert Kent Donovan has argued that there had been a decrease in anti-

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<sup>56</sup> Irvine to Harcourt, Dublin Castle, 12 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 82, SPI, TNA, Kew.

Catholicism in both the British and Irish upper echelons, but that all were aware they could cause a stir if they actively pursued Catholic relief. He argues that they knew they could only do so in this climate if there was a clear material benefit, meaning the recruitment of soldiers for the American war, and even then, that the intent to relieve Catholics and recruit them would need to be obscured.<sup>57</sup> The Protestant position in Ireland in terms of numbers had always been precarious, as they were a significant minority of the population, and much of their number was consolidated in Ulster. Though the population of Protestants in Ulster was mostly due to an influx of Scottish Presbyterians, who were not part of the Anglo-Irish Protestant Ascendancy power structure. The Protestant Ascendancy was a further minority of the overall Protestant population which only held social and political power due to the backing of the British state.<sup>58</sup> This meant that alteration to the status quo in Ireland in terms of more access for Catholics to the social, economic, and political structure there would be met with skepticism at the very least, if not outrage or revulsion. Thus in order to establish why it was necessary to obscure Catholic recruitment, it is first necessary to discuss the prevailing stereotypes, fear, and hostility that Irish Protestants held for Irish Catholics which made their recruitment so undesired.

One of the main questions which needed to be addressed relating to Irish Catholic recruitment was to what degree they were loyal subjects. Some Irish Protestants feared that Irish Catholics would be disloyal, but the prevailing argument from members of the elite was to trust Irish Catholics, as they had endured the penal laws and increasingly expressed their loyalty from the 1760s onward. Sir John Dalrymple, a Scottish Baronet, argued that Irish Catholics “had long proved their loyalty, by the surest of all tests, their patience under sufferings, were to a man, enemies to the American rebellion, and, for a century past, had made every corner of Europe ring with the fame of their valour”.<sup>59</sup> In a report to the House of Lords and Commons in Ireland later in this period, in mid 1779, the Committee of the Revenue went so far as to argue that the penal laws were no longer necessary. Their main arguments centered on the idea that the penal laws had been necessary in dealing with Irish Catholics immediately post their rebellion against England and support of James II, but that it had been a while since then and during the interim Ireland had been fully integrated into the British system. Specifically, they argued that:

Circumstances and Temper of this Country would justify their Total Repeal; seeing, as your Excellency does, that this loyal Nation is now intimately united with Great Britain, by Affection, by Inter-Marriages among all Ranks, by

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<sup>57</sup> Donovan, “Military origins,” 83.

<sup>58</sup> McBride, *Eighteenth century Ireland*, ch 8.

<sup>59</sup> Dalrymple, *Three letters*, letter 1, p. 10.

Commercial Connections, by the Residence of many of our Nobility and Men of Fortune in England, by the extensive Possessions held in this Kingdom by those of Great Britain, and in short by every public and private Bond.<sup>60</sup>

The Committee thus asserted that Irish Catholics had integrated themselves into Irish, and also English, society through their actions, loyalty, economic associations, and personal relationships, so laws which limited their participation in government and society were no longer necessary. These arguments, along with John Dalrymple's, make it clear that people were thinking about how Irish Catholics had weathered the penal laws, shown their loyalty, and no longer deserved to be punished or restricted for either their religious affiliation, or actions in a war which took place at the end of the previous century.

However, it is important to acknowledge this idea of Catholic loyalty in Ireland is most accessible and developed in terms of the Catholic elites and upper class. According to Robert Kent Donovan, "in Ireland [Catholics] were a large majority, between 70% and 80% of over 4,000,000 but there as elsewhere they were among the poorest inhabitants, few of them occupying society's middle and upper class ranks."<sup>61</sup> The motives and loyalties of the lower classes of Irish Catholics is hard to determine. Addresses of loyalty to the British government written by Catholic elites but signed on behalf of Irish Catholics by region were increasingly common in the 1770s through the 1790s. The Irish Catholic elite sought to assert themselves within the British narrative through use of these addresses and were interested in curating a picture of Irish Catholic loyalty that was uniform and unshaken by the American conflict.<sup>62</sup> Again, it must be acknowledged that while these addresses claimed to be from Catholics from different regions, they were written and shaped by Catholic elites or the emerging middle class, with the participation of those outside of those groups highly debatable.<sup>63</sup> This debate continues in modern historiography, with some historians arguing for the decline of Jacobitism leading the lower classes of Ireland to be more willing to embrace the English state, while others argue for a continuous political and social tradition of Jacobitism throughout the century.<sup>64</sup> That said, these

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<sup>60</sup> "Copy of the Report of the Commties of the Revenue upon the Addresses of the Lords & Commons of GB relative to the State & Trade of Ireland," 26 Jun 1779, SP 63/465, f 283-293, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>61</sup> Donovan, "Military origins," 83.

<sup>62</sup> "The humble address of the principal Roman Catholick inhabitants of the city and county of Waterford," Jun 1779, SP 63/465, f 178, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>63</sup> McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, 376-378.

<sup>64</sup> Connolly, "Jacobites, Whiteboys and Republicans"; Morley, *Irish Opinion*; Eamonn Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause 1685-1766: A Fatal Attachment*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002).

efforts to bring Irish Catholics into the larger umbrella of British participation and Britishness shows that fears of a lack of Catholic loyalty may not have been warranted.<sup>65</sup>

Relating to presumed loyalty, or lack thereof, of Irish Catholics, were discussions which sought to define what the term “English Subject” meant. There were some efforts in the early 1760s to make a more encompassing “English Subject” term in reference to the people of Ireland, rather than referring to Catholics and Protestants as separate groups. As argued by Marshall, “the conquests of 1763 made the empire even more religiously and ethnically polyglot”, which required more thinking on how to incorporate people who were potentially not English or Protestant, into the empire as subjects.<sup>66</sup> In Lord Lieutenant Halifax’s address to the House of Lords in January 1762 he asserted the “Affection and Loyalty of [His Majesty’s] Faithful Protestant Subjects of Ireland”, referring to only the Protestants as part of this loyalty.<sup>67</sup> The response from the House of Lords did not reference Protestants, but instead claimed the loyalty of all levels of people in Ireland to the king, as that as a collective and unanimous body they would do all that was asked of them.<sup>68</sup> Halifax’s response adopts the use of the term “His Maj’s Subjects of all Ranks and in all His Dominions”, which amalgamated the Catholic subjects in with the Protestant ones.<sup>69</sup> That said, he did reference at the end of his response that His Majesty “will regard with the utmost Attention, and resist with the most steady Resolution, everything which may menace the Religion, Laws and Liberties of His Subjects of His Kingdom or Ireland”.<sup>70</sup> Mentioning religion here is a deliberate choice to assert Protestantism as a requirement of Britishness. It is interesting to note that in the original draft of this statement, religion was not included, the line simply read “be assured, that His Majesty’s Attention, in this time of danger, will be carefully directed to the Protection of a People, who are so deservedly dear (entitled to his protection subbed in below) to Him”.<sup>71</sup> In the final draft despite keeping the broader term of “all subjects” religion was included, and listed as the first category. This means that during this period ideas of Britishness were expanding, but ultimately Britishness was still tied to Protestantism.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> This especially considering that ultimately the group leading the charge to rebel in 1798 was not the Irish Catholics, but the Presbyterians. McBride, *Eighteenth century Ireland*, ch 12.

<sup>66</sup> Marshall, *Making and Unmaking Empire*, 160.

<sup>67</sup> Halifax to House of Lords, “Lord Lt’s Message to the House of Lords,” 26 Jan 1762, SP 63/421 f31, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>68</sup> House of Lords to George III (copy), Feb 1762, SP 63/421, f 35-36, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>69</sup> Halifax to House of Lords, 31 Jan 1762, SP 63/421, f 55, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Halifax to House of Lords (draft), 31 Jan 1762, SP 63/421, f 57, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>72</sup> Catholics sought to assert themselves within the narrative of British subjecthood. An address on behalf of the Roman Catholics of Galway claimed that Catholics there would do anything they could for the

The use of the term “Protestant fellow-subjects” could be used to either denote inclusion or exclusion of Irish Catholics in ideas of British subjecthood. A letter from Lord Lieutenant Buckingham to Weymouth in October 1779 stated the Knights of the Shire of Galway had sent in an address of loyalty from the Irish Catholics of the same county in which they asserted that they were loyal to King and Country and further that they would “conduct themselves in such a manner as may fully evince their Loyalty to His Majesty and satisfy their Protestant fellow Subjects that they are firmly united with them in mutual Interest and Affection”.<sup>73</sup> This demonstrates Irish Catholic interest in asserting themselves as on the same footing as their fellow Irish Protestants. Further, it acknowledges that they knew the Protestants felt either divided from them, fear of them, or both. This is a clear example of Irish Catholic effort to assert belonging and loyalty within Britishness during this time of conflict.

If the definition of Britishness and the integration of Irish Catholics was increasing, there still remained a begrudging acceptance of this on behalf of some of the English government and the Protestant Irish elite. The Lament for Art O’Leary, a poem which was written by O’Leary’s widow, Eibhlín Dubh O’Connell, after his murder on May 4th, 1773, illustrates that the penal laws were not consistently implemented, but still remained looming threat over Catholics which were deemed too powerful or to have offended Protestants. O’Leary had been serving as a Captain in the Austrian Army, but had moved back to Ireland to settle and live with his wife. This was not necessarily uncommon, Irish soldiers had been serving in armies in continental Europe since at least the early seventeenth century.<sup>74</sup> Catholics trained in military tactics or which held themselves with the decorum of an officer induced anxiety among the local Irish Protestant population. Further, the latter could be punished under the penal laws, as was the case with O’Leary.

O’Leary was not quiet about his status as an officer, he had a nice sword and a high-quality horse when he returned to Ireland, and walked around his home area without hiding either. Eilís Dillon argues that “in wearing his silver-hilted sword in public he was breaking the law, since he was a Catholic”.<sup>75</sup> Correctly so, one of the components of *An act for the better securing the government by disarming Papists*, passed in 1695, stated that Catholics in Ireland

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defense of King and country, “and satisfy their Protestant fellow Subjects that they are firmly united with them in mutual Interest and Affection”. Such rhetoric was being used by both Catholic and Protestant writers. See Harcourt to Weymouth, Dublin Castle, 23 Oct 1779, SP 63/467, f 49, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>73</sup> Buckingham to Weymouth, Dublin Castle, 23 Oct 1779, SP 63/467, f 49, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>74</sup> Roger B. Manning, *An Apprenticeship in Arms: The Origins of the British Army 1585-1702*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

<sup>75</sup> Eilís Dillon, “The Lament for Arthur O’Leary,” *University Review* 5, no. 2 (1968): 216–222. 216.

were not allowed to carry or possess weapons.<sup>76</sup> Dillon further asserts that O'Leary flaunted this status and "seems to have gone in for baiting the local Protestant big-wigs", which culminated in him participating in a horse race against Abraham Morris, High Sheriff of Cork.<sup>77</sup> O'Leary won the race, which led Morris to invoke a penal law which allowed Protestants to buy horses from Catholics for five pounds, no matter the value of the horse.<sup>78</sup> After a bit of back and forth, including O'Leary threatening to kill Morris, O'Leary was chased down and killed. Morris was then tried for murder, but was acquitted and ultimately faced no legal consequences.

The Lament expresses O'Connell's grief and anger at the murder of her husband and conveys themes which are in line with the sentiments outlined above. She described O'Leary's finery and manner, "How well your hat suited you, Bright gold banded, Sword silver-hilted, Right hand steady...How fine your brooch was Fastened in cambric", a good model of a proper soldier and gentleman with finery befitting such a role. These markers of status and training made him noticeable to others, and the reception was not positive. O'Connell wrote: "When you crossed the sea to us, They would clear the street for you, And not for love of you But for deadly hatred".<sup>79</sup> This is likely in reference to the jealousy or anxiety of locals in reaction to O'Leary. Perhaps if O'Leary had been less conspicuous with his equipment and more humble in demeanor he could have avoided this fate, as it seemed there was animosity toward him stemming more from his behavior than just simply from his existence as a soldier returned to Ireland. While this example is a bit early for the discussion of Irish Catholic recruitment into the British Army for the American Revolution, as it took place in 1773, this example shows that while some level of toleration, or more willingness to talk about the place of Irish Catholics in society and empire emerges at the 1770s progress, the penal laws certainly remained a threatening force for the maintenance of class structure in Ireland throughout this period and could be called upon when necessary, or when anti-Catholic prejudice led to doing so.

This remaining animosity and fear of trained Irish Catholic military men is also clear in newspaper articles in which reactions to Irish Catholic recruitment were expressed. Articles expressed the abhorrence at the "schemes pursuing by Administration against our Protestant

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<sup>76</sup> "An act for the better securing the government by disarming Papists," (Dublin: Printed by Andrew Crook, 1695), John J Burns Library, Boston College.

<sup>77</sup> Dillon, "The Lament for Arthur O'Leary," 216.

<sup>78</sup> This law was another component of the act which disarmed Catholics. "An act for the better securing the government by disarming Papists", (Dublin: Printed by Andrew Crook, 1695), John J Burns Library, Boston College.

<sup>79</sup> Eibhlín Dubh O'Connell, "The lament for Arthur O'Leary from the Irish of Eibhlin Dubh Ni Chonail, translated by Eilís Dillon," in Eilís Dillon, "The Lament for Arthur O'Leary," *University Review* 5, no. 2 (1968): 216-222, 219.

fellow-subjects in America”.<sup>80</sup> Sending an historic enemy who was not to be trusted, the Irish Catholics, to fight good Protestants in the colonies was argued to be at best bad form, and at worst an intolerable slight. This was not just to do with Irish Catholics, but Catholics from other parts of the empire being used as well. The same author who wrote the above quote in a letter to the editor of the *Middlesex Journal* argued that using Catholics from Granada or Catholic territories in Canada to raise “Roman Catholic armies to butcher the Protestants” demonstrated “the principles of those who advise the present measure against America”, thus slandering those who had supported measures to recruit Catholics.<sup>81</sup> These very public pushbacks to Catholic recruitment show that even despite their current rebellion, the writers saw Americans as co-subjects and continued to see Irish Catholics as an ‘other’ despite Irish Catholic efforts to assert the contrary.

Another article, though seemingly supportive of Catholic recruitment, was consistently disparaging of those involved and of the Irish Catholics themselves. The author agreed that recruiting large numbers of Catholic recruits could occur with “uncommon alacrity”, especially when done through the influence of Catholic elites, but referred to Roman Catholic recruits as “ignorant Natives who do not understand a word of English”.<sup>82</sup> He put a more positive spin on the above issue of sending Catholics to fight Protestants in America, at least from an efficacy of recruitment perspective, arguing that they would volunteer for service in order to take revenge for the treatment and deaths of their ancestors at the hands of the English and the Protestants. This is not at odds with the statement that sending Catholics to fight Protestants was bad form, but does admit that at least from the vantage point of necessary and fruitful recruitment, Catholic involvement was valuable. Through the earlier insulting comment and this further comment which made it seem as though he thought Irish Catholics dim witted and manipulatable when their past trauma was employed to entice them to serve it is clear the writer held a lot of animosity for Irish Catholics as a group. Even so, he recognised the utility of using them. In this example we can see the issues surrounding Irish Catholic recruitment clearly laid out; the idea that the use and recruitment of Catholics was distasteful, the anger at them ever present, but the need to use them to fill out the regiments clearly addressed as well. This illustrates the need to recruit Catholics, but keep the process hidden as much as possible, needed to be the policy moving forward in order to keep Irish Catholic recruitment active while

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<sup>80</sup> “To the Editor of the Middlesex Journal, from a Protestant,” *Middlesex Journal*, #1005 (London, England) 2 Sep 1775, BNC.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> “Extract of a Letter from the Hague, Sep 2,” *Middlesex Journal*, #1007, 7 Sep 1775, BNC.



avoiding direct discussion, permission, or acknowledgement of Irish Catholic recruitment and service.

An article in the *St James Chronicle* put the policy of hiding Catholic recruitment at the forefront of his discussion. The author agreed that Catholic recruitment was not legal but outlined the way in which it was being carried out regardless, arguing that this was common knowledge and commonplace. The newspaper stated that a correspondent assured them that “far from enlisting Irish Papists into our marching regiments, the recruiting officers are highly punishable by their superiors, for even enlisting Irish Protestants to serve in the Infantry, though on the Irish Establishment and stationed in that Kingdom”<sup>83</sup>. The writer argued that to get round this policy, those in Ireland who could pass as English were being sent to Liverpool for inspection, leading Irish foot soldiers in the British Army to claim they were “from Cheshire or Lancashire”.<sup>84</sup> They further claimed that this had been the constant policy for Irish recruitment for over a century. This process was used to obscure Irish recruitment overall, not just Catholics, but does provide a glimpse into why tracking down Irish Catholic recruits is so difficult as they could have been claiming to be from a different area and thus recorded as such in recruiting documentation. The writer behaved like this policy was known, useful, and consistently used to gather Irish recruits which shows that even before developing the obscuring language which was used in the 1770s, Irish Catholic recruitment had already been both happening and hidden. The assumptions of the writer that this hidden process was common knowledge makes an interesting point about the nature of obscured Catholic recruitment during the American Revolution as well, meaning that it could be argued that regardless of the law, the stated protocol was to obscure the recruitment but carry it out anyway. In this way, the obscuring language developed in the 1770s for recruiting Irish Catholics was necessary not as a way to get around the law, but a rather way to exist within the established convention.

During all this Harcourt himself continued to be suspicious of Catholic plots in Ireland. In April 1775 he requested permission for himself and the Postmaster General in Ireland to be able to “look into the Correspondence of Popish, or other disaffected Persons in this Kingdom, in order to the Discovery of any Designs that may be now, or hereafter, set on foot to the Prejudice of the Publick and of government”.<sup>85</sup> This request was granted and renewed annually throughout the period until at least 1781, each Lord Lieutenant making it a thing they asked for. The granting of permission was sufficiently vague that it could be applied in any situation which

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<sup>83</sup> “London,” *St James Chronicle or British Evening Post*, #2278, 19 Sep 1775, BNC.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Harcourt to Rochford, Dublin Castle, 7 Apr 1775, SP 63/446, f 192, SPI, TNA, Kew.

implied a security threat. Harcourt was told he could look into any correspondence he “shall think contain Matters of dangerous Consequences to His Majesty’s Government”.<sup>86</sup> Harcourt’s initial letter calling out Popish correspondence in particular shows his continued skepticism of this group as a potential threat to the security and government of Ireland. So even as he was carrying out the recruiting efforts as ordered, still maintained the assumption that Catholics in Ireland were inherently to not be trusted.

The actions of the Whiteboys also called Irish Catholic loyalty into question, making them come off as violent peasant dissenters rather than a trustworthy group. Most prevalent in the 1760s, the Whiteboys used agrarian violence such as destroying fences and defacing land to protest tithes and advocate for tenant rights. Ian McBride argues that these acts of protest were read by some contemporaries as “part of an elaborate conspiracy”, but were meant as nothing more than protest for social change rather than any sort of proto-nationalist effort.<sup>87</sup> However, regardless of their intent, the actions of the Whiteboys invigorated the ever present concern that Irish Catholics would use their connections to Catholic powers to rise up against England. Jean and Desmond Bowen put it succinctly, arguing that since the mid seventeenth century the English became “perennially anxious about a resurgence of Irish militarism ideologically supported by the power of the Papacy and continental armies”.<sup>88</sup> Harcourt expressed concerns about the disloyalty of the lower classes of Irish, and the Whiteboys in particular, in mid 1775 amidst the augmentation process for regiments being sent abroad. He wrote to Rochford asking for a more consistent military force to stay in Ireland, arguing that the present number was not enough to quell the unrest there. He was concerned that the need for soldiers in Ireland to take action was “becoming more frequent than usual, the Civil Power being, by no means sufficient to quell the licentious Spirit of the lower Class of People in Ireland, particularly of the persons associated under the name of White Boys”.<sup>89</sup> Though a minority group perpetrating these protests their actions could be used as propaganda to add further suspicion to the Catholic majority, reinforcing popular Protestant impressions that Irish Catholics were peasants, violent, and unsupportive of the established political and social structure in Ireland.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Rochford to Wm Henry Lord Clermont (copy), SP 63/447, f 133, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>87</sup> McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*.

<sup>88</sup> Bowen, *The Heroic Option*, 3.

<sup>89</sup> Harcourt to Rochford, Dublin Castle, 2 Jun 1775, SP 63/447, f 156-157, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>90</sup> Substantial analysis of the Whiteboys is out of the scope of this project, for a more detailed discussion see McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, Ch9.

The topic of trust relating to Irish Catholic recruits emerged in a section of Parliamentary minutes published in *Freeman's Journal* in October 1775 in which assumptions about the efficacy of Irish Catholic soldiers were discussed. In these minutes Barry Barry of County Cavan, whom Secretary Blaquiere noted as a constant opponent of Harcourt's administration in his notes on the parliament of 1775, expressed concerns about Catholics soldiers being raised for American service.<sup>91</sup> He argued "that the report that a number of Papist soldiers were to be raised, gave grounds for jealousies and discontents amongst the people" and commented about "how dangerous it would be to put arms in the hands of those very men, who by the present system of laws, were prohibited from bearing any".<sup>92</sup> The writer recounting these proceedings stated that Barry "threw out" this remark, as it was a tangent which was unrelated to the previous discussion which had focused on arrears and public accounts. This suggests that the topic was on Barry's mind, as he had brought it up without prompt and it was a topic which held no relevance to the discussion at hand.

Barry's sentiment met rebuttal by Colonel Arthur Browne, representative of the Borough of Gowran, who expressed approval of Irish Catholic recruitment due to concerns about local security and argued that Irish Catholic soldiers were effective in the field. In terms of local security, he argued that "it was better to export Papists for soldiers than Protestants", alluding to the idea that removing large groups of Protestants from Ireland was equally if not more dangerous than recruiting and training Irish Catholics. Regarding their efficacy as soldiers, he stated that he was certain based on his experiences serving in America in the Seven Years War that "the Papists made as good soldiers as Protestants".<sup>93</sup> Browne was Lieutenant Colonel of the 28th Foot, and Secretary Blaquiere's description of him states he was "a most zealous Friend of Government- Atho' a bad Speaker a most useful & necessary Member for the Castle & much beloved".<sup>94</sup> Barry's response to Browne seemed to recognise the validity of the idea that exporting Catholics as soldiers made sense, but that they posed a security risk when they returned to Ireland after their service. He argued that they would "be the more dangerous from having been disciplined and trained in arms; and he thought every Papist inlisted was a breach of the established laws".<sup>95</sup> This shows that Barry was concerned with both the illegality of this recruitment, as well as its potential long-term consequences.

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<sup>91</sup> Hunt, *The Irish Parliament 1775*, 3.

<sup>92</sup> "Parliamentary Diary," *Freeman's Journal*, vol 13 #29, (Dublin) 28 Oct 1775, INA.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Hunt, *The Irish Parliament 1775*, 7.

<sup>95</sup> "Parliamentary Diary," *Freeman's Journal*, vol 13 #29, (Dublin) 28 Oct 1775, INA.

Major Boyle Roche then entered the discussion, saying he “thought himself obliged to say something on this point”. Boyle Roche was on the recruiting service at the time of this meeting, and thus had direct insight into this topic. He made similar remarks about the Irish Catholics who had served in the British army during the Seven Years War, commenting on their loyal service. Though he stated that “his instructions were to enlist only Protestants” in his current role, instructions he certainly was not following, he knew there had been heavy recruitment in Munster in 1757 during which time “the officers enlisted a great number of Papists”. He stated that these men had been sent abroad, and argued “that their religion did not influence them, so as either to behave remissly in action, or to desert” even though where they had been sent meant they were serving “in Romish countries, and fighting against those of their own religion”.<sup>96</sup> This asserted that Irish Catholic soldiers could be trusted and effective and further specifically combatted the assumption that they would desert in large numbers. Boyle Roche emphasised this in the end of his comments, stating that “every military gentleman in the house, who had served in the last war in America, could testify that there never was less desertion than from Papist soldiers, and that no men behaved better or were more observant of discipline”.<sup>97</sup>

There is no further commentary in this source, as the discussion was pulled back to the topic they had intended to discuss, which had nothing to do with Catholic recruitment. This tangent to an unrelated subject shows that the quality of Catholic soldiers was certainly on the mind of Irish politicians, and that the politicians thought the Catholics to be unreliable. However the men correcting them, the military men more directly involved in serving with the Catholics, knew otherwise as they had seen the efficacy of Irish Catholic soldiers first-hand.<sup>98</sup> This would later become clear to politicians as well. When commenting on Irish desertion rates in 1780, Hillsborough remarked “that the Irish out of their Country do not desert more than others”.<sup>99</sup> This was in reference to all Irish, not just Catholics, but shows that the British administration was eventually aware that the truth of the matter was that Irish soldiers did not desert more than any other group.

Faith in Irish Catholics either as co-subjects or loyal or effective soldiers was thus by no means universal, but these discussions occurring with such publicity and frequency shows that

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Roche would later be very involved in Irish Catholic recruitment through his involvement as agent to Lord Kenmare. See “Letter from Major Boyle Roche enclosing a recruiting poster,” 18 Aug 1775, London, British Library, Barrington Papers, Add MS 73648, #21,

<sup>99</sup> Hillsborough to Buckingham, St James, 17 Jan 1780, SP 63/468, f23, SPI, TNA, Kew.

the questions were being more specifically asked and debated than in previous decades. As argued by Bartlett, “receptivity to Enlightenment ideas depended largely on Protestants’ perceptions of their security, and Protestant opinion on their security was by no means unanimous”.<sup>100</sup> James Kelly has expressed similar observations in his discussion of the development of Catholic relief in the latter half of the eighteenth century, arguing that concerns for recruitment “did not result in the reduction in volume of anti-Catholic commentary”, but that rather there was an emergence of “contrary voices...whose accessible and reasoned advocacy of religious toleration struck a chord with Protestants as well as Catholics”.<sup>101</sup> The context of the American War meant that new security concerns needed to be addressed, and in the case of Irish Catholics, old security threats to be reevaluated. Weighing these concerns, Irish Catholic recruitment emerged as a now appropriate, if not particularly acceptable, measure to safeguard wider imperial concerns and helped add momentum to the overall discussions of Catholic relief which were emerging.

### **Obscuring Irish Catholic Recruitment**

Due to these concerns about the loyalty of Irish Catholics, the quality of Irish Catholic soldiers, and the actual illegality of recruiting Catholics, it proved necessary to obscure their recruitment and participation in the British army at this time. Efforts for Catholic relief, or Catholic recruitment without legality, needed to be carried out with caution.<sup>102</sup> Surviving letters in the State Papers Ireland about how recruitment was to be carried out make it clear that the British and Irish governments were complicit in the process of recruiting Irish Catholics, and developed a language in which they never directly sanctioned recruiting this group, but for all intents and purposes that is what they had approved. It is unclear as to whether discussions were had in which those involved actively sought to develop consistent obscuring language, but several terms emerge in the State Papers as stand-ins for references to Irish Catholics. The terms used to refer to the Irish recruits to indicate their Catholicism without saying so specifically, the geography of the recruitment approvals, and referencing Irish Catholic elites who were to be involved in recruiting Catholic tenantry to imply approval of recruiting Catholics

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<sup>100</sup> Bartlett, *The rise and fall of the Irish nation*, 68.

<sup>101</sup> James Kelly, “The first phase of Catholic relief in Britain and Ireland, 1766-1789,” in *The Oxford history of British and Irish Catholicism Volume III: Relief, Revolution, and Revival, 1746-1829*, ed Liam Chambers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 31-48, 38.

<sup>102</sup> Donovan, “Military origins,” 83.

were all avenues used to indicate Catholic recruitment and provide tacit permission for recruiting these men while avoiding the repercussions of doing so openly.

Newspaper discussions of Catholic opinions and recruitment referred to them in distancing terms, and tended to amalgamate the Catholic Irish under the terms “common people”, “traditional Irish”, or even “lower sort”, all of which served to talk about Irish Catholics without referencing them as such. These terms were consistently used in discussion of Irish Catholic opinion of the American rebellion in various newspapers. For example, an article in the *Chester Chronicle or Commercial Intelligencer* wrote that the “common people” had no objection to the American war, as others had recently asserted. In fact the opposite, that they had “large expectations by the forfeited estates and cultivated lands which may fall to them when the trouble subsides”.<sup>103</sup> This term was also used in correspondence in the State Papers. A letter from the Surveyor General of Munster discussed that the Presbyterians were spreading rumors that Irish Catholics did not want to enlist and in so doing called them the “common people” as well.<sup>104</sup> This term was less commonly used in recruitment efforts, but was very common in newspapers and in discussions about addresses of loyalty from Catholics of different towns or counties. Use of this term synonymously with Irish Catholic shows that those employing it were aware that the commoners, and thus the overwhelming majority of people in Ireland, were Catholic. The term more associated with Catholic recruitment was “lower sort”, asserting the low class status of the general Irish Catholic populace. Harcourt referred to them as such in discussion about the loyalty of Irish Catholics, labeling the “lower sort” as a problematic category of people. This term was also used directly in a discussion about Catholic recruitment, arguing that the “lower sort” was unwilling to enlist unless their clergy encouraged them to do so.<sup>105</sup> The class implications of the term “lower sort” as well as the clear derogatory nature of classifying them as such provides insight into how the men using the term viewed Irish Catholics as a group. Despite any biases which existed against them the “common people”, the “lower sort”, would prove to be a major contributor to the British army during this period.

The second way in which Irish Catholic recruitment was encouraged but obscured during this period was references to recruiting in different regions of Ireland. Given the ‘present emergency’, the geography of recruiting in Ireland changed. Regiments on the British establishment were now being given permission to recruit in all of Ireland. Recruiting efforts

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<sup>103</sup> “Ireland,” *Chester Chronicle or Commercial Intelligencer*, #21, 18 Sept 1775, BNC.

<sup>104</sup> “Extract of a Letter from Mr Gordon Surveyor Genl of Munster to Mr Lee,” Corke, 16 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 112-113, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>105</sup> “Extract of a letter from Dublin, Sept 3,” *Middlesex Journal*, #1007-2 (London, England) 7 Sep 1775, BNC.

before this were generally kept to Ulster in which the population was most likely to be either Anglican or Presbyterian.<sup>106</sup> Opening recruitment up into the other three provinces of Ireland, Munster, Leinster, and Connaught, was a way of encouraging Catholic recruitment. Referring to this as only a geographical change rather than one which lessened the religious criteria was a way to obscure the real goal, massive Catholic recruitment from these areas. Rochford sent orders for this to Harcourt in January of 1775, writing “and as in the present exigency, the necessity of recruiting is so pressing your excellency will authorise the recruiting parties to raise recruits in the Provinces of Munster, Leinster, and Connaught.”<sup>107</sup> This again makes it clear that the American Revolution added a lot of pressure to the British Empire and more directly to the British Military apparatus, as it was referenced here that it was the “present exigency” which necessitated an update of the recruiting policy and a change in the geography of recruitment in Ireland.

To determine what this meant in practice for the religious affiliation of those who would be the focus of these recruiting efforts, it is necessary to look at the proportion of Catholics in these provinces which were now approved for recruitment. Two census reports are helpful in addressing the religious proportions in more specific geographies within Ireland, the 1766 Religious Census and the 1834 census. The 1766 census data reported 130,236 Protestant households and 305,680 Catholic households, meaning a Protestant proportion overall of around 30%. As argued by Gurrin et al, this is likely inflated as Protestant households could hold individual Catholics as servants or labourers and this report would have left them out, and that Catholic households were more likely to be unreported than Protestant ones, given that this survey was conducted by local Church of Ireland clergymen who were more likely to be familiar with the Protestants in their community, rather than the Catholics.<sup>108</sup> The extant data from the 1766 census does not cover every parish due to both lack of reporting to some extent, and the Public Records Office fire which destroyed some of the records. That said, the data which has survived and been compiled in a recent volume illustrates that recruitment outside of Ulster would have had to include recruitment of Catholics in order to be effective. The table below

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<sup>106</sup> This is when recruiting in Ireland was allowed at all, as official policy dictated that Irishmen as a whole were not to be recruited into the army. This changed in 1756, when Irish Protestants were allowed, and in the 1790s when Catholics were allowed. Jean and Desmond Bowen argue that disallowing recruitment of the Irish as a whole was due the fact that “there could be no certainty that Irish Catholics would not slip in” if Irishmen were recruited. Bowen, *Heroic Option*, 13.

<sup>107</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 19 Jan 1775, SP 63/445, f 17-20, SPI, TNA, Kew.

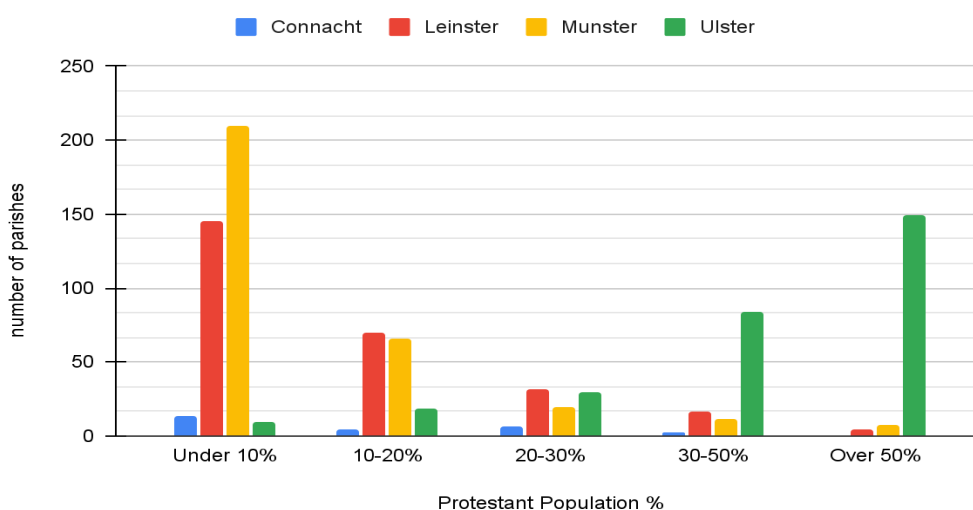
<sup>108</sup> Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 121.

shows the proportion of Protestants in parishes where generating this data is possible.<sup>109</sup> The left column lists a percentage range of Protestant proportions, the other columns list the corresponding number of parishes in each province which reported each proportion.<sup>110</sup> This data is also charted in Figure 1.2.

**Table 1.1:** Protestant Proportions by Parish, according to the 1766 religious census of Ireland

Protestant Population %	Connacht	Leinster	Munster	Ulster
Under 10%	14	145	210	10
10-20%	4	70	66	19
20-30%	6	32	20	30
30-50%	2	17	12	84
Over 50%	0	4	7	149
Total	26	268	315	292

**Figure 1.2:** Protestant Proportions by Province



<sup>109</sup> This section uses proportions as reported in Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*. For Connacht, p. 126-139, Leinster p. 140-236, Munster p. 237-332, and Ulster p. 333-409.

<sup>110</sup> Only parishes for which Gurrin et al had sufficient data to generate proportions as percentages of total households reported are included.



This data shows that in over half of parish data which was complete enough for analysis from Connacht, Leinster, and Munster the Protestant population was under 10% of the parish. The highest proportion of parishes which reported under 10% Protestant populations was in Munster, as these parishes made up 66% of those able to be analyzed in this way. Of the parishes in these three provinces considered in Table 1, 92% indicated a Protestant population of less than 30%. The proportions in Ulster are generally the reverse of this data, with only 3% reporting a protestant population of under 10%, and 79% reporting a Protestant proportion of greater than 30%, with about 50% of that being reports of over 50% Protestant proportions. In some cases in Ulster the Protestant reports also included information on proportions of Church of Ireland versus dissenters, but inclusion of this is very inconsistent. That said, generally when it was included the dissenter population, likely to be mostly Presbyterians, was significantly higher than that of the Church of Ireland.<sup>111</sup> However, given that this work is more concerned with Catholic vs Protestant proportions, splits within the Protestant proportions into denominational groups are less material to these discussions.

The proportion of Catholics in each county from the 1834 census data have been very helpfully presented in a monograph titled *Troubled Geographies*, which used Geographic information software to map the religious proportions reported on that census.<sup>112</sup> The findings of this study indicated that the vast majority of the areas now approved for recruitment were those areas in which 90% or more of the population was Catholic, or 60-90% of the population was Catholic. This work also addressed the population of the Church of Ireland in each county, which tends to show the reverse of the Catholic maps, though not entirely as these were not the only religions present in Ireland during this period. Presbyterians for example also made up a large proportion of the population of Ulster, and were also being recruited now that the overall ban on recruiting in Ireland had been lifted. William Hunt discussed these regions in terms of their religious affiliations, stating that “recruiting was urged forward in the Catholic south and the Presbyterian north”.<sup>113</sup> That said, findings presented in this study were clear that the regions now approved for recruitment were generally 90% or more Catholic in composition, with some of the eastern area and a bit of the south being between 60-90% Catholic.

The religious distributions from both censuses suggest that if recruitment efforts in Connaught, Leinster, and Munster were to be successful, Catholics had to be included in the

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<sup>111</sup> For example, in Clondermot Parish in Londonderry the religious proportions provided are 16.2% Church of Ireland, 54.9% Dissenter, and 28.9% Catholic. Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 391.

<sup>112</sup> Gregory et al, *Troubled Geographies*, ch 3.

<sup>113</sup> Hunt, *The Irish Parliament 1775*, xxxi.

population of men who were recruited. The recruiting parties sent to these areas were ordered to get the recruits they were after for their regiments, but also to “be directed to get as many recruits as they can as supernumeraries”<sup>114</sup>. This meant that not only were they to fill the ranks needed for the regiments for which they were recruiting, but also to take on as many extra recruits in these places as possible. Due to the high concentration of Irish Catholics in these areas and the hesitance to remove remaining Protestants, it is very unlikely that enough recruits could be garnered without the inclusion of Irish Catholic recruitment

Referring to the approval of recruiting in Connaught, Leinster, and Munster, de facto Catholic recruitment, was obscured even further in subsequent letters. Moving forward, discussions of recruitment in those regions did not even refer to them by name. Discussions of the geography of this recruitment became about regiments being completed “with Recruits from the three Provinces of that Kingdom where the last Recruits were permitted to be raised”<sup>115</sup>, a phrase which was present in two letters. The first reference to this phrase quoted above was in a letter from Rochford to Harcourt, the other from Harcourt to Rochford. Harcourt also obscured this a bit when he wrote to Rochford telling him he had passed these orders onto the commanders in charge of Dublin and Munster, writing “with Directions to them to issue all such orders as shall appear to them to be proper and necessary in Consequence of the Information and Directions contained in the said Letters.”<sup>116</sup> It is possible that because this is correspondence between just Harcourt and Rochford who had both been notified of this policy and transmitted orders to carry it out. Thus this phrasing could have been used for sake of expediency when communicating with each other, no need to list the three provinces directly when they both know which provinces had been recently approved. That said, given the confusing and multifaceted logistics of war and recruitment, it would seem that it would make more sense to reference the regions by name in order to avoid any logistical discrepancies or problems in executing the orders accurately. Rather than err on the side of being clear, both writers chose to say ‘three provinces’ or ‘three counties’. This kept the idea of Catholic recruitment even farther removed from being included in the correspondence in any direct sort of way.

In line with the discussions of fear of depleting the Protestant minority, Harcourt pushed to restrict recruiting parties for the British Establishment to recruiting only in Munster, Leinster,

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<sup>114</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 19 Jan 1775, SP 63/445, f 17-20, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>115</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 10 Feb 1775, SP 63/445, f 94, SPI, TNA, Kew; and also present in Harcourt to Rochford, Dublin Castle, 15 Feb 1775, SP 63/445, f 165, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>116</sup> Harcourt to Rochford, Dublin Castle, 6 Feb 1775, SP 63/445, f 102, SPI, TNA, Kew.

and Connaught, leaving Ulster out of reach.<sup>117</sup> He suggested not only that they be limited to those regions, but also that they “might be directed to get as many recruits as they can as supernumeraries”.<sup>118</sup> This means that Harcourt was pushing for not only those regiments to be completed through recruitment in these areas, but also that as many extra men as possible should also be obtained, then sent along with the augmented regiments to then be dispersed in the colonies throughout the British Army as needed. Without saying so, given the aforementioned population ratios in these areas, Harcourt was prioritizing Catholic recruitment. Harcourt was not granted this request however, and received a letter from Rochford expressing His Majesty’s will that due to the need for expediency at this “critical juncture”, and that he must “give the necessary orders for authorizing the recruiting parties of the regiments on the British Establishment, when they shall apply for them, to beat up in Ireland at large for the raising of recruits in that kingdom.”<sup>119</sup> This ruling meant that recruiting would continue in Ulster as well, but the interest of Harcourt in trying to limit recruitment in Ulster, and therefore proportionally more Protestant recruitment, during this augmentation for the colonies, is certainly worth noting. The idea that Harcourt was directly trying to limit Protestant recruitment in Ulster means that he was certainly aware that recruiting in the other three provinces meant recruiting Catholics.

Another way that Catholic recruitment was hidden was through working with Irish Catholic elites who volunteered to recruit those under their influence, who were more than likely to be Catholic as well. Some Catholic elites suggested recruitment of men from their estates or communities as a bargaining chip for further measures of Catholic relief. The most prominent example of this was the efforts of Lord Kenmare. This will be explored further in the next chapter, but it is worth covering in brief here with the other terms which were used to obscure Catholic recruitment. The proposal to recruit those “under the influence of Lord Kenmare” was approved in early August 1775 and his influence was to be a helpful factor in enticing Catholics to enlist.<sup>120</sup> Additionally, the geographical area in which the recruitment would take place also implied Catholic recruitment. A recruiting poster made by Kenmare’s agent stated he was recruiting in Munster, a by far majority Catholic region. 87% of the parishes in Munster for which reports remain from the 1766 census showed a Protestant population proportion of under

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<sup>117</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 16 Mar 1775, SPI, SP 63/445, f 265, TNA, Kew.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

and also Irvine to Harcourt, Dublin Castle, 12 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f82, SPI, TNA, Kew makes it clear that Harcourt did follow these orders as Irvine wrote that he would “send a party consisting of one officer &c: into Ulster, another into Munster, another into Leinster & another into Connought”.

<sup>120</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 2 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 15-18, SPI, TNA, Kew.

20%, and almost all of this region falls into the 90% or more bracket of the 1834 census.<sup>121</sup> Interestingly, the language in the original recruitment plan obscured this as a location, instead referring to this as “that part of Ireland as proposed by him”.<sup>122</sup> Kenmare’s involvement, as well as the geography of this recruiting effort, are both clear indications that this was an effort to target Catholic recruitment without saying it specifically, “under the influence of Lord Kenmare” becoming synonymous with Catholic recruitment.

The employment of these terms to discuss Catholic recruitment in Ireland provided a thin veil of secrecy which made this recruitment consistently employable. This generated a satisfactory excuse to recruit any and all Irishmen for service abroad, provided no one used the word Catholic at any time during the recruitment process. This policy was thus employed similarly to ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ in the United States in modern history, as long as no one had been officially notified that a recruit was Catholic there was no problem or consequence to Catholic recruitment.<sup>123</sup>

### **Obvious Catholic Recruitment, and its Consequences**

This language of obscurity was important in order to make Catholic recruitment palatable enough to occur without being a major scandal, at least generally speaking. But what would happen if Catholic recruitment was pulled out of the shadows and into the forefront? The pushback to Catholic recruitment in general was present, so the need for it to be obscured was crucial to it not causing larger issues. In this last section we will explore a case in which Catholic recruitment was attempted loudly and publicly, leading to outraged discussion, court martial of those involved, and perhaps setting a regiment on a course for a service destination change.

The Loyal Irish Corps, as they would become known, was a regiment commanded by Major William Dalrymple. This regiment will be discussed in detail in chapter four, as it contained Irish Catholics and its treatment, service, and efficacy are helpful in understanding the experience of Irish Catholics in the British Army during this period. That said, it is worth focusing on them here as it was the loud recruitment of Catholics that first got them into trouble with Irish

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<sup>121</sup> Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 237-332, Gregory et al. *Troubled Geographies*, ch 3.

<sup>122</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 2 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 15-18, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>123</sup> Britt Zerbe, “A bridge between the gap: the martial identity of the marine corps, 1755-1802,” in *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of Arms*, edited by Catriona Kennedy and Matthew McCormack (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) 99-116, 100.

and British officials. The Loyal Irish Corps was raised shortly after the outbreak of the American war, and was supposed to be a place in which Irish Catholic recruits could be actively obtained and used.<sup>124</sup> This had been argued for successfully by Sir John Dalrymple and then William Dalrymple, his brother, was placed in charge of the corps. In early 1776, a Captain Seely who was an officer in the Loyal Irish Corps, placed an advertisement in a newspaper (which newspaper is as of yet not clear) which stated that Colonel Dalrymple had been placed in command of a company of Grenadiers which was to consist of Roman Catholics who would be free to express their religion and worship outwardly as it demanded. The advertisement claimed that the regiment was to have a priest as chaplain, so this also involved religious officials being added to the army. The text for the advertisement is as follows:

As His Majesty has been pleased to appoint one to the Command of a Company of Grenadiers in a Regiment to be raised under the command of Colonel Dalrymple, which is to consist of Roman Catholics, who are to have the free use of their own Religion, as a Priest is to be the Chaplain, and to be enlisted only for three years, or during the present Disturbances in North America, His Majesty finding by the loyal Behavior of the Catholic Clergy, and Laiety of this Kingdom that His Confidence in them is not misplaced, has empowered proper officers to raise said Regiment for the Defence of this Kingdom in the Room of those that are to embark in the Spring for America. Any young Man fit for my Company as a Grenadier, not under five feet nine inches high, and whose Character can bear the strictest scrutiny from his Parish Priest shall receive one Guinea and a Half from me, besides the King's Bounty of a Guinea and a Crown. Any young Man, under that size, having an equal Character will from my hands, on account of the Colonel, receive one Guinea besides the King's Bounty of a Guinea and a Crown. The Half Pay of the officers and the Pensions of the Men, depend on their own good behavior.

Henry Seely, Capt: 71st Regt of Foot; or the Queen's loyal Catholic Volunteers"<sup>125</sup>

The advertisement claims several key things that would be contentious, and some information that was just entirely incorrect. First and most obvious, it advocates for the recruiting of Roman Catholics. Further, it asserts that they will be free to practice their religion which will be supported by their being accompanied by a priest. This actively disregards the established 'don't ask, don't tell' policy for Catholic recruitment, outwardly talking about being Catholic or practicing Catholicism. Catholics were not to assert their religious status as that would confirm the illegality of their service. Indeed most of the accounts of service in British regiments I have encountered do not mention religion in the ranks at all. Given this climate, it should be no

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<sup>124</sup> Robert Kent Donovan, "Sir John Dalrymple and the Origins of Roman Catholic Relief, 1775–1778," *Recusant History* 17, no 2, (1984):188-196, 191.

<sup>125</sup> Copy of Henry Seely Recruitment Advertisement, 17 Feb 1776, SP 63/452, f 144, SPI, TNA, Kew.

surprise that there was certainly no such regiment called ‘The Queen’s Loyal Catholic Volunteers’, which Seely had referenced at the end of the advertisement. Further, the history of regiments titled the 71st Regiment of Foot during this period is complex, but never did it include deliberate Irish Catholic recruitment. The first iteration of a numbered regiment called the 71st Foot formed in 1758 for service in the Seven Years War, constructed along several others out of the second battalions of fifteen regiments of infantry. The 71st through the 75th regiments which had been formed in this way were disbanded when the war concluded in 1763. Another 71st Foot then appeared in the lists of invalids during the interim between the Seven Years War and the American Revolution. The 71st regiment related to the service in the American Revolution was raised in 1775 under Major General Simon Fraser. The 73rd regiment, raised by Lord John Macleod in 1777 became numbered the 71st during the redistribution of the British Army after the conclusion of the American Revolution.<sup>126</sup> Thus there were a variety of versions of the 71st Foot during this period, but in none of its iterations was the 71st Foot referred to as ‘The Queen’s Loyal Catholic Volunteers’. Further, none of the army lists for the 71st Foot during the Seven Years War, or early on in the American Revolution, list a Henry Seely as one of its officers.<sup>127</sup> Thus overall it seems Seely was generally misinformed about the status and structure of the corps he was recruiting for, as Dalrymple was approved for an independent corps, not a regular regiment, as well as his own standing in the army.

Upon being informed of this advertisement, Harcourt immediately wrote to Lord Weymouth explaining the situation, and deeming that this issue would need immediate attention.<sup>128</sup> He reassured Weymouth that this advertisement had been published without his permission and “without any Encouragement whatsoever” from the Irish government.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Richard Cannon, *Historical Record of the Seventy-first Regiment, Highland Light Infantry Containing an Account of the Formation of the Regiment in 1777, and of Its Subsequent Services to 1852*, (London: Historical Records of the British Army), Project Gutenberg ebook.

<sup>127</sup> *A list of the general and field-officers, as they rank in the army, of the officers in the several regiments of horse, dragoons, and foot, on the British and Irish establishments...* for the year 1762, (London: Printed for J Millan), BOA; *A list of the general and field-officers, as they rank in the army, of the officers in the several regiments of horse, dragoons, and foot, on the British and Irish establishments...* for the year 1764, (London: Printed for J Millan), BOA; *A list of the general and field-officers, as they rank in the army, of the officers in the several regiments of horse, dragoons, and foot, on the British and Irish establishments...* for the year 1775, (London: Printed for J Millan), BOA; *A list of the general and field-officers, as they rank in the army, of the officers in the several regiments of horse, dragoons, and foot, on the British and Irish establishments...* for the year 1776, (London: Printed for J Millan), BOA; *A list of the general and field-officers, as they rank in the army, of the officers in the several regiments of horse, dragoons, and foot, on the British and Irish establishments...* for the year 1777, (London: Printed for J Millan), BOA.

<sup>128</sup> Harcourt to Weymouth, Dublin Castle, 28 Feb 1776, SP 63/452, f 138, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

Harcourt immediately began investigating the issue. He had a letter written to William Dalrymple asking to explain the situation, as well as put out “every Method possible” to determine if Seely was indeed the author of this recruiting scheme. Additionally of interest in Harcourt’s letter is a comment that he was concerned that the advertisement “should make its way to the other side of the Water, or by any accident be brought into the House of Commons” in Ireland.<sup>130</sup> Here Harcourt’s anxiety is apparent at the thought of either government in England or Ireland thinking he had approved this advertisement. Though given the order in which he references them, he was clearly more anxious at the thought of the news of this advertisement reaching the British. He recognised this as a breach of policy, and did not want to be blamed for it in any way, so immediately tried to address the situation and find those responsible.

Harcourt assigned John Blaquiere, chief secretary for Ireland, to write to William Dalrymple to get a better understanding of the situation. Blaquiere sent a letter as ordered, in which he enclosed a copy of the advertisement with an accompanying note. Blaquiere claimed that Harcourt was ‘unwilling to believe that Mr Seely should have been the Author of, or, accessory to the Printing of’ this advertisement.<sup>131</sup> He further asserted that the printing of this advertisement was “so directly repugnant to the Laws of the Land, and contains so many unwarrantable Assertions”<sup>132</sup> that this issue should be immediately cleared up, and it needed to be determined if Seely was indeed at fault. Here we can see through the aggressive language which Blaquiere was using that resistance to loud Catholic recruitment was still very much present, and enforcement of the laws which prevented Catholic recruitment had to be adhered to unless the recruitment was being somehow obscured.

William Dalrymple’s answer to Blaquiere was short and to the point, he claimed he did not have any prior knowledge of such an advertisement being suggested, let alone printed. He stated that he had approved and printed a different advertisement, but had no prior knowledge or say in this one.<sup>133</sup> He further claimed that he would investigate this with all possible speed, but it may take time given that Seely was “now in a remote part of this Kingdom”.<sup>134</sup> From the available documentation it is unclear whether or not anything that Dalrymple says here is true. Once this advertisement had proved to be controversial, he could have just been covering for

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Blaquiere to William Dalrymple, Dublin Castle, 27 Feb 1776, SP 63/452, f140, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> William Dalrymple to Blaquiere (copy), Dublin, 27 Feb 1776, SP 63/452, f142, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

himself here while throwing Seely to the wolves as a scapegoat.<sup>135</sup> Additionally, the comment that Seely was now in a location which would make investigating this more difficult is also not able to be confirmed. It could be true, or it could be that Dalrymple was covering for Seely until they could get their story straight. In any case, once called out that this advertisement was both shocking and illegal, Dalrymple purported to follow the procedure for dealing with such instances as well as distanced himself from having approved the advertisement or being at fault in any way for its publishing.

Seely's response to these charges came in early March in a letter in which he admitted in no uncertain terms to being the author of the advertisement, which was then followed by his arrest.<sup>136</sup> In addition to his confession, Seely attempted to mitigate punishment by asserting that he had perpetrated this crime out of thoughtlessness rather than malice. He wrote that "a zeal for His Majesty's service" had caused him "to commit an error for the purpose of raising Recruits", meaning that he was pulled into the pressure of the need for recruits as fast as possible which led him to place the advertisement for Catholic recruits", rather than any sort of deliberate effort to break the law and recruit Catholics.<sup>137</sup> This having been his given reason, once arrested the case proceeded to be as though the character of Seely was on trial, rather than pursue charges for the crime he had committed. The case from this point became about the quality of Seely as a soldier, and whether or not he would do such an unlawful act out of rebellion, or consciously trying to commit a crime. When Seely had first sent that letter and been arrested, two officers with whom he had served had written notes testifying to his good character. In his enclosures about the case to Lord Weymouth, Harcourt included the letter from Seely as well as the accompanying notes. Harcourt wrote that he included the verified certificates of several officers, Major Grant<sup>138</sup> and Captains Agnew<sup>139</sup> and Pilman<sup>140</sup> of the 24th Regiment "testifying Mr Seely's having served for many years in that Corps, and that he was always esteemed a worthy inoffensive man."<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> This is hard to assert, as the personal correspondence of William Dalrymple, which would be helpful in determining more of the nuance of his reaction as well as his participation, does not seem to have survived.

<sup>136</sup> Harcourt to Weymouth, Dublin Castle, 13 Mar 1776, SP 63/452, f 235, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>137</sup> Seely to General Cunningham, Kings Arms Cork, 5 Mar 1775, SP 63/452, f 237, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>138</sup> Major Robert Grant of the 24th Foot, *A list of the general and field-officers, as they rank in the army, of the officers in the several regiments of horse, dragoons, and foot, on the British and Irish establishments... for the year 1776*, (London: Printed for J Millan), BOA, 78.

<sup>139</sup> Captain William Agnew of 24th foot, *ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> Captain Henry Pilmer of the 24th foot, *ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> Seely is not listed as an officer in the army lists for the 24th Foot, so he was either a private or a gentleman volunteer, *ibid.* Harcourt to Weymouth, Dublin Castle, 13Mar1776, SP 63/452, f235, SPI, TNA,



A landed Gentleman of Ireland, Owen Wynne, vouched for Seely as well. Harcourt described Wynne as “a Gentleman of very large Property in this Kingdom, a Privy Counsellor and Member of Parliament, and has upon every Occasion shown the most zealous attachment to HM’s Person and Government”.<sup>142</sup> Wynne was also a trustee of the Linen Board and brother of John Wynne, the Governor of Cork.<sup>143</sup> Thus as well as having fellow officer friends to vouch for him, Seely had other supporters in high places. A proponent of Seely had written to Wynne and argued that that it was not in his character to be maliciously and deliberately skirting the law. Grenville, writing on behalf of Seely to Wynne, wrote “I hope you will excuse the liberty I take in applying to you in behalf of an old acquaintance in the 24th Regt, who I find has got into a scrape account of an advertisement he has injudiciously published for encouraging men to enlist into Dalrymple’s Corps.”<sup>144</sup> This letter prompted Wynne to write to Harcourt asking for him to support Seely. In his letter to Harcourt, Wynne brought up that he had heard word that Seely was in trouble for having beaten up for Catholic recruits in Sligo, and that he was writing to come to the defense of this “Unfortunate gentleman”.<sup>145</sup> Wynne asserted that “Seely did not Intend to give offence by his conduct, Either to His Excellency or to the Public, and that nothing could have induced him to have made use of such a stratigime, but a Zeal for the Service”<sup>146</sup>. This reinforces the claims made by the officers who knew him which were discussed above.

Wynne then went a step further and asserted that Seely’s principles were good, and that he was descended from “old Protestants”.<sup>147</sup> In this statement Wynne vouched for Seely’s character, but more importantly tried to establish his innocence by placing him in the Protestant Irish category. Saying that “his Family are old Protestants” can be seen as a direct attempt to legitimise Seely as a properly qualified officer and associate Seely with being an acceptable British subject, as well as a way to protect him by distancing him and his family from any sort of Catholic identity or Catholic bias. This made him seem more legitimate and helped his case that he would not have loudly been recruiting Catholics as a way to be deliberately offensive. In addition to his Protestantism argument for the character of Seely, Wynne also argued that Seely had been effective in carrying out his duty to recruit soldiers in Sligo, writing “that he has been of great use, as he has been most indefatigable in the Recruiting Service, and has got a great

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Kew; *A list of the general and field-officers... for the year 1775, 78; A list of the general and field-officers, ... for the year 1774, 78.*

<sup>142</sup> Harcourt to Weymouth, Dublin Castle, 29 Mar 1776, SP 63/453, f 21-22, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>143</sup> Hunt, *The Irish Parliament 1775*, 53

<sup>144</sup> Grenville to Wynne, Margaret Street, 21 Mar 1776, SP 63/453, f 25, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>145</sup> Wynne to Harcourt, Kaslewood, 19 Mar 1776, SP 63/453, f 23, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

many men in and about Sligo”.<sup>148</sup> It was Wynne’s contention that even if this method was too loud and was causing an issue, Seely had been very useful in the efficacy of recruiting, so Wynne thought that Harcourt intervening on his behalf was both warranted and beneficial to the continued recruiting efforts in Ireland.

That said, the act which he had committed with his loud recruitment of Catholics had also offended important people. Harcourt, though being asked to give support to Seely, was offended at the illegality and the depravity of this act. Major General Cunningham was also shocked, and though he passed along the message that Seely “acknowledged himself the Author, & pleaded Ignorance”<sup>149</sup> other parts of a letter he sent to Major General Gisborne show that he was angry the advertisement had been placed. He called it a “most extraordinary advertisement” and seemed to doubt Seely’s intentions. He was appalled that “this Advertisement has been dispersed in Hand Bills, and contains so gross an Insult to HM to the Government of this County & to the Protestant Religion.”<sup>150</sup> This shows he seemed particularly curious and frustrated that if the advertisement was simply a thoughtless act, why had it been dispersed without approval. Additionally, Cunningham’s statement interacts with the larger concern of if Irish Catholics belonged in the British army or indeed Britishness, to which his clear answer here was that they did not. Cunningham called trying to recruit Catholics and insult to the King and government itself, and to the Protestant religion, all of which supports the idea that publicly and politically he saw the integration of Irish Catholics into the system, even as foot soldiers, to be ridiculous, abhorrent, and an abomination to King, Country, and Britishness. To address this, Cunningham sent Seely to Dublin to face punishment. It is interesting here that Cunningham jumped directly to punishment, not a trial. He wrote that he would send Seely to Harcourt to “that you may treat him as you think proper.”<sup>151</sup> Then again, this outrage all in the public record could be for show, as Catholic recruitment was definitely a major part of the augmentation process, so it is doubtful that Cunningham was unaware it was occurring. But the public nature of the Seely advertisement, as well as what he said in it, was polarizing to say the least, and provided an avenue in which those involved in the governance of Ireland or the British Military apparatus felt the need to reassert themselves as loyal British Protestants through a show of actively restricting this behavior and making an example out of Seely.

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Maj Genl Robert Cunningham to Maj Genl Gisbourne, Cork, 5 Mar 1776, SP 63/452, f 239, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

## Conclusion

Upon considering everything he had received, Harcourt did ultimately take Seely's side. The official policy as per a letter he wrote to Lord Weymouth in early April 1776 was that the matter would not be further reviewed by the Irish Parliament as they had received enough evidence in support of Seely's character to show that the placement of the advertisement had been done out of his loyalty to carry out his duty on the recruiting service, not out of some sort of political statement or malice to king or country. Harcourt decided that based upon the references he had received, "in Consideration of the undoubted good Character which this Gentleman bears, and as it does not appear that his Misconduct proceeded from any other Motive than an indiscreet Zeal to raise as great a Number of Recruits as possible for that Corps", to request that Seely be removed from arrest.<sup>152</sup> The phrase 'indiscreet zeal' used here by Harcourt is a very interesting phrase in terms of the wider issue of Irish Catholic recruitment. As this chapter has shown, it was not the fact that Catholics were being recruited that was the problem in the Seely case, but that he had loudly claimed that Catholics were now welcome in the ranks of the British army.

The obscuring language of Catholic recruitment such as 'three counties', 'under the influence of Lord Kenmare', and 'common people' provided a subtlety to Irish Catholic recruitment which made it both less public and more palatable. The lack of discretion employed by Seely and aggressive and immediate reactions to his recruitment as a result show that if Irish Catholic recruitment was obvious, or too loud, it would still be treated as controversial and illegal, and enforced as such. The pragmatic necessity of recruiting more soldiers won out, but the method in which recruitment was carried out was directly impacted by continuous lack of actual universal toleration of Catholics and the continued prevalence of anti-Catholic laws and bias at a political and social level. In practice this did not mean an end to recruitment or a limit, but creative solutions for soft legality and recruitment in such a way as to be able to occur without constant pushback. Thus while efforts for a more homogenous, if still multi-faceted, definition of what it meant to be British or an English subject or how 'others' fit into the British Empire was certainly being considered during this period, such notions had not yet fully eclipsed existing biases and 'othering' tendencies in relation to Irish Catholics.

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<sup>152</sup> Harcourt to Weymouth, Dublin Castle, 4 Apr 1776, SP 63/453, f 73, SPI, TNA, Kew.

## Chapter Two: Irish Catholic Elite Involvement in Recruitment

One cannot read about Catholic relief during this period without the name Lord Kenmare emerging somewhere in the discourse. Thomas Browne, the fourth Viscount Kenmare consistently pursued Catholic relief beginning in the 1760s and continuing into the 1790s. Kenmare became involved in recruitment for the British Army through his continued efforts for Catholic relief. He was a founding member of the Catholic Committee and was recognised as a leader among Catholic elites. Originally pushing for Catholic relief meant sending addresses to representatives of the English King, or indeed addressed to the King himself, describing the fierce and unwavering loyalty of the Irish Catholics to His Majesty's person and government.<sup>1</sup> This went well for a time during which Kenmare was recognised to be the representative voice of all Irish Catholics.<sup>2</sup> This is demonstrated in his correspondence with Edmund Burke, they consistently wrote letters back and forth about Catholic relief and the conditions Catholics were enduring in Ireland.<sup>3</sup> Indeed it was a letter from Kenmare asking for Burke's opinion that spurred Burke to write his opinions about the Penal Laws and the repeal of some of them in his famous 'Letter From a Distinguished English Commoner to a Peer in Ireland on the Penal Laws Against Irish Catholics'.<sup>4</sup> Kenmare eventually turned to other methods of trying to secure Catholic relief, particularly to recruitment of his Catholic tenantry as a trade for the alleviation of the restrictions on Catholic elites in Ireland.<sup>5</sup> His use of this strategy, as well as the lack of interest in more widely applicable reform for the treatment of all Irish Catholics made Kenmare a controversial

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Fagan, *Divided Loyalties: the Question of the Oath for Irish Catholics in the Eighteenth Century*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), Ch 6.

<sup>2</sup> The reality was of course more complicated. As argued by Fagan, there were certainly divides among the Irish Catholic community. He cites three main types; 'within clergy ;between seculars and regulars', 'between the clergy and the laity, that is, the middle and upper class laity', and 'between the poor and the middle and upper classes'. So while certainly, and as recognised by Fagan, Kenmare had emerged 'as a principle Catholic leader', he was one of several and also spoke more for Catholic elites rather than representing everyone within those divisions. Fagan, *Divided Loyalties*, Ch 1, and p 137.

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Burke to Kenmare, February 21, 1782, in *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke Vol. 4*, ed Thomas W Copeland (Cambridge, Chicago: University Press; University of Chicago Press, 1958) 405-418.

<sup>4</sup> Edmund Burke, *A letter from a distinguished English commoner, to a peer of Ireland, on the penal laws against Irish catholics; previous to the late repeal of a part thereof, in the session of the Irish Parliament, held A.D. 1782*, (Dublin: printed for Matthew Doyle, 1783).

<sup>5</sup> For more on class dimensions related to Catholics under the Penal Laws and looking for relief see Fagan, *Divided Loyalties*, 17-19.

figure during this period as well as leading to a split within the Catholic Committee into two competing factions.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter will explore Kenmare's efforts for recruitment and address why approval of his schemes was possible in the 1770s, when previous such offers had been rejected. This recruiting effort met with both support and criticism from various places. The Lord Lieutenant was hopeful for success, if skeptical of that actually occurring, Kenmare's agent was confident in his ability to garner recruits, but newspaper reactions again pushed back against the use of Irish Catholic recruitment. This recruiting effort seems to have walked the line between quiet and loud Catholic recruitment, as Kenmare and his agents were careful not to refer to it as such but newspaper coverage made it clear that everyone was aware they were indeed intending to recruit Irish Catholics. The British and Irish government's approval of Kenmare's proposal showed a willingness to work with Catholic elites when their objectives were in line with one another, as well as to believe that the emerging notions of Irish Catholic loyalty were legitimate, at least in terms of the elites.

Kenmare's recruitment overall seems to have been ineffective, falling far short of the initial numbers put forward. That said, this recruitment effort illustrates that Irish Catholic recruitment was functioning similarly to regular recruitment, relying on the reputation and influence of local established lords and elites to sway the common people into enlisting. Also, as this was a well-known effort, both to contemporaries and historians, it has more documentation than most Irish Catholic recruitment efforts in terms of how recruitment was carried out, and what the reactions to it were. Kenmare's offer for recruitment was odd only in terms of his status as an Irish Catholic. Kenmare's recruitment efforts, though not as effective as hoped, show how he, a member of the Irish Catholic elite, asserted himself within the British system as a figure who belonged in society, rather than a Catholic who should be rejected. This furthered the contemporary arguments on the place of Catholics, Irishmen, and Irish Catholics, in the British Empire during this period.

### **Kenmare, the Title and Expectations**

To understand Lord Kenmare's decision to assert belonging in this way, it is essential to understand how his family received their title, as well as their struggles to keep their title, estate,

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<sup>6</sup> Dáire Keogh, *The French Disease: The Catholic Church and Irish Radicalism, 1790-1800*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1993), 20.

and status which led him to interact with British recruitment. This context sheds some light on why Kenmare made the decisions he did, as well as why he was so keen to be perceived as a respected member of the elite. Many Irish Catholic elites were stripped of their titles and estates during the implementation or enforcement of the penal laws. Indeed, one of the penal laws was put in place specifically to decrease the size and value of Catholic estates over time. This law forced Irish Catholic estate holders to split their estates and lands among all possible male heirs upon their deaths.<sup>7</sup> The implications of this are twofold. First, if a landlord died and split the land amongst many heirs, it would get split into smaller and smaller pieces over time, thus decreasing the overall size and value of the estates and proportionally doing so to the power, reputation, and social sway of the head of the estates. This could be read as a way to limit the population of Irish Catholics which existed in this higher or more respectable class, as it put pressure on estate holders to have fewer children. More significantly, this threat to the maintenance of their status and land was a way of exerting pressure on the Irish Catholic elite which would encourage them to reject Catholicism and become Protestants in order to retain their station. As argued by Bartlett, “those who refused to conform found their land slipping away from them, and with it their social authority”.<sup>8</sup> However, this did not necessarily mean that every Catholic who conformed to this law and changed their behavior accordingly actually became Protestant. Bartlett argues that conformity was “an outward political act” whereas conversion “had to come from the heart”.<sup>9</sup> This meant that this law generated some level of nominal conformity in order to retain position, estate, or power, but perhaps fewer actual conversions.

Focusing on this specific example is not to say that the other penal laws did not affect these elites, the penal laws overall were intended to dismantle the Catholic hierarchy in a variety of interesting and targeted ways. Getting the Catholic elites to convert would lessen the threat of a rebellion from below, as it was a prominent idea that without the leadership of higher up Catholics, the lower classes would not rebel.<sup>10</sup> That said, not all Catholic elites succumbed to this pressure, some like the Kenmare family were able to maintain some semblance of local influence and authority without even nominal conversion to Protestantism, then attempted to rebuild their status and estates over time. Their role then became to maintain the peace at the local level and give no signs of rebellious behavior. Toward the end of the century, these elites

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<sup>7</sup> Edward MacLysaght, *Introduction to The Kenmare Manuscripts*, (Dublin: The Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1942), xi.

<sup>8</sup> Bartlett, *The rise and fall of the Irish nation*, 23.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 23

turned to expressions of loyalty to the British throne in order to re-establish or strengthen their position as elites through written assertion of loyalty, and eventually to use their influence to help garner recruits for the army in America, both of which showed them working within the established system to maintain their station, rather than working to overthrow it.

The Kenmare title was bestowed on the Browne family in May of 1689 by James II.<sup>11</sup> This is especially significant because it was given to them after James II had been forced to flee to Ireland after his removal from the English throne, but during which time he was technically still king of Ireland. This cast some shadow on the legitimacy of the title, as arguably James II was in no position to be bestowing them. The first two Kenmares served the Jacobite cause, fighting for the reinstatement of James II as monarch during the Williamite Wars. Because of this, and indeed because of their status as Catholics, the title was never legitimised, leaving the title and estate in an unclear position after the Jacobite defeat. After the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 Valentine Browne, 1st Viscount Kenmare, was forced to forfeit Ross Castle, which had been the residence of the Browne family since the late 16th century, as well as all property they held. Ross Castle then became a military barracks and would not end up back in the possession of the Kenmare estate until 1815.<sup>12</sup> The forfeiture led to decades of legal battles and social struggles for the Browne family as they sought to reobtain their territory and status.

One thing was clear through all of this, the family had no intention of converting to Protestantism in order to keep their status. Edward MacLysaght, in his introduction to the Kenmare Manuscripts, commented that the efforts to keep the estate and title were done “without the smallest compromise being made in matters of religion”.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, though given less status than titles bestowed properly, MacLysaght states that in practice, the title given to the Brownes was able to be passed down from father to son, “recognized for all practical purposes both in Ireland and England.”<sup>14</sup> The 3rd Viscount Kenmare, also called Valentine, recovered the family estate in 1720.<sup>15</sup> Despite winning their legal battles and gaining back the estate, the origins of the title would still be commented upon as a way to delegitimise the status of their family. A newspaper article in 1779 which discussed the 4th Viscount Kenmare reminded readers of the contentious nature of the title, saying the peerage was

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<sup>11</sup> MacLysaght, *introduction to The Kenmare Manuscripts*, ix.

<sup>12</sup> “The Browne Family, Earls of Kenmare,” Browne Family, Earls Of Kenmare, accessed May 12, 2023, <https://www.muckcrosshousereseearchlibrary.ie/kenmare-family.php>.

<sup>13</sup> MacLysaght, *introduction to The Kenmare Manuscripts*, viii.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, ix.

<sup>15</sup> “The Browne Family, Earls of Kenmare,” Browne Family, Earls Of Kenmare, accessed May 12, 2023, <https://www.muckcrosshousereseearchlibrary.ie/kenmare-family.php>.

rejected by the state and that it was more due to local custom and proper behavior of the Lords Kenmare that they were still referred to as such.<sup>16</sup> MacLysaght mentioned this in his introduction as well, writing that “though being Papists constituted no insurmountable handicap to the Brownes, they were seldom free from the apprehension that something might happen to endanger their property and their freedom”.<sup>17</sup> The selective enforcement of the Penal Laws and the variety of topics they covered meant that the Brownes had to be wary of their actions and public perception constantly to avoid persecution or embarrassment. All this to say that the Browne family were odd for their time, “Papists of property and position”, who needed to act in the prescribed fashion both to set an example for their communities and in order to avoid being targeted by the watchful eyes of their enemies.<sup>18</sup> This would later be a factor in Thomas Browne’s endeavors to participate in military recruitment for the British Army in the 1760s and 1770s, using his status as a member of the elite and his expectations of his role as such to provide legitimacy for his recruitment offers.

The Lord Kenmare of interest relating to Catholic recruitment for the service during the American Revolution is Thomas Browne. He received the title in 1736 after the death of his father, at only ten years of age. He had had an older brother, but he had passed before their father, leaving young Thomas the only male heir. After the death of his father he was put into the guardianship of his aunt, Madame Catherine Da Cunha. His aunt was the wife of Don Luis Da Cunha, the Portuguese ambassador to London, but they lived in England separate from him.<sup>19</sup> She sent young Thomas to Oxford for his education, during which time Mme Da Cunha “was principally concerned with combating the direct attempts made to induce him to forsake his religion”.<sup>20</sup> These attempts did not work, he remained a Catholic, but it is of interest that he was sent to England for his education. Irish Catholic notables tended to choose France for their education, because Catholicism was welcome there.

This education in England could have been one of the key factors which led Kenmare to behave more like an English lord and want to work within that apparatus for his future endeavors for Catholic relief and recruitment. Indeed his appearance at Oxford at all was odd

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<sup>16</sup> *Morning Post*, #2122 (London England) 3Aug1779, BNC.

<sup>17</sup> MacLysaght, *introduction to The Kenmare Manuscripts*, xii.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, xi.

<sup>19</sup> MacLysaght, *The Kenmare Manuscripts*, 92-93.

<sup>20</sup> MacLysaght, *introduction to The Kenmare Manuscripts*, xii. Thomas Browne does not appear in the records of the Alumni Oxonienses, which seems to assert that he was not recorded or recognised as a student there, and oversight which could have been more deliberate obscuring of his presence. Though the document claims to be a record of those who graduated, the listings also include some that did not. See *Alumni oxonienses: the members of the University of Oxford, 1715-1886; their parentage, birthplace and year of birth, with a record of their degrees* (Oxford: University of Oxford, 1888).



considering Catholics were not allowed to attend Oxford during this period.<sup>21</sup> This suggests he was masquerading as a Protestant, or at the very least not being vocal about his Catholic identity, as he attempted to fit in with the British elite. His attendance also may have been made possible by the principal of St Mary's Hall at the time, William King. Kenmare lived in St Mary's while at Oxford, and King was known to be a Jacobite sympathiser.<sup>22</sup> Given the Kenmare family's participation in the Jacobite cause during the Williamite Wars and their subsequent persecution under the penal laws, it is possible King helped facilitate Kenmare's attendance. Kenmare's correspondence during this period illustrates his attempts to fit into his role as a member of the elite within British and Irish society. In a letter from Kenmare to Edward Foley dated 11th April 1742, Kenmare wished to not be confined to the university "being of an Age wherein all young gentlemen travel" and expressed frustration that he was unable to do so. He argued that this was due, given that it was the system "universally followed by all the nobility both of England & Ireland".<sup>23</sup> This seems to have come from a sense of what was his due as a titled member of the elite, an expectation that would form a persistent theme in his correspondence and work in support of Catholic relief. .

Thomas would spend his adult life splitting his time between his house in France and his estate in Ireland. An article in the *Middlesex Journal* from September 1775 argued that Kenmare had lived on the continent to avoid the indignities he had been put through in Ireland as a result of his religious status. This included having his carriage coronets scratched off repeatedly, and not being allowed to carry a sword if he visited Dublin Castle, in accordance with "the strict letter of the penal laws".<sup>24</sup> The writer argued this had driven him to live in exile by choice, but "however, this treatment has not affected his loyalty to his sovereign, in Whose cause he is ready to sacrifice both life & fortune".<sup>25</sup> MacLysaght's summary of Kenmare concurs with this contemporary writer's impressions. He wrote that Kenmare's upbringing "made him a man whom it is impossible not to respect very highly, even though he often shows an irritating tendency to be both punctilious and pompous."<sup>26</sup> If an accurate depiction, this seems to be in line with his consistent need to play the part he was given and receive the privileges which were

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<sup>21</sup> Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in eighteenth-century England, c 1714-80: a political and social study*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 205.

<sup>22</sup> Sharp, Richard, "King, William (1685–1763), college head and Jacobite sympathizer," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 Sep. 2004, Accessed 23 Oct. 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Kenmare to Edward Foley Esqr, 11 Apr 1742, D4151/F/1, #3, The Kenmare Papers, PRONI, Belfast.

<sup>24</sup> "Extract of a letter from Dublin, Sep 3," *Middlesex Journal* #1007-2 (London) 7Sep1775, BNC.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> MacLysaght, *Introduction to The Kenmare Manuscripts*, xi.

his due. Perhaps an air of pomposity was helpful in asserting his status and compensating for feelings of imposter syndrome due to his family's persecution earlier on in the century.

Maintaining the image and estate led to some need to accept things as they were and endure some mistreatments or social and political slights. This can be seen during Thomas' father's time, with his decisions about how to interact with English soldiers and how those interactions affected his reputation. In a letter to Thomas' father, Lord FitzMaurice commented on Valentine's positive treatment of English soldiers in his territory. This letter seems to be in response to an inquiry Valentine had sent to FitzMaurice in which he asked him if he had heard any circulating rumors about his treatment of English soldiers. FitzMaurice's response was comforting, he wrote that Valentine was "uncapable of insulting any persons, especially [sic] his Majesty's soldiers"<sup>27</sup>. Uncapable is likely the most accurate word which could have been used, there would have been an immediate pushback if Valentine had treated these soldiers any other way. Commenting on this at all is of interest, seems that perhaps other people may have expected Valentine to be less kind to the English soldiers and the writer was pointing out that he treated them as he should, and did not insult or do anything negative to them, as he was "convinced [Valentine] never had a thought of the kind"<sup>28</sup> arguing that Kenmare would not even consider behaving badly toward the King's soldiers. Interestingly though the writer took this even farther, then arguing for Kenmare as a stabilizing factor in his community, by saying "and to this effect your Lordship shall always have my helping hand by keeping the soldiers within the Grounds of Decency, while your Lordship endeavors to suppress the turbulent spirits of your neighbors."<sup>29</sup> In this way not only was Kenmare expected to treat the soldiers properly, was also required to keep the locals in line as well. This puts the responsibility of the different communities, in this case soldiers and the locals (who were likely Irish Catholics for the most part) on Kenmare's shoulders, making it his job to keep the peace. By keeping both His Majesty's soldiers in line as befitting the decency with which a soldier should behave, and conversely making sure the locals were not being problematic by taunting them or being in any way rebellious, whoever held the mantle of Kenmare was expected to serve as the bridge between the two and keep the peace.

Though this letter was in reference to Thomas' father, it shows the pressure on the Lords Kenmare to keep things in line and to walk in two worlds. One world, that of a member of the Catholic elite who was supposed to mentor their community and keep it in check, and one of a

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<sup>27</sup> FitzMaurice to Kenmare, 23 Feb, D4151/f/1, #5, The Kenmare Papers, PRONI, Belfast.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

titled lord of Great Britain who is expected to interact with the apparatus of British governance in a certain way. It would only undermine his legitimacy as a lord, estate holder, and participant in the British system if he were to mistreat the soldiers and side with the locals, as well as make him a target for crushing via the penal laws. Additionally, if he showed favoritism toward his locals or co-religionists, he could have easily been relieved of his title even after his family had worked so hard to keep it. The writer of the letter discussed above put this clearly into words, saying it was Valentine's job "to prevent disturbances, rather than to creat them"<sup>30</sup>. All this to say that though their estate had been given back to them after the legal battles in the mid century, their position was by no means a secure one. It was precarious, and can give us some insight into why Thomas later acted the way he did relating to recruitment. The goal was thus to play the game, be a member of the elite in title and action, and not rock the boat too much in favor of the locals. Upon the title passing to him, Thomas Browne acted similarly to his father, trying to walk in both worlds, but was more assertive about his belonging, eventually becoming known as the voice of Irish Catholics as well as a pillar of their community.<sup>31</sup>

### **Kenmare's recruitment proposals**

Once the American War broke out, it became clear to Kenmare that the path forward for Catholic relief was to take further steps for expressing loyalty by supporting the war effort through helping quickly augment the British Army. Reliance of the British government on locals and lords for the recruiting service was common, the elites could exert their influence on the populace to make the recruiting service more effective. This can be seen in the many offers received by the War Office of men of status offering to raise corps for service, with themselves in charge of course.<sup>32</sup> In this way, Kenmare was only trying to exist within the established norm by structuring his efforts with these recruitment offers. Lord Lieutenant Harcourt mentioned as the established plan directly in August 1775 in a letter to Rochford, writing:

that my utmost endeavors shall be exerted and every means carried into execution in this Kingdom which I can devise for promoting the Plan adopted by HM for the reinforcement of His Army in America and I hope by the influence of the Noblemen and Gentlemen of Estate and Interest in this Country to whom I shall make application upon this exigency, that I shall be able to prevail upon

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> "Extract of a Letter from the Hague, Sep 2," *Middlesex Journal*, #1007 (London, England) 7 Sep 1775, BNC.

<sup>32</sup> Many such letters can be found throughout Add MS 73627, BP, BL, London.

them to give utmost assistance to the Officers employed upon the Recruiting Service not only in recruiting the Numbers wanting to compleat and Augment the Army here, but in raising a Body of Men towards suppressing that unnatural and open Rebellion in which so large a part of HM's American Dominions are now involved.<sup>33</sup>

Thus we can see that this practice was more or less official policy, making it not odd for Kenmare, who conducted himself as a member of the British elite, to participate as his position would dictate. Other Catholic elites took up this torch as well, jumping at recruitment as a way to express their solid loyalty to the British crown. In a discussion of this in correspondence, one writer claimed that the more the Catholic elites were questioned, the more they expressed zeal to prove themselves and one way to do so was through the recruiting service. He wrote, "Still whenever the Harvest is in. The Rich Papists declare they will spend their last shilling or get Men at an end and that they will do everything in their power to find out every Deserter from the King's Troops in this Country, and that the more people talk against them the more conspicuous their Loyalty will be."<sup>34</sup> This letter was specifically in reaction to Presbyterian pushback against the loyalty of Irish Catholics which the writer had been discussing, but the writer came immediately to the defense of the Catholics, arguing they were both loyal and useful. Harcourt also took the time to forward an extract of this letter on to Rochford, which is significant as it shows their interest in the behavior of Irish Catholics, their degree of loyalty, and their involvement with recruitment.<sup>35</sup>

Other elites had made offers to help facilitate recruitment of Irish Catholics during the Seven Years War, but these had not been approved. For example, Lord Trimelston had offered to recruit Irish Catholics to fill six regiments, around 3,000 men, in 1762, but his plan was rejected. This rejection was despite a caveat which would have put these Catholic soldiers under the authority of Portugal, "Britain's Catholic ally", thus removing them from the British structure, but allowing them to serve British goals.<sup>36</sup> This is an earlier example of trying to use Irish Catholic soldiers, but somehow hide their involvement. However, while hiding the soldiers in Portuguese control was clever, Trimelston's proposals still loudly discussed recruitment and used the word 'papist', which was a clear announcement that the purpose of the proposal was Catholic recruitment.<sup>37</sup> This is far more specific than British officials were willing to get, even by

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<sup>33</sup> Harcourt to Rochford, Dublin Castle, 7 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 62, SPI, TNA, Kew,

<sup>34</sup> "Extract of a Letter from Mr Gordon Surveyor Genl of Munster to Mr Lee," Corke, 16 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f112-113, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>35</sup> Harcourt to Rochford, Dublin Castle, 21 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 110-113, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>36</sup> Patrick Fagan, *Divided Loyalties*, 129

<sup>37</sup> Bartlett, *The rise and fall of the Irish nation*, 58.

the 1770s recruitment, as illustrated in Chapter one. Bartlett argues that this example, while ultimately unsuccessful, shows that the issue of Catholic recruitment was emerging as a topic which required discussion, and which would eventually become an imperial necessity.<sup>38</sup> This is reflected in the approvals of Catholic recruitment in the 1770s, though the language of the offers remained necessarily vague.

Kenmare's offer to recruit those within his sphere of influence in the 1770s was far more well-received, and was approved in early August 1775.<sup>39</sup> This was during the second major wave of recruitment for regiments being sent to the American colonies as discussed in the previous chapter, specifically the recruitment for the Augmentation of the 17th, 55th, 27th, 28th, and 46th Regiments of Foot.<sup>40</sup> There was a concern that removing these regiments from the Irish Establishment would decrease the efficacy of security in Ireland, which was consistently mentioned by Harcourt during this process.<sup>41</sup> Because of these concerns, Harcourt was notified by Rochford in a letter dated 2 August 1775 that if he could provide the requested number of recruits to augment these regiments, he could keep one or more in Ireland. Rochford's response stated that "His Majesty, ever anxious to keep up the Establishment of Ireland as far as the necessities of Government will permit, has commanded me to grant Your Excellency a discretionary Power to retain in Ireland one or more of the said Five Regiments on the following conditions"<sup>42</sup>. The conditions related to a proposal from Major Boyle Roche which argued that he could provide the necessary recruits. If Boyle Roche provided 477 recruits at Cork harbour by the appointed time, the 46th foot could remain in Ireland. If he provided 954 recruits, then the 46th and 28th could remain, and if he provided 1435 recruits then the 46th and 28th and 27th could remain in Ireland. The overall goal was for the equivalent of five regiments to be sent to the American colonies, but not necessarily in the form of the five regiments that had been ordered to do so, meaning that a combination of regiments and recruits to be sent to other regiments could be used instead. In this way Harcourt was given an option in which he could retain several of these regiments to serve in Ireland on the Irish establishment rather than being sent abroad, thus mitigating some of his concerns about local security and leading to the acceptance of Kenmare's offer to recruit his tenantry in order to obtain the needed recruits.

The problem with this plan was that it relied implicitly on the success of Boyle Roche's recruiting efforts, and Rochford did not seem to have faith in these efforts actually being

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 2 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 15-18, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>40</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 3 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 19-21, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>41</sup> Harcourt to Rochford, Dublin Castle, 2 Jun 1775, SP 63/447, f 156-157, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>42</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 2 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 15-18, SPI, TNA, Kew.

successful. In the same letter which outlined the offer and the conditions, Rochford also told Harcourt “as it appears very uncertain whether Major Roche will be able within that time to convey any Recruits to Corke, your Excellency must at all events give the most precise Orders that all the 5 Regiments be in entire Readiness to embark at the appointed time”.<sup>43</sup> So yes, there was a policy that some regiments could be kept if the number of recruits received was sufficient, but simultaneously Rochford expressed his doubts that a significant enough number would be obtained by Boyle Roche and sent to Cork Harbour by the appointed time. Rochford’s lack of hesitation in voicing his concerns illustrates that the approval of this scheme did not mean that Rochford trusted either that it could be carried out effectively or as quickly as needed. Whether or not Boyle Roche could garner enough recruits aside, the time pressure of only having until the 10th of September, so about a month, to accomplish his task made his success less likely.

Boyle Roche’s proposal was the manifestation of Kenmare’s recruitment plan. The place where Boyle Roche intended to get this large, and albeit unlikely to be got, number of recruits from was the Kenmare estate, as well as those under the influence of Lord Kenmare. As discussed in the previous chapter, the language of the letter does not mention approval of recruiting Catholics, but the location of recruitment and the involvement of Kenmare are both signs that this meant the recruitment of Catholics in practice. The plan for recruitment that Harcourt had submitted had been sent in by Boyle Roche, who was to be agent of this recruitment. The approval for this plan from Rochford made this process clear:

The Plan transmitted by your Excellency from Major Roche about raising two thousand or more Recruits under the Influence of Lord Kenmare is approved of, and it is The King’s Pleasure that Your Excellency should give the necessary Orders for authorizing him to beat up for as many Recruits as he can get in that part of Ireland as proposed by him, which Recruits are destined solely for North America, and to be appropriated to the Regiments already there.<sup>44</sup>

There are several important things to discuss regarding this proposal. First, the two thousand men to be recruited through this proposal would very much have been adequate to allow Harcourt to keep several of the five, all three in fact, of the regiments now ordered for foreign service to stay in Ireland instead as per the agreement outlined above. Second, the emphasis that these recruits were destined only for service in North America is also significant. It makes it clear to the recruits that they would not be serving locally, which provides different appeal than general recruitment, as the men would be signing up for service in a predetermined location,

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

which was not always the case. More important for this research, this is another way of talking about this which would let the soft legality of Catholic recruitment be used for this round of recruitment. Service in Ireland was still pretty much out of the question, but service abroad was far more acceptable. The combination of “under the influence of Lord Kenmare” with these recruits being “destined solely for North America” lets us make a good case that Catholic recruitment would have been an active part of this recruitment offer, if not the full thrust of it.<sup>45</sup>

This approval letter also unpacked how this recruitment was to be paid for, and emphasised the need for speed. Boyle Roche was to be in charge of this recruitment, and it was to be paid for by the British, not the Irish. This was a consistent bone of contention with different Lord Lieutenants of Ireland who always wanted it to be clear that if this was recruitment for the British Establishment and the British Army abroad, then it should come out of the British budget.<sup>46</sup> To mitigate any delay, the approval letter made this clear from the start, saying “the said Recruits to be raised and subsisted at the Expence of Great Britain, and the Levy Money and Subsistence will be sent from hence without delay”.<sup>47</sup> Further discussion of the augmentation of these five regiments also emphasised its importance and the need for speed, with Rochford writing that “His Majesty (is) relying on Your Excellency’s Zeal and Activity to quicken and accelerate this important service.”<sup>48</sup> Speed is consistently mentioned as a necessary feature of this wave of recruitment, more soldiers were needed immediately and as quickly as possible, which is why they turned to Kenmare and Roche in hope they could use their reputations to accomplish this task quickly.

The approval of Kenmare’s proposals are also significant because the terms were used as a template for further Catholic recruitment. Colonel William Style sent in a petition to make a corps which would be sent to serve in America<sup>49</sup>. This petition was granted and approved by King George III, with the instructions that Style was “to be allow’d the same terms of recruiting as Lord Kenmare”.<sup>50</sup> This could and did probably refer to the bounty money and structure of recruitment given, but also likely relates to Catholic service and recruitment specifically for regiments going abroad. The recruits were to come from Style’s estate in County Donegal, which held “several thousand souls and most valuable tenants”.<sup>51</sup> Style’s estate was located in

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Harcourt to Rochford &c, Dublin Castle, 16Jun1775, SP 63/447, f 177-180, SPI, TNA, Kew; Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 19Jul1775, SP 63/447, f 228-230, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>47</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 2 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 15-18, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>48</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 3 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 19-21, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>49</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 8 Sep 1775, SP 63/448, f 171-175, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>50</sup> Approval for Style’s corps, c. Sep 1776, SP 63/448, f 175, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>51</sup> Proposal of Colonel William Style, 8 Sep 1775, SP 63/448, f 173, SPI, TNA, Kew.

central Donegal in areas reporting between 50-75% Catholic population proportions in the 1766 religious census, which implies that at least around half of his tenantry was Catholic.<sup>52</sup> Though approved, this corps does not appear to have come to fruition, as Style appears in the British Army List of 1776 as a Second Major in the 1st Foot Guards, a rank received 8 June 1775, then as a First Major of the same in the Army List of 1777, a rank received 19 February, 1776.<sup>53</sup> His continued service as an officer in the 1st Foot Guards during this period implies that he did not successfully recruit his own corps for service in the American colonies. Style does seem to have had some initial recruiting success, but became immediately frustrated with the waning numbers of volunteers.<sup>54</sup> That said, the use of Kemare's approval as a template shows both that there was a willingness to entertain similar proposals and that the template provided helpful language with which to continue to approve but obscure Irish Catholic recruitment.

Once the recruiting plans had been approved, this recruiting effort was advertised to the public, which supports that though illegal to recruit these people, it was common knowledge that Irish Catholics were being recruited. The political language in the state papers may have generally been obscure as discussed in chapter one, but it was no secret to the public that this was happening. Indeed recruitment obviously required public engagement and advertisement in order to be effective. There is a surviving recruiting poster from Boyle Roche's efforts which would have circulated to garner interest and recruits. This poster was put out by Kenmare and Boyle Roche and stated that there was a new recruitment project under the command of Major Boyle Roche to get recruits in Munster. Recruits were to receive "One Guinea and a Crown Bounty-Money and a Crown for to drink His Majesty's Health".<sup>55</sup> The latter was to encourage a celebratory atmosphere and make recruitment seem more appealing, while also emphasizing loyalty to George III. Additionally, those recruited through this scheme would receive "a Reward of Half a Guinea as soon as such VOLUNTEER shall be passed by the Receiving Officer in CORK."<sup>56</sup> The condition at the end, that the volunteers only received this extra money once they passed inspection at Cork, was insurance to make sure that men would not take the extra

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<sup>52</sup> According to Griffith's Valuation, Style's estate was primarily within the Stranorlar Union which reported 317 Protestant households and 632 Catholic households in the 1766 religious census, meaning a proportion of 33.4% Protestant and 66.6% Catholic. The adjacent parishes of Inishkeel and Conwal reported Catholic proportions of at least 74.4% and 52.7% respectively. See Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 359-367; *Griffith's Valuation of Ireland 1847-1864*, (Dublin, Ireland: Irish Microforms Ltd., 1978) National Archives, Dublin and Public Record Office, Belfast, 57 & 76.

<sup>53</sup> *A list of the general and field-officers... for the year 1777*, 48.

<sup>54</sup> Morley, *Irish opinion*, 139.

<sup>55</sup> "Letter from Major Boyle Roche enclosing a recruiting poster," 18 Aug 1775, Add MS 73648, #21, BP, BL, London.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*



bounty money and desert and additionally to ensure that those recruits who did receive the extra bounty money met the requirements for service such as age, height, and state of health. This recruiting poster did not directly mention Catholic recruitment, but printing that Kenmare was involved was a way of communicating that Catholics were welcome, as did the recruitment taking place in Munster.<sup>57</sup>

Additionally though the recruiting poster left the word Catholic out, newspaper coverage relating to this recruitment scheme did not. An article in the *Freeman's Journal* stated "the Roman Catholics of the county and city of Limerick have offered half a guinea per man for the first 200 able-bodied men who shall enlist in said city and county, with Major Boyle Roche."<sup>58</sup> This at least mentioned that those behind the recruiting efforts were Catholic elites of Limerick, and again this can be seen as a way to say Catholic recruitment was encouraged without referencing it as such. Indeed when later talking about his recruitment, Boyle Roche would claim that he was told to only recruit Protestants, but this was in a comment during a session of parliament in which admitting he was recruiting Catholics could have been problematic.<sup>59</sup> Though he did in the same comment also go on to discuss how Irish Catholics had been recruited for service in 1757 and had behaved well during that service, so while he was hiding that he had recruited Catholics, he personally does not seem to have had any impression that their recruitment and service were problematic. This recruiting poster and discussion of the recruitment effort in the newspapers clearly showed that Catholic recruitment was happening publicly, and being facilitated by Kenmare and other Catholic elites.

There were definitely benefits for volunteering for Kenmare's recruiting scheme, most obviously the extra bounty money that Kenmare offered to provide "as a further Encouragement" to entice men to volunteer.<sup>60</sup> Additionally, the month after the recruiting poster was published a Colonel Newman volunteered to give further bounty money in addition to Kenmare's already additional bounty. The *London Chronicle* reported thusly: "Colonel Newman gives ten shillings addition to the bounty offered by Lord Kenmare, to every recruit who will enlist in his Majesty's service, in the parish of Kilshanick".<sup>61</sup> This parish (now spelled 'Kilshannig') is located in County Cork, where Boyle Roche was said to have friends and be

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<sup>57</sup> See chapter 1 for discussion of geography of recruitment as it relates to Irish Catholics.

<sup>58</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, #1557 vol 13 #6, (Dublin) 5 Sep 1775, INA.

<sup>59</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, vol 13 #29, (Dublin) 28Oct1775, INA.

<sup>60</sup> "Letter from Major Boyle Roche enclosing a recruiting poster," 18 Aug 1775, Add MS 73648, #21, BP, BL, London.

<sup>61</sup> "Corke, Aug 31," *London Chronicle*, #2929, (London) 14 Sep 1775, BNC.

well-liked.<sup>62</sup> Kilshannig is also located just north of Cork Harbour, so would be an easy place to pick up recruits before bringing them to the harbour for inspection. Additionally, Newman targeting Kilshannig parish was certainly done to encourage Catholic recruitment, as the 1766 religious census of Ireland reported that only 10-25% of the population of this parish was Protestant.<sup>63</sup> Analysis of the census data showed that of the 467 households listed in the census report from Kilshannig 406 (89.9%) were Catholic and only 61 (13.1%) were Protestant.<sup>64</sup> This meant that a recruit who signed up through Kenmare's scheme at the parish of Kilshannig, though very much outside of Kenmare's estate, was still likely to be Catholic. These recruits, if taking advantage of both bounty incentives, would have received two guineas, one crown, and four shillings total from Kenmare and Newman, and given that Boyle Roche later claimed he required reimbursement from the British treasury for men he had recruited, it seems this total was in addition to the regular bounty a recruit received of between three and three and a half guineas total.<sup>65</sup> This sum could be appealing to a labourer who could sign up, receive the normal bounty and a bit extra, then receive (ideally) consistent pay, clothing, and subsistence during their service. High initial bounty money and consistent pay could help savvy soldiers set themselves up for a brighter financial future.<sup>66</sup> This could have increased the appeal to especially Irish Catholics, who were more restricted in terms of professions and economic opportunities in Ireland.

The Kenmare scheme, if carried out as stated, also gave some agency for recruits to know where they would be sent, as the scheme Boyle Roche had sent in was specifically in reference to helping complete the augmentation required for five regiments to be sent to the American colonies.<sup>67</sup> This meant that a potential volunteer could take this into account which could have appeal for two reasons. First, recruits may simply be interested in going to the American colonies and this was their ticket to get there. Second, it meant that a volunteer could have some certainty that they would not be sent to India or the Caribbean, at least for now. Service in either of those climates proved fatal to many soldiers sent as they were not used to the local climate and tended to fall ill.<sup>68</sup> This will be discussed more in Chapter four, when we

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<sup>62</sup> Extract of a Letter from Mr Gordon Surveyor Genl of Munster to Mr Lee, Corke, 16 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 112-113, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>63</sup> Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 267.

<sup>65</sup> "Sir Boyle Roche his General Recruiting Account with the War Office," 17Feb1777, T 1/542/270, Treasury Papers, TNA, Kew.

<sup>66</sup> Berkovich, *Motivation in war*, 129.

<sup>67</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 2 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 15-18, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>68</sup> Dr Powell to Germain, 2 Sep 1780, CO 137-78, f 318-320, SPI, TNA, Kew.

focus on the Loyal Irish Corps, a corps which recruited Irish Catholics which then served in the West Indies. Having any influence over where you would be sent as a private was not generally on offer, so this recruitment scheme allowed for more power of choice. There was also a benefit to the government with this recruitment happening over a more narrow populace and specifically those under the influence of Lord Kenmare. Pulling from a smaller group and relating it to a specific estate means that the community would have been able to easily identify deserters, and additionally that they could encourage each other to enlist. Kenmare also obviously had a vested interest in this effort succeeding, so would be wary of desertion or causing problems through unacceptable recruits. The last thing he needed was to cause problems and become a target for more anti-Catholic sentiment. He had put himself and his reputation behind this effort, and doing it at all was controversial, he did not need to give his enemies any more reason to criticise him. All this combined, this recruiting scheme provided the necessary appeal to potential Irish Catholic recruits, and should have led to the quick recruitment the British government was after.

Kenmare was also engaged to recruit more soldiers later in the conflict in 1778 as can be seen in an article printed in the *Pennsylvania Ledger* which stated:

The following Roman Catholic regiments are fixed on to be raised in Ireland for the American service: Two of foot, of two battalions each, the command of which is given to the Lords Kenmare and Cahar, and a regiment of light horse, to be commanded by George Gould, Esq; of Cork. These Gentlemen have engaged to raise these regiments by the first of April. The officers are to be Roman Catholics, and the Colonels are to appoint them.<sup>69</sup>

This article shows that Catholic recruitment was occurring without subtlety or secrecy, it was active and in the public eye. Also, the fact that this article was printed first in Ireland, then as a news update from London in the *Pennsylvania Ledger*, means that Catholic recruitment and the efforts of Lord Kenmare were seen as significant enough to make it into transcontinental news, being highlighted in the colonies as well. The advertisement would have been printed in Ireland to encourage recruitment, but its subsequent printing in Pennsylvania would be more due to this being an issue which was interesting, of note, or controversial.

Newspaper commentary on this recruitment effort in Ireland in *Adam's Weekly Courant* showed that the public were interested in this recruitment as well, writing "we hear", as if it is circulating by word of mouth as well as in the newspapers, about the three Catholic regiments to

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<sup>69</sup> "London, December 16," *The Pennsylvania Ledger*, (Pennsylvania) 28 Mar 1778. INA.

be raised with Catholic Colonels heading them. The writer in this case seemed to be confident that this recruitment could be done effectively, making the statement “that each of these Gentlemen would be able, from mere personal & family attachment, to have their respective complements ready in less than a fortnight”.<sup>70</sup> The writer in this case did not criticise Catholic recruitment, but in the previous statement does seem to be justifying it by saying that the recruits could be quickly mustered through use of the position and connections of the Catholic elites involved. A circular from Jenkinson from 1779 similarly expressed that local elites were needed and useful in recruiting efforts. He stated he hoped to see the “Gentlemen of the County properly exerting themselves”, that “His Majesty relies on their Zeal, as well as their Discretion, in the Discharge of their Duty on this Occasion”, and that “use their utmost Efforts to induce others to enter Volunteers into His Service, by the Influence which their Characters and Property will necessarily give them, and by the ample Encouragements which the Law enables them to hold out for that Purpose”.<sup>71</sup> This was in reference to recruitment in England, but clearly shows reliance on local elites to help facilitate quick recruitment.

Additionally this article is of interest because it states the regiments which were to be raised by Kenmare and Cahar were to have Catholic officers. While Catholic recruitment was extensive, allowing Catholics to be officers was still very controversial and not something which was common at this time. Exceptions seem to have been made in this instance in case of Catholic elites, though a regiment headed by Kenmare would never actually come to fruition.<sup>72</sup> I have found no evidence that this second wave of Kenmare recruitment led to Kenmare ever serving as an officer, in the American colonies or otherwise. This shows that while British and Irish officials were willing to recruit Irish Catholics as foot soldiers to fill out the lower ranks, they were still generally unwilling to trust Catholic recruits with power in the military structure, or follow through on suggestions to let elites become officers.

The approval of Kenmare’s proposals suggest the willingness of the British government to begin recognizing and leaning on the influence of Catholic elites in Ireland. Granted this was very much due to military necessity, but the fact that expressions of Irish Catholic loyalty were also generally well-received indicates a turn toward admission of the utility of some level of accommodation of Irish Catholics, even if this was just reserved for elites. The approval of

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<sup>70</sup> *Adam’s Weekly Courant*, #2392, (Chester, England) 25 Aug 1778, BNC.

<sup>71</sup> “Copy of the Secretary at War’s Circular Letter to the Sheriffs,” (copy), Jenkinson to Sheriff of Surrey, War Office, 1779, WO 34/113, f 6-7, Amherst Papers, TNA, Kew.

<sup>72</sup> The East India Company was more flexible on this policy and provided some level of opportunity for Catholics to become officers. Andrew MacKillop argues that “Catholic families found it easier to obtain corporate commissions” during the American Revolution, as that system was less rigid than the British Army. MacKillop, *Human capital and empire*, 132.

Kenmare's proposals at the very least shows a clear diversion from the refusal of similar proposals by Trimelston a decade prior and a positive trajectory for further Catholic accommodation as the century progressed.

### **Kenmare recruitment in practice**

Kenmare's proposals had been approved because officials were hopeful he could provide them with a lot of new recruits, and his advertisements were certainly appealing due to the increased bounty money. But how did this unfold in practice? How can we, if at all, measure the success of this effort? First and foremost, Kenmare did not serve as an officer of his recruits. In fact, he did not serve at all.<sup>73</sup> Kenmare remained in France, England, and Ireland during this whole period. Based on available evidence, he never even set foot on American soil during his lifetime. This could mean that the above news article was incorrect in stating that he was to be the officer of his own corps, or that Kenmare did not generate enough recruits to create his own corps. The article could have been accurate when it was suggested that there was intent that Kenmare would become an officer, but that in practice this would not occur due to the continued enforcement of the policy that Catholics could not be officers or hold commissions. It is not clear whether Kenmare himself ever intended to serve in the army, though doing so seems incongruous with the life he had built as a member of the landed elite with an interest in local politics. It is far more likely that he wanted the status and favors from having participated actively in offering to recruit and recruiting effectively than that he wanted to have any sort of martial glory or soldiering recognition for himself. Additionally, it is hard to determine how active Kenmare was in the actual recruiting process. As discussed, this responsibility had been on Boyle Roche as agent to carry out the plan, Kenmare himself seems to have been more of a backer who bankrolled the operation, rather than participating in the day to day process. Additionally, once the campaign for approving this recruitment was over, Kenmare was not really present in the documents relating to the logistics of this, which means it is hard to tell how active his participation was in actually trying to use his influence to get recruits.

The most helpful source for figuring out how this recruitment was carried out, and to measure its efficacy, is a document held in the collections of the English Treasury. Some of the

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<sup>73</sup> Kenmare's name does not appear in any of the British Army Lists for the period of 1775-1778. These lists include both the British and Irish Establishments. See: *A list of the general and field-officers...1776*; *A list of the general and field-officers... for the year 1777*; *A list of the general and field-officers... for the year 1778*.

recruitment done by Boyle Roche is reflected in a document which he sent to the War Office in order to get what he claimed was his due reimbursement for his services. This document, titled *Sir Boyle Roche his General Recruiting Account with the War Office*, is from 17 February 1777 and can tell us much about Boyle Roche's approach to recruitment. Submitted in 1777, this document covers the recruiting efforts from 1775-1776. It lists how much money was spent, and on what, with a final calculation of the sum Boyle Roche was still owed, as he had received some initial seed money when he began his efforts. All of the items listed and their associated costs certainly need to be taken with some degree of suspicion, as this is the document that Boyle Roche was sending in to make sure he got paid his due, which means that some items could have been exaggerated to make his service look more effective, or just to receive more money than he had actually spent. For example, the number of effective recruits he enlisted could be inflated, it is hard to determine the accuracy of this report when there is not any accompanying paperwork such as recruiting returns, to prove his claims. There do not seem to be any surviving recruiting returns for this effort in the War Office collections for that matter. Regardless of the potential inflation of what had been done or the inaccuracies, this expense report does give us an interesting picture of the costs associated with being in the recruiting service and lets us get some impression from which we can measure the success of Boyle Roche's efforts in this case. The following will discuss this, as well as anecdotal evidence in which Boyle Roche's efforts were discussed, showing that Boyle Roche ultimately fell significantly short of the expected two thousand recruits.

Boyle Roche lists on this expense report that he had recruited 190 men, 110 of whom had remained for service and 80 of whom had deserted. He had also generated 62 more recruits, which he subsequently rejected but were then re-enlisted into other corps. Boyle Roche still claimed an expense of £325 10s for these recruits, the entry states "62 Rejected Recruits from me and my Parties which after being discharged were Re-enlisted & actually received into Sundry different Regiments, but particularly into Capt Dalrymple's Corps".<sup>74</sup> Transferring those recruits to Dalrymple's corps is significant because it illustrates that the recruitment process was very interconnected, with different regiments and corps all trying to raise recruits at once, and in this case trading or sending unwanted recruits to other regiments. Further, the idea that Boyle Roche had rejected these recruits but they had been accepted by another corps is interesting. There are no notes on why they had been rejected, they could have been rejected to free them up to send them to regiments other than the five augmented regiments heading for America that

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<sup>74</sup> "Sir Boyle Roche his General Recruiting Account with the War Office," T 1/542/270.

Boyle Roche was assigned to recruit for. Or, more interestingly, these recruits could have not met the quality standards Boyle Roche was looking for. Some drama around Dalrymple's recruitment efforts which will be discussed in chapter four implies his standards were lower, so he could have been willing to accept recruits that Boyle Roche rejected.<sup>75</sup> Regardless of where they were to end up though, Boyle Roche had still covered the cost of recruiting those volunteers, so he listed the expenses garnered as something he was due to be reimbursed for.

This expense report also gives us an impression of how the recruiting was carried out, as Boyle Roche listed reported expenses related to the different avenues he pursued. We can tell that he set up recruitment parties, as one entry of £24 13s 2d is listed for "Lodgings for the different Parties at the Sundry stations". To help with the efficacy of these parties, he also paid £25 10s to hire drummers to be associated with each party during their efforts. Drummers were a helpful way to get people in the military mindset, as well as to advertise recruiting efforts.<sup>76</sup> For quality control and ensuring the health of recruits, Boyle Roche paid to have a surgeon on hand to examine them, and various medicines from an apothecary because Influenza was a concern. £32 was allocated for "Stationary, Postage, Advertisements, Hand Bills, Post Bills, and all the necessary attendt Expences".<sup>77</sup> He also of course listed his own personal expenses of £280 for his own food, lodging, transportation, and "the Extra Expense of opening Houses of Rendezvous for the Entertainment of the lower Order of People to encourage them to inlist".<sup>78</sup> There was also another reference to specifically targeting the lower class of people by "money distributed at the beginning of the Service amongst the lower Order of the Clergy, to encourage the lower class of people to enlist", to which was allocated the staggering amount of £600.<sup>79</sup> This term "lower class of people" could refer to lower class Irishmen at large, but as previously discussed, this could also be one of those terms used to obscure Catholic recruitment by not labeling them as such. A newspaper writer made a similar claim using this term and arguing that use of the clergy was necessary. In an article in the *Middlesex Journal*, a writer argued that the claim that 10,000 Irish Catholic soldiers could immediately be raised was false, and that the "lower sort" was unwilling to enlist, and would be until the clergy, "by whom they are held in

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<sup>75</sup> The Earl of Cavan carried out an inspection of Dalrymple's recruits in April 1776 and asserted that many of them fell short of the necessary requirements for recruitment. See Earl of Cavan to Harcourt, Dublin, 19 Apr 1776, SP 63/453, f 192, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>76</sup> For more on the function and components of recruiting parties see Berkovich, *Motivation in War*, 139-140.

<sup>77</sup> "Sir Boyle Roche his General Recruiting Account with the War Office," T 1/542/270.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

great subjection” encourage them to do it.<sup>80</sup> The writer also claimed that Kenmare would be helpful in convincing the clergy to join these efforts, due to his heritage and status.<sup>81</sup>

Through these listed expenses, we can see that Boyle Roche sent out recruiting parties, used media and mail to advertise, hosted events for the common people to entertain them and then get them to enlist, as well as bribing the clergy to support his recruitment efforts. The entertainment, as well as the drummers on retainer, would help make recruitment a spectacle, an event, which would hopefully draw people into its excitement and get them to enlist.<sup>82</sup> The use of the clergy clearly illustrates that there was an assumption that the clergy could have a significant impact on their flock, so bringing them into the recruitment effort would make it more effective. Boyle Roche definitely put stock in this as he committed such a large sum to that facet of the process, a full 25% of his requested reimbursement was from money he had allocated to the clergy. This shows that getting the clergy on board was a significant part of his recruiting strategy. Similar arguments emerge in the historiography of Catholic relief, as Colin Haydon suggests that the Catholic community had cause to assert their demands for relief as a trade for recruitment, given “the successful recruiting of Catholics might largely depend on the support and encouragement given to the drive by priests”.<sup>83</sup> Generating a positive atmosphere and utilizing the relationship of the Catholic clergy with the locals could help make the communities Boyle Roche’s recruiting parties visited more amenable to their efforts.

The second method of expense, the fanfare of recruiting being a scene and a social event, seems to have been a preferred method as well. Ilya Berkovich argues that the goal of effective recruiting parties was “to demonstrate that the army was a fun, prosperous, and exciting place to join.”<sup>84</sup> The goal was to get people into the patriotic spirit, which Boyle Roche accomplished through music, entertainment, and of course alcohol. An article in *Finns Leinster Journal* described the spectacle Boyle Roche put on when recruiting thusly:

Major Roche, bearing a large purse of gold, Captain Cowley, A great number of likely recruits. An elegant band of music, consisting of French Horns, Hautboys, Clarionete and Bassoons, playing ‘God Save the King’, a large brewer’s dray with five barrels of beer, the horse richly caparisoned and ornamented with ribbands. Two draymen with cockades, to serve the beer. The recruiting Serjeant. Drums

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<sup>80</sup> “Extract of a letter from Dublin, Sep 3,” *Middlesex Journal*, #1007-2, 7 Sep 1775, BNC.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> For more on this see Berkovich, *Motivation in War*, 139-140.

<sup>83</sup> Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in eighteenth-century England, c 1714-80: a political and social study*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 199.

<sup>84</sup> Berkovich, *Motivation in War*, 140.



and Fifes. Another division of recruits. The recruiting soldiers. A prodigious concourse of spectators.<sup>85</sup>

Along with all this celebratory ambiance, Boyle Roche also gave speeches to encourage recruitment. One was printed in the article the above description is from. Boyle Roche emphasised his enjoyment at participating in the recruiting effort, saying as opening: "I think it the most happy circumstance of my life to be the instrument of leading you forth to honour and renown."<sup>86</sup> The speech that followed had three major themes. Firstly, the rhetoric of loyalty that Kenmare and the other Catholic elites were known for relating to relief and recruitment. Boyle Roche stated that enlisting in the British Army would "convey to latest posterity a renewal of our fidelity and a confirmation of our loyalty", making it clear that this recruiting effort was about the larger picture of the place of Ireland and Irish Catholics in the British system.<sup>87</sup> Secondly and building from the first point, he couched his discussion in language of us vs them, Americans being the 'them', and 'us' of course being the British. Boyle Roche argued that the Americans were behaving "like unnatural children" by turning on their parent who had protected their welfare through both effort and expense.<sup>88</sup> Lastly, Boyle Roche brought it back to a more local perspective, ending with comments relating to the honor and reputation of Ireland. This harkens to the Irish soldiering tradition, so integral to these calls for recruitment and their success, and the impressions of this that Europe had of Ireland. In the final lines of the speech, Boyle Roche stated that fighting the Americans would "give a fresh conviction to all Europe that Hibernian laurels have not faded by time; but on the contrary are encreasing in *bloom* and *verdure*."<sup>89</sup> This three pronged approach asserted where Boyle Roche thought Irish loyalty should lie, with their soldiering heritage put to use in the British Army against the selfish Americans.

Boyle Roche's initial efforts do seem to have looked agreeable to him accomplishing his task. Several sources commented optimistically on his chances of getting all requested recruits through his methods and the influence of those he represented. The Surveyor General of Munster, a Mr Gordon, when commenting on Boyle Roche's efforts in a piece of correspondence which was forwarded to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland wrote "I have seen Major Roche & he is as active as I could wish, I think he cannot fail to get the Men he propose, For besides lord Kenmare's Support, Boyle Roche has powerful Friends in the West and Corke

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<sup>85</sup> *Finns Leinster Journal*, vol 9 #67, (Kilkenny, Ireland) 23 Aug 1775, INA.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

also.<sup>90</sup> This was in comment to the initial recruitment effort right after approval, the letter being from 16 August 1775. Thus the initial outlook and enthusiasm from and for Boyle Roche and his efforts seems to have been present and positively looked upon. An article in *Finns Leinster Journal* from late August showed a similar impression, stating “ yesterday Major Boyle Roche, Representative in Parliament for Tralee, (who is raising a body of men for his Majesty’s Service) began recruiting here and met with great success, which was not surprising if we consider his connections, and the uncommon support he has received from the Noblemen and Gentlemen of this Province.”<sup>91</sup> A subsequent article, also in the *Finns Leinster Journal* dated 23 August described the fanfare and scene being made by Boyle Roche’s recruiting party, calling his methods “as uncommon, as it was pleasing to those who viewed the procession”<sup>92</sup> and another article in the *Middlesex Journal* suggested that Kenmares “interference” would make Roman Catholic recruitment significantly more effective.<sup>93</sup> Thus at this early juncture it appeared that people were hopeful that Boyle Roche would deliver the requisite number of recruits.

Though I am sure Boyle Roche’s efforts provided quite a spectacle, in the end the recruiting scheme was not particularly effective. These methods had some success but seem to have not been nearly as successful as Kenmare and Boyle Roche had said they would be. Bearing in mind the initial recruitment estimates were around two thousand, which were to be quickly sourced through the use of Kenmare’s influence.<sup>94</sup> The total of 252 from the treasury document between those he recruited and those he then forwarded to the Loyal Irish Corps does not come even close to this initial estimate, and that is without taking the 80 deserters into consideration. This means that while Boyle Roche did recruit from Kenmare’s tenantry, in practice he did not actually enlist a significant number of men for American service.

Impressions of Boyle Roche’s success after this initial optimism by both his contemporaries and modern historians are that his contribution to recruitment was negligible. Vincent Morley discusses this in terms of Irish opinion about America, claiming that this lack of success was due to the pro-America stance of the common people, who were the target of this recruitment.<sup>95</sup> The spectacle used to encourage recruitment notwithstanding, Morley states that Boyle Roche only left with 100 men, 42 of which were rejected at Kinsale because they were not

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<sup>90</sup> “Extract of a Letter from Mr Gordon Surveyor Genl of Munster to Mr Lee,” Corke, 16 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 112-113, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>91</sup> *Finns Leinster Journal*, vol 9 #67 (KilKenny, Ireland), 23 Aug 1775, INA.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> “Extract of a letter from Dublin, Sep 3,” *Middlesex Journal* #1007-2 (London England), 7Sep1775, BNC.

<sup>94</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 2 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 15-18, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

worthy of service.<sup>96</sup> There is also some evidence that there was resistance to Kenmare's recruiting efforts. One letter from an Irish officer to another officer in Boston commented directly on the recruiting efforts of Kenmare, writing "Even Lord Kenmare, who on this occasion took the lead, had his recruiting party severely beat up in Tralee, and their drums broken to pieces".<sup>97</sup> This could be attributed either to the common people's support of the American cause, or pushback to Kenmare's Catholic recruitment efforts. Both this incident, and the rejections of half of Boyle Roche's recruits at Kinsale show that though initial impressions in August were impressed with the effort Boyle Roche and Kenmare were putting in, by September the outlook was looking far more bleak. This is furthered by the offer of Colonel Newman outlined above to give more bounty money to those who were recruited under Kenmare's scheme.<sup>98</sup> While this may read as generous goodwill, further thought as to why this would have been required on top of the original amount of bounty money suggests that this was rather just a desperate ploy to entice more men into service, which implies that Boyle Roche was being unsuccessful with the backing of Kenmare alone.

John Dalrymple suggested that the lack of success was not due to any mistake on the part of the Irish Catholic elites attempting to engage recruits, but rather that the structure of the British army made service unappealing to the Catholic masses. He argued that the practice of augmenting existing regiments rather than creating new ones meant that Catholics were sent into potentially hostile companies which saw them as an 'other' to be rejected.<sup>99</sup> Dalrymple thus concludes that though the Irish Catholic elites who were engaged to help recruit Catholics were actively trying to do so, systematic change in the way in which those recruits were received and integrated into the British army was needed in order to make their efforts have the desired success.<sup>100</sup>

Whatever the causes, Boyle Roche's lack of success was clear to Harcourt, who immediately began suggesting alternate ways to fill the recruiting quotas needed for the augmented corps and various regiments being sent to the American colonies. In a letter dated 5 August 1775, he suggested that "instead of their Vacancies being filled up by Raw Recruits...a Draft of one Man from each company of the sixteen Regiments of Infantry, which will remain in

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<sup>96</sup> Morley, *Irish Opinion*, 138.

<sup>97</sup> The letter, dated 8 September 1775, was intercepted and published by order of Congress in the *Philadelphia Packet* of 27 November 1775; it is quoted in Michael O'Brien, *A Hidden Phase of American History: Ireland's Part in America's Struggle for Liberty* (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Company, 1921), 48.

<sup>98</sup> "Corke, Aug 31," *London Chronicle*, #2929 (London) 14 Sep 1775, BNC.

<sup>99</sup> Dalrymple, *Three letters*, letter 1.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, letter 1, pg 10-11.

this Kingdom, be made, and be replaced in those Corps severally by the Recruits, directed by Your Lordship's Letter, to be raised in this Kingdom".<sup>101</sup> Harcourt blamed this thought on the idea that the new recruits would be less useful than those already trained as soldiers who would be of immediate use. That being said, this seems to be a vote of no confidence for the big talk of swift recruitment of the Catholic elites offering to raise recruits. Harcourt certainly did not want to get in trouble for holding up the process. The lack of confidence in Boyle Roche's ability to effectively recruit was also clear later in the conflict, when in 1779 he offered his services for recruitment again, but was rejected.<sup>102</sup> This offer, though it must be said, was also to raise his own corps, and such offers were consistently being rejected at this time, as the policy was augmentation of existing regiments rather than the creation of new ones.<sup>103</sup> But Harcourt immediately considering other methods of recruitment shows his lack of confidence either in the Catholic elite proposals, Roche himself, or both.

Regardless of the efficacy of these recruiting efforts, it is also important to unpack the reactions we can see to this recruitment being suggested, let alone occurring. One writer, though thinking Kenmare's involvement and methods would make recruitment more effective and did not disagree with it in principle, saw it as a deliberate manipulation of the lowly Irish Catholics so that large numbers would enlist, against their usual tendencies or even best interest. He referred to Irish Catholics as "ignorant Natives who do not understand a word of English", but who could be recruited "with uncommon alacrity" because they would think they could get revenge for their ancestors at the hands of the English Protestants by taking this out on the American colonists.<sup>104</sup> Another writer in a previous issue of the same newspaper mentioned the same topic, but was appalled that the British government was "raising Roman Catholic armies to butcher the Protestants" "demonstrate the principles of those who advise the present measure against America".<sup>105</sup> The second writer's piece is labeled a letter to the editor from "a Protestant", which clearly illustrates his bias. Both writers are not wrong, recruiting Catholics, as the first writer suggests, was necessary to gain the recruiting numbers that were now being required, but as the second writer states, there was a belief that sending Catholics to fight against the more directly related English subject, Protestants, in the colonies was

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<sup>101</sup> Harcourt to Rochford, Dublin Castle, 5 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 48-50, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>102</sup> Jenkinson to Boyle Roche, Addescombe Place, 25 Dec 1779, Add MS 38307, #105, Liverpool Papers, BL, London.

<sup>103</sup> Roche to Liverpool, Dublin, 16 Dec 1779, Add MS 38344, #100, Liverpool Papers, BL, London.

<sup>104</sup> "Extract of a Letter from the Hague, Sep 2," *Middlesex Journal*, #1007 (London, England) 7 Sep 1775, BNC.

<sup>105</sup> "To the editor of the Middlesex Journal, from a Protestant," *Middlesex Journal*, #1005 (London, England) 7 Sep 1775, BNC.

disturbing.<sup>106</sup> An Irish Catholic army putting down a rebellion in America was simply bad form. The second writer also clearly thought about Americans as more co-subjects than Irish Catholics. In his notes to the editor, he wrote that he wanted the editor to publish the enclosed document, which was a document about Kenmare's recruitment and the directions he had issued, to show the public "the schemes pursuing by Administration against our Protestant fellow-subjects in America".<sup>107</sup> Through both of these reactions, with the first painting Irish Catholics as "ignorant Natives" and the second rejecting them as fellow subjects, we can see that even when embraced as a helpful resource for the British Army, Irish Catholics were still discussed as an 'other'.

Newspaper reactions also tended to involve people bringing up that controversial issue of the origin of Kenmare's title to undermine his legitimacy. One writer both recognised Kenmare as a "powerful Roman Catholic Peer", but also took the time to unpack the sordid past of how that title had been acquired.<sup>108</sup> Another article in the same paper claimed that Kenmare was not legitimate as a lord, that he was "only esteemed as a commoner, even in Ireland" and referred to the current Lord Kenmare as the grandson of Valentine Browne, "one of the most Active tools under Ld Tyrconnel, Jame's bloody deputy".<sup>109</sup> This sought to call attention to Kenmare's supposed lack of status, but also to get people to associate the Kenmare name with the Jacobite threat, both of which would undermine his authority. That said, this writer also noted that Kenmare's "interference" would make Catholic recruitment a lot more effective.<sup>110</sup> Though Kenmare was portrayed as illegitimate in some way in both cases, these writers also recognised that Kenmare did have power and influence, regardless of his legitimacy or origins.

Some critics directly brought up the lack of legality of recruiting Catholics, despite that Kenmare had received all necessary approvals, calling into question the legitimacy of the whole project as a way to jibe at Kenmare and Boyle Roche. An article in the *St James Chronicle* stated "It is thought that both Lord Kenmare and his cousin Major Boyle Roach will be taken up and sent to Gaol, for enlisting Roman Catholics into His Majesty's service, it being expressly against the Law and Constitution of England".<sup>111</sup> This asserted in no uncertain terms, and

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<sup>106</sup> Hill argues that "the Scots were particularly outraged at the prospect of the use of Catholics against the (Protestant) Americans" as evidenced by the breakout of rioting in Edinburgh and Glasgow in 1779. Hill, "Religious Toleration," 105.

<sup>107</sup> "To the editor of the Middlesex Journal, from a Protestant," *Middlesex Journal*, #1005 (London, England) 7 Sep 1775, BNC.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> "Extract of a Letter from the Hague, Sep 2," *Middlesex Journal*, #1007 (London, England) 7 Sep 1775, BNC.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> *British Evening Post*, #2275, 12 Sep 1775, BNC.

correctly, that this was not a legal endeavor, but can read as one of those aforementioned swipes at Kenmare which he was tired of receiving.

Another strategy was to make Kenmare's recruitment efforts seem odd or illegitimate. A letter to the editor of the *Middlesex Journal* from "a Protestant" acknowledged that Kenmare was promising extra bounty money to those who volunteered through Boyle Roche, and emphasised that Boyle Roche was a relation of Kenmare's. He also posted a copy of an advertisement from Kenmare which stated Kenmare would "show every act of favor in [his] and power to the friends of volunteers as show proper spirit on this occasion".<sup>112</sup> The tone of the author's discussion makes it clear that he thought Kenmare offering the extra bounty and favors for those who encourage their friends or family to enlist was underhanded in some way. However, recruiters offering extra bounty money was both common and necessary during this period to encourage recruitment.<sup>113</sup> Further, as argued by Martyn Powell, the "bonds of kinship, connection, and self interest" were instrumental in both British and Irish politics during the eighteenth century, thus Kenmare using them to encourage recruitment should not seem odd.<sup>114</sup> This illustrates that the 'Protestant' in question does not seem to have been concerned with best practices for recruitment, nor what was being commonly used, but rather solely in lambasting Kenmare.

## Conclusion

So, at the end of the 1770s Lord Kenmare had been twice approved for recruiting schemes, but neither had been very effective and both had received criticism in the newspapers as being controversial at best, illegal and punishable at worst. Where does this leave Kenmare moving forward? Kenmare would continue campaigning for Catholic relief in Ireland by asserting himself as a deserving member of the elite, and Irish Catholics as loyal British subjects. Eventually it became clear that Kenmare was more concerned in relief only to address the concerns of the Catholic elites which would cause tension in the Catholic Committee, eventually leading to a split in the group, leaving Kenmare on one side, the elite faction, and the Dublin merchant class on the other. Kenmare continued to submit addresses of loyalty to George III

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<sup>112</sup> "To the editor of the Middlesex Journal, from a Protestant," *Middlesex Journal*, #1005, 2 Sep 1775, BNC.

<sup>113</sup> Gilbert, "An analysis of some eighteenth century army recruiting records"; John Dalrymple, *Three letters*, Letter 2, 6-7.

<sup>114</sup> Powell, *Britain and Ireland in the Eighteenth-Century*, 13.

and assert himself as the leading voice of Catholics, regardless of the split in the committee.<sup>115</sup> This would lead him to be an increasingly controversial figure, with some seeing him as a snobby member of the upper class<sup>116</sup> and others seeing him as a gracious and welcoming lord of his estate.<sup>117</sup> Richard Burke, while serving as agent of the merchant faction of the Catholic Committee, was certainly hostile toward Kenmare, arguing Kenmare had “[lulled] the Catholics with vain assurances or as vain and unbeneficial concessions” during his time as head of the Catholic Committee as a whole, and that this had only served to “suppress the wishes of an oppressed people, instead of relieving them”.<sup>118</sup> This illustrates once again that Kenmare’s bias toward the elite was a prominent feature of how he conducted himself, thus it was a key factor in how he interacted with Catholic recruitment during this period.

Kenmare’s recruiting efforts of the 1770s were odd only in terms of his religious status and in that they had been approved when other such offers were consistently being rejected. The first offer, to gather recruits for the augmentation of regiments heading abroad, was far more in line with the British policy at the time of augmentation rather than the creation of new corps, which made its passage make more sense. But the second approved proposal in 1778 for Kenmare to have his own corps is far more odd, particularly considering that the first round of recruitment headed by Kenmare and Boyle Roche in 1775 does not seem to have been particularly fruitful. The interesting situation in which England found itself, needing quick and reliable recruitment and turning to Ireland for the bulk of it, allowed these proposals to recruit Catholics to pass, though with skepticism from the Lord Lieutenant and some outrage in the public. However controversial it may have been, and though the numbers recruited were not nearly as many as had been put forward in the proposals, Kenmare’s recruitment scheme provides a clear example of Irish Catholic elites interacting with and thinking about Britishness, and their place within it. It seems that to Kenmare he was as much British as the next member of the elite, and believed he should be given his due as such. This is clear in his annoyance at being othered which is present since his youth. Because of this belief, he seems to have used his loyalty to assert the blanket loyalty of Irish Catholics at large, however true or not that may have been. This trickle-down loyalty made the recruitment of Catholics appealing and felt more secure to the British government, comforting them that Irish Catholics could be trusted to serve

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<sup>115</sup> “Dublin Dec 10,” *Finns Leinster Journal*, (Kilkenny, Ireland) 14 Dec 1791, INA.

<sup>116</sup> This growing animosity and Kenmare not being the voice of Irish Catholics any longer is reflected in the tumultuous relationship he had with Richard Burke. See Thomas W Copeland, ed, *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, Vol. 4 and 7.

<sup>117</sup> “Dublin Sept 14,” *Belfast Newsletter*, (Belfast) 14 Sep 1790, INA.

<sup>118</sup> Richard Burke to Henry Dundas, January 20, 1792, in *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke Vol. 7*, 35.

in the British army. The public nature and discussions of this recruitment brought it more out of the shadows than in the previous conflict, showing that it was more acceptable and adding to the impression that Catholic toleration was indeed increasing, at least at a governmental level. Simultaneously however, Kenmare's efforts and demonstrations of loyalty made it appear he had sold out to the British, preferring to negotiate with the British government and officials as a member of the elite while trading the recruitment of the 'lower sort' as his bargaining chips. However, Kenmare was simply doing what was expected of a man of his standing during this conflict, expressing loyalty to the Crown, helping with the war effort, and by so doing, asserted himself into a wider definition of Britishness which was forming, and which would include Irish Catholics.



### Chapter Three: Irish Catholic Recruitment into Regular Regiments, a case study of the 46th Regiment of Foot

The previous chapters have focused on the reasons and purpose of Irish Catholic recruitment, discussing the political maneuvering involved in approving and obscuring Catholic recruitment as well as how Catholic elites used Irish Catholic recruitment as both a bargaining chip for further Catholic relief, and an assertion of their belonging as valid elites within the British system. This chapter will diverge from this focus on the bigger picture of the social and political structure of Irish Catholic recruitment and present the first of three case study discussions of the 'who' at hand, the Irish Catholic recruits themselves. These recruits were certainly acted upon by the politicians and elites, but also are actors and participants in this process. This chapter will focus on Irish Catholic recruitment and integration into the 46th regiment of foot using the official records of the War Office as a data set. Identifying Irish Catholic recruits and tracking their careers through these records will allow us to get a sense of their experience and treatment in a regular regiment on the British establishment. The work presented here will help integrate Irish Catholic experience into discussions of the 46th, a subject whose historiography does not currently include mention of them.<sup>1</sup> Irish Catholic recruits seem to have integrated quickly and unproblematically into the 46th regiment of foot, embracing soldiering as a common factor rather than religion as a limiting one, many taking the opportunity to become career soldiers.

Subsequent chapters focus on more niche regiments who were authorised and encouraged to target Catholic recruitment specifically, but it is important to discuss Irish Catholic experience in the 46th for several reasons. Firstly, this case study shows that Irish Catholics were not just being sent to niche regiments that were curated to receive them, they were also being actively integrated into the rank and file of existing regiments. This means that, at least bureaucratically, some Irish Catholics were being treated the same as any other recruit. This is not to say their 'catholicity'<sup>2</sup> was being celebrated or even discussed in any way, but does support that the penal law which restricted Irish Catholics from service was not being adhered to

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<sup>1</sup> The official history of the 46th Foot for example, does not make any mention of Irish Catholic recruitment. Though this is especially unsurprising, as it was published in 1851. See Richard Cannon, *Historical record of the forty-sixth, or south Devonshire Regiment of Foot*, (London: Parker, Furnivall, & Parker, 1851) ebook.

<sup>2</sup> Charles O'Connor uses this word in O'Connor to Dr John Curry, 9 Feb 1773, #240, *The Letters' of Charles O'Connor of Belanagare vol 2*, edited by Catherine Coogan Ward and Robert E. Ward. Ann Arbor, (Mich: Published for Irish American Cultural Institute by University Microfilms International, 1980). 36.

in any consistent fashion. Secondly, the 46th was not only an established regiment, but is also well-known to modern scholars for its participation in many important events in the American Revolution, as well as during its service in the Seven Years War.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, the experience of Irish Catholics in the 46th seems to support the idea that while both contemporaries and modern scholars see Irish Catholics during this period as an 'other', outsiders to British institutions and Britishness, they seem to have fully integrated into the 46th with no more desertion than expected, and even a few promotions, and without causing controversy or being detrimental to regimental discipline. This in and of itself shows us that Irish Catholics were not problematic in the composition of the regiment and fit in well with the other soldiers. Subscribing to the British military structure made them a part of a pre-existing 'military fraternity', and occupational solidarity, being a soldier inherently making them part of the in-group by asserting their belonging through their military behavior.<sup>4</sup> Despite controversy during recruitment, at least according to the available record, it seems to have been the identity of being an effective soldier which was the significant factor in determining who belonged and who did not once a recruit had joined the regular army.

The circumstances of the 46th before the American war bear consideration, as the formation and service before it dictates the type of environment that the Irish Catholic recruits were joining in 1776. The 46th foot was raised in 1741 as part of a set of seven additional regiments, and was at that time called the 57th foot.<sup>5</sup> It was subsequently stationed in Scotland and involved in putting down the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, thus helping end the Jacobite threat.<sup>6</sup> The 46th was then ordered to Ireland, where it was stationed for eight years beginning in 1749.<sup>7</sup> The regiment embarked for Nova Scotia in May 1757 and fought in the Seven Years War until peace was reached in 1763. The 46th was then stationed in American colonies until 1767 when it was ordered back to Ireland where it remained for a further eight years of service until it was ordered for augmentation and sent back to the American colonies for service in the American Revolution.<sup>8</sup> It is clear from this brief history that the 46th was commonly used for maintenance of imperial territory. Also of interest is that the formative early years of its service

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<sup>3</sup> Cannon, *Historical record of the forty-sixth*.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Conway, "The British Army, 'Military Europe,' and the American War of Independence," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2010): 69–100.

<sup>5</sup> Cannon, *Historical record of the forty-sixth*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 4-10.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 11-20

was against the Jacobites, which suggests possible connections between regimental identity and anti-Catholicism, though this is difficult to confirm.

Richard Cannon provides a detailed history of movement of 46th and involvement in different battles, as well as casualties or comments from letters where applicable, but does not provide much comment on regimental community, cohesion, or conflict during this period in his narrative. Sources which provide more personal narratives for the 46th are hard to come by, so this is not surprising. When compiling his history of the 46th foot in 1852 Cannon emphasised that before the mid-19th century it was not common, nor was there a policy which required, regiments to keep a record of themselves. Thus there is no consistent record of day-to-day activities, significant events, participation in different battles, or how soldiers interacted with each other and their officers.<sup>9</sup> Further, there is minimal discussion in Cannon's narrative about those recruited into the 46th, and certainly no mention of Irish Catholic recruits.<sup>10</sup> Thus his history of the regiment does not personalise the experience of people in the regiment, but rather tracks the regiment's movement and participation in different conflicts and geographies. This type of military history is helpful certainly, but is not comprehensive. Moving away from such traditional military history, this chapter seeks to add definition to Irishmen recruited to the 46th foot, recognizing that the army was "a crucial arena in which national identities were formed and articulated".<sup>11</sup> To explore this, the chapter will provide discussion of these recruits in terms of their potential motivations for enlistment, their background and religious status, and in terms of specifically Irish Catholics, their impact on regimental cohesion.

### **Recruitment and Augmentation of the 46th Foot**

Tracking Irish Catholic recruits into the 46th Regiment of Foot begins with the decision to augment this regiment and send it to the American colonies. In 1775, King George III authorised

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<sup>9</sup> Cannon states that this remained true until the mid-nineteenth century, when it was ordered that regiments were to keep a "full and ample record of its services at home and abroad" in 1836, making consistent record keeping a requirement. See Cannon, *Historical record of the forty-sixth*, iv.

<sup>10</sup> Indeed the only mention of the word 'recruit' in the whole piece is "A letter, dated the 31st of August, 1782, conveyed to the regiment His Majesty's pleasure, that County Titles should be conferred on the Infantry, and the FORTY-SIXTH was directed to assume the designation of the SOUTH DEVONSHIRE regiment, in order that a connexion between the regiment and that part of the county should be cultivated, which might be useful in promoting the success of the recruiting service.", talking about geographically connecting this regiment to England for recruitment. This is interesting, considering that it had been raised in Scotland, and mostly served in Ireland or the Atlantic world. Cannon, *Historical record of the forty-sixth*, 29.

<sup>11</sup> Kennedy, "True Britons and real Irish," 38.

Lord Barrington to augment several corps which were then to be sent to the American colonies and serve under the command of General Gage. Lord Barrington discussed this in a letter to General Gage which stated the following:

His Majesty has been pleased to direct that the 17th Regiment of Foot, Moncktons's, 27th Massey's, 28th Earle's, 46th Vaughan's, and 55th Cavan's, now under order to embark agreeable to their old numbers viz.t 477 Men, Officers included, from Ireland for North America, and which are to embark in the ensuing Spring, shall be augmented to the Establishment above specified.<sup>12</sup>

Once recruited up to strength, these regiments were then to set sail for America the following spring. Following this letter, Barrington sent a circular to the corporals of the augmented regiments on 26th August 1775 which provided instructions for how to carry out the recruiting process in Ireland in order to augment the regiments as ordered.<sup>13</sup> Each officer would receive five guineas for each approved recruit, of which the officer kept two and the recruit received three. It was normal for the officers in the recruiting service to be paid per recruit, this served to motivate them to fill their quotas. Recruiting officers were also encouraged to recruit contingent men to ensure the regiment would be complete, and who could then be sent to other regiments once in the American colonies if they managed to retain a surplus.<sup>14</sup> This circular was also to include "a List of Officers appointed from Half Pay to one of the additional companies", but this is missing from the document.<sup>15</sup> One of the additional companies was to be made in Ireland and put on the recruiting service, the other remain and recruit in Great Britain, and the involved officers to "be appointed by a Regimental Promotion as soon as convenient".<sup>16</sup> Three Regiments of foot guards were to each lend a Sergeant to the augmented regiments as well, who were to serve in the recruiting efforts. The head of these efforts in Ireland was Lt Colonel Samuel Townshend.<sup>17</sup>

It is important to note that there was no mention in the orders from Barrington about whether or not Irish Catholics could be recruited. This could be either because he had assumed the recruiting officers would not do such a thing as the law stated they could not, or because he deliberately left it out, continuing the policy of not discussing the religion of the recruits. However, given that recruitment efforts were undertaken after the policy of recruiting in Munster,

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<sup>12</sup> Lord Barrington to General Gage, Jul 1775, PRO 30/55/1/27, f 3, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>13</sup> "Circular Letter to the Corporals of the augmented regiments from the War Office," 26 Aug 1775, PRO 30/55/1/29, f 191, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>14</sup> Lord Barrington to General Gage, 26 Aug 1775, PRO 30/55/1/29, f 2, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

Leinster, and Connacht had been implemented the year before, Catholic recruitment was certainly to be involved.<sup>18</sup> Further, this was in the third wave of recruitment for augmented regiments, which implies that recruits needed to be sourced wherever possible.

Chapter one discussed the motivations that British and Irish officials had for recruiting them, but what of the motivations of the recruits themselves? There is no evidence to suggest that the Irish Catholics who were recruited for service in the 46th foot had any sort of patriotic factors motivating them to do so. Recruiting posters during this period were more informative than motivational. One poster set up for recruitment on a Catholic estate did offer a monetary reward higher than others available for both recruits and those who found recruits.<sup>19</sup> However there was not recruitment propaganda like would be employed in the 20th century conflicts, with snappy art of the good boys going to war, calling a man to do his duty. It is more likely that given the available options soldiering was appealing economically, as soldiers would be paid consistently and be provided with accommodations and food, at least ideally. They also would receive medical care and had the possibility of pensions if they were effective long term soldiers.<sup>20</sup> As a labourer, jobs were not secure and also there was a large amount of competition, especially during the colder months. Recruiters would have used this migrant labor force as a ready source to be tapped for military recruitment, as military service would fulfill their needs for pay, meals, and clothing.<sup>21</sup>

However, a stable source of income was not the only reason that enlistment was appealing. Ilya Berkovich has explored the motivations behind enlistment in depth in the context of old-regime Europe and argues that when reading the writings from soldiers which discussed their enlistment financial matters were certainly a factor, but “military service held an appeal not only as a profession, but also as an institution, which led some men to choose it over other forms of employment”.<sup>22</sup> Berkovich argues that the British army had appeal as an institution and occupational social organization in which a sense of duty and belonging could be garnered not for the army as an entity.<sup>23</sup> This would have been appealing to Irish Catholic recruits as a place where they could belong and be successful in the empire, when they were consistently

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<sup>18</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 19 Jan 1775, SP 63/445, f 17-20, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>19</sup> Letter from Major Boyle Roche enclosing a recruiting poster, 18 Aug 1775, Add MS 73648, #21, BP, BL, London.

<sup>20</sup> Berkovich, *Motivation in War*, 129.

<sup>21</sup> Sara Caputo has made a similar argument relating to the service of foreigners in the British Navy during the Napoleonic Wars. She describes the Navy as part of an “international employment market” in which foreigners could be mobile in different forces while receiving economic benefits and other opportunities. See Caputo, *Foreign Jack Tars*, 201.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, chapter 4.

reminded that they did not belong in Anglo-Irish and Protestant dominated society at home. Further, as argued by Peter Karsten, the British Army was also appealing as an institution simply because it was a military institution, allowing for pursuance of the Irish military tradition. Karsten defines this as “‘a military tradition’ or a ‘spirit of adventure,’ perhaps even a ‘love of a good fight’.”<sup>24</sup> This has also been explored by other historians such as Jean and Desmon Bowen and Timothy Bowman, who concur with Karsten’s argument that the Irish, whether Protestant or Catholic, had a tradition of military service which made soldiering an appealing job in part because it meant joining in this cultural legacy.<sup>25</sup>

The final motivation for recruits during this period was to change or escape their local circumstances, or to fulfill a sense of adventure. This could derive from the army providing a means for those of low economic standing to be able to explore more of the world, or from a need to ‘escape’ their family life for whatever reason.<sup>26</sup> Hagist suggests that army enlistment was a consistently available option, stating that “the army was probably an option of which they were always aware, but the decision to enlist appears to have more to do with being discontent with immediate circumstances, down on luck, or in need of a change”.<sup>27</sup> For example, when discussing his decision to enlist in a regiment going abroad in early 1776, private William Crawford said he had done so to satiate his “ardent disposition for adventure”.<sup>28</sup> Thomas Sullivan, another Irishman, reflected on his motivations in similar fashion. He stated that his intention was “to travel and traverse a stretch of the Seas...to satisfy an inclination, so strongly bent upon rambling; especially by entering into a Regiment that was going abroad, and not likely to return home for some years to either England or Ireland.”<sup>29</sup> In both cases, military service provided an open door to new experiences and geographies.

It is also important here to discuss that given the source material, there is also no evidence that the recruitment was not motivated by some level of patriotism or feeling of

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<sup>24</sup> Peter Karsten, “Irish Soldiers in the British Army, 1792-1922: Suborned or Subordinate?,” *Journal of Social History* 17, no. 1 (1983): 31–64, 39.

<sup>25</sup> See Bowen, *The Heroic Option*; Timothy Bowman, “Irish Military Cultures in the British Army, c.1775–1992”, in *Redcoats to Tommies: The Experience of the British Soldier from the Eighteenth Century*, ed Kevin Linch and Matthew Lord (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2021):192–210.

<sup>26</sup> Berkovich, *Motivation in war*, 150-153.

<sup>27</sup> Hagist, *British soldiers American war*, 73.

<sup>28</sup> Crawford was a Protestant Irishman, though he claimed to have little use for religion, stating: “In all my adventures and services in his majesty’s army, though I possessed no religion in my heart, I found it convenient to carry my prayer book about my person, because appearances of religion I have found to have great efficacy in the affairs of the world...-besides, between the leaves of my prayer book I found a safe deposit for my money”. “A narrative of the life and character of William Crawford,” in Hagist, *British soldiers American war*, 60-71, 67.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Sullivan, “The Thomas Sullivan Journal,” in Joseph Lee Boyle, ed, *From redcoat to rebel: the Thomas Sullivan Journal*, (Maryland: Heritage Books, 2006), 3.

connection to Britain. This could have been present, but there is no way of knowing given available sources. Catholic elites and officials within the Irish and English governments certainly claimed that the Irish Catholic masses could be trusted and would serve with loyalty and zeal for Britain and her empire, but there is no evidence whether or not the general populace subscribed to these claims.<sup>30</sup> It is also worth noting that Catholics notably were not recruited for service at home, where they had more ties and may have felt more of a sense of duty or honor to serve. Recruitment for service at home was still quite taboo, as the last thing the Protestant ascendancy would have wanted was armed and trained Catholics running around as a potential threat to their power and security. Recruitment of Irish Catholics serving abroad was also concerning to the British and Irish governments for similar reasons, even more so because those soldiers would be coming from Catholic armies across Europe who were enemies of the British crown, particularly France. Irish Catholics from the French service would have been met with suspicion both due to their religious affiliation and their involvement with the French government, especially after France joined the American cause.

These motivations can be discussed in a broad sense, but it is difficult to ascribe them to any particular individual. The consistent problem when trying to study Irish Catholic recruitment during this period is lack of available or surviving source material. Most of the Irish Catholics who were recruited were from the lower classes and this group tended not to be literate, so it is unlikely to find source material directly from them. Berkovich's recent work highlighting the voices of soldiers through a surprisingly large amount of first hand accounts he has been able to track down gives me hope that some first-hand experiences of Irish Catholics may be out there, but I have yet to encounter them.<sup>31</sup> This means that there are no narratives in which these recruits discuss their reasons, or whether they were affected more or less by one factor or another. The Kenmare recruitment had clear benefits such as additional bounty money and the local-focused structure of that recruitment could have made it more worthwhile to Irish Catholics in particular. The larger picture of motivations for enlistment given here, and the variety of accounts from non-Irish Catholic soldiers during this time period presented by Berkovich and Hagist which express similar themes despite being from different backgrounds and geographies, would suggest that such things are less material to the decision to enlist. These soldier accounts were generally unified in their reasons for enlistment, following the same major

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<sup>30</sup> See Lord Gormanston to Princess Amelia, 24 Sep 1775, GEO/MAIN/16037, Georgian Papers Project Online. Gormanston professed the loyalty of Irish Catholics, arguing they are attached to the King and that they are nervous that the blowback of people not supporting the American war will come back on them.

<sup>31</sup> See Berkovich, *Motivation in war*.

themes. Put succinctly by Marshall, “men had served because it was in their interest to do so.”<sup>32</sup> This supports the idea that religious status was a legal limitation to enlistment, not social one, thus when the law was not enforced, Irish Catholics would enlist for the same reasons as anyone else.

### **Personalizing the Official Record**

Without access to narratives from the Irish Catholic soldiers themselves, some archival creativity is needed in order to study their service and experience in the British army. The integration of these soldiers into the British army institution means that while their own voice is not present, a record of their military careers and presence is. Intercontinental empire and army maintenance means the generation of a lot of paperwork for when and where troops were recruited, what regiments they were placed in, where those regiments went, if people were injured, which companies they were present in, when they were discharged, and in some cases pension applications post-discharge. Thus though the recruited Irish Catholics left little to no trace of their individual experiences through their own writings, looking at the shadows these men left on the official record, while seeming just a dry list of data, can give us a chronological view of the life of a soldier which otherwise would not be accessible. This reconstruction of at least their official existence within the military establishment and their military careers then provides a way to discuss the treatment and integration of Irish Catholics into the British state and empire in the late 18th century.

For personal comments on the quality or service of Irish Catholic recruits this work relies on finding works from people who would have interacted with these Irish Catholic soldiers such as their officers, British army officials, or other soldiers that may have mentioned them in their writings, but thus far this search has been almost entirely fruitless. Discussions of religion of recruits are not present in the records of the 46th, nor any anecdotal evidence in soldier diaries or journals. Most personal sources are generally procedural, discussing which regiments went where or battle structure and strategy.<sup>33</sup> None that I have seen except one even mentions whether or not other soldiers are Irish, let alone Catholic as well. The group that is usually included as an “other” is the Hessians, but the Irish seem to just blend in and not be pointed out. The only journal I have found which has differentiated Irish from English soldiers is that of

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<sup>32</sup> Marshall, *The making and unmaking of empires*, 70.

<sup>33</sup> Cannon, *Historical record of the forty-sixth*, iv.



Thomas Sullivan. Sullivan enlisted in the 49th Regiment of foot in Dublin in February 1775 at twenty years of age. He arrived in the American colonies in June 1775 and served in the colonies until his desertion in July 1778.<sup>34</sup> Sullivan was an Irishman, but not a Catholic, and had been educated since childhood. Because he was Irish, he seems keen in his journal to mention if relevant groups or people were Irish. That said, he never made mention of any Catholics in his journal.

The main documents discussed here will be recruiting returns, muster lists, discharge records, and pension applications. Musters in simplest terms are lists, taken monthly or quarterly, which contain the names of all soldiers present in a regiment, and any relevant notes associated with each person. They also list any casualties, transfers, or desertions. When a soldier first joins a company, their enlistment date or the start of service is also included, though this does not remain with their name moving forward. Each muster list is taken by company within the regiment and lists the officers, then the private men, then the casuals. They are generally taken by the adjutant of the regiment, then signed by the present officer and then sent in for approval. Muster lists show the state of a regiment and are used for the purposes of pay and accounting. For the purposes of this project, they also serve as the service record of the men present.

Recruiting returns are lists of men who were recruited for service in the army, usually for a specific regiment. Unlike the muster lists, the recruiting return provides more descriptive and biographical information about each recruit. Rather than just their name and date of enlistment, recruiting returns provide the age, height, physical characteristics, parish and county born in, where enlisted, when, and by whom, and profession of each person recruited. This provides helpful information for looking for other official records of each man. Additionally, given the year they were born and the parish and county, this gives enough data to make an educated assumption about the religious status of the person in question. Inspection returns would also have been helpful for this, as they list what proportion of the men and officers in a regiment are from where. I had hoped to find inspection returns for the 46th foot but have not encountered them. Inspection returns also tend to provide general comments about the effectiveness and state of the regiment in question, so could have provided helpful anecdotal evidence about the discipline of the 46th foot.

Discharge records provide the date of discharge and generally also the service record of the soldier, showing which regiments he served in and for how long. Also includes the physical

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<sup>34</sup> Joseph Lee Boyle, ed. *From redcoat to rebel: the Thomas Sullivan Journal*, (Maryland: Heritage Books, 2006) iv.

description like the recruiting returns do, as needed to pick up any remaining pay, to confirm the person in front of you was the person listed on the discharge. Pension applications are very similar to this and contain the same information with some additional features like personal notes in favor of the candidate receiving a pension from their officers, also a blurb that they are recommended for whichever pension institution for either in or out pension. In-pension meant residence and medical care and was a coveted position. Out-pensioners were not granted residence, instead just receiving payments but having to fend for themselves otherwise. Pensioners could apply to either Chelsea Hospital or Kilmainham. Kilmainham was the more likely institution for my purposes, as that is the one most Irish soldiers would have been funneled to. Kilmainham was created in the late seventeenth century to provide medical, financial, and social support to those who had served in the British Army and been discharged either due to wounds, age, overall health, or simply at the end of a long military career. Kilmainham was able to support 570 out-pensioners by 1726, but this number was increased after the American War to 2,500. They offered significantly fewer in-pensions, this was limited to only 400 men.<sup>35</sup> The competition for these pensions was high, thus any evidence found that Irish Catholics were receiving them is inherently an admission of their effectiveness and usefulness as soldiers. These applications are also helpful because they can concretely determine the literacy of the soldier in question. They were required to sign the document to acknowledge that the information was correct, and most signed their name with an 'X' which was labeled 'their mark'. Literacy was required for being an officer, so Irish Catholic recruits who marked with an 'x' were unlikely to be officers both because of their religion and because they could not read or write. When the information from all of these sources is combined, it ideally provides a clear service record of the soldier in question.

It is important to state however that being official documents, this can also be problematic due to being inconsistent or incomplete. None of the men I have found have been present in the records of the General Courts Martial, which are the records of court martials that were carried out in a public and official capacity. That said, regiments could and often did handle problems and offenses internally without keeping a record of the situation.<sup>36</sup> So while it is significant that there is no evidence of consistent Irish Catholic soldier court martials, which would be assumed to be present if they were in fact as hostile to the British as was the

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<sup>35</sup> Ferguson, "The Army in Ireland," 18 & 94.

<sup>36</sup> Arthur N Gilbert, "The Regimental Courts Martial in the Eighteenth Century British Army," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 8, no. 1 (1976): 50–66; G. A. Stepler, "British Military Law, Discipline, and the Conduct of Regimental Courts Martial in the Later Eighteenth Century," *The English Historical Review* 102, no. 405 (1987): 859–86.

prevailing belief at the time, any disciplinary issues or even anti-Catholic sentiment or hazing could have been done internally in the regiment or even in the company the soldier was serving in. In this case, records may not have been kept. Especially considering that admitting that soldiers were Irish Catholics on official documentation of an incident would not have been appropriate, as it would have been an admission of their illegal presence. Further, the official record as a whole can sometimes be incomplete. For example, though inspection returns for the 46th foot would be invaluable to this chapter, I have not been able to locate any. Not every regiment files every document, and even if they had, that does not mean it is extant in current archival collections. It is also important to recognise that even when the paperwork was filed, the official record is often incomplete in terms of missing information on filed documents. When tracking these recruits through the muster rolls some just disappear, not listed as having transferred to another regiment or as a casualty or deserter. It is impossible to know what happened to those who drop out of the record.

Though these sources are an invaluable source of information for this subject, there are several problems which occur when working with them and using them as a basis of analysis in practice. First and foremost, these sources do not in any way provide a direct voice of Irish Catholic recruits. They do not share their perspective on their recruitment and service, nor their daily experiences or thoughts. Additionally it must be stated that this is the official record, so military and government officials could curate what was included and what was left out. It is important to recognise this as a shortcoming of the source material, but that said these records at the moment seem to be the only way to access the lives of these men in recorded history. This research does not attempt to state concretely the opinions or political and social thoughts of these men. It is merely an attempt to make an educated guess based on the source material as to what the experiences of the British military looked like for Irish Catholic recruits by following the careers of these men.

The second and third problems with these records are far more logistical, given that these records were being generated by different officers and officials over time, spellings of names are not always consistent. One soldier who will be discussed at length later in this chapter, Barnabus O'Brien, is referred to by many different names and spellings including 'Bernard O'Brien', 'Barnabus Bryon', 'Bar<sup>n</sup> Bryan', 'Bar<sup>y</sup> Bryan', and 'Barny Bryon'.<sup>37</sup> In this example we can see nicknames being used, as well as inconsistent spellings for his last name.

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<sup>37</sup> Barnabus O'Brien Pension Application, WO 119, box 0006, record #23, f 38-40, Kilmainham: Pensioners' Discharge Documents (Certificates of Service), TNA, Kew. All pension records are from Royal Hospital, Kilmainham: Pensioners' Discharge Documents (Certificates of Service), WO 119, TNA, Kew.

Many times abbreviations were also used for names to make the record writing process faster. For example, the name 'John' was sometimes recorded as 'Jn<sup>o</sup>', the name 'James' as 'Jm<sup>s</sup>' or 'Ja<sup>s</sup>', Patrick could be 'Patt:' or 'Pat<sup>k</sup>'. Several other names were also abbreviated in this fashion. This complicates searching these records digitally or by keyword in available databases. This led to a need to transcribe all relevant documents into a standardised form for more substantial data analysis. Additionally, as with any transcription project, there is potential for human error. Regardless of accidental spelling mistakes or abbreviation use by the document creators, another problem with spelling on these records is the anglicisation or misspelling of traditional Irish names. This all needs to be taken into account when making generalizations about this data set and tracking individuals through them.

Because the 46th was a regular regiment, much official documentation is available. For the purposes of this project, we will be considering the muster lists from 1775-1782.<sup>38</sup> The muster lists are organised chronologically and have the captain of each company being mustered listed at the top of the page. It then proceeds to list the officers in the company and anything of note with them like if they are on duty, recruiting, sick, etc. Below that is a list of all of the rank and file, again with any relevant notes. A category of interest here is also casualties, which lists deaths, transfers, and desertions. Given this, the muster lists provide some helpful information for the purposes of this project. Most notably, the muster lists generally say the date when a recruit officially joined the regiment, which can aid in finding other information about the soldier in pension records, discharge papers, or other relevant paperwork.

In order to identify potential Irish Catholics in the 46th foot, I will be focusing on one recruiting return from 9th February 1776.<sup>39</sup> This recruitment occurred as a result of Barrington's orders for recruitment in Ireland for the augmentation of regular regiments headed to the American colonies. This recruiting return is from the efforts of three recruiting officers, a Captain Duff, Lieutenant Bathurst, and an Ensign Danby during their time with the recruiting service in Ireland and can provide much helpful information. The logistical purpose of the document at the time it was created would have been to use as a list of those recruited along with their birthplace and description which would help confirm who had been recruited and make them identifiable to the officers in the companies they would be assigned to or when boarding to ship out.

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<sup>38</sup> All muster lists for the 46th Foot referenced are from the TNA, 46th Foot 1st Battalion Musters 1761-1776, WO 12/5796/2, War Office Papers, TNA, Kew; 46th Foot 1st Battalion Musters 1777-1788, WO 12/5797/1, War Office Papers, TNA, Kew. Moving forward, individual musters will be cited using 46th Foot, Captain's name, date, volume when citing specific muster lists is necessary.

<sup>39</sup> "List of Recruits Rais'd for the 46th Regiment of Foot Commanded by the Hon'ble Brigadier General John Vaughan," Dublin, 9 Feb 1776, WO 1/992, War Office Papers, TNA, Kew

Sometimes another enlistment document with the oath of allegiance and a signature for the recruit is generated, but I have not found any of the men listed on this return. The data provided is much more than on the muster lists, and includes some biographical information about the recruit which can be used to identify their religious affiliation.

To address the raw data of this recruiting return: there are 71 names listed as recruits. Of this 71, 15 deserted before having set sail with the regiment for the American colonies which left 56 for further investigation. Desertion at or before embarkation was common, so a 20% desertion rate out of these recruits is not surprising. A letter from the Adjutant General of Ireland to the Secretary of the Lords Justices of Ireland from March 1767 made this clear, as they hoped that ships could be quickly identified for transporting Irish troops because the general was “apprehensive” that if transports took too long to arrive there would be large numbers of desertion.<sup>40</sup> The embarkation returns of various other regiments support this as well. Recruiting parties under the command of Major Bruce reported that they had raised 195 recruits, 41 of whom had deserted.<sup>41</sup> This yields a similar desertion percentage to the 46th Foot recruits. However, this ratio varied wildly between regiments as is made clear in the general return of several regiments which embarked for American service in December 1775 and January 1776. The 15th Foot only experienced 12% desertion, the 33d Foot 2%, the 37th 7%, the 54th 1%, and the 57th 10%.<sup>42</sup> However this seems to be misleading, as an embarkation return for the 9th Foot lists only 15 deserters out of 469 men, but their accompanying desertion return lists a total of 66 deserters who departed “from the time of their receiving orders for foreign service”.<sup>43</sup> Using just the embarkation return, it appears that the desertion rate of the 9th Foot was only 3%, but using the full desertion return yields a rate of 14%. The 20th Foot reported similarly, their embarkation return yielding a desertion rate of under 1%, but their desertion return yielding 14%.<sup>44</sup> These are lower than the 46th Foot, but they also represent desertion across the whole

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<sup>40</sup> “Extract of a Letter from the adjutant General of Ireland to the Secretary of the Lords Justices of that Kingdom,” 29 Mar 1767, SP 63/424, f 297, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>41</sup> “A Return of Recruits raised for the Army in N:th America under the Command of Major Bruce at Cork,” 6 Mar 1775, SP 63/447, f 19, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>42</sup> “General return of the 15th, 33d, 37th, 54th, & 57th Regiments of Foot embarked at Cork by Major General Cunningham in the months of December 1775 and January 1776,” SP 63/451, f 130, SPI, TNA, Kew.

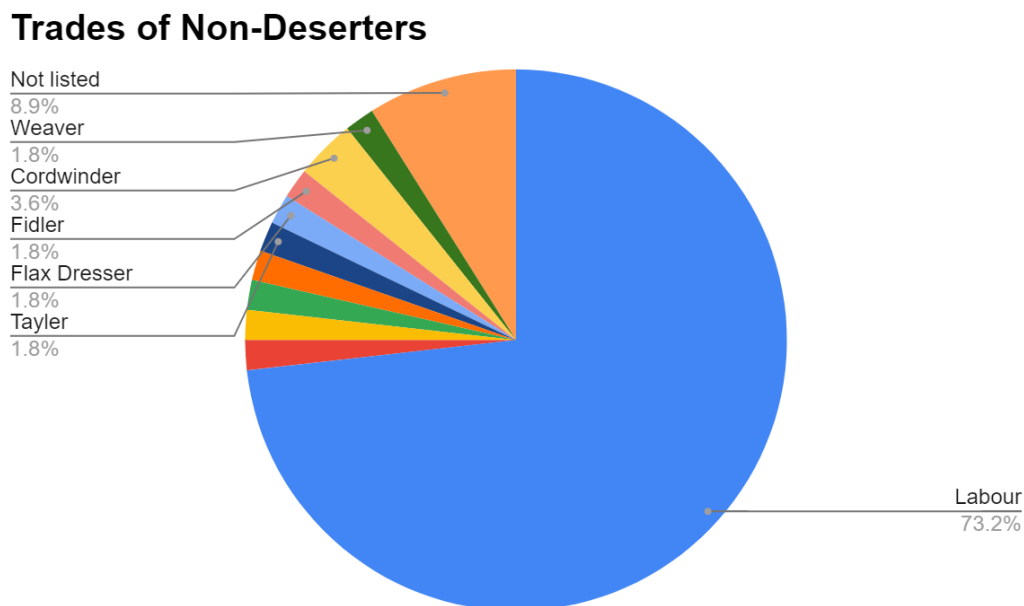
<sup>43</sup> “Embarkation return of His Majesty’s 9th Regiment of Foot Commanded by the Right Honble Major Genl Edward Lord Vist Ligonier,” Cork Harbour, 5 Apr 1776, SP 63/453, f 163, SPI, TNA, Kew; ‘Return of the deserters from the 9th Regiment of Foot from the time of receiving their orders for foreign service, to the time of their embarking’, Cork Harbour, 5 Apr 1776, SP 63/453, f 165, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>44</sup> “Embarkation return of His Majesty’s 9th Regiment of Foot Commanded by the Honble Major General Geo Lane Parker,” Cork, 5 Apr 1776, SP 63/453, f 166, SPI, TNA, Kew; Return of the deserters from the 9th Regiment of Foot from the time of receiving their orders for foreign service, to the time of their embarking at Cork’, Cork Harbour, c Apr 1776, SP 63/453, f 165, SPI, TNA, Kew.

regiment rather than just the one recruiting return being used as a basis for analysis of the 46th Foot here.

Reasons for desertion varied, but generally were related to being ordered for foreign service, deciding not to commit to military service, or because a better opportunity was available. Five of the deserters from the 46th Foot were listed as holding a skilled profession, arguably making them less likely to serve in the military, as they had other career options. Six of the deserters were labourers, the other four had no job listed. All recruiting for the return took place between December 1775 and February 1776. About half of the recruits were aged in their twenties, a quarter were under 20 and a quarter were above 30. 66% of the 71 men on the full return were labourers, 12% did not list professions, and the remaining 12% held skilled positions such as hatter, weaver, school teacher, etc. As illustrated by the chart below, the proportion of labourers within the non-deserters is even higher, coming in at 73.2% labourer, 8.9% no profession listed, and 10.8% listed with a skilled profession. The winter season would have made it hard to find work in the agricultural sector, sending many labourers to urban centers to look for work. Local positions would not have been available for all who needed work, making the military an appealing decision. The significant majority of those who reported 'labourer' as their profession is illustrated by the chart below.

**Figure 3.1:** Trades of Non-deserters from the February 1776 Recruiting Return



Birth county and parish is included on this recruiting return for almost all of the individuals listed, save four which only include county. From this information it is possible to

determine the province a recruit came from, which is relevant to discussing if recruitment was indeed being more extensive in the ‘three provinces’ for which it was now approved.<sup>45</sup> When grouping the birth counties into their respective provinces it becomes clear that this order certainly was being followed. Analysis of the county information shows that eleven men had been recruited in Connacht, 53 in Leinster, none in Munster, and seven in Ulster, meaning about 90% of this recruitment had been of men born in one of the three approved provinces, leaving only about 10% of recruits having been born in Ulster. The overwhelming majority, 74.6%, were recruited in Leinster, with Connacht as the other contributor at 15.5%. No recruits on this return reported a birthplace in Munster. Though this is based on birthplace information, not current place of residence, this still suggests that recruitment was indeed being focused to those who were not from Ulster given that recruitment was much higher of non-Ulstermen.

Applying this province information to the desertions noted on the recruiting return also yields interesting results. Table 3.1 below shows the total recruits from each province, the number of deserters, and the percentage of recruits from each province which deserted. As the table illustrates, about half of those recruited who were born in the province of Ulster deserted before service, generating a desertion percentage which was double that of those recruited from Leinster, and Leinster had provided over seven times the number of recruits. This first seems to indicate that recruits who were born in Ulster were more likely to desert, but this needs to be contextualised in terms of the above discussion of occupation relating to desertion. Of the three deserters from Ulster one was listed as a labourer and two held professions, one as a Hatter and one a Fifer. Of the 11 Leinster deserters, four were listed as labourers, four had no information listed, and three listed professions, two butchers, and a ‘cordwinder’, the latter of which is likely a misspelling of ‘cordwainer’, meaning a shoemaker. The sole deserter from Connacht was listed as a labourer. Thus while these provincial desertion proportions seem to suggest Ulstermen were more likely to desert, this is mitigated by the fact that, at least on this return, men from Ulster were more likely to hold a profession which would then make leaving Ireland for military service less appealing or economically necessary.

**Table 3.1:** Birth Province Proportions and Desertions from the February 1776 Recruiting Return

birth province	total recruited	deserters	% deserted
Connacht	11	1	9%
Leinster	53	11	20.75%

<sup>45</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 19 Jan 1775, SP 63/445, f 17-20, SPI, TNA, Kew.

Munster	0	0	-
Ulster	7	3	42.86%

Through discussion of desertion, professions, and birth province several conclusions emerge. First, the recruitment of men for the 46th seems to have been most successful or substantial in Leinster by far, with some recruitment from Connacht and less from Ulster. This illustrates that recruitment was indeed being focused outside of Ulster, as low recruitment from Ulster does not necessarily mean less interest from residents of Ulster in being recruited, but rather could indicate more substantial efforts were being made to recruit elsewhere. This is in line with the plan to focus recruiting efforts in the three approved provinces. Second, the desertion reported on this return, while constituting about a fifth of the men listed, does not differ significantly when compared to the desertion returns at time of embarkation from other augmented regiments. This data also suggests that desertion was tied to opportunity, as only about 10% of those who listed 'labourer' as their profession deserted, compared to 33% desertion for those who listed specific professions or trades. The next step in this analysis is to identify Irish Catholic recruits within this return and see how their service and rates of desertion measure against those of the recruits as a whole. This will help determine their efficacy, as well as if they were more likely to desert than other soldiers.

### Determining religious affiliation

The geographical details the recruiting return provides are a key factor in determining the likelihood of any given recruit being Catholic, especially the specifics of birth parish and county given on the February 1776 return. Pension or discharge records generally also state which parish or nearby market town the subject was born in, but these are not uniformly available. The approval of recruitment in the three provinces other than Ulster implied Catholic recruitment, but claiming that any and all recruits who listed non-Ulster birthplaces were Catholic is problematic to say the least. Conversely, it would also be problematic to assume those recruited in Ulster were Protestants as Catholics certainly lived there as well.<sup>46</sup> Discussion

<sup>46</sup> The 1766 religious census data that survives lists data collected from 311 parishes in the province of Ulster, and of this 311 about half of the parishes reported Protestant proportions of under 50%, including the birth parishes of four of the seven recruits from the February 1776 recruiting return. See Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*.



of the religious proportions in each geography is thus paramount to determining the religious status of each recruit more concretely. By applying the findings of two religious censuses of Ireland to the biographical data available on the recruiting return, this section seeks to identify Irish Catholic recruits which can then be tracked through the muster lists of the 46th foot to get a sense of their treatment and service.

The first data set of use is the 1766 religious census of Ireland, called for by the Irish House of Lords on 5 March 1766. This census came immediately after the Hearth-Tax census of 1764-5, which also included religious reporting. The surviving data from both censuses has been compiled in a volume from 2022, published by the Irish Manuscripts commission.<sup>47</sup> The work of these historians is exceedingly appreciated, having all of the census information in one volume and presented in a standard format is an unexpected and helpful development for this research. The 1764-5 census was carried out by the “fiscal machinery of the state”, relying on local tax officials to generate reports. Data for this effort was recorded inconsistently, such as some reporting household returns and some listing or counting individuals. The editors of the 2022 volume argue that though the data from this census is ‘extensive, it is far from being comprehensive’, and express concern that “Catholics were more likely than Protestants to be under-enumerated”.<sup>48</sup> The 1766 census was generated from reports of parish ministers, which the editors of the 2022 volume argue made it more complete because these ministers had a vested interest in this topic.<sup>49</sup> While neither census generated full coverage of Ireland, the second was more extensive, accurate and geographically more complete.<sup>50</sup> Because of this, this chapter will rely more heavily on the data from the 1766 religious census data rather than that of the 1764-5 Hearth Tax census, though the latter will be used when appropriate.

The mandate of the 1766 religious census was for parish ministers to return a list of families in their parishes denoting which were Catholic and which were Protestant, as well as submission of a list of Catholic priests and friars serving in their parishes.<sup>51</sup> The proportion of Church of England versus dissenters was also noted occasionally as well. The information compiled in the 2022 volume is made up of surviving records of this census, as well as any

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> For example, Protestant households were less likely to be homogenous than Catholic households, many having Catholic servants or boarders. This means that if Protestants and Catholics were counted based on household reporting, there is potential to leave many Catholics out of the count as they would be obscured within Protestant households. Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 4-5.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, xxiii.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 13.

transcriptions or copies made that can help fill the gaps in what is extant.<sup>52</sup> All told, the 1766 census covers reports from 1,271 civil parishes and around 460,000 households.<sup>53</sup> The reports being from individual parishes is helpful for the purposes of identifying the religious status of men from the 1776 recruiting return for the 46th foot, as birth parish is part of the included information. The 2022 volume includes the number of households of each type reported in each parish, as well as maps which show the percentage of Protestants in each parish where surviving data was obtained. This can help make a case for the likelihood of a recruit of the 46th to be Catholic, if they came from an area which was presented as only 5% Protestant for example, it becomes more likely that they were a Catholic recruit.

The second census of use was taken in 1834, about 50 years after the recruitment for the American Revolution. The data from that census was presented in *Troubled Geographies*, which uses spatial analysis and maps to explore religious divisions in Ireland. The work on the 1834 census helps provide a bookend to the 1766 census, giving a second set of data points to help determine the Catholicity of Irish Catholic recruits for the American Revolution based on their place of birth. The data analysis presented in *Troubled Geography* “showed that 80.9 percent of the population professed to be Catholic, 10.7 percent to belong to the Church of Ireland and 8.1 percent to the Presbyterian church” in 1834.<sup>54</sup> This data can be used to show if Catholic proportions changed over time in different geographic areas, and also to generalise more in terms of percentages of Catholics overall in each county, whereas the 1766 census data is presented by parish. When used in tandem, these data sets provide a strong avenue to support the assignment of religious status of a recruit from the February 1776 recruiting return using their birthplace information.

When applying the 1766 census data to the parish birthplaces on the recruiting return, a strong pattern of recruitment from majority Catholic areas emerges. Of the 71 names on the return, 67 include birth parish information. However, only 37 of the 67 names with parish information can be tracked using the 1766 census, as data for the parishes of the other 30 men is not present in the 1766 census data. This could be due to either lack of reporting at the time of the census, but likely is due to the loss of much of the original census documentation. The four men who did not have associated parish information did report birth county, all four were from King’s County. Broadly King’s County reported high Catholic proportions, with only one out

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<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately much of the original census data was lost in the Public Records Office fire, so this reconstruction is necessary. For methodology of how this data was reconstructed and the sources used to fill the gaps, see Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, Part II.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>54</sup> Gregory et al, *Troubled geographies*, ch 3.

of the 13 parishes for which there is available reported data reporting a Protestant population of above 25%.<sup>55</sup> Of the 37 men whose birth parish can be found in the 1766 census analysis, 29 were born in areas which reported a Protestant population proportion of under 20%. Further, of those 29 men, 13 were from areas which reported a Protestant proportion of under 10%. The remaining men, with five from 20-50% areas and only two from over 50% areas. Even then those two, Edward O'Brien and Henry Owens, were from areas which reported 50.8% and 55.9% Protestant respectively. This shows that even when the men were from an area which had a Protestant majority, this majority was very slim indeed. Though this analysis unfortunately cannot be applied to the full 71 men listed on the recruiting due to lack of data, those which can be analyzed show that at the very least about 40% (29 out of 71) of these men were from areas with a maximum proportion of Protestants of 20%, and further almost 20% (13 out of 71) were from areas which reported under 10% Protestant proportions. This analysis shows that these recruits were likely to have been born in areas which were majority Catholic, and thus likely to be Catholic themselves.

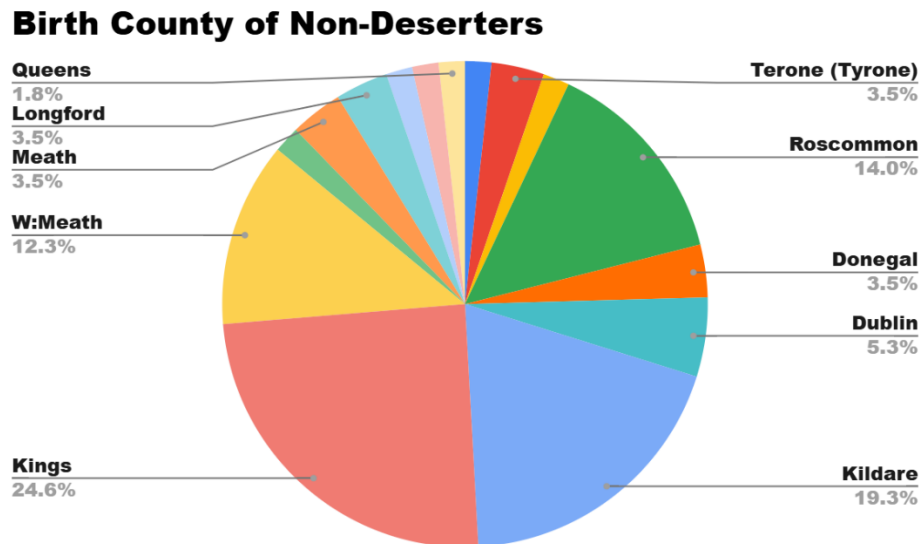
The data from the later 1834 census shows that Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo, Longford, Queens, Midland, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford, Offaly (known as King's at the time), Meath, and West Meath all had a population which was 90% or more Catholic during the time of the survey. Of the 71 men present on the recruiting return, 75% were recruited from these counties, which gives strong evidence that these recruits were Catholic. The other 25% were recruited from areas which reported a population of Catholics of between 60-90%.<sup>56</sup> This makes assuming their Catholicity less concrete but solidly supports that some of that remaining 25% was likely to be Catholic, especially considering the above discussion of the 1766 census in which some parishes were listed in a higher proportion bracket, but were only a reported few percent higher Protestant proportion than the previous bracket. The high percentages of Catholics in these counties helps make an educated assumption about the men from there being likely to be Catholic.

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<sup>55</sup> Monasteroris parish reported 169 Protestant households and 388 Catholic households, meaning the proportion of reported households which were Protestant was only 30.3%. Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 189.

<sup>56</sup> Gregory et al, *Troubled geographies*, 24.

**Figure 3.2:** Birth County of Non-Deserters from the February 1776 Recruiting Return



Other avenues for identifying the religious affiliation of recruits such as genealogy relating to the surnames of the men have been considered, but have not been fruitful lines of inquiry. For example, traditional Irish surnames make it likely the man in question was Catholic. This claim is supported when doing searches for the name in question in the time period in genealogical databases, the results of which are mostly Roman Catholic marriage records. While it is hard given the limited biographical information available on the return to confirm if a person found in a genealogical database is indeed a match to the person on the recruiting return, searching their name and birthdate calculated based on their age at enlistment in 1776, and region they were from, can help us gain evidence that they were most likely Catholic because even if the people who pop up are not the soldiers themselves, they are at least potential relations. Surname analysis through use of Edward MacLysaght's *Guide to Irish Surnames* has also been considered, but has similarly not led to concrete conclusions.<sup>57</sup> MacLysaght attempted to generate a list of Irish surnames accompanied by the potential origin of each, with specific comment as well to potential anglicization of Irish names spelling changes. He also discusses the geography of surnames, where they are and have been most prevalent. These entries do not comment on the religious connections of the surnames, but rather the nationality or regional significance. Applying his guide to this research shows just how murky it can be to use surname analysis to assert geographic or religious origins, making it difficult to assert the regional or religious identity of the person in question based on their surname alone.

<sup>57</sup> Edward MacLysaght, *A Guide to Irish Surnames*, (Dublin, 1964).

Use of the Catholic Qualification and Convert Rolls has been similarly problematic. An Act passed in 1774 allowed for subjects of any religious status to take an oath declaring their loyalty to the British crown, and these rolls list those who did so. The entries include geographic area or parish of conversion, full name, and the date of qualification, which does not provide a lot to go on in terms of ensuring accurate identification of specific people from the recruiting return. Searches of the names from the recruiting return in these records yields anywhere from no results to ten results generally, with some outliers yielding around 50.<sup>58</sup> Only three of the men from the recruiting return had possible matches on the qualification rolls which predate their recruitment and make sense based on their age, but none have enough information to confirm that they are the same person as listed in the recruiting return. This and the aforementioned difficulties relating to confirming that the men from the recruiting return are the same as those listed in marriage or death records or surname analysis means that this research relies on birthplace information to determine the likelihood a recruit was Catholic.

Both census reports show that both Catholics and Protestants were living in each parish or county, so how can we be certain, or at least assert that it was more likely, that those recruited were Catholics? A high proportion of Catholics, in some parishes the Protestant population only made up under 2% of those living there, certainly suggests that those recruited were Catholics.<sup>59</sup> There is an argument to be made that the Protestants in those areas could have sought out recruitment in order to get out of majority Catholic areas, but this does not seem probable. As discussed in chapter one, the concern from government with this recruitment was that recruiting large numbers of Protestants would lessen the already precarious position and security of the Protestant minority in Ireland.<sup>60</sup> Thus this would mean that recruiting Protestants in an area such as Cloncurry parish in Kildare, which reported an under 5% Protestant population, could have been discouraged in order to maintain Protestant presence or control in that parish.<sup>61</sup> Given this and the fact that 75% of the men on the recruiting return were born in counties listed as 90% or more Catholic on the 1834 census, and 78% of those trackable via the 1766 census data were born in parishes which had a Protestant population of

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<sup>58</sup> The name 'Thomas Fitzgerald' yielded 52 results in the database. Catholic Qualification Rolls, 1700 – 1845, National Archives of Ireland, <https://census.nationalarchives.ie/search/cq/home.jsp>

<sup>59</sup> For example, recruits James Rooney and Alexander Roach, both of whom can be found in the muster lists for the 46th foot, were born in Kellcock parish in County Kildare. This parish reported 271 households in the 1766 census, 8 Protestant and 263 Catholic, meaning a proportion of 3% Protestant to 97% Catholic in Kellcock parish. Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 165.

<sup>60</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James Place, 6 Feb 1775, SP 63/445, TNA, Kew, 87.

<sup>61</sup> Cloncurry reported 135 households, 2 of which were Protestant and 133 of which were Catholic, making the proportions of each 1.5% and 98.5%, respectively. Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 162.

under 20%, suffice to say Irish Catholic recruits should certainly make up a significant portion of the February 1776 recruit list.

### **Tracking recruits into service in the 46th Foot**

Once the census records have been used to determine potential Catholic recruits of interest, ideally the muster lists for the 46th foot will provide snapshots of the service of these recruits, and, when taken in together, to generate a service record. This would show at the very least whose company they were in and where they were located during any given muster period. The General Muster Books from the Commissary of Musters Office within the War Office Papers at the British National Archives contains 91 muster lists for the 46th regiment of foot during their service in the American colonies from 1775-1783. The consistency of these records is invaluable in the received Irish Catholic recruits over time, as they provide a continuous record of their presence. Because of this, I have been able to track 37 recruits from the 1776 recruiting return discussed above who proceeded to serve in the 46th foot in the American colonies via the muster lists for the regiment. Most appear in the first in the musters from 1777 taken at Perth Amboy, and state that the listed man entered the army on July 4, 1776.<sup>62</sup> The remaining men from the recruiting return are not present in this set of muster lists.

What follows will be a discussion of the 37 men which can be seen in the musters of the 46th regiment and what their record can tell us about Irish Catholic service. Almost 70% of these 37 men came from counties which were 90% or more Catholic in the 1834 census, with the remaining 30% hailing from counties which were between 60-90% Catholic.<sup>63</sup> On a parish level, specific religious proportions are only available for 21 of these men. Of those 21, five were born in parishes with a less than 5% Protestant population, three from areas with between 5-15% and nine (all born in Geashill parish in King's County) with a population of 17.8% Protestant. Two were from areas with higher proportions, Thomas Waide and Henry Owens with Protestant proportions within their birth parishes of 35.1% and 55.9% respectively.<sup>64</sup> This data shows that 19 out of the 21 men were born in parishes with under 20% Protestant proportions. Thus the numbers from the 1834 and 1766 censuses both suggest that a large portion of these trackable recruits were Irish Catholics.

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<sup>62</sup> 46th Foot, all companies, Perth Amboy, 5 May 1777, WO 12/5796/2.

<sup>63</sup> Gregory et al, *Troubled geographies*, 24.

<sup>64</sup> Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 156 and 407.

Only four of these recruits are listed as having deserted during their service; William Coffey on the February 1776 recruiting return, William Clarke in April 1776, Lawrence Allen in September 1777, and Mathew Dalton in August 1778. All of these occurred within the first two years of service. Though listed as a deserter on the recruiting return, Coffey was listed as a private in Ferguson's company in the muster lists from 5 May 1777 and noted as entered on 4 July 1776 which is the same entrance date as the other recruits from the February recruiting return.<sup>65</sup> His appearance suggests he was likely caught somehow after attempting to desert. Coffey was from County Meath, which makes it likely he was Catholic as per the 1834 census, but this cannot be confirmed by the 1766 census as no data is given for his birth parish. Given that the 1776 muster lists put the recruit's arrival in the colonies at Staten Island in August 1776, William Clarke must have also deserted before the ships left Ireland, but seems to have been caught as well. His desertion was recorded in Leighton's company and dated 5 April 1776, but a William Clarke is listed in Vaughan's company on 5 May 1777 as having entered the army 4 July 1776, again the same date as the other recruits.<sup>66</sup> Clarke was likely to have been Catholic, as he was one of the recruits from Geashill parish in King's County which had a 82.2% Catholic population.<sup>67</sup> Both of the other deserters, Allen and Dalton, listed Kildare as their birthplace, which was one of the counties in the 60-90% Catholicity bracket on the 1834 census. However, this is potentially misleading as the 1766 census data shows that each of these men were born in parishes which reported Catholic proportions of no less than 80%, and in the case of Dalton, a proportion of 97% Catholic.<sup>68</sup> This illustrates the importance of looking at both sets of data, and seems to imply that these three deserters were likely to have been Catholics. This illustrates again that indeed some Irish Catholics did desert, but certainly does not suggest that the majority of Irish Catholics did so.

Those deserters aside, that leaves us with 35 men to account for.<sup>69</sup> Seven of the men are listed as casualties, having died during their service. Five of the seven died within the first year of service, the only information available to track them is their entry into the regiment, all listed as entered on 4 July 1776, then their names noted as a casualty with the date of death. There is not much to learn from the small bit of information given relating to those four, other than that they did not desert and were killed in action which shows that they did participate in

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<sup>65</sup> Ferguson, Perth Amboy, 5 May 1777, WO 12-5796-2.

<sup>66</sup> Leighton, Staten Island, 10 Aug 1776, WO 12-5796-2; Vaughan, Perth Amboy, 5 May 1777, WO 12-5796-2.

<sup>67</sup> Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 188.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 165.

<sup>69</sup> This is inclusive of William Clarke, as it seems he did serve, at least briefly.

the British army once recruited. There is also minimal information available about the other two listed casualties, Barnaby Rourk and John Bigly, but both served until their deaths in the spring of 1780. John Bigly served in three different companies during his time as a soldier, under Captain Leslie, then Captain Bell, then finally Captain Morden until his death 28 May 1780. No other notes are present with his name, so it is impossible to determine why he bounced around to three different companies. This could be due to being a bad fit in a company, or simply due to the need to fill out different companies as the war progressed. Bigly was born in county Tyrone, making it less likely he was Catholic.<sup>70</sup> Barnaby Rourk was also in Morden's company when he died 17 April 1780. He was sick upon his arrival to the 46th foot, and initially served in Leslie's company as well. Both of these men seem to have served unproblematically until their deaths.

After addressing the casualties we are left with 28 men. Twenty of these men have minimal information available, it is only noted when they joined the regiment and one or two other mentions of their presence in a company. The other eight are consistently present throughout the muster lists during the period at hand. Their continuous service implies that these fourteen men were effective and consistent soldiers, as they had not been killed in action and they were kept within the regiment. Of these eight men, six stand out as particularly significant.

Four of these six men are noted as transferring to the 55th regiment of foot at the end of 1783 when the 46th foot was reduced and reassigned to the West Indies.<sup>71</sup> Only a select group of private men was kept with the 46th, but it was mostly the officers that were retained.<sup>72</sup> Many transfers from the 46th to the 55th regiment occurred during this reduction.<sup>73</sup> The four of interest here, Patrick Carney, Edward White, John Dempsey, and Patrick Bourke, continued their military service there after their experience in the 46th which makes them appear to have been career soldiers. Dempsey will be discussed more later, as he applied for a pension at the end of his military career.<sup>74</sup> Both Dempsey and Bourke were born in parishes which reported a

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<sup>70</sup> His birth parish was not listed in the 1766 census data. Looking broadly at Tyrone it is certainly possible he was Catholic, as about half of the 39 parishes covered in the analysis reported Protestant proportions of 50% or less. Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 403.

<sup>71</sup> See Richard Cannon, *Historical record of The 46th*.

<sup>72</sup> 46th Foot, all companies, 1783, WO 12/5797/1.

<sup>73</sup> This was a common practice when regiments were being sent elsewhere or returning home, as it kept "seasoned" or "serviceable" men in places where they could be helpful. This could of course have also been used to get rid of dead weight in a regiment, but as Don Hagist argues, analysis of this process has shown that generally speaking it was effective soldiers who were passed along. See Hagist, *British soldiers American war*, 52-57.

<sup>74</sup> Discharge and pension application for John Dempsey, 19 Dec 1807, WO 199, box 0006, record #84, f 144, Kilmainham: Pensioners' Discharge Documents (Certificates of Service), TNA, Kew.



protestant proportion of 17.8%, and White was from an even more Catholic area, his birth parish is listed as 9.8% Protestant.<sup>75</sup> Carney is harder to determine, as the surviving data from the 1766 census for Galway is very incomplete. Of the 18 parish reports which are available for Galway, the maximum reported Protestant proportion was 22.4%, which seems to suggest Carney was likely Catholic as well.<sup>76</sup> This is supported by the 1834 census data which shows the overall Catholic population of Galway was 90% or more.<sup>77</sup> The fact that these men were not discharged when the regiment was reduced and were instead passed on to another regiment shows their usefulness as effective soldiers was recognised by their commanding officers. It also shows they were skilled enough soldiers to not have any sort of injury which would have prevented them from further service.

The other two men of note, John Coughlin and Charles Flood, were both listed as having held rank above that of a private during their tenure with the 46th foot. Given the restrictions against recruiting Catholics, it was very rare that an Irish Catholic recruit would be promoted as they certainly were not wanted in positions of authority. Coughlin is listed as having been born in King's County on the initial recruiting return, which makes the likelihood he was Catholic very high.<sup>78</sup> The 1766 census data supports this, as the proportions of Protestants to Catholics in his birth parish, Geashill, were 17.8% and 82.2% respectively.<sup>79</sup> Coughlin served in Captain Enoch Markham's company until he was appointed as a Corporal in Mathew Johnson's company 25 September 1782, where he remained until his discharge on 27 March 1783. Once he was promoted into another company, he was noted as "recd and appd"<sup>80</sup> (received and appointed), which shows he was transferred from another company before gaining his post. The fact that Coughlin was internally promoted after a consistent record of service shows his value as a soldier, as well as potential aptitude to be an effective leader. Coughlin proved himself a loyal and successful soldier and was rewarded by becoming a non-commissioned officer. This shows that, in this case at least, aptitude and service record meant more to the military than a recruit being Catholic did.

The second officer whose name was among the Irish recruits from the 1776 recruiting return was Charles Flood. Flood is never listed as a private, he first appeared as an officer, an

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<sup>75</sup> Gurrin, et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 188 and 167.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 126-127.

<sup>77</sup> Gregory et al, *Troubled geographies*, 24.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>79</sup> Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 188.

<sup>80</sup> 46th Foot, Johnson, 15 Aug 1783, WO 12/5797/1.

Ensign, in Captain Johnson's company in the muster list dated 11 October 1775.<sup>81</sup> He then pops up as a Lieutenant in Captain Downes' company in 1777, and is listed in the subsequent Downes muster list as being transferred to Captain Hall's company on 5 April 1777.<sup>82</sup> This transfer was successful, Flood appeared as a Lieutenant in Hall's Company in all of the musters for 1778, then continued in the same position when Captain Kemble took over the company for the 1780 musters. Flood listed Kildare as his birthplace, which makes determining if he was a Catholic more difficult. Parts of Kildare as it existed in the 1770s are in places the 1834 census listed as 90% Catholic, but other parts are shown in the 60-90% category.<sup>83</sup> This combined with the fact that Flood was immediately an officer upon his arrival makes it questionable whether he was a Catholic. That said, the 1766 census data seems to suggest it was likely Flood was Catholic, as his birth parish of Naas was overwhelmingly Catholic, at 90.2% of reported households.<sup>84</sup> The fact that Flood was immediately an officer upon his arrival in the American colonies though would suggest either that he was from the Protestant minority of his parish, or that the Charles Flood on the recruiting return and the Charles Flood on the musters was not the same man. If he was, this provides a very compelling example of ignoring religious affiliation if a soldier could be of use as an officer. However, more investigation of Flood is required in order to make any sort of concrete claims.

What emerges from analysis of the service of these identified Irish Catholics is a general picture of effective service. None were imprisoned or court martialed, and there was minimal desertion from this group with only four total deserters once service began, and one of those four seems to have returned to service. The fact that any of the likely Irish Catholics identified rose above the rank of private is significant as it is a clear demonstration that merit as a soldier was a more significant factor than religious affiliation. It certainly is likely true that none of these men were advertising their Catholicity, but even so it remained a looming limiting factor to their participation and belonging. The effective service of these men in the 46th without incident, fighting, or discrimination shows that when Catholic recruitment and service was done quietly, Catholics could certainly be accommodated within the ranks.

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<sup>81</sup> 46th Foot, Johnson, 11 Oct 1775, WO 12/5796/2.

<sup>82</sup> Not likely to have held a commission though despite this rank, as Lieutenant was noted as his rank in the regiment, not the army, on the Army Lists for 1777. *A list of the general and field-officers... for the year 1777; A list of the general and field-officers... for the year 1778; A list of the general and field-officers... for the year 1779.*

<sup>83</sup> Gregory et al. *Troubled Geographies*, 24.

<sup>84</sup> Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 166-167.

## Pension Applications

In addition to the muster lists for the 46th foot, the other main source of information about these soldiers are the few existing pension applications from Irish Catholics which served in the regiment during this period. Applying for a pension and receiving it was desirable, but it was not a guarantee at the end of service, especially if applying for an in-pension position. As argued by Caroline Nielsen, though the opportunity to receive a pension after service was a helpful incentive during recruitment “for many it was only ever a promise” rather than a reality, as no soldier was “automatically entitled” to receive a pension of any type until 1807.<sup>85</sup> Pension applications thus had to argue that the applicant had served the army well and that they were deserving of the long-term benefits the hospital provided. Any pension application from Irish Catholics provides a bit of their own voice as they asserted their belonging within these institutions. The pension records discussed below are applications to Kilmainham Hospital in Ireland. Most Irish soldiers would have been sent to Kilmainham for the application process rather than Chelsea Hospital, as Kilmainham was a similar institution based in Ireland.

At least twelve possible Irish Catholic soldiers from the 46th regiment applied for pensions from Kilmainham. This section will discuss three of the more compelling applicants, Bernard O’Brien, John Dempsey, and Mathew Stewart. None were derived from the February 1776 recruiting return, but all three were Irishmen, and applied for pensions at the point of their discharge after long and successful military careers. Additionally, both O’Brien and Dempsey were likely to have been Catholic. O’Brien provides an example of a career soldier who served in different regiments after his time with the 46th foot.<sup>86</sup> Stewart is of particular significance not only because he was a non-commissioned officer at the end of his career, but also because his application occurred before the Act of Union in 1801 and right around the time of the 1793 Catholic relief Act which removed all further restrictions from Catholic military service, he applied two years after in 1795. It is important to note that all pension records I have found relating to potential Irish Catholics who served in the 46th foot during the American Revolution occurred after the institution of the 1793 relief act. This may have provided a sort of retro-active legitimacy to the service of these men which allowed them to apply for pensions without fear of rejection due to their religious status at the time they enlisted. The only example of a potential

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<sup>85</sup> Caroline Louise Nielsen, “Disability, Fraud and Medical Experience at the Royal Hospital of Chelsea in the Long Eighteenth Century,” in *Britain’s Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715–1815*, edited by Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), 183-201, 183.

<sup>86</sup> Discharge and pension application for Bernard O’Brien, 23 Oct 1804, WO 199, box 0006, 23, Kilmainham: Pensioners’ Discharge Documents (Certificates of Service), TNA, Kew. 37.

pensioner I have found which took place before 1793 was James Daly, a private who was listed in Joseph Ferguson's company in the muster list of 13 April 1778 as 'recommended'.<sup>87</sup> Daly was born in King's county and holds a traditionally Irish surname, both of which make it likely that he was Catholic.<sup>88</sup> He is listed in the 18 August 1778 muster list for Ferguson's company as having been discharged 24 April 1778.<sup>89</sup> I have not found an accompanying pension record or application, but even if unprocessed, the fact that a recommendation for pension was noted for a man who was likely an Irish Catholic as early as 1778 is significant because it adds weight to the claim that Irish Catholics were effective soldiers and did find ways to belong and be liked by their officers enough for them to be recommended for pension, even before they were legally allowed to be present in the army. The next section of this chapter will discuss the careers and pension application of Bernard O'Brien, John Dempsey, and Mathew Stewart and what they show about the treatment and experience of Irish Catholics in the 46th foot.

Bernard O'Brien is a great example of an Irish Catholic as a career soldier. Born in the parish of Coppagh, near the market of Omagh in County Tyrone, O'Brien entered the British army on 4 July 1776, along with many other recruits from Ireland. Tyrone falls in the 60-90% Catholic bracket on the 1834 census, but Omagh remains predominantly Catholic through modern day.<sup>90</sup> The 1766 census data lists the proportions of Church of England, Dissenters, and Catholics for Coppagh parish as 11.8%, 47.5%, and 40.7% respectively.<sup>91</sup> Given this it would seem O'Brien had a fair chance of being either Catholic or a Dissenter denomination, the likely option for the latter meaning a Presbyterian Ulster Scot. However the surname of O'Brien, a 'traditional Irish' surname which is anglicised in many different ways as addressed previously in the article, makes it likely that O'Brien was Catholic.<sup>92</sup> O'Brien was placed in General Vaughan's company upon his arrival in the American colonies, where he would stay until mid-

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<sup>87</sup> 46th Foot, Ferguson, 13 Apr 1778, WO 12/5797/1.

<sup>88</sup> King's County is in the 90% or more Catholic bracket on the 1834 census. Unfortunately Daly's birth parish is not listed in the 1766 census data, but given that of the parishes which are included for Kings only one reported a Protestant proportion of over 25%, both censuses indicate that the likelihood that Daly was Catholic is high. Gregory et al. *Troubled Geographies*, 24, and Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 188.

<sup>89</sup> 46th Foot, Ferguson, 18 Aug 1778, WO 12/5797/1.

<sup>90</sup> Gregory et al. *Troubled Geographies*, 24; Justin Gleeson, "Religious majorities in Northern Ireland," *The Irish Times*, (9Feb2013), which states Omagh was 70.3% Catholic as recently as 2013.

<sup>91</sup> Gurrin et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 404.

<sup>92</sup> MacLysaght's entry for O'Brien associates its origins with a 'Dalcassian sept', meaning it relates to Gaelic Irish clans, which associates this surname with the 'old Irish' and supports the idea that Bernard O'Brien was Catholic. Further, O'Brien is not listed on the Ulster Scots Agency list of 'Common Ulster-Scots Surnames'. See Edward MacLysaght *A Guide to Irish Surnames*, (Dublin: Helicon LTD, 1964), 32, and 'Surnames in Ulster', Ulster Scots Agency, 2023, <https://discoverulsterscots.com/history-culture/who-are-ulster-scots/surnames-ulster>.

1778. He was then transferred to Captain Humphrey May's company briefly, before then being sent to Captain Mathew's company. He spent some time ill while in Mathew's company, then was sent to Captain Bell's company in 1782. From there, he was drafted into the 55th regiment of foot on 6 July 1782, but subsisted by the 46th until 24 August 1782. More follow-up with the muster lists for the 55th foot must be done in order to track O'Brien after he left the 46th foot. According to his pension application, O'Brien was discharged at age 44 after 28 years of service. He had served in the Royal Battalion of Veterans for one year and ten months at the time of his application dated 23 October 1804. According to the application, O'Brien was discharged and recommended for pension at Kilmainham. Attached to the application is a petition signed by George Mathews, "late captain of the 46th reg.mt".<sup>93</sup> The note states that O'Brien had served for 8 years in the 46th foot, then 7 years and 6 months in the 55th regiment, followed by 5 years in the Queen's County regiment of Militia, and lastly is almost two year service in the Royal Veterans Battalion. The note explains that 3 years was spent in the American Colonies and 5 were spent in service in the West Indies, and thus recommends O'Brien as "deserving the proper increase in pension due" to those who served in the West Indies. Mathews goes on to state that O'Brien "behaved himself in every respect as a good soldier".<sup>94</sup> He also stated this once again in an additional note included in the application.<sup>95</sup> A final note is included in the file from an official with the Royal Hospital in Dublin, which stated that O'Brien was to "be admitted as a Pensioner having served above 20 years service."<sup>96</sup> These notes and the pension application itself can tell us a lot about O'Brien. We know he served for 28 years, continuing his service until discharged for meeting the qualifications of over 20 years of service. He was not injured or discharged due to being 'worn out', as was common parlance for when a soldier was let go from the army and no longer fit to serve. The only reason for his discharge is that he had put in his time, and he qualified for pension because that time had shown he was an effective soldier. This is further supported by the not one, but two notes in his file from Captain Mathews which described him as a good soldier and indeed recommended him for extra pay based on where he had served. These notes illustrate that O'Brien must have

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<sup>93</sup> Note from Captain Mathews in Discharge and pension application for Bernard O'Brien, 23 Oct 1804, WO 199, box 0006, 23, f 37, Kilmainham: Pensioners' Discharge Documents (Certificates of Service), TNA, Kew.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Second note from Captain Mathews in Discharge and pension application for Bernard O'Brien, 23 Oct 1804, WO 199, box 0006, 23, f 37, Kilmainham: Pensioners' Discharge Documents (Certificates of Service), TNA, Kew.

<sup>96</sup> Hospital note, 5 Aug 1800, in Discharge and pension application for Bernard O'Brien, 23 Oct 1804, WO 199, box 0006, 23, f 37, Kilmainham: Pensioners' Discharge Documents (Certificates of Service), TNA, Kew.

had a positive relationship with Mathews, or at least had left a lasting positive impression, showing that Irish Catholic recruits could integrate into the 46th as effective men. O'Brien's form is also of interest because he was recommended for Kilmainham, presumably in-pension because others were noted as "recommended for out pension pay". In-pension positions were more coveted spots, as they provided a place to live, and consistent food and medical care. No doubt it was the recommendations from his officer which set him apart and garnered him the better application.

Another career soldier recommended for pension was John Dempsey, who had a similarly long and successful time in the British Army. Dempsey was listed on the February 1776 recruiting return as a sixteen-year-old labourer born in Geashill Parish in King's County.<sup>97</sup> As with the many others from Geashill parish on this recruiting return, this meant Dempsey was likely to be Catholic. He applied for a pension in December 1807 and was recommended for out pension pay. The note in his file stated that "served honestly and faithfully" in the 46th Foot for five years, and commented the same on his sixteen years of service "in other corps" after his time with the 46th.<sup>98</sup> This meant he spent a total of 21 years in the British Army in total and was 37 years old when he was discharged. He spent most of his time in the 46th Foot in Captain Downes' and Captain Bell's Companies, with a brief stint in Captain May's company in 1778. He was listed in Bell's company during the reduction of the 46th Foot as "drafted into 55th regt 6 Jul 82 & subsisted to 24 Aug 82".<sup>99</sup> Again, a likely Irish Catholic from the 46th Foot had served effectively within that regiment and proved himself a good soldier, so was drafted into further service with the 55th Foot. He seems a bit young for discharge, but that could have resulted from his enlistment at such a young age, as he had only served two years less than O'Brien. The reason cited for his discharge and recommendation was that he was "weakly & Rheumatic" and thus "totally incapacitated from providing for himself".<sup>100</sup> This led to a recommendation for out-pension pay, but neither Dempsey's career or illness seem to have been serious enough to garner him an in-pension position.

Mathew Stewart's pension application is interesting because his only service listed was with the 46th foot, he spent his entire military career in that regiment. Stewart was born in Clonmell in County Tipperary in 1749. Tipperary falls into the 90% or more Catholic category

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<sup>97</sup> Pension application for John Dempsey, 19 Dec 1807, WO 199 Box 0008, record #84, 149-150, TNA, Kew.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Bell's Company, 1 Apr 1783, WO 12/5797/1.

<sup>100</sup> Pension application for John Dempsey.

based on the 1834 census numbers.<sup>101</sup> The town of Clonmell was included in the data for St Mary's parish in the 1766 census data which showed a population that was 22.1% Protestant for the whole parish. It is unclear what this means for the town of Clonmell more specifically.<sup>102</sup> Stewart was not present in the 1776 recruiting return, but did join the 46th foot at a similar time to those recruits. According to his service record in his pension application, Stewart entered military service in the 46th in 1775 and then served with this regiment for twenty years.<sup>103</sup> This can be confirmed using the 46th foot muster lists, a 'Mathw Stewart' is listed in Captain Leighton's Grenadiers on the muster list which was taken on board the *Argo* on 11th October 1775.<sup>104</sup> Stewart remained in Leighton's company until 1780, when he was moved to Captain Humphrey May's company. Nothing is noted in the muster lists about his service in Leighton's company other than that he was reported as sick during the 1777 muster list.<sup>105</sup> It is significant however that he was placed in the Grenadiers, as this would have been for men that looked more intimidating and were known to be more elite soldiers.<sup>106</sup> After his service in Humphrey May's company, Stewart moved to Captain Morden's company, where he was promoted to the rank of Corporal. He is present and listed as a Corporal in Morden's company through both musters taken in 1783. His presence as a corporal in 1783 shows that he was being retained as the regiment pulled out of the American colonies. He remained with the 46th foot until 1795, at 40 years of age. He was discharged "recommended for the bounty of Kilmainham Hospital" "by reason of having an incurable Dropsy".<sup>107</sup> Dropsy, now called *Edema* in current medical scholarship, is a disease characterised by swelling within the body due to a build up of fluid.<sup>108</sup> A note was present in Stewart's pension application from the Physician General, signed "M Quinn", which stated Stewart had been ill and under his care "for a considerable amount of time in the King's military infirmary", and that different remedies had been tried but he remained "quite unfit for service".<sup>109</sup> This illness may have been the determining factor in his being

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<sup>101</sup> Gregory et al. *Troubled Geographies*, 24.

<sup>102</sup> Gurrin, et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 319.

<sup>103</sup> Discharge and pension application for Mathew Stewart, 1795, WO 199, box 0006, 237, f 442, Kilmainham: Pensioners' Discharge Documents (Certificates of Service), TNA, Kew.

<sup>104</sup> 46th Foot, Leighton, 11 Oct 1775, WO 12/5796/2.

<sup>105</sup> 46th Foot, Leighton, 1777, WO 12/5797/1.

<sup>106</sup> "Grenadier," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ed Amy Tikkanen, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/grenadier-military>

<sup>107</sup> Discharge and pension application for Mathew Stewart, 1795, WO 199, box 0006, 237, f 442, Kilmainham: Pensioners' Discharge Documents (Certificates of Service), TNA, Kew.

<sup>108</sup> "Edema," in *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/edema>. Accessed 29 Jun. 2024.

<sup>109</sup> Accompanying note to Stewart pension application, 1795, WO 199, box 0006, 237, f 442, Kilmainham: Pensioners' Discharge Documents (Certificates of Service), TNA, Kew.

recommended for in-pension at Kilmainham, as it was more severe than the diagnosis of weak or worn out that Dempsey had received. Though this could additionally be due the fact that he had been a Corporal. Stewart worked his way up to the rank of Corporal in the 46th foot, and only stopped serving because of an illness. His career as an effective soldier led him to both promotion and pension recommendation upon his discharge. Stewart's service and subsequent pension once again illustrates that effective and long term service could be the determining factor in developing a successful military career unlimited by religious affiliation.

## **Conclusion**

Given the career tracking information from the recruiting return, muster lists, and pension records, some generalizations about Irish Catholic service in the 46th foot are possible. First and foremost, Irish Catholic recruits were indeed present during this period and served during the American Revolution, before they were legally permitted to be present in the army. Second, several Irish Catholic recruits were able to become career soldiers, meaning they were a continuous presence within the British army during this period and beyond. Thirdly, given the level of desertion relating to the recruits from the 1776 recruiting return, we can assert that at least within this case Irish Catholics did not tend to desert in droves as was a contemporary concern. Additionally, I have thus far encountered no evidence that Irish Catholic soldiers were more rowdy, ill-tempered, or misbehaved than any other sort of soldier. In fact, once recruited there has been no mention of their Catholicity in any document I have encountered. This is definitely partially due to the illegality of their presence, but lack of any mention of them in soldier diaries which mention the 46th lends credence to the idea that Irish Catholic soldiers integrated themselves into the institution of the British military effectively and with little trouble. Further study of the other names present on the muster lists but not reflected on the 1776 recruiting return is needed to get the full scope of how much of the regiment could have been Irish Catholic, but this research clearly shows that Irish Catholics were present in the 46th regiment of foot and became part of the British military, and by extension British imperial structure, through their soldiering activities.

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## **Chapter Four: Dalrymple's Loyal Irish Corps and Irish Catholic Service 1776-1783**

Quiet assimilation into the ranks of regular British regiments during the augmentation process was not the only way in which Irish Catholics joined the army during this period. Despite the policy against raising new corps in favor of augmenting the regular regiments several independent corps were approved, one of which was William Dalrymple's Corps, which became known as the Loyal Irish Corps. Dalrymple's Loyal Irish Corps was raised in 1776 and was immediately surrounded by controversy relating to the recruitment of Irish Catholics relating to Captain Seely's advertisement discussed in chapter one.

Discussing Catholic recruitment into the LIC is significant for several reasons. The records available relating to the raising of the LIC imply that Irish Catholics were part of the intended recruiting scheme. This is different from the recruitment which was taking place for the 46th foot which included Catholic recruitment, but in which it was not directly stated as one of the goals of the regiment. This makes the LIC of further interest, because the treatment and reception of this corps seems to have been a direct result of their involvement with Catholic recruitment. The LIC provides an example of a niche corps in which the Irish Catholics were to be deliberately integrated, and how that shaped both their treatment within the corps and outside impressions of the corps is significant in illustrating why obscuration of Irish Catholic recruitment was necessary. Taking a chronological approach to discuss the raising, service, and controversies relating to this corps, this chapter explores how the treatment of this corps was related to Irish Catholic recruitment and the reception of Catholic recruitment, as well as how far this can be attributed to the Catholicity of the corps, or if it was due to the behavior of their commanding officer, William Dalrymple. Both factors had a significant impact on the treatment and reception of the LIC and shaped the experience during service of those recruited for this corps.

### **Approval**

Approval to raise the Loyal Irish Corps was received in February 1776, and the approval itself is worthy of analysis. Lord Barrington had been told to reject proposals for independent

corps en masse, and consistently did so.<sup>1</sup> These rejections generally had similar text, they thanked whichever member of the elite or officer had offered to raise a new company and acknowledged their zeal in service to the King, but ultimately refused the offer per current policy of his majesty.<sup>2</sup> Indeed within the same letter in which Lord Weymouth notified Lord Lieutenant Harcourt that Dalrymple's offer to raise his corps had been approved, he also wrote that he was commanded to reject the offers of the Earls of Antrim, Granard, and Ross for the same.<sup>3</sup> The rejections were qualified as above, declined, but offered the condolence that His Majesty was "graciously pleased to consider them as proof of their Zeal and attention" to his service.<sup>4</sup> Given all this, the approval of Dalrymple's proposal is certainly an outlier, and thus requires further attention.

Dalrymple's offer seems to have been approved due to the conditions he had proposed which limited its long-term significance. The approval notification sent by Weymouth stated the number of officers and men Dalrymple was to obtain, that his corps was "to consist of five companies of four Serjeants, four Corporals, two Drummers and one hundred private Men each Company".<sup>5</sup> Including the captains of each company, this meant 555 men in total. This is different than the regular regiments on the British establishment which required more men, starting at 477 inclusive of officers but adding a further 1 Serjeant and 1 Drummer as well as 18 private men to each company, then augmenting the regiment with a further addition of 2 companies each with 9 officers and 56 men.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the Loyal Irish Corps would not be due the same privileges at the end of their tenure as regular regiments. The approval for the corps stated that "the Officers of that Corps are not to retain their Rank nor are they to be entitled to Half Pay when the Service is over for which they are now raised".<sup>7</sup> This meant that while the officers could garner a positive reputation through their service, they were not entitled to keep their political and military status as officers upon the reduction of the Loyal Irish Corps, nor the long term monetary conciliation which other officers would be due. This measure limited the forward momentum of their military careers, as they could use their time with the LIC to establish themselves as officers, military men, and effective recruiters, but they would still have to buy or influence their way into official and lasting rank in the British army. These limitations

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<sup>1</sup> Many such letters can be found throughout Add MS 73627 and Add MS 73628, BP, BL, London.

<sup>2</sup> Harcourt to Weymouth, Dublin Castle, 15 Feb 1776, SP 63/452, f 47, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>3</sup> Weymouth to Harcourt, St James, 8 Feb 1776, SP 63/451, f 230-231, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Rochford to Harcourt, St James, 25 Aug 1775, SP 63/448, f 98-99 SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>7</sup> Weymouth to Harcourt, St James, 8 Feb 1776, SP 63/541, f 230-231, SPI, TNA, Kew.

suggest that approval of the LIC was a pragmatic decision for the conflict at hand, rather than a long-term project with lasting influence and impact.<sup>8</sup> Weymouth emphasised to Harcourt that it was this condition which made the LIC approved, where other corps had been rejected. He explained that Dalrymple's proposal "differs very materially from every other proposal that has been made" in this very significant way.<sup>9</sup> Weymouth, clearly recognizing that the approval of Dalrymple's Corps while so many others were being rejected would cause tension, told Harcourt in no uncertain terms to "lose no opportunity of explaining" this key difference which led to the approval of Dalrymple's Corps over others.<sup>10</sup> Garnering more men for the army, while not being beholden to integrate the LIC or its officers into the wider military, political, and fiscal system once their service was terminated made approval of the corps more appealing.

Dalrymple's Corps was to be raised in Ireland through the efforts of William Dalrymple, and any officers under him whom he sent out on the recruiting service. An announcement of the formation of this corps in the Gazette listed all of the officers to be appointed as well. Out of the 21 men listed, only 5 were referenced as coming from another regiment, including William Dalrymple himself. Dalrymple, Henry Monck (intended as a captain), and Andrew Stewart (intended as an ensign as well as adjutant of the corps) were listed as being from the 20th Regiment of Foot, and William Harper (intended to be a lieutenant) and William Sheldon (intended to be an ensign) were from the 14th Dragoons. The other 16 men are only listed as "gentleman".<sup>11</sup> Of the four captains listed Monck was the only with any military experience referenced, which almost certainly would have contributed to the later discipline issues of the corps. The four captains and Dalrymple proceeded to each recruit a company for this corps. It is clear that the recruitment of this corps was to rely on the reputation of the gentlemen involved, similar to the way in which the recruitment under Lord Kenmare had functioned.

The geography of this recruitment approval is unclear, as it was only listed that Dalrymple was to receive orders "empowering them to beat up for Recruits in Ireland, and in such parts of that Kingdom as shall be judged most expedient for the Service of the said corps".<sup>12</sup> This could relate to the approval to recruit throughout Ireland in the three provinces

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<sup>8</sup> For interesting case studies of officers trying to accomplish the status boost through service and recruitment, see Gilbert, "An analysis of some eighteenth century army recruiting records".

<sup>9</sup> Weymouth to Harcourt, St James, 8 Feb 1776, SP 63/541, f 230-231, SPI, TNA, Kew explains the conditions, and Harcourt to Weymouth, Dublin Castle, 15Feb1776, SP 63/452, f 47 is Harcourt's response that he would carry out the orders and had issued the necessary beating orders to William Dalrymple.

<sup>10</sup> Weymouth to Harcourt, St James, 8 Feb 1776, SP 63/451 f 230-231, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>11</sup> "War Office, September 18," *The London Gazette* 11699, (London) 7Sep1776.

<sup>12</sup> Weymouth to Harcourt, St James, 8 Feb 1776, SP 63/541 f 230-231, SPI, TNA, Kew.

now approved, but the phrasing lacks any such specificity. Seely is not mentioned on the above officer list, as he was removed from his command after his court martial and does not appear in any record relating to the Loyal Irish moving forward. Because of his advertisement and subsequent court martial we do know Seely at least was recruiting in County Sligo.<sup>13</sup> His location during these efforts further reinforces the idea that he was actively recruiting Catholics, as Sligo falls into the 90% or more Catholic area as per the 1834 religious census.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, information relating to where the other officers recruited their men is unavailable, so further analysis of these efforts in terms of the geography of the recruitment as it relates to determining the religious affiliation of the recruits is not possible.

Irish Catholic recruitment was an underlying component of the approval of this corps. The Seely drama makes this expectation clear, as Seely must have actively thought that Catholics were welcome in this corps if he had put out the advertisement discussed in chapter one. Seely stated in the advertisement in no uncertain terms that the new corps under William Dalrymple, in which he was to generate and command a company of grenadiers, was “to consist of Roman Catholics.”<sup>15</sup> The whole text of the advertisement encouraged Catholic recruits to volunteer, and indeed in signature for the advertisement, Seely claimed to be part of the Queen’s Loyal Catholic Volunteers.<sup>16</sup> I have not found use of this title elsewhere so it does not seem to have come to fruition as such, but the fact that Seely included it in his advertisement means that he, at least, thought that this corps was to be completed through Irish Catholic recruitment. William Dalrymple argued that Seely’s loud Catholic recruitment and his thought that the LIC was to be made up of Irish Catholics was derived from his “extreme Zeal for the Service and his ignorance of the Laws of the Country”.<sup>17</sup> This claim does not really hold weight, as recruiting Catholics in England or Scotland was also not allowed at this time, so Seely should have been aware of it, no matter his personal origins. Dalrymple’s immediate reaction to Seely, as well as how he distanced himself from his actions, seems to imply that he was aware of Seely’s plan to recruit Catholics, but unaware as to how he intended to do so in a loud, attention garnering way. He supported Seely’s motivations, but recognised the problem with his conduct, and pushed Catholic recruitment back into obscurity where it belonged.

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<sup>13</sup> Wynne to Harcourt, Kaslewood, 19 Mar 1776, SP 63/453, f 23, SPI, TNA, Kew

<sup>14</sup> Gregory et al, *Troubled geographies*, ch 3.

<sup>15</sup> Seely Advertisement, in Blaquiere to Captain William Dalrymple, Dublin Castle, 27 Feb 1776, SP 63/452 f 140-144, SPI, TNA, Kew, 144

<sup>16</sup> Harcourt to Weymouth, Dublin Castle, 28 Feb 1776, SP 63/452, f 138, SPI, TNA, Kew. Seely also claimed to be part of the 71st foot, which was a Highland regiment which served in both the Seven Years War and the American Revolution. *A list of the general and field-officers... for the year 1775*, 129.

<sup>17</sup> William Dalrymple to Harcourt, Dublin, 23 Mar 1776, SP 63/452 f 343, SPI, TNA, Kew.

## Recruitment and Inspection

Controversy surrounded the LIC before it left Ireland for service, and indeed even before they were finished recruiting. The Seely case was one of the issues they had to navigate, but there were further complications during their recruitment. The Seely drama stirred interest in the LIC and its composition at higher levels in the British Army, so oversight was placed on the Loyal Irish to ensure that they would be up to par and not cause further issues or embarrassments. Quality control efforts such as required recruiting return reports were to be expected, but the consistent presence of documents discussing the paperwork relating to the LIC shows that British officials were keen to keep more deliberate focus on how this corps was constructed.<sup>18</sup> However analysis of the recruiting returns provided by the LIC and the inspections of the corps suggest that this degree of oversight and quality control was linked to policing the Catholic proportions of the corps.

The first inspection was requested by Lord Barrington in mid March 1776, once he had been notified that Dalrymple was claiming his corps was complete. The level of specificity of the orders Barrington sent for the inspection makes it seem as though he was already suspicious of the LIC, as this level of detail was not present in other calls for inspection. Inspections of most regiments regularly occurred and were submitted to the War Office, but the lack of commentary other than acknowledgement of reception of the document in the State Papers suggests reactions to other returns were not as active or severe.<sup>19</sup> Barrington requested that the officer sent to carry out the inspection should “make an accurate Report of the Age, Size, and general fitness of the Recruits for the Service”, paying specific attention to “the number of Men under five feet four Inches in height, and under Eighteen years of Age, or upwards of Forty” as well as any that he may deem generally unfit for duty. He also included a comment that the officer was to highlight in the report if William Dalrymple had followed the prescribed guidelines for

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<sup>18</sup> Weymouth to Harcourt, St James, 19 Mar 1776, SP 63/452, f 369, SPI, TNA, Kew discusses that Barrington had sent orders about LIC, and Barrington to Weymouth, War Office, 16 Mar 1776, SP 63/452, f 273, SPI, TNA, Kew is the orders from Barrington.

<sup>19</sup> A letter from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to Hillsborough in May 1781 forwarded a return of completed independent companies that have been inspected and approved, and there was no follow-up discussion requiring more steps to be taken or specific problems. Several other letters in the volume expressed the same. Carlisle to Hillsborough, Dublin Castle, 26 May 1781, SP 63/473, f 1, SPI, TNA, Kew.

recruitment during the completion of his corps.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly in a post script he also requested that it be noted “whether any of the Recruits have received more than three guineas Bounty Money”.<sup>21</sup> As seen in the Kenmare recruitment, it was not uncommon for recruits to be given more than the usual bounty money, so it is a bit odd that Barrington was concerned about it regarding the LIC. The inspection Barrington called for was carried out by the Earl of Cavan in April 1776, the results forwarded to Weymouth on the 20th.<sup>22</sup> The goal was to evaluate the status of the men completing the corps and assess whether or not they met the aforementioned criteria. At no time during this process was Catholicity of the recruits themselves brought up as a criterion for rejection. Barrington said only that he was interested if they met the physical criteria, with no mention of the religious limitations for service.<sup>23</sup> It is possible that this inspection was really being called to assess the Catholicity of the corps given the public nature of the Seely case, but there was no direct mention of it which would make that argument in any way concrete.

The Earl of Cavan was tasked with conducting this inspection. The first inquiry he made was to Dalrymple himself, asking if he had followed the prescribed rules and conditions during the recruiting process, to which Dalrymple responded “that he had been furnished with none.”<sup>24</sup> Without any criteria listed from which to evaluate, Cavan asserted that it was up to his own judgment to assess the recruits and decide if they were fit for service. The review took him seven hours and left him with many troubling concerns. He stated in his report that there were indeed 500 recruits present to be reviewed, but he “could not in justice to His Majesty’s service approve above 200.”<sup>25</sup> This left him rejecting over half of the recruits which Dalrymple had assembled. The 200 men he found acceptable were mostly made up of deserters who had turned themselves in as per a recent proclamation, and a group of militia called the Limerick Volunteers, and even these approved men seemed suspicious to him.<sup>26</sup> The deserters who had turned themselves in had done so through a recent policy in which deserters could turn

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<sup>20</sup> Barrington to Weymouth, War Office, 16 Mar 1776, SP 63/452, f 273, SPI, TNA, Kew

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Harcourt to Weymouth, Dublin Castle, 20 Apr 1776, SP 63/453, f 192, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>23</sup> Harcourt recognised the size criteria in particular as a limiting factor which was inhibiting potential recruiting efforts. He had forwarded the concerns of General Gisborne which discussed lessening the size requirements in order to gain more recruits. This request was rejected, the argument being that it was “very dangerous to give too great a Latitude to Officers on that Head, and therefore it appears more advisable to postpone lowering the standard for some time longer” Weymouth to Harcourt, St James, 23 Feb 1776, SP 63/452, f 71, SPI, TNA, Kew

<sup>24</sup> Earl of Cavan to Harcourt, Dublin, 19 Apr 1776, SP 63/453, f 192, SPI, TNA, Kew

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

themselves in to any officer and join that regiment or corps without facing any punishment for their previous desertion.<sup>27</sup> They also were not required to turn themselves in back to their original officers, but Cavan found it suspicious that over 100 such men had turned themselves into Dalrymple's Corps, suspecting "some private influences might have been practiced".<sup>28</sup> When asked about it, the recruits confirmed that they had been offered as much as two guineas to turn themselves in to Dalrymple. This seems akin to the practice of providing additional bounty money, but because it was used to target and entice deserters Cavan seems to have viewed it as somehow an underhanded tactic. The concern however was with the recruitment of the Limerick Volunteers militia force, who reportedly had received assurances from Dalrymple for which he was not approved. They had apparently been told that they would serve only under their officer who had joined with them, a Captain Richard Hart, and that they would not be moved around to other regiments and assigned elsewhere. This was not a privilege that Dalrymple was able to ensure, he had received no such permissions. There was a further concern of monetary issue, as this condition was the only thing that the Limerick Volunteers had requested, they had not been given any bounty money. Cavan asserted that even though they had not been given bounty money, he suspected "they will be charged to government at five Pounds a man", arguing William Dalrymple would simply pocket the regular bounty money each recruit was entitled to.<sup>29</sup> Due to this agreement, Cavan argued that these men, while they met the review requirements, "can be of no service at all" given that their officer "knows nothing of discipline" and that they could not be shifted around without a breach to the deal they had made.<sup>30</sup> All this to say that even the 200 men who were approved during the review were controversial, problematic, and raised further suspicion for the LIC.

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<sup>27</sup> A proclamation had been issued on 1 March 1776 which granted a pardon to deserters who turned themselves in. Similar proclamations were issued or discussed throughout this period, in order to bring the deserters back into the army and to avoid dealing with the need to spend resources pursuing them. See Harcourt to Weymouth, Dublin Castle, 22 May 1776, SP 63/454, f 122-123, SPI, TNA Kew.

<sup>28</sup> Earl of Cavan to Harcourt, Dublin, 19 Apr 1776, SP 63/453, f 192, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> This deal was not honored, the recruits stayed under Hart while in Ireland, but Hart is not present at all in the muster lists for the LIC's service in Jamaica. Only one of the officers from Hart's volunteers, John Egan who was listed as a corporal, is listed in the muster lists. He is present in the 1780 Muster lists for Daniel Leo's company as a serjeant who is on the recruiting service. As for the men, most of those present were listed in Leo's company so they do seem to have been kept together for the most part, just not under their officers they had brought with them save for Egan. There are 110 men listed on Hart's volunteers, of which 19 are present in Leo's company in the Muster lists. 12 are listed as privates, 3 as officers, and 4 dead. 1 man from the Hart's list can be found in Harrison's company, and 2 in William Dalrymple's one of which was an officer and one listed as dead. See LIC Recruits Richard Harte's Company, 18 Apr 1776, SP 63/453 f 199, SPI, TNA, Kew and Dalrymple's (Irish Corps), WO 12/10685, War Office Papers, TNA, Kew.

Cavan provided further comments on the 300 men he had rejected in order to justify this action. The general comment from Cavan was that he “found them mostly to be, some old and infirm, some blind of an eye, some decrepit and with broken distorted limbs, some weak and feeble, with a great number of boys, and some to under the necessary age, size, and strength, as to be fit for no present use”.<sup>31</sup> He commented further that the large number of boys too young could eventually be good soldiers, but at present were simply too young to qualify. Regarding the quality of Dalrymple’s officers, Cavan “found many of them very exceptionable, some quite too old, and several appointed to those officers, who had never before been in the service”.<sup>32</sup> Naturally Cavan found this combination of never been tested officers, too young or unfit recruits, and questionable recruiting methods very concerning. Further, Dalrymple had not furnished him with the necessary paperwork for these men, such as clearly written recruiting returns or consistent muster lists, and he found what paperwork he had been provided with to be “so extremely incorrect and without precision” as to be useless for his assigned task.<sup>33</sup> Thus through the process of inspection Cavan found over half of the men unacceptable as per the criteria Barrington had asked him to check, and the lack of adhering to both quality standard for recruits and standard paperwork generation for the War Office disconcerting.

Cavan certainly found the number of men he was forced to reject from the LIC concerning, but was further disappointed by Dalrymple’s behavior in reaction to these rejections. Upon news of the rejections Cavan wrote that Dalrymple “carried his displeasure so far, and even beyond the bounds of that decency and respect”.<sup>34</sup> Cavan also mentioned that Dalrymple had accused him of a lack of impartiality, a sentiment Cavan states Dalrymple was spreading to other superior officers. Cavan said Dalrymple argued that “no officer in Garrison would refuse to take such Men into his Regiment, that he plainly saw I was determined to do him no sort of Justice”.<sup>35</sup> The result was an inquiry into Dalrymple’s conduct at the behest of Weymouth which began in early May 1776, “trying him for his Misbehavior to Majr Genl Earl of Cavan”.<sup>36</sup> Dalrymple and his officers sent in a memorial contesting the claims of Cavan and asserting that the inspection had been carried out improperly, and with clear bias against the corps. They argued that they had “Zealously exerted themselves by an unremitted attention towards the completion of the above Corps with youthful, Stout, and able bodied men” and that they were

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<sup>31</sup> Earl of Cavan to Harcourt, Dublin, 19 Apr 1776, SP 63/453, f 192, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Weymouth to Harcourt, St James, 2 May 1776, SP 63/453, f 230-231, SPI, TNA, Kew.



happy to risk their fate and fortunes in service to the king and “to contribute their mite on the present illjudged Rebellion in America”.<sup>37</sup> Their argument was generally that Cavan had rejected men en masse who met the required recruitment criteria, as well as measured them in a way which caused their disqualification. Dalrymple argued that Cavan had measured the men in such a way that prevented recruits from meeting the criteria, stating:

..caused the men to be unfairly measured for he would not permit many of them that were measured, to stand upon the Soals of the Feet, but compelled them in a very uncustomary manner to stand on their heels with their Soals bearing off the board which lowered them considerably in their height, and even himself raised the point of the Level which caused them to appear lower than they were.<sup>38</sup>

This skewed measurement had, in Dalrymple’s opinion, led to the rejection of many more men than should have been. This perceived mistreatment was what then led Dalrymple to become heated and engaged in the ungentlemanly behavior Cavan described. It is possible this bias against them that Dalrymple and his officers cited came from either the Catholicity of the corps, his dislike of Dalrymple himself, or both, but this cannot be determined based on the extant source material.

This incident combined with the more strict enforcement of oversight on the LIC and adherence to the quality standards required for recruits after the Seely case does suggest that this inspection and the rejection of over half of the recruits via questionable evaluations could have been a way to remove Catholic recruits without referencing them as such. Clearly Cavan thought he was in the right in rejecting the men, and Dalrymple and his officers disagreed. But who was right? The extant paperwork allows for some commentary on this. The recruiting returns which Cavan would have been given list both the ages and the heights of the men being recruited. This could have been falsely reported certainly, as Cavan claimed, but the paperwork is the only source available to investigate these claims and discuss whether or not these men were rejected based on their ages and heights as Cavan claimed. Using the recruiting return for the 46th Foot discussed previously gives us a line of comparison to assert whether the ages of the LIC recruits had similar proportions as that of recruits for a regular regimen as the 46th Foot recruiting return can help generate a sense of the proportion which was found acceptable during that recruitment. Several of the recruiting returns for the LIC do also include the age of the officers for that corps which skews the numbers a bit, as officers being older and drummers

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<sup>37</sup> “Memorial of Capt William Dalrymple and the Officers of His Corps of Infantry,” SP 63/453, f 232-233 SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

being younger affects the proportions of those age brackets. The 46th recruiting return does not contain officer or drummer information, so potentially lists fewer people who would have fit into the under 20, 30-39, or over 40 brackets. The data from all of these recruiting returns is presented in the table below, but only uses the ages of the private men to mitigate these concerns during the comparison.<sup>39</sup>

**Table 4.1:** Age of Recruits for the Loyal Irish Corps and the 46th Regiment of Foot

Age	Monk's Grenadiers	Dalrymple's company	Dodwell's company	Harte (Limerick Volunteers)	46th Foot recruiting return
Under 20	11%	25%	20%	21%	15%
20-29	73%	65%	58%	73%	70%
30-39	13%	9%	16%	5%	15%
40+	1%	1%	5%	1%	0
unlisted	2%	0	1%	0	0

Overall the LIC recruiting returns show for the most part an age distribution that is not wildly different from that of the 46th Foot recruits. Similar percentages of the age group 20-29 were recruited in each force, with some companies of the LIC having a bit more and some a bit less than the 46th foot in this category but averaging at 67% of recruits in this bracket across all four companies considered. In both cases this made up the majority of recruitment at over half of those recruited. As for Cavan's comments that the LIC were either too old or too young, it is true that most of the companies of the LIC had close to a quarter of their men in the under 20 age bracket, averaging 19% across the four companies considered. This is 4% more than the 46th Foot, so the LIC recruits did skew a bit younger than the 46th Foot recruits. As for those recruits who were older, the numbers recruited in the 30-39 bracket are similar or less than the proportion of the same group recruited into the 46th Foot as listed on the recruiting return for

<sup>39</sup> Loyal Irish Corps Recruiting Returns, SP 63/453, f 196-201, SPI, TNA, Kew. Analysis includes all recruiting returns for the LIC except Galdowe's company because a complete version of that return could not be viewed. The data for the 46th Foot is from "List of Recruits Rais'd for the 46th Regiment of Foot Commanded by the Hon'ble Brigadier General John Vaughan" Dublin, 9 Feb 1776, WO 1/992, War Office Papers, British National Archives, Kew

that regiment from 9 February 1776. With an average of 11% in this age bracket across the four companies considered from the LIC, the 46th Foot recruits had a slightly higher proportion of this age group at 15%. This comparison with the age distributions of the 46th Foot, a regular regiment in which normal process was adhered to, illustrates that the ages of the men of the LIC did not differ significantly from those of the 46th Foot.

Cavan's argument relating to the sickness of the men seems more believable and is supported by existing documentation. The initial recruiting returns for the LIC note a total of 21 sick. According to the monthly returns for the LIC as illustrated in the table below, there were consistently around 30 men sick from the LIC until October 1776 when this number began to drop.<sup>40</sup> This drop could be due to sick men dying and being replaced, but is likely due to the accepted sick men receiving treatment for their illnesses now that they were in the army. The consistency of sick men being listed though does suggest that the LIC was willing to accept ill men into its rank and file. That said, Dalrymple may have been more willing to accept men outside of the regular age bracket and men who were sick as a means of necessity rather than malice or trying to inflate his numbers. This recruitment effort occurred after all four waves of augmentation in the previous year had taken place, so accepting men of lower value could have been driven by pragmatism to meet his quota when so many able men had already been recruited in the previous waves of augmentation.

**Table 4.2:** Sickness of Loyal Irish Corps Recruits<sup>41</sup>

	June 1776	July 1776	Aug 1776	Sept 1776	Oct 1776	Nov 1776
Number of sick	35	33	29	27	19	3

Given the lack of certainty this analysis provides, it is possible that these men were actually being rejected because they did not meet the religious criteria. After all, the Seely advertisement was what had led to such a detailed inspection, and that recruitment advertisement had specifically asked Catholic recruits to come forward. As discussed above, the composition of this recruitment relating to age did not differ very much from the composition of the 46th foot recruiting return. This suggests that Cavan was being more particular with the

<sup>40</sup> Monthly Returns of the Loyal Irish Corps, Jun 1776-Nov 1776, WO 17/234, Returns; colonial, fencible, and others, TNA, Kew.

<sup>41</sup> This table was generated with data from Loyal Irish Corps Recruiting Returns, SP 63/453, f 196-201, SPI, TNA, Kew.

inspection of the LIC relating to age of the recruits, perhaps due to some bias against them. However this could have nothing to do with the potential Catholic composition of the LIC and everything to do with the fact that it was an independent corps which by definition was a deviation from contemporary military policy, thus requiring more oversight. However, if the need for recruits was so desperate, as per the discussions in the State Papers and the four waves of augmentation which took place before this corps was created, why look so closely at Dalrymple's recruits and reject so many en masse? Especially given that their stated purpose was not to be a long-term force and not to become a regular regiment, only to provide temporary manpower and equally temporary officers. So what was there to gain from such aggressive policing of their recruitment?

Once put into context about religious status, the recruits who were rejected versus kept on by Cavan makes sense. The deserters who were kept on were likely to be Protestants. The deserters would have been from regiments which were serving in Ireland and thus likely to be entirely Protestant, as service at home was more uniformly Protestant. The Limerick Volunteers, of which Hart's company was constructed, were also Protestant in nature.<sup>42</sup> Read in this way, the rejection of the other 300 recruits could be seen as a way to cull Catholics from the ranks of Dalrymple's Corps. William Dalrymple certainly believed the inspector was biased, and personally said so to him which is what led to Dalrymple's court martial. Dalrymple claimed that the officer had mistreated his regiment and enforced the criteria in a way that was unusual, incorrect, and unacceptable.<sup>43</sup> It is possible that this enforcement of procedure so strictly, and the improperly taken measurements, were both a way to provide a public facing and legitimate excuse to reject Irish Catholic recruits without needing to refer to them as such. It certainly had likely made the LIC much more Protestant in construction than it originally had been.

Ultimately the court martial of William Dalrymple relating to his treatment of the Earl of Cavan during the inspection did occur. Harcourt was informed in June 1776 that Dalrymple had been found "guilty of disrespectful Behavior to Major General Earl of Cavan to the prejudice of good order and Military discipline", but that he had been acquitted of actually insulting him in the carrying out of his task.<sup>44</sup> Harcourt was instructed to issue orders for the agreed upon punishment to be carried out, though the letter makes no reference as to what that punishment

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<sup>42</sup> Kieran Kennedy, "Limerick Volunteers 1776-1793," *Old Limerick Journal* 36, (1999) 21-26 claims that the Catholics were not invited to join the militia in Limerick until April 1782

<sup>43</sup> "Memorial of Capt William Dalrymple and the Officers of His Corps of Infantry," Dublin, 22 Apr 1776, SP 63/453, f 232-233, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>44</sup> Weymouth to Harcourt, St James, 21 Jun 1776, SP 67/23, f 130, SPI, TNA, Kew

was to be.<sup>45</sup> It is clear, though, that the punishment did not involve Dalrymple losing his commission or his corps, as the letter to Harcourt also requested that a subsequent inspection of the LIC be carried out in order to check the quality of the new men Dalrymple claimed had already been found to bring the corps once again up to complete numbers. This suggests that the court martial, while successful, was more performative than punitive.

William Dalrymple's brother, Sir John Dalrymple, wrote about the court martial in his letters to Barrington and was furious that it had occurred. He argued that the inspection was a direct attempt to "ruin my brother and his corps" by rejecting a large proportion of the men he had recruited, men he claimed were "three hundred of the bloom of youth of Ireland". He also asserted that this was done based on the biased orders of Barrington.<sup>46</sup> This was part of his continuous argument that Barrington was biased against the new corps and was in favor of the regular army regiments which were to be augmented. John Dalrymple argues that due to this bias, these men were rejected in an attempt to wreck this corps; to make it ineffective and ultimately to disband it before it gained more traction. He also argued that "all Ireland cried out against the proceedings of Lord Cavan" and asserted that many figures including Colonel Burgoyne and General Johnston supported his brother and the LIC.<sup>47</sup> The rejection of these men, John Dalrymple argued, materially changed the construction of the corps, as it was over half of their number and would lead necessarily to different men being recruited. Though John Dalrymple lays this at Barrington's feet as an example of his pro-regular establishment bias, it is also possible that this had to do with Catholic recruitment. Rejecting these men based on very strict implementation of other criteria, rather than ever mentioning religious status, could have been a subtle way to enforce the limitations on Catholic recruitment without admitting that this was to blame. This would keep the LIC intact, avoid further public drama relating to Catholic recruitment, and potentially allow for the subtle recruitment of Catholics in the new wave of recruitment, following the same quiet way it was being done throughout this period. The rejections gave a show of action, of cleaning house, which could alter public perception and make them think that this corps had been cleansed.

A subsequent inspection was called for Dalrymple's Corps in June 1776 following Dalrymple's claim that the corps was once again complete.<sup>48</sup> Dalrymple had written to Lord Barrington in late May, claiming to have replaced all men who had been rejected with recruits

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<sup>45</sup> The actual records of the court martial have thus far eluded me, so I am reliant on the reports in the State Papers Ireland which discuss it and cannot provide substantial analysis of the court martial itself.

<sup>46</sup> Dalrymple, *Three letters*, letter 1, 19.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, letter 1, 21.

<sup>48</sup> Barrington to Weymouth, War Office, 8 Jun 1776, SP 63/454, f 176, SPI, TNA, Kew

garnered using his own “private fortune”.<sup>49</sup> The monthly returns of his corps for June 1776 illustrated that the corps was complete, each company having 100 rank and file, around 80 of whom in each company were listed as “fit on duty”, the others being either listed as sick or on furlow.<sup>50</sup> The only person wanting was one sergeant for Dodwell’s company. The new inspection focused only on the recruits which Dalrymple had gathered since 18 April 1776, as the others had undergone inspection in the previous round.<sup>51</sup> The return of these men lists 79 names, as well as the age, size, and birthplace information of each recruit. This is interesting, as the previous recruiting paperwork for the LIC did not include the birthplace information. It seems at this point Dalrymple was leaving little to chance, complying to every standard by filling out the full extent of the required paperwork.

This return was somewhat of a surprise, as Dalrymple had asserted that his corps was very quickly replenished to strength after the rejection of over half of his men during the previous inspection. One explanation of the speed at which Dalrymple completed his corps was integration of the recruits from Lord Kenmare’s estate as discussed in chapter two. As per the bill that Sir Boyle Roche submitted to the War Office in order to get reimbursed for his recruiting efforts, the LIC had received 62 recruits which Boyle Roche had generated while serving as agent to Kenmare.<sup>52</sup> The treasury document in which Boyle Roche claimed expenses for these recruits stated that it was for efforts between 1775 and 1776. This suggests that some, if not most, of the recruits that Dalrymple used to immediately refill his corps were from an immediate influx of recruits by negotiating for them from Boyle Roche. This is supposition, but given the speed with which they were garnered, seems a likely hypothesis. If so, that would mean that the recruits given were more likely to be Catholic, given that Boyle Roche’s recruits were to come from the Kenmare estate or areas where Catholics were the majority of the population.

The post-April 18th 1776 recruiting return provides birthplace information which allows for analysis of the potential for each recruit to have been an Irish Catholic using the same method which was applied to the recruiting return from the 46th Foot. The other extant recruiting returns for the Loyal Irish Corps do not contain information relating to birthplace, making a full analysis of the recruits taken on during this period impossible, but the recruiting return for men

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<sup>49</sup> Dalrymple to Barrington, Dublin, 31 May 1776 (copy), SP 63/454, f 178, SPI, TNA, Kew

<sup>50</sup> “Monthly Return of a Corps of Foot raised and Commanded by William Dalrymple Esqr Capt Commt,” Dublin, 1Jun1776, WO 17/234, War Office Papers, TNA, Kew.

<sup>51</sup> “Return of the number of men with their names, age, size, and places where born that have been inlisted in Captain William Dalrymple’s Corps, since the 18th day of April 1776,” SP 63/454, f 253, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>52</sup> “Sir Boyle Roche his General Recruiting Account with the War Office,” 17 Feb 1777, T 1/542/270, TNA, Kew.

who joined Dalrymple's Corps after 18 April 1776 provides us with a snapshot of the religious and national composition of this set of recruits. This recruiting return contains 79 names in total, about 40% of whom were recruited in Dublin. Of these 79 men, 71 were listed Ireland as their birthplace. The other eight men were either born outside of Ireland or did not list a birthplace; four from England, two from Scotland, one from Germany, one unlisted. We cannot make the assumption that the proportion of Catholics was the same across all companies of the Loyal Irish given the lack of birthplace information for those recruited prior to April 18 1776, but this recruiting return does give us insight into at least this batch of recruits.

It is difficult to apply the data from the censuses from the 1760s to this set due to what seem to be multiple misspellings or using town names and calling them parishes.<sup>53</sup> Because of this as well as aforementioned gaps in the extant data from these censuses, only 29 of the 72 recruits have parish data which was compatible with the use of the censuses from the 1760s. Of those, half were from areas which reported above 75% Catholic populations. See the table below for the full distribution.<sup>54</sup> The data from the 1834 census provides more clarity as the birth county is more uniformly and correctly recorded on the recruiting return. Of the 71 Irishmen on the return, 43 were listed as being born in counties which were listed as 90% or more Catholic areas in the 1834 religious census.<sup>55</sup> This means that around 60% of those from the recruiting return who were born in Ireland hailed from 90% or more Catholic areas. Further, another 28% of these men listed birthplaces which fall in the 60-90% Catholic areas from the 1834 religious census.<sup>56</sup> The proportion from the 90% or more area is not as large as that on the 46th foot recruiting return in which 75% hailed from those areas and 25% came from the 60-90% Catholic bracket. This is of interest, given that the Loyal Irish Corps was known to be recruiting Catholics so it would be expected that their proportions should be higher than those of the 46th foot. This could be because only 11% of the 46th recruits signed on in Dublin, the rest in destinations further west and not so metropolitan (Geashill in King's County, and Kilcock in Kildare).<sup>57</sup> This could mean that the LIC was experiencing more oversight, so they were trying to take on fewer Catholics in this round of recruitment, especially given the previous slew of rejections. Still though, over half of the Irishmen on the list seem likely to have been Catholic.

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<sup>53</sup> This data set uses data from both the 1764 Hearth-Tax collectors census and the 1766 religious census, as some parishes reported information in the former but not the latter.

<sup>54</sup> Gurrin, et al, *religious censuses of the 1760s*.

<sup>55</sup> Gregory, *Troubled Geographies*, 24.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> "List of Recruits Rais'd for the 46th Regiment of Foot Commanded by the Hon'ble Brigadier General John Vaughan," Dublin, 9 Feb 1776, WO 1/992, War Office Papers, TNA, Kew

**Table 4.3:** Catholic Population Proportions from the 1760s Censuses

Catholic population proportion	Number of recruits
under 25%	1
25-50%	2
50-75%	3
75% or more	16
listed only as 'about equal proportions'	6
listed only as 'majority protestant'	1
total	29

In addition to this data comparison, there are several bits of anecdotal evidence which assert that the LIC recruited Irish Catholics. As already discussed, the Seely advertisement and the drama surrounding it was due to his loud recruitment of Catholics into the LIC. Additionally though, John Dalrymple seemed to be under the impression that the LIC was recruiting Catholics, and connects this to his perceived mistreatment of the corps. His letters to Lord Barrington which criticised his treatment of the Loyal Irish also reference discussions of Irish Catholic recruitment and treatment, which implies that this was intertwined with the treatment of his brother's corps. He suggested a new structure for raising Catholic troops in Ireland in which "if new regiments were raised, composed of Protestant officers, because English laws require it, but the private men of entirely Irish, and either entirely of Catholics, or indiscriminately of Protestant and Catholic Irish, many regiments might be raised for the most instantaneous service."<sup>58</sup> He argued that this would lead to higher recruitment in Ireland overall, both by encouraging Irish Catholics to enlist as well as altering the structure of the regiments in which they would serve, trying to mitigate the existing anti-Catholic biases of the British army and avoid situations in which Irish Catholic recruits faced situations "where their country and their religion were scoffed at by their companions."<sup>59</sup> As these letters are intended to be in part a critique of Barrington's overall handling of the army in relation to the American conflict in general

<sup>58</sup> Dalrymple, *Three letters*, letter 1, 11-12.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, letter 1, 11.



and in part specifically complaint about the treatment of his brother's corps, this statement about the structure of Irish Catholic recruitment seems less theoretical, and more like a direct statement of what his brother's new corps was trying to do. While this is presented as theory, a suggestion for what could have occurred if more independent corps were approved, the approval of William Dalrymple's Corps followed by the immediate controversy of the Seely case implies that this suggested structure was what William Dalrymple was implementing in practice.

Further evidence of this system being used in-practice by the LIC can be found in John Dalrymple's letters in which he took credit for the proposal of William Dalrymple's corps. He wrote that he "presented a memorial to the King's servants, in which it was proposed to raise a new corps in Ireland, of which the officers were all to be protestants, and the private men all to be Irish."<sup>60</sup> This proposal makes no mention of Irish Catholics, but amalgamates all people of Ireland together under the term 'Irish'. Given the context of the previous bit of the letters outlining John Dalrymple's suggestions for more effectively recruiting in Ireland, it can be asserted that by saying all the men were to be Irish, he meant both Catholics and Protestants would be recruited in his suggested corps. This claim is further supported by the fact that when talking about the officers, John Dalrymple mentioned specifically that they would be Protestant. If he had intended for the men to be as well, surely he would have mentioned it in both places. The officers being Protestant and the men being a mix again harkens back to his suggestions for more effective Irish recruitment. Referring to the men with the broad term of 'Irish' but the officers as specifically Protestant also suggests that in this case, 'Irish' is being used deliberately as a way to suggest Catholic recruitment without getting into trouble by doing so directly. This relates back to the language in the State Papers Ireland developed around Catholic recruitment in order to do it, but not refer to it as such.

Thus the raising of the LIC was far more dramatic than recruitment of Irish Catholics for the 46th foot. Loud Catholic recruitment from Seely at the beginning got them in trouble from the start, and William Dalrymple's treatment of Cavan during the inspection did not help matters. Their composition had been materially changed by the rejection of over half of their initial recruits, and they had left officials feeling suspicious and annoyed with them before they had even embarked for service. Despite the rejections, the LIC was recruited up to the required numbers quickly, and the second inspection allowed them to retain more recruits. It is clear from the snapshot of recruitment for the LIC that it was likely that around half of their recruits during

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, letter 1, 14.

the second inspection were Catholic, and that these men successfully passed inspection and entered service in the LIC.

### **Embarkation and Service**

The treatment of the LIC once they had been fully recruited further supports the idea that there was an existing bias against them. This could be either because it was an independent corps which already had a reputation for not following the rules, or because of its Catholic composition. Discussion of their treatment after recruitment but before embarkation, as well as their eventual service in Jamaica, provides an avenue by which to assess the level of discipline of the LIC and how far this can be related to the composition of the corp. This begins with analysis of the decision to send them to Jamaica to be out of sight, out of mind rather than to the American colonies as had been a condition of their generation.

Though the LIC was originally raised to be sent to the American colonies, it was ultimately sent to Jamaica instead.<sup>61</sup> The War in America had spilled into the West Indies in terms of European colonial competition, especially after France and Spain joined the American side. The Jamaican colony provided significant economic benefit to whichever power held it, so its maintenance and security were a priority for the British empire.<sup>62</sup> Despite its economic importance, it was a less coveted military posting. John Dalrymple asserted that the shift from American to Jamaican service was a disservice to the newly formed LIC. He argued that this was a demonstration of Barrington's stewardship to his brother and the LIC, as he was sending them to a less desired post where the climate was notorious for killing soldiers.<sup>63</sup> John Dalrymple argued that the memorial which suggested the creation of the LIC was accompanied by another memorial in which it was suggested that the LIC be sent to join Lord Dunmore's forces in Chesapeake Bay.<sup>64</sup> He questioned whether this memorial was considered, debated, or just outright ignored. He argued that if the original destination had been honored and "had the two battalions of Irish and of Highlanders, or just the battalion of Irish alone, sailed from England in the end of the year seventeen hundred seventy-five, Lord Cornwallis' armament might have found all Chesapeake Bay in a flame; and if it had, the subsequent repulse at Charlestown,

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, letter 1, 29.

<sup>62</sup> Robert Neil McLarty "Jamaica Prepares for Invasion, 1779," *Caribbean Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (Jan 1955): 62-67.

<sup>63</sup> Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 14.

<sup>64</sup> Dalrymple, *Three Letters*, letter 1, 31.

abandonment of Boston, surrender at Saratoga, and the unconsequential campaigns around New York and Philadelphia, might have all been prevented.”<sup>65</sup> This is certainly a lot of weight to assign to the participation of one or two additional corps in the war in the American colonies and we cannot know how this would have materially changed much in the conflicts listed. However, it does show that the idea of raising the LIC had been partially defined by them being able to lend service to the forces in America. John Dalrymple asserted this in no uncertain terms later in the letter, writing “the original offer of service by the Irish gentlemen, was for the American war” and further that “not one of them would have engaged in the business, if he had foreseen that they were to be turned into a garrison, and a West India garrison, to fight with nothing but the climate, and to gain no laurels but from runaway negroes”.<sup>66</sup> He further argued that despite the “ungrateful and ungenerous” nature of the change of destination, no officers from the LIC resigned nor discussed doing so, highlighting their civility and adherence to duty despite their circumstances.<sup>67</sup> This shows that at least John Dalrymple’s assertion was that the service change was at best a dishonor to these men, and at worst a punishment for the LIC.

John Dalrymple further argued in his letters to Barrington that the LIC had been deliberately disadvantaged and treated badly before it had even left for service in Jamaica. After acknowledging what he argued was the extremely biased and calculated inspection carried out by Cavan, John Dalrymple pointed out several times that Barrington had slighted the LIC during their preparation to ship out. First, he complained that the LIC was not provided with the necessary and required resources. He outlined how they did not have enough functional muskets to create a guard which would ensure their men all boarded the boats for embarkation and thus had to hire a guard from another regiment. He argues that needing a guard was common practice, as men who are told they will be sent abroad “will shew signs of reluctance when ordered to quit their own country, and to embark for scenes of war three thousand miles distant from it”.<sup>68</sup> John Robert Shaw, an Englishman who enlisted in 33d Foot in 1777, mentioned this in his narrative of service. He recalled that he had hoped for fanfare at Portsmouth during their arrival there, but was met with “streets lined with old pensioners” which were to guard them and ensure they boarded the ships.<sup>69</sup> Hagist asserts this was common practice and was used to encourage recruits to stay, as “embarkation provided an opportunity

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, letter 1, 33-34.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, letter 1, 35.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, letter 1, 35.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, letter 1, 25.

<sup>69</sup> John Robert Shaw, “The narrative of John Robert Shaw,” in *British soldiers American war: voices of the American Revolution*, ed Don Hagist (Yardley: Westholme, 2012), 13-48, 22.

for recruits to desert knowing their own corps would be departing and unable to apprehend them”.<sup>70</sup> The fact that the LIC was not equipped to police themselves meant they had to hire other help, which John Dalrymple claims led to negative anecdotes about the inclinations of the soldiers and officers of the LIC.

In addition to a lack of guns, John Dalrymple also argued that the LIC was not given proper clothing. He wrote that “in a country where most of the common people are ill clothed, most of the recruits were half naked”.<sup>71</sup> Clothing the men was supposed to be the responsibility of the British establishment, but John Dalrymple argued they had received no such accoutrements. His use here of the term ‘common people’ of Ireland is also worthy of note. As discussed in chapter one, this term was used synonymously with ‘traditional Irish’, and both designations were to distance reference to Irish Catholics in any specific capacity. The use of ‘common people’ in description of the men in the LIC, the men John Dalrymple argued that Barrington was unwilling to clothe, reinforces the idea that Irish Catholic service was prominent in this corps. To make sure that the men were adequately clothed, John Dalrymple states that William Dalrymple “bought seven hundred frocks and breeches, with shoes and stockings, out of his own pocket”.<sup>72</sup> He further wrote that William Dalrymple had decided that these uniforms he purchased would be green, “as the favourite colour of the Irish is green”.<sup>73</sup> This reinforced their identity as an Irish corps, differentiating them from the usual red coats which were associated with British military service. This colour choice was also significant because, as John Dalrymple argues, it provided distinction between the men of the LIC and the White Boys, making them look like a professional force which was in no way tied to this radical organization.<sup>74</sup> John Dalrymple says that the colour pleased the men, as did the thoughtfulness of the choice, making them happier with their commandant. The lack of bias, or rather lack of ill-will, that this illustrates that William Dalrymple held for the common people of Ireland, his Catholic recruits, lends credence to John Dalrymple’s idea that Irish Catholics would be loyal and more willing to serve in regiments which were tailored to their presence.

John Dalrymple’s letters paint a picture in which Lord Barrington was vehemently against the establishment and activities of the LIC. He said that Barrington’s reaction to the news that William Dalrymple had thus clothed his corps was outrage, Barrington treating it “with as much

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<sup>70</sup> Hagist, *British soldiers, American War*, 292.

<sup>71</sup> Dalrymple, *Three letters*, letter 1, 26.

<sup>72</sup> Dalrymple, *Three letters*, letter 1, 26.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Connolly, “Jacobites, Whiteboys and Republicans”.

importance, as if it had been a matter of high treason”.<sup>75</sup> John Dalrymple stated that Barrington intended to report this to his Majesty as a complaint, but that he had talked him down, arguing that reporting the supposed crime “that one of his officers had the impudence to prevent his men from dying of cold, when the secretary at war would have had them go stark naked through the streets before all the matrons and virgins of Dublin” would not make the King look favorably upon Barrington.<sup>76</sup> The next bit of John Dalrymple’s letter further accused Barrington of bias against the Loyal Irish through discussion of his reaction to the Seely advertisement. John Dalrymple brought up that one of the officers of the Loyal Irish had been “foolish enough” to circulate an advertisement that the Roman Catholics of Ireland were welcome in the new corps, and that he “shall never forget the triumph with which” Barrington told him of this.<sup>77</sup> He then argued that Barrington was “mortified” when he told him that William Dalrymple had already handled this matter “more severely than a recruiting trick seemed to deserve, by striking his name from the list of his officers”.<sup>78</sup> This explains why Seely’s name is not present on any of the recruiting returns, nor subsequent muster lists for the Loyal Irish Corps during their service in Jamaica.<sup>79</sup> Reference to this case as a ‘recruiting trick’ also reinforces the idea that Catholic recruitment was being used to garner large numbers of Irish recruits. John Dalrymple seems to be asserting here that William Dalrymple handling this issue quickly in-corps is a point to his efficacy as an officer. Barrington’s reply, according to John Dalrymple, again was unfavorable. Barrington wrote that “he expected...to hear more *of such things from such men*”, implying that he anticipated further controversy relating to the LIC.<sup>80</sup> Whether this was a jab at William Dalrymple and his officers or the Catholic construction of the LIC is unclear. Regardless of the intended target these examples, at least how they are presented by John Dalrymple, show that he thought Barrington had at best an unfavorable opinion of Dalrymple and his corps, and further that he attempted to not give them the resources they were due.

Lastly, John Dalrymple also asserted in this section that Barrington had hindered the recruitment efforts of the LIC by ordering William Dalrymple to “dismiss his supernumerary men”.<sup>81</sup> John Dalrymple argues that this was done because if the supernumeraries had followed

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<sup>75</sup> Dalrymple, *Three letters*, letter 1, 26.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 27.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>79</sup> All LIC muster lists are from Dalrymple's (Irish Corps), WO 12/10685, War Office Papers, TNA, Kew. Moving forward, they will be referenced as individual musters will be cited using DML, Captain's name, date, volume when citing specific muster lists is necessary.

<sup>80</sup> Dalrymple, *Three letters*, letter 1, 28

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*.

the normal process of being sent to other regiments or corps in need of recruits, William Dalrymple would have been entitled to receive bounty money for having recruited them. Given the speed with which regiments were to be augmented and the need for soldiers overall, rejecting these supernumeraries does indeed seem odd. John Dalrymple pointed out that rejecting these men, especially when the War Office “was searching all the jails in Britain to compel felons to be heroes” was another way in which Barrington showed his lack of confidence in the LIC.<sup>82</sup> He posed the question of if this rejection was due to “*public motives*, or from *private spleen?*”, meaning was the rejection related to public sentiment or Barrington’s own biases against the LIC at large, and William Dalrymple in particular. This again suggests that rejecting Dalrymple’s supernumeraries could have been a way to police controversy relating to Irish Catholic recruitment, as it seems it was clear to everyone that Dalrymple was accepting Irish Catholics in a public manner.

Before the LIC even left Ireland it was clear, at least to John Dalrymple, that they were being treated unfairly by the British establishment. Changing their orders and not issuing them the necessary clothes or resources limited both their status and their ability to be effective in service and appealing as a place to join the British army. This also showed a lack of overall lack of confidence in or willingness to help the corps, which could both deter potential recruits as well as lessen the morale of the LIC before they saw any action.

What then, was the experience of soldiers in the LIC once they had left Dublin? They arrived in Jamaica in 1777 and seem to have been mostly used as a garrison and a place from which to send soldiers to other regiments who needed them. To access the experiences of the recruits from Ireland I have attempted to track those listed in the post 18 April recruiting return, but this proved tricky. The recruiting return was from 1776, but the only surviving muster lists for the LIC are from 1780-1782.<sup>83</sup> This means there is a four year gap between the records which are accessible and the original recruitment. Part of this gap would have been transportation of the corps to Jamaica, but other than documents about them leaving which generally talk about baggage or logistics, there is a lack of documentation relating to embarkation returns or the time the LIC spent on board the ships. The only documents which cover this gap are the monthly returns of the LIC from before they left Ireland, which show that the LIC remained for the most part complete from the time they began recruiting to the end of 1776, having been short fifteen

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid; Peter Way, “The Scum of Every County, the Refuse of Mankind’: recruiting the British Army in the eighteenth century,” in *Fighting for a Living: A Comparative Study of Military Labour 1500-2000*, ed Erik-Jan Zürcher, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 291–330.

<sup>83</sup> DML, WO 12/10685.

men at most during this period.<sup>84</sup> The return for 1 October 1777 tells a different story, listing the LIC as short 109 men.<sup>85</sup> This was after they arrived for service in the West Indies, so many explanations for the difference in numbers are possible. It is worth noting that this was not due to mass desertion though, the monthly return listed no deserters. These monthly returns are certainly useful for overall quantitative data about the number of men and officers present in the LIC, but they include only that, numbers. This makes tracking specific recruits during this gap impossible, leading to the inability to comment on the service or experience of these men during those four years, as one cannot assert the whereabouts or condition of each individual.

That said, nineteen men from the April 1776 recruiting return do appear within the available muster lists. This is a far cry from the 79 men listed on the return, but the nineteen men who can be identified provide an avenue for analysis of the careers of some of this batch of recruits. Of those nineteen, nine came from 90% or more Catholic areas, seven from the 60-90% bracket, and one from the under 40% areas, one who was born in England, and one whose birthplace information was not recorded.<sup>86</sup> Only five of the men are present for more than one muster list, but their appearance in these lists at all shows that the recruits from the post 18 April recruiting return did indeed serve in the Loyal Irish Corps.

Of the nine men from the 90% or more areas, seven appear only once in this set of muster lists.<sup>87</sup> Of those seven, 4 listed just as privates and or noted with 'duty'; John Kelly, William Brown, Edward Moore, and Patrick Flanagan. Two of the men only listed once are listed as drummers; James O'Brien, James Samuel Littleton, and one is listed as a corporal; Brien Evans.<sup>88</sup> The two men from the 90% or more bracket that are listed more than once in this set of muster lists are Corporal Jasper Rourke and Serjeant Henry Burgess. Rourke was very likely a Catholic, as he was born in Feenagh parish in County Clare, which reported an under 5% Protestant population on the 1764-5 Hearth Tax census.<sup>89</sup> Burgess's birthplace also reported a

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<sup>84</sup> The LIC was short 15 men August 1776 "Monthly return of a corps of foot raised and commanded by Wm Dalrymple Esqr Capt Commandant," Dublin, 1 Aug 1775, WO 17/234, War Office Papers, TNA, Kew.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Gregory, *Troubled Geographies*, 24; "Return of the number of men with their names, age, size, and places where born that have been inlisted in Captain William Dalrymple's Corps, since the 18th day of April 1776," SP 63/454, f 253, SPI, TNA, Kew.

<sup>87</sup> DML, WO 12/10685.

<sup>88</sup> Evans does imply potentially non-Irish heritage, as this was generally a Welsh name. MacLysaght, *Irish Surnames*, 77. Additionally there were two men called James O'Brien listed on the 18 April recruiting return. I cannot identify which specific James O'Brien appears in the musters for the LIC, but it is likely one of them.

<sup>89</sup> The recruiting return spelling 'Fernlah' seems likely to be a misspelling of Feenagh parish. Gurrin, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 39.

low Protestant proportion on the 1766 religious census of just over 11%.<sup>90</sup> Henry Burgess appears consistently in this set of muster lists. He is listed in 1780 in Cashell's company as a sergeant, and is noted to be on the recruiting service. He then is listed in 1781 as a serjeant in William Dalrymple's company and is noted to be on furlough. In the latter half of 1782 he was still listed as a sergeant in William Dalrymple's company and once again noted to be recruiting.<sup>91</sup> Where he was recruiting was not noted, this could have been locally in Jamaica, or indeed back in Ireland mustering fresh recruits to send abroad. The fact that these likely Catholics served as a corporal and a sergeant is significant, as being Catholic was not compatible with them being an officer of any type. This could have been less of a limiting factor in the LIC because the LIC had its own special rules as outlined above, no pay security or officer status once the LIC was disbanded, which would ensure they did not have a lasting place in a position of authority.

The seven men in the 60-90% bracket are also worth discussing. Four are just listed as privates in a company in 1780, then do not appear in the lists further. One, a John Lynch, appears twice in the muster lists. Once in 1780 he was listed in Cashell's company as having died on the 5th of August 1780. However, a John Lynch was also listed in William Dalrymple's company in 1781 with a further note of his discharge on 25 March. Either of these listings could be the John Lynch who had been recruited in 1776, but either option shows a career ending with the LIC. The other name of note in the 60-90% bracket is Terence O'Brien. O'Brien's birth parish does not help with determining if he was Catholic, as St Paul's was listed as about half Catholic and half Protestant in the earlier census data, but the traditional Irish surname gives more weight to the claim he was potentially an Irish Catholic.<sup>92</sup> The same can be said of Lynch who was born in the same parish and also has a surname with traditional Irish implications.<sup>93</sup> O'Brien appears several times in the muster lists throughout 1780-1782. He was a private in William Dalrymple's company for the duration, then is noted as having been drafted into the 99th regiment of foot on 17 April 1782. O'Brien's further service shows commitment to a military career, and being drafted into a regular regiment shows that he was an effective and loyal soldier.

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<sup>90</sup> Burgess lists 'Ballintino' as his birthplace, likely a misspelling of 'Ballinteenoe', which was located in or near the Kilnarath Union, who reported a proportion of 11.9% Protestant and 88.1% Catholic households in 1766. Gurrin, *Religious Censuses*, 310.

<sup>91</sup> DML, WO 12/10685.

<sup>92</sup> Gurrin, *religious censuses of the 1760s*, 156.

<sup>93</sup> MacLysaght, *Irish Surnames*, 142.



None of the recruits I have been able to track from the 18 April recruiting return have been listed with any problematic notes such as desertion or imprisonment. This supports the argument that Irish, and Irish Catholic, recruits did not desert more than other groups of recruits, which is congruent with the findings of desertion of Irish Catholics in the 46th Foot. The religious analysis of the 18 April recruiting return shows that the LIC did accept Irish Catholics. Though it is difficult to make substantial points about these men as most appear very briefly in the limited records of the LIC, their participation shows that Irish Catholics were being used on multiple fronts during this period, not just in regular regiments in the American colonies but also in this corps in Jamaica. This seems to suggest that once out of Ireland, there were fewer incidents or loud and obvious concerns, about the Catholicity of the LIC. This also helps combat the stereotype that Irish Catholics were inherently disloyal or ineffective soldiers.

### **Loyalty and Desertion**

John Dalrymple poses the idea that the men of the LIC were loyal to their commandant and felt as though he was on their side, which led them to not want to desert the LIC despite their service location and experiences during recruitment. Arthur Gilbert has argued that “in all new Corps, one of the major determinants of success in recruiting was the personal appeal of the commander”, so their affection or even loyalty toward William Dalrymple would prove to be imperative to both the success of the recruiting efforts, as well as the service of the corps.<sup>94</sup> John Dalrymple offered two main examples of “pleasing proof of the affection of his corps” toward William Dalrymple.<sup>95</sup> First, he stated that since the inspection undertaken by Cavan with the subsequent trial of William Dalrymple, “not a man ever deserted from him in Ireland”.<sup>96</sup> He spoke to the honor of the Irishmen who had been recruited into the LIC with reverence, that they stuck by their fellow recruits and their commanding officer. “Amidst their poverty, they had that generosity...they said, that he was a stranger, and suffering for them, and that it would be base to forsake him”.<sup>97</sup> He further discussed the lack of desertion from the Loyal Irish in talk of their embarkation. John Dalrymple argued that “the Irish common people quit their country with more reluctance than other men do theirs”, and that it was common for regiments leaving Ireland to

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<sup>94</sup>Arthur N. Gilbert, “Military recruitment and career advancement in the eighteenth century,” *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, spring 1979, vol 57, no. 229 (SPRING 1979), 34-44.

<sup>95</sup> Dalrymple, *Three letters*, letter 1, 28

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, 29

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, 29-30.

do so incomplete.<sup>98</sup> Again, like the newspaper articles which referred to Catholic recruitment, this is put into the language of the ‘common people’ of Ireland. John Dalrymple was confident in his brother’s ability to influence the common people to volunteer despite their ‘reluctance’, and argued that he had done so successfully, stating that William Dalrymple “had left Ireland without wanting a man”.<sup>99</sup> John Dalrymple himself went on to write that once onboard, it was discovered that “a few men were found to be amissing”.<sup>100</sup> That gave him the opportunity to spin a heroic tale of how William Dalrymple refused to leave with the corps incomplete, sailed back to find the missing men, found them, then convinced “four seamen, by high reward, to follow the transports with him in an open boat, in a roaring ocean, through the Irish channel” which was followed by “the shouts, and embraces, and tears of his people, while they helped him into the ship from his boat, half dead with fatigue and cold” but having successfully carried out his mission.<sup>101</sup> This is certainly a clear illustration of John Dalrymple’s bias toward his brother, constructing a narrative of efficacy and bravery in which he demonstrated full commitment to his corps and cause.

Yet this is still also a narrative about the loyalty of the LIC, of Irish and Irish Catholic recruits. Couching his discussion in terms of the ‘common people’ implies these men were Catholic. John Dalrymple asserts in no uncertain terms that these ‘common people’ were loyal to their corps and their commanding officer. This reinforces the idea of Irish Catholic loyalty once recruited, but adds a bit of nuance in that these recruits were showing loyalty to William Dalrymple directly, not necessarily the larger British military apparatus. This illustrates the potentially multi-faceted and complex way in which loyalty could be expressed, where joining a regiment or corps could mean patriotic intent, loyalty to the British establishment and monarch, or simply personal loyalty to a particular officer.<sup>102</sup>

Though this anecdote does what it was intended to do, provide a clear example of William Dalrymple’s harrowing commitment to his corps and especially to the common people he had recruited, the idea that no one had deserted the LIC before it embarked for Jamaica is provably false. The monthly returns for the LIC during their time in Ireland include the number of deserters from each company from June to December 1776.<sup>103</sup> The number of deserters in each company is presented in the table below. Given this, one cannot say that no desertion

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>102</sup> For more on discussions of loyalty or reasons for enlisting in the military in the 18th century, see Berkovich, *Motivation in War*.

<sup>103</sup> “Monthly Returns of the Loyal Irish Corps,” Jun1776-Nov1776, WO 17/234, Returns; colonial, fencible, and others, TNA, Kew.

from the LIC had occurred, nor even that no desertion from Dalrymple's personal company had occurred. This is not to say that desertion before embarkation was odd, it was actually quite common. The recruiting return for the 46th foot used in chapter 3 for example listed 15 deserters out of 71 recruits.<sup>104</sup> Even though William Dalrymple had effectively recruited his corps and had consistently replenished the men that were needed after sickness or desertion, he did not have such a grip on his corps as to have had no desertion as John Dalrymple had argued.

**Table 4.4:** Loyal Irish Corps Desertion Before Service Abroad

	June 1776	July 1776	Aug 1776	Sept 1776	Oct 1776	Nov 1776	Dec 1776
Dalrymple	1	1	4	4	-	-	-
Monk	2	-	3	6	2	-	-
Harte	-	4	6	4	11	-	-
Gladowe	1	6	10	8	2	-	1
Dodwell	-	6	5	4	5	-	-
Total	4	17	28	26	20	0	1

Desertion from the LIC also occurred during their service in Jamaica. The muster lists show no desertion in 1780, then report 6 deserters in the second half of 1781, followed by 17 in the first half of 1782, and finally two from June-December 1782. Given the issues relating to climate, these numbers are not entirely surprising. That said, they are still not low. For comparison, the company of the 46th foot which experienced the most desertion, the men of James Marsh which was eventually taken over by Joseph Ferguson, shows a total of 17 deserters from the coverage of the muster lists from 1775 until 1783.<sup>105</sup> This means that the most desertion a company of the 46th experienced in a span of eight years occurred in the LIC in a period of 6 months.

<sup>104</sup> "List of Recruits Rais'd for the 46th Regiment of Foot Commanded by the Hon'ble Brigadier General John Vaughan," Dublin, 9 Feb 1776, WO 1/992, War Office Papers, TNA, Kew.

<sup>105</sup> Captain Marsh and Captain Ferguson, 1775-1783, WO 12/5797-1 and WO 12/5796-2.

This high desertion rate is directly related to service in Jamaica. The disciplinary issues that did occur, according to John Dalrymple, had more to do with the climate of the posting the LIC had received than it did to the leadership of William Dalrymple, the loyalty of the soldiers, or the religious proportions of the LIC. As Gilbert has argued “the total attrition rate, because of disease and battle-related deaths, was considerably higher” for service abroad, particularly in the Caribbean.<sup>106</sup> Sara Caputo asserts that this concept is more broadly applicable; that soldiers who served in climates to which they were unaccustomed tended to experience higher rates of illness. She argues that doctors in the eighteenth century initially based this on race, as local natives fared better in tropical climates, whereas Britons were “deemed to have considerably lower chances of survival”, but that some eventually realised it was more associated with a “sudden change of climate” rather than inherent racial immunities.<sup>107</sup> The increased rates of illness led to a lack of satisfaction with military life, which in turn meant more desertion.

The climate in Jamaica was known to have a significant impact on the health of the soldiers sent there. Governor Dalling made several comments about the soldiers and the climate in letters to Lord George Germain. He talks about being distressed at the state of the “poor soldiery”<sup>108</sup> and in a later letter wrote that “this Island will continue to be the cemetery of the poor European soldier”<sup>109</sup>. However, he did also say that “had some of the lately imported Corps arrived in a better state of health, the mortality would not have been so great” which suggests that Jamaica was not receiving soldiers who were healthy when they had arrived.<sup>110</sup> This is in line with points Stephen Fuller, agent to Jamaica, made in a plea to Germain for sending more experienced troops to Jamaica in which he argued that the inexperienced troops were “unavoidably dwindled away by the inclemencies of the climate”.<sup>111</sup> Sickness due to adjusting to the climate provided a consistent threat to soldiers serving there, and this likely contributed to the higher rates of desertion.

The level of seriousness of the state of the soldiers in Jamaica relating to the climate was addressed in a letter to Germain from Doctor Matthew Powell, general physician to the troops in Kingston Jamaica. He included a return of the sick of each regiment or corps, including in what way they were ill. The categories listed include fevers, fluxes, rheumatism, dropsy,

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<sup>106</sup> Arthur N Gilbert, “Why men deserted from the eighteenth-century British Army,” *Armed Forces & Society* 6, no. 4, (1980): 553–67, 558.

<sup>107</sup> Caputo, *Foreign Jack Tars*, 132, 136.

<sup>108</sup> Dalling to Germain, Jamaica, 8 Jun 1780, CO 137/78 f 57-60, COJ, TNA, Kew.

<sup>109</sup> Dalling to Germain, Jamaica, 31 Dec 1780, CO 137/79, f 170-171, COJ, TNA, Kew, 170.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Stephen Fuller to Lord George Germain Upper Harley St, 19 Dec 1781, CO 137/81, f 189-192b, COJ, TNA, Kew

venereal, lame with ulcers or amputations, scurvy, coughs and consumption, and convalescents. Powell wrote that his return covered 1021 men, but “that about a couple hundred more, not included in this return, would be unable to move upon any Active Service”.<sup>112</sup> He also added that these numbers would soon increase as the seasons changed, sickness being even more prevalent in the coming October to December. The LIC were included in this return, but had less sickness than the others listed. Of illness in the LIC, Powell reported thusly: 2 suffering from terrors, 1 was listed as terminal, 13 as lame with wars and amputations, and 16 convalescent, listing 32 sick in total.<sup>113</sup> This is in line with the number of sick reported when the LIC was in Dublin before their embarkation, but is deceptive. The number of sick in Dublin was around 30, but this was out of 500 men.<sup>114</sup> As per the monthly return of the Loyal Irish in Jamaica from October, 1 month before this report, they only had 126 men total. This means that 30 men sick from the 500 in Dublin meant 6% of the men were reported sick, whereas 32 out of the 126 men in Jamaica meant a much higher proportion at about 25%. The category of sickness reported overall was ‘fluxes’, meaning dysentery, of which Powell reported 328 of the total 1021 men suffered.

The reported numbers from Doctor Powell do not match up with the reported sickness on the muster lists for the LIC. The 1780 muster lists only reported five men as sick or in hospital, the 1781 muster listed 26, the first half of 1782 listed 11, and the latter half of 1782 listed four. Doctor Powell’s list was most likely more comprehensive. For example, from 1781 the muster lists show a significant number of men being discharged, but do not report why.<sup>115</sup> This could be due to illness, and the timing of their discharge could put them in Doctor Powell’s list but not the muster lists. The muster lists do not list the condition of discharged individuals. We can also see the impact of service in Jamaica on the other return paperwork generated for the army in Jamaica. A monthly return from the army in Jamaica from October 1780 stated that the rank and file of the LIC which had turned up for the return numbered only 126 men, only 16 of which were labeled ‘fit for duty’.<sup>116</sup> 17 men were listed as sick, and 81 on command. Only 126 men present meant that the LIC was wanting 374 men in order to be complete. The paperwork also listed 71 dead from the LIC.<sup>117</sup> The War Office paperwork as well as the report

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<sup>112</sup> Dr Powell to Germain, 2 Sep 1780, CO 137/78, f 318-320, COJ, TNA, Kew, 318.

<sup>113</sup> CO 137-78 Dr Powell to Germain, 2Sep1780 318-320, 320.

<sup>114</sup> “Monthly Return of a Corps of Foot raised and Commanded by William Dalrymple Esqr Capt Commt,” WO 17-234, War Office Papers, TNA, Kew

<sup>115</sup> DML, WO 12/10685.

<sup>116</sup> “Monthly return of His Majesty’s Royal Artillery 60th, 79th, 85th, 92nd, 93d, 95th regiments and Loyal Irish,” Jamaica, 1 Oct 1780, CO 137/79, f 57, COJ, TNA, Kew.

<sup>117</sup> “Return of absent officers and royal artillery,” CO 137/79, f 56-57, COJ, TNA, Kew.

of Doctor Powell show that illness had a consistent impact on the men of the LIC and contributed to them being continually incomplete, illustrating the merit of John Dalrymple's fears that service in Jamaica would have significant impact on the LIC.

### Contemporary Impressions of the LIC

John Dalrymple's arguments about the loyalty and service of the LIC are inherently biased, as he was arguing in favor of two of his brothers so that they would receive better treatment. In the case of William Dalrymple, the respect he thought he was due, and in the case of Samuel Dalrymple, their younger brother who was an officer in the LIC, an officer commission after his time with the LIC.<sup>118</sup> But what can be said about the actual experiences and treatment of the Loyal Irish Corps once they began serving in Jamaica? Not much is known about the LIC in terms of their involvement in different operations. We do know from correspondence from John Dalling that it served for a time in the Mosquito Shore in present day Nicaragua and Honduras and that it was involved the Battle of San Fernando de Omoa during which the British army captured fortifications there and held them for six weeks.<sup>119</sup> Other than this, the LIC is generally cited only as part of the Jamaica garrison, in which they served until their reduction.<sup>120</sup> John Dalrymple spent little to no time discussing the day to day operations or expeditions of the LIC in his letters, save for mentioning that the climate was a problem and asserting that they should have been sent to the American colonies as planned. This is a result of his letters being written in 1778, which would have been right after the LIC arrived in Jamaica, giving him little to comment on. He did mention briefly one story of the LIC being effective, arguing they had helped when the town of Kingston was on fire which he cites as the event "which first brought mortality into the corps".<sup>121</sup> He claimed that the locals were grateful and expressed their thanks to the LIC, but also added an attack directed at Barrington, saying that "the Island had gratitude; but you [Barrington] had none".<sup>122</sup> This example thus claimed that the locals were grateful for the service of the LIC and made no negative comments about their conduct, but mostly seems to have been intended as more ammunition with which to berate Barrington. Discussion of other

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<sup>118</sup> Dalrymple, *Three letters*, letters 2-3 are almost entirely about getting Samuel a commission.

<sup>119</sup> María Fernanda Valencia Suárez, "English Imperial Aspirations in the Yucatan and Central America, 1584-1800," *Revista Trace* no. 8 (2002).

<sup>120</sup> Elliot-Wright, "The Officers of the Irish Brigade," 24.

<sup>121</sup> Dalrymple, *Three letters*, letter 1, 30

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, letter 1, 35

sources of opinions of the LIC are needed to gain a more substantial and more complete idea of their service and efficacy.

Letters in the collections of the Colonial Office for Jamaica provide more significant anecdotes about the reception and service of the LIC. These hold comments on the LIC, and the behavior of William Dalrymple in particular, from several military officers, as well as from John Dalling, governor of Jamaica during the time of their service. By considering the social landscape in which the LIC served through anecdotes which mention them we can get a sense of how LIC spent their service, who they impressed, and who they disappointed. It also helps develop clarity on the extent to which the climate did indeed impact the mortality of the LIC. The following section will outline the various personal accounts of William Dalrymple and the LIC to help get a sense of what people thought of them, and if this was tied to pre-existing stereotypes of the Catholicity of the corps.

Alexander Leith, Lieutenant Colonel of the 38th Regiment, made comments about the LIC, but more specifically on the conduct of William Dalrymple. He had visited Dalrymple in July 1780 when he was stationed at St John. Dalrymple had subsequently left to follow other orders, and Leith wrote that he hoped he “has left no body like him behind”.<sup>123</sup> Dalrymple had been sent out on orders but returned not with military achievement, “but extremely encumbered with a great quantity of fat turkies, and some broods of fine young chickens”.<sup>124</sup> Leith was happy to see the supplies, but mentioning the lack of glorious victory or battle shows Leith was trying to assert that Dalrymple was more interested in supplies for himself or his corps than victory. Leith also commented that Dalrymple had claimed to be ill, but that he “could not help observing to him that I thought his state of health not so very dangerous as he seemed to apprehend, and that people would look strangely on him as a sick man, when he could drink his Claret, and eat his turkey, as well as any Officer in the Camp”.<sup>125</sup> He also noted that Dalrymple entertained him well enough, with food and women, but that with the women “he practiced all the conduct of a Covent Garden brothel”.<sup>126</sup> In further unbecoming conduct, Leith writes that Dalrymple asserted that he was ill and that his current illness would lead to his death, and began to talk about what should happen if he were to die. Leith claimed Dalrymple “beg’d that his dear corps, the Loyal Irish, might fire over him; and, as a token of the affection he bore, when in the agonies of death, to so brave a body of men, he bequeathed to the sick of the corps all his wine and

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<sup>123</sup> Alex Leith to Keating, St John’s, 22 Jul 1780, CO 137/81, f 247-249, COJ, TNA, Kew, 247.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

turkies".<sup>127</sup> His officers did not seem to take this seriously, which proved to be the right course of action as Dalrymple did not die, but was only lethargic the following morning. This did not stop him from acting in a selfish way again, according to Leith, in which he stopped a small canoe heading for General Kemble, and "took by for the ablest man out of her".<sup>128</sup> This delayed the supplies getting to Kemble, and Leith suggested "such conduct as this ought not to pass uncensured".<sup>129</sup>

This story gives us two main points relating to understanding the service of the LIC. First, it illustrated that Dalrymple, in his ill and potentially drunken state, was still interested in asserting that his corps was brave, loyal, and deserving of resources and praise. This could have also been a way for him to sing his own praises, as he was in command of them, but the celebratory way he discussed his corps is still worth noting. Second, this gives us an impression of William Dalrymple the commandant and the man. The LIC was raised on his reputation after all, so his reputation is material to this discussion. His behavior was unbecoming of an officer, yes, but there was no mention by Leith of his men reacting negatively to his actions or his words. This could be a sign of loyalty to their commanding officer, or they could just have not wanted to step out of line and cause trouble for themselves by reacting to Dalrymple's behavior. Leith also had an interest in making him look bad, as the competition for resources and men would have been a reason for him to generate a negative portrait of Dalrymple. That said, another account of what appears to be the same incident from Capt. Despard of the 79th Regiment confirms Leith's impression. Despard argued that Dalrymple was willing to hoard resources to the detriment of the orders of Kemble.<sup>130</sup> Thus while this story generates an impression of Dalrymple himself, it provides little insight into the men of his corps.

Kemble also seems to have held a negative impression of Dalrymple and the LIC, as is clear in a letter he sent to Governor Dalling. He mentioned sending forces up river from St John to get supplies and how he would have liked to have sent "subaltern and detachments of Loyal Irish Corps but they are a troublesome set, know nothing of the management, and most probably would never have got up".<sup>131</sup> This shows he did not trust them for the supply run, and that he thought they lacked discipline. This mirrors Leith and Despard's claims about LIC and Dalrymple in particular keeping resources for himself rather than sending them where needed.

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 248.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> "Account of Capt. Dalrymple's conduct while at St. John's by Capt. Despard of the 79th Regiment, as requested," nd, CO 137/81, f 241-243b, COJ, TNA, Kew.

<sup>131</sup> Kemble to Dalling, Pelican off Bluefields, 7 Oct 1780, CO 137/79, f 60-67, COJ, TNA, Kew, 61.



Kemble also mentioned that a soldier of the LIC was “in confinement for theft and desertion”.<sup>132</sup> This was only one soldier, so this cannot assert a pattern of LIC behavior, but given that the only comments Kemble had for the LIC in this letter were that he did not trust them to carry out a mission and that one of them was waiting on court martial, this does not inspire confidence in them. However, he also did mention that he was uncertain that he had the officers and decorum enough in the area to effectively hold a proper court martial. Thus Kemble did not have a favorable impression of the LIC, but nor does it seem he held the rest of the local military apparatus in high esteem.

There were those however who felt that the LIC had a positive reputation deserving of praise and promotion, mostly the local government and elites. One such example can be found in a memorial sent to the King from Stephen Fuller, agent for Jamaica. He argued that William Dalrymple had provided “exemplary services” during the taking of Omoah which “did him great honour in his professional line” and provided necessary service to the security of the Island.<sup>133</sup> This impression led Fuller, at the behest of the local council and assembly, to suggest that the LIC be regimented and added to the purview of the Jamaica Station as part of their allotted number of men.<sup>134</sup> The letter connects this idea directly to the character and actions of William Dalrymple and his handling of the LIC. Though this is couched in language relating to Dalrymple, it also shows confidence in the men of his corps that they were interested in integrating the corps into their regular army.

Governor Dalling also expressed a positive impression of both the LIC and William Dalrymple.<sup>135</sup> He had ordered many of the privates of the LIC to be transferred to the 60th and 79th regiments of foot in November 1780 due to the ‘weak state of those regiments’.<sup>136</sup> The following month, Dalling wrote again to Germain requesting that Dalrymple be approved to reconstitute his corps. He also suggested, as Fuller had, that the LIC be put on the regular establishment by extending “his Majesty’s patronage to the Majr and his Officers”.<sup>137</sup> The text of

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 61-62.

<sup>133</sup> Fuller to Germain, Southampton St, 8 Mar 1781, CO 137/80, f 5-9, COJ, TNA, Kew. For an account of the taking of Omoa and the role of the LIC in this action, see “Memorial from late Governor Dalling regarding Omoa,” N.D., CO 137/82, f 393-394, COJ, TNA, Kew.

<sup>134</sup> Fuller to Germain, Southampton St, 8 Mar 1781, CO 137/80, f 5-9, COJ, TNA, Kew, 7.

<sup>135</sup> Though this seems to be due, at least in part, to he and Dalrymple working together to skim resources from the army and keep them for themselves. See “Report of the Committee into the effects of the late expedition at St. John’s,” CO 137/79, f 175-122, Colonial Officer Jamaica, TNA, Kew.

<sup>136</sup> Dalling to Germain, Jamaica, 5 Nov 1780, CO 137/79, f 106-109, COJ, TNA, Kew, 108. This also illustrates the LIC being used as a garrison to hold soldiers until they needed to be used to replenish other corps/regiments.

<sup>137</sup> Dalling to Germain, Jamaica, Dec 1780, CO 137/79, f 148, COJ, TNA, Kew.

the request to reconstitute the LIC shows Dalling thought they were effective, and that Dalrymple was a good commanding officer. It reads:

Majr Dalrymple will have the honor to deliver this letter- I much hope he will have every furtherance from government in order that he may again be enabled to recruit his Corps, it was among the very best of all the Young Corps I have yet seen, and, under his direction, I am confident will once more demand that applause which he so justly merited in the first instance.<sup>138</sup>

Major General Archibald Campbell agreed with this sentiment, sending his own letter to Germain in which he wrote of William Dalrymple's reputation that it was his "duty to acquaint your Lordship that his Zeal and attention in the service of his Country merits the highest applause".<sup>139</sup> Campbell further suggested that Dalrymple should be sent back to Ireland to carry out the recruitment for the LIC once more, as many of the men initially obtained had "fallen a sacrifice to this inhospitable Climate".<sup>140</sup> He closed his letter by saying "that from the state of discipline in which I found that Corps on my arrival in Jamaica" William Dalrymple has shown himself to be a valuable asset to the British army.<sup>141</sup>

Other officers from the LIC also experienced success and recognition and were able to maintain their rank after their service with the corps "as a reward for their services". Further Samuel Dalrymple, a captain in the LIC, rose through the ranks of the British Army through a long military career and was eventually appointed as a Lieutenant-General in 1812.<sup>142</sup> The approval of the LIC had stipulated that the officers of the corps would not retain their ranks after their service in the American war, so the fact that some had shows they had proved themselves effective and useful during their service with the corps, or at the very least that they had made powerful connections with men who could help them hold onto their rank once the LIC was disbanded.<sup>143</sup> While, again, this does not give us a direct account of the behavior of the men of the corps, some of their officers overcoming this limitation to gain lasting rank does imply

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Archibald Campbell to Germain, Jamaica, 30 Dec 1780, CO 137/79, f 150, COJ, TNA, Kew.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> *The Royal Military Calendar, or Army Service and Commission Book containing the services and progress of promotion of the generals, colonels, lieutenant-colonels, and majors of the army, according to seniority: with details of the principal military events of the last century*, London: printed by A.J. Valpy, 1820, 217.

<sup>143</sup> Weymouth to Harcourt, St James, 8 Feb 1776, SP 63/541, f 230-231, SPI, TNA, Kew.

that the men of the corps were being led effectively and were disciplined enough to make their officers appealing candidates for long term positions.

Thus the impressions of the LIC seem to have been a mixed bag, with Leith, Despard, and Kemble finding fault with them and Fuller, Dalling, and Campbell celebrating the LIC and William Dalrymple as effective in their duty. This shows that the local British hierarchy seems to have supported William Dalrymple and LIC whereas Kemble, a recent arrival, and Leith and Despard, both officers of regular regiments and thus in competition with the LIC for soldiers and resources, thought they lacked discipline. Additionally these anecdotes only reference William Dalrymple or the LIC as a whole, so it is difficult to say anything substantial about individual soldiers within the corps. The actions of Dalrymple always being mentioned in tandem with the LIC as a whole illustrates the impact his reputation and actions could have on overall impressions of the men under his command.

## **Conclusion**

The raising of the LIC and their initial experience was certainly tied to Catholic recruitment, or at least assumptions that they were recruiting Catholics. The change in orders which got them sent to Jamaica seems a result of this as well, keeping them and their controversy out of sight and out of mind while not providing the officers and men of the LIC with long term job security nor post-service benefits. The experiences of the corps while on duty in Jamaica reinforces the idea that this was a worse assignment than fighting in the American colonies, given the consistent competition for resources and the likelihood of illness due to the climate.

The treatment of the LIC during the process of recruitment shows the consequences of loud Catholic recruitment and thus emphasises the necessity of the way it was obscured in the State Papers. It also shows the necessity of how Lord Kenmare went about playing his hand, being more quiet and couching his language in a carefully constructed way in order to be more well-received and to not bring unnecessary attention and oversight to his recruitment efforts. It is worth noting that Kenmare also had less freedom to be direct, as his position as a member of the Irish Catholic elite was less secure than that of William Dalrymple, a relation to a Scottish Baronet and having hailed from a well connected Scottish family. In Dalrymple's case, the Seely drama was quickly slid under the rug and he did not lose his position nor his corps. This is

expressed in the lack of further references to the Catholic character of the LIC after the recruiting efforts. The Catholicity of the corps was no longer being asserted or assessed, and the records from their service included no references to the potential religious status of the recruits. Kenmare and Dalrymple's experiences highlight how intricate the politics around Irish Catholic recruitment were. The British army was certainly in need of Irish Catholic recruits, but the manner in which this was discussed and how the recruitment was carried out were significant to both the success and reception of the recruiting efforts.

## Chapter Five: Provincial Recruitment of Irish Catholics in the American Colonies

Irish Catholics could be found not just in Ireland, but throughout the British Empire as well. The number of Irish emigrants in the American Colonies in the eighteenth century were not nearly as high as those in later centuries, especially in terms of Irish Catholics. Though their numbers were not massive, they were certainly present in the American colonies, which provided a pool of men which the British Army could target for recruitment, if they could make service appealing. Regarding Irish emigration to the American colonies, Kirby Miller has estimated that of the 250-400,000 emigrants “one-fifth to one-fourth of the emigrants of 1700-1776 were Catholics, with about another one-fifth Anglicans, and the rest Dissenters, primarily Presbyterians from Ulster”.<sup>1</sup> Two provincial corps, the Roman Catholic Volunteers (RCV) and the Volunteers of Ireland (VOI), were created to capitalise on this, one targeting Catholics and the other Irishmen, but both accepting Irish Catholics. The creation of the former tested John Dalrymple’s theory that Catholics would be more likely to be recruited if there were corps which were tailored specifically for them, supporting the Catholic religion and having Catholics officers. The latter corps, the Volunteers of Ireland, showed Irishness to be a useful identity to use to garner recruits. These corps were raised at similar times, but historians generally view the Roman Catholic Volunteers as an effort which crashed and burned, as it was disbanded about a year after being raised. The Volunteers of Ireland, by contrast, are seen as successful, so much so that it eventually became a regular regiment. Both corps were raised with a specific identity in mind, one Catholic and one Irish, and were interesting experiments on either identity being helpful for fruitful recruitment and corps cohesion and efficacy.

This chapter explores the reasons behind the failure of the Roman Catholic Volunteers, and compares this corps to the more successful Volunteers of Ireland, asserting that the latter corps was set up for success, whereas the former was set up to fail. The efficacy and discipline, or lack thereof, of the RCV had more to do with the lack of experience of the officers of this corps than to it being a Catholic corps. Desertion and disciplinary issues were to be expected if officers were not experienced and could not keep the men of the corps in line. Two officers of the RCV were also discharged for bad behavior, so they were certainly not leading by example.

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<sup>1</sup> Kirby Miller states that these are estimates, and also suggests that Presbyterian emigration obscured Catholic migration, as the Presbyterians could and did bring Catholic servants for example, who are less likely to have been accurately recorded. Miller, *Emigrants and exiles*, 137.

It is hard to untangle the lack of discipline of the officers from the impressions of the corps in order to get at the efficacy of the rank and file. That said, around a third of the men of the RCV being transferred to the VOI upon the former's disbandment shows that at least some of the men of the corps were useful soldiers. By analyzing the raising, reactions, and service of the RCV, as well as following the transferred men into the VOI and commenting on their careers, this chapter will assert that while the RCV was labeled a failed corps, the continued service of many of the men of the corps in other groups not raised on the premise of religion shows that the circumstances of the RCV were what made them fail, not the men within it.

The issue when discussing the RCV and VOI relating to Irish Catholic recruitment is determining the proportion of men who were both *Irish* and *Catholic* in these corps. The RCV was to be a loyalist force made up of Catholics, but this does not mean it was entirely composed of *Irish* Catholics. On the reverse, the VOI was to be made up of Irishmen for the most part, but not specifically *Irish Catholics*. The assumption that Irish Catholics were present in both corps is certainly prevalent in the historiography, one source going so far as to claim these "two provincial corps were raised with an overtly Catholic character".<sup>2</sup> A series of posts on the blog of the Loyalist Institute entitled "Irish Catholic Loyalists in the American Revolution" which included comments on both the RCV and the VOI reinforces this assumption, though their discussion of the VOI is more clear that the VOI likely contained Irish Catholics but was not entirely made up of them.<sup>3</sup> Charles Metzger also asserted Irish Catholics served in both corps in his discussion of Catholic Tories in the American Revolution.<sup>4</sup> Sources contemporary to the RCV and VOI support these assumptions to some extent, though caveats are needed. For example, Clinton's orders relating to recruitment sent from the British headquarters in Pennsylvania in May 1778 makes it clear that the RCV and VOI were to target Irish recruitment. In fact, Clinton had limited other corps from taking on Irish recruits, stating no other corps were "to entertain Irish Recruits, except the Queen's Rangers, Roman Catholic Volunteers, and Volunteers of Ireland".<sup>5</sup> In the

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<sup>2</sup> Philipp JC Elliot-Wright, "The Officers of the Irish Brigade and the British Army, 1789-98," (PhD diss, University of Leeds, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Leah Grandy, "Fighting for the Crown?: Irish Catholic Loyalists in the Military, Part 1," *Atlantic Loyalist Connections* (blog), *The Loyalist Collection*, 22 Nov 2018; Leah Grandy, "Fighting for the Crown?: Irish Catholic Loyalists in the Military, Part 2," *Atlantic Loyalist Connections* (blog), *The Loyalist Collection*, 5 Dec 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Charles H Metzger, "Some Catholic Tories in the American Revolution I," *Catholic Historical Review* 35, no. 3 (Oct 1949): 276-300.

<sup>5</sup> 'Clinton's Orders', Head Quarters, Philadelphia, 30 May 1778, in *The Kemble Papers*, (New York: New York Historical Society, 1884), 587-588. The Queen's Rangers was another provincial loyalist corps which was raised before the RCV and the VOI. See John R. Cuneo, "The Early Days of the Queen's Rangers August 1776--February 1777," *Military Affairs* 22, no. 2 (1958): 65-74.

case of the RCV this would then mean Irish Catholic recruitment was a specific target, and in the case of the VOI, restates the obvious that they were to target Irish recruitment. Proving the VOI consistently recruited Irish Catholics is more difficult, though there is some vague language in their recruiting poster which could have implied Catholic recruitment, or at the very least not excluded it. The main identification of Catholic service in the VOI is that around 80 men were transferred from the RCV to the VOI when the RCV was disbanded.<sup>6</sup> Thus by showing that the RCV was targeting Irish Catholics, and some of its men were sent to the VOI, the VOI almost certainly received Irish Catholics in this group. Given these sources, this chapter will proceed with the idea that both the RCV and the VOI were made up of, at least in part, Irish Catholics, so analysis of these corps is material to evaluating the recruitment, treatment, service, and integration of Irish Catholics into the British army, in this case through service in provincial corps.

The Roman Catholic Volunteers have received little attention from historians. This seems to be at least in part due to the lack of source material relating to this corps, as well as its very limited time in existence. It only existed for about a year, during which time it seems to have generally been lumped in with other loyalist forces rather than specific mention of it by name.<sup>7</sup> Again, this could be to obscure the service of Catholics in the British army, but given that other small loyalist corps were not always referred to specifically either, this is most likely more due to convenience or lack of specific heroic or significant actions which would have led to more active mention of them. Several articles written by Martin Griffin from the early 20th century mention the RCV in discussion of Catholic loyalists in the colonies and the degree of uniformity which the Catholic population in the American colonies had in relation to their opinions about the American Revolution.<sup>8</sup> These articles also use for the most part the same source material to provide a chronology of the RCV and discuss it as it relates to British recruitment of deserters and the assumptions therein, rather than substantial analysis of the makeup or efficacy of the corps. Griffin's intent is to discuss Catholic loyalties and to assert that there was not a uniform Catholic response to the American Revolution. Charles Metzger also discussed the RCV in his

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<sup>6</sup> Clinton to Germain, New York, 23 Oct 1778, PRO 30/55/13, f 1469, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>7</sup> For example Metzger argues that the RCV had been sent to Monmouth, but the role they played there is unclear because the documents lack specific reference to them. Metzger "Some catholic Tories", 282.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Griffin wrote several articles on this topic in the late 19th and early 20th century for the *American Catholic Researches*, as well as a self-published book in 1907. Martin I. J. Griffin, "The roman catholic regiment of Philadelphia in the service of Great Britain during the revolution," *The American Catholic Historical Researches* 14, no 2 (1897): 65–80; Griffin, "Catholic loyalists of the Revolution," *The American Catholic Historical Researches* 6, no 2, (1889): 77–88; Griffin, "The Roman Catholic Regiment," *The American Catholic Historical Researches* 3, no 4, (Oct 1907): 324-338; Griffin, *Catholics and the American Revolution*, (Ridley Park: Published by Author, 1907); see also Metzger "Some catholic Tories".

discussion of Catholic Tories in the American Revolution, but both Metzger and Griffin's works were published for American journals focusing on Catholic history and do not seem to have generated further work on the subject. More recent attention was given to the RCV in Phillip Elliot Wright's 1997 dissertation, but only to add context to his discussion of officers of the Irish brigade in the British Army around the close of the century.<sup>9</sup> All sources which address the RCV agree it was both short-lived and unremarkable in its military service, but remarkable in its Catholic composition.

### **Formation of the RCV**

The formation of the Roman Catholic Volunteers was approved in October 1777, among the approval for several other loyalist corps which were to be formed in Philadelphia.<sup>10</sup> Alfred Clifton, who was to be the commanding officer of this corps, had suggested that targeting Philadelphia Catholic loyalists could be an effective way of garnering more provincial forces. He received a letter discussing the Commander in Chief's thoughts via a letter from his secretary, Robert Mackenzie, on October 7. This approval was forthright about acknowledging the oddity of this corps, as it laid out the reasons why it was being considered. Mackenzie wrote that "it is understood that this Corps is to Consist of Roman Catholicks only on a presumption that they will prefer serving under an Officer to whom they are naturally attached, and not interfere with other Levies".<sup>11</sup> The beginning of this rationale is very reminiscent of John Dalrymple's argument that recruitment of Irish Catholics would be more effective if the system was materially altered to make corps which would be more welcoming to Catholics.<sup>12</sup> Though in John Dalrymple's case, he maintained that the officers would have to be Protestants, as that was what the law required, but that the men of the corps could either be entirely Catholic, or mixed indiscriminately between Catholic and Protestant. The open use of Catholic officers in the RCV was very progressive. As seen in chapters three and four, such a suggestion would not have been accepted in Ireland even for men recruited for service abroad. The approval of officers of

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<sup>9</sup> Elliot-Wright, "The Officers of the Irish Brigade".

<sup>10</sup> William Allen was also raising the Pennsylvania Loyalists there at the time, and another provincial corp had been approved as well. Metzger "Some catholic Tories," 279.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Mackenzie Esqr to Alfred Clifton, Headquarters Germantown, 7 Oct 1777, PRO 30/55/6, f 698, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>12</sup> Dalrymple, *Three letters*, letter 1, 11-12



the RCV came a week after the approval of the corps.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, this list did not include any biographical information such as birthplace which would help identify the officers as not just Catholics, but Irish Catholics in particular. Their origins have been investigated to some degree by Martin Griffin who claims that Clifton was “an English gentleman of an Irish mother” and that he was a “Philadelphia Catholic”.<sup>14</sup> He also claims that Major John Lynch and Lieutenants Peter Eck and Nowland were Philadelphia Catholics as well, though no source is cited. He states that he did not find any evidence which would confirm that Hanly, Wieregan, Yelverton, or O’Neill were Catholics, but due to the instructions the corps had to have Catholic officers, it is likely that several of them were Catholic.<sup>15</sup> This represents a severe deviation from legality, as well as from the informal policy of allowing Catholics to be members of the rank and file only.

The latter comment from the approval, that the Catholics would then “not interfere with other Levies” is also interesting, as it seems to assert the idea that Catholics could go to this one corps without controversy and that it could be a good spot to place Catholics who were willing to serve. In this way the Catholicity of this corps, in both the private men and the officers, was a tool to encourage Catholic service while avoiding any legal or social troubles of actively integrating Catholic loyalists into existing corps or regiments. It was also asserted in the approval letter that Clifton was to ‘engage none others but of the Roman Catholick community’, which thus disallowed the RCV to recruit people who were not Catholic, further discouraging the mixing of Catholic service with other denominations. So while it is more ‘loud’ than the Catholic recruitment discussed thus far, it still asserted that Catholics were an ‘other’ and that the policy of needing to keep Catholics as separate from the British Army was being twisted, but still present.

The terms of service for the Roman Catholic Volunteers, as well as its location of recruitment, are both significant factors in the decision to allow Catholics to be officers. First, the letter from Mackenzie made it clear that “the engagement of the Men must be for two years, or during the continuance of the Rebellion in North America, if required”.<sup>16</sup> This gave them a clearly limited service capacity, they were being raised solely for this conflict. This is similar to the treatment of other provincial corps which had been approved at a similar time, such as the Pennsylvania Loyalists, the recruiting advertisement for which stated that the volunteers for that

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<sup>13</sup> Robert Mackenzie Esqr to Alfred Clifton, Headquarters Germantown, 14 Oct 1777, PRO 30/55/6, f 701, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>14</sup> The first is based on quoting a letter from Ferdinand Farmer, who was asked to be chaplain of the RCV, which he declined. Griffin, “The Roman Catholic Regiment of Philadelphia,” 3 & 6.

<sup>15</sup> Griffin, “The Roman Catholic Regiment of Philadelphia,” 7.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Mackenzie Esqr to Alfred Clifton, Headquarters Germantown, 7 Oct 1777, PRO 30/55/6, f 698, TNA, Kew.

corps were to serve “only two Years, or during the present Rebellion in America”.<sup>17</sup> When talking about how the men of the RCV were to be clothed, armed, victualled, and receive pay, Mackenzie wrote that this was to be done “in the Same manner as his Majesty's regular Troops, of course they are under the same order and discipline”.<sup>18</sup> This statement makes it clear by referencing that they were to be treated *like* the regular troops reinforces the distinction that they are not regular troops. They had the same benefits and expectations of them during their participation in the army, but their status and legitimacy are not the same. Second and more obviously, this was a provincial corps, which meant it inherently had less impact on Britain and Ireland because the recruits were residents of the American colonies. Provincial Catholics being militarily trained does not seem to have had the same level of controversy as arming and training Catholics who resided in Ireland. Limiting the impact of both the Catholic officers and private men on the overall makeup and hierarchy of the army, as well as their geographic distance from Britain and Ireland proper, made their service and participation, and their louder recruitment, less controversial and potentially less impactful in the long term.

The Roman Catholic Volunteers is certainly an oddity in terms of its deliberate appeal to and use of Catholics as soldiers, let alone as officers. This approval was from 1777, so it was after the implementation of the language obscuring and encouraging Catholic recruitment in Ireland, the approval of Kenmare's recruitment, and the recruitment of the Loyal Irish Corps. Griffin argues that the Kenmare recruitment, particularly the advertisement in several newspapers which stated that Kenmare was to recruit his own Catholic corps and serve as an officer, showed that there was precedence in British policy for such recruitment, so Catholic officers creating provincial corps in the colonies was simply an extension of this already occurring policy.<sup>19</sup> It is worth noting however that Griffin referenced the circulating newspaper advertisement which stated that Kenmare was to raise his own corps of which was published in London newspapers in December 1777, so it cannot be used as precedence for Catholic provincial officers in this case, as the development of the RCV predates this announcement.<sup>20</sup> Further, as discussed in chapter two, Kenmare did not ever serve as an officer nor recruit his own corps, so using this example is also inappropriate in that regard. Regardless of the misuse of that example, Irish Catholic recruitment in Ireland was certainly already active before the approval of the RCV, as illustrated by the 1776 recruiting return for the 46th foot discussed at

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<sup>17</sup> “Recruiting poster for the 1st Battalion, Pennsylvania Loyalists, commanded by His Excellency Sir William Howe KB,” NAM. 1969-07-17-1, Study Collection, National Army Museum, London.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Griffin, “The Roman Catholic Regiment of Philadelphia”.

<sup>20</sup> “London, December 16,” *The Pennsylvania Ledger*, (Philadelphia) 28 Mar 1778, INA.

length in chapter three. Thus Catholic and Irish Catholic recruitment into the provincial corps was indeed not a deviation from British policy, but rather a continuation of the soft legality of Catholic recruitment being implemented in practice in Ireland.

Given the illegality of recruiting Catholics for British service and the vocal reactions in Ireland to this occurring, one would think the RCV would have received similar pushback, particularly in the newspapers. However, I have encountered no such reactions to the formation or service of the RCV. Several newspaper articles comment on there being a corps of Roman Catholics, but no comment on how they felt about it nor any criticism. The first appears in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* in January 1778, mentioning the development of the RCV when discussing the state of Philadelphia, writing that Colonel Allen was raising 'Men with Spirit' and that "the Roman Catholics, from the mild Administration of the former Laws, were to a Man on the Side of Government".<sup>21</sup> This was three months into the RCV, and the report was purely factual, that a Roman Catholic corps existed and was recruiting. It is worthy of note that the article did mention the lax attitude toward the maintenance of the penal laws which prevented Catholics from serving, referring to this as a policy of 'mild Administration' of the previous laws, especially considering that these laws were anything but 'former' as they were still technically in practice. But comments such as this reinforce the idea that the soft legality of Catholic recruitment was a consistent policy during this period.

Newspapers which mentioned the RCV toward the end of their service remain entirely based in statements of fact as well. An article in *Saunders's Newsletter* from October 1778 commented only that "a corps of Roman Catholics is now waiting at New York, and fills very fast. A regiment of the same religion was raised at Philadelphia."<sup>22</sup> This could be in reference to the recruitment that the RCV was carrying out during their service in New York, as there does not seem to have been an additional Catholic corps. This same statement was also published in the *Leeds Intelligencer*.<sup>23</sup> None of the reactions to the RCV in the newspapers provide detailed comments on the corps, other than that it had been formed. This is certainly different than in the Irish case in which Captain Seely's public assertion of Catholic recruitment had led to inquiry and court martial and Catholic recruitment being pushed back into obscurity, as discussed in the previous chapter. The lack of a similar reaction regarding the recruitment of the RCV could be due to a variety of factors including that this was temporary provincial recruitment, or that people did not expect this corps to form, let alone be successful.

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<sup>21</sup> "London, January 12," *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, no 1291 (Oxford) 24 Jan 1778, FindMyPast.

<sup>22</sup> "London, September 23," *Saunders Newsletter*, no 6434 (Dublin) 2 Oct 1778, FindMyPast.

<sup>23</sup> "London Sept 26," *Leeds Intelligencer*, vol15 #1274 (Leeds) 29 Sep 1778.

## Recruitment

The historiography makes it apparent that determining the population of Philadelphia at this time is complex and unreliable, let alone the population of Irish Catholics.<sup>24</sup> Joseph Galloway commented on the demographics of the city of Philadelphia after researching them in October 1777. This was in a packet of tables he had made about the demographics of the area which he sent to the Earl of Dartmouth. In this document, he estimated the total male population of Philadelphia as 9,423 men and 12,344 females. Of the men, he claimed 4,941 were under 18 years of age and 4,482 men were over 18 and under 60.<sup>25</sup> If recruitment of the populace of Philadelphia was expected it would be from the latter 18-60 year old group of men, making the pool of potentially recruitable men 4,482. That said, in a previous document Galloway claimed that men of property would only serve if they were officers rather than among the 'common ranks', so the number of men able to be obtained to fill the ranks was further limited by this.<sup>26</sup> Narrowing down the population of Irish Catholics who were part of this figure is more complex. In a study of census records present in the records of the Swedish Lutheran Church, Susan Klepp claims that on those records religion was implied by or tied to nationality, the two being "nearly synonymous". According to her research, "a Scotsman was a Presbyterian, an Englishman an Anglican, a German a Lutheran" and that "the Irish in the early eighteenth century were Presbyterians, later they were Roman Catholics".<sup>27</sup> She further argues that this assumption is problematic at best, historically the relationship between nationality and religion is more complex, as one cannot ascribe religion based on national identity at the end of the eighteenth century. Klepp illustrates this in discussion that many or most British nationals of Pennsylvania were quakers, not anglicans.<sup>28</sup> Thus just because a recruit identified as Catholic,

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<sup>24</sup> Susan Klepp, "Five Early Pennsylvania Censuses," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 106, no. 4, (Oct 1982): 483-514; John K Alexander, "The Philadelphia Numbers Game: An Analysis of Philadelphia's Eighteenth-Century Population," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* vol 98, no. 3 (Jul 1974): 314-324. JSTOR.

<sup>25</sup> "An account of the Number of Houses, and Inhabitants, &c in the City of Philadelphia, the Northern Liberties, and district of Southwark," Philadelphia, 9 Oct 1777, #2085, *Steven's facsimiles of manuscripts in European archives relating to America, 1773-1783 vol 24*, (London: Photographed and printed by Malby & sons, 1889-95).

<sup>26</sup> "Account of fighting men," Joseph Galloway to the Earl of Dartmouth, 23Jan1778 #2078, *Steven's facsimiles vol 24*.

<sup>27</sup> Klepp, "Five early Pennsylvania censuses," 204.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*.

we cannot assert that that fact alone made him Irish. However, the fact that only three corps were allowed to recruit Irishmen, one of which being the RCV, implies a strong relationship between this corps and Irish Catholics.<sup>29</sup>

The first recruitment effort for the RCV was in Philadelphia. The approval letter does give us some idea of the structure of the initial recruitment of the RCV, especially in terms of how it incentivised the appointed officers to obtain the needed recruits. The basics of recruiting remained the same, the recruits would each receive bounty money when they were approved to join the corps, implying the usual inspections to ensure the recruits were of sufficient quality. Mackenzie wrote that “the Officers also will receive pay according to their success in recruiting, and the full proportion of the different Ranks is, as follows, A Captain thirty men, A Lieutenant fifteen Men, an Ensign twelve Men.”<sup>30</sup> Thus giving the officers a monetary incentive to gather as many recruits as possible to receive pay in proportion to their efficacy, and this also seems to be a way to vet these officers, as most of them had not served in the army before.

Howe initially seemed hopeful that a lot of men could be raised in Philadelphia via three main figures; William Allen, a gentleman of great influence in the area, Mr Chalmers, a man with esteem in the lower colonies which likely refers to James Chalmers, commander of the Maryland Loyalists, and of course Alfred Clifton, who he described as “the chief of the Roman Catholic persuasion, of whom there were said to be many in Philadelphia, as well as in the rebel army, serving against their inclinations.”<sup>31</sup> This relates to part of the plan for these corps being to draw deserters from the American army. This appears to have worked relating to Irishmen, as a few months later in March 1778 Galloway’s report of deserters from the American army which had come to Philadelphia and taken the Oath of Allegiance estimated that 492 Irishmen had done so, almost double the next highest group and making up about 40% of the total number.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> “Clinton’s Orders,” Head Quarters, Philadelphia, 30 May 1778, in *The Kemble Papers*, 587-588.

<sup>30</sup> Robert Mackenzie Esqr to Alfred Clifton, Headquarters Germantown, 7 Oct 1777, PRO 30/55/6, f 698, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>31</sup> *The narrative of Lieut. General Sir William Howe in a committee of the House of Commons on the 29th of April 1779, relative to his conduct during his late command of the King’s troops in North America: to which are added some observations upon a pamphlet, entitled, letters to a nobleman, third edition*, (London: Printed by H Baldwin, Fleet Street, 1781) Hathitrust ebook, 53; Robert Mackenzie to James Chalmers Esqr, n.d., Mic. 971, A1, No. 23, Reel 4, Military Affairs 1777-1875, Saunders Family Papers, Harriet Irving Library, University of New Brunswick.

<sup>32</sup> “An account of the number of deserted soldiers, galley-men &c from the Rebel Army & fleet, who have come into Philadelphia and taken the Oath of Allegiance, with a particular account of the places in which they were born,” Joseph Galloway, Philadelphia, 25 Mar 1778, #2094, *Stephen’s Facsimiles vol 24*. Galloway states that there were 1134 soldiers total, allocated in the following proportion for each birthplace: England 206, Scotland 56, Ireland 492, Germany 88, America 283, Canada 4, France 5.

Despite his initial optimism, it quickly became clear to Howe that the provincial corps would not grow as quickly as had been hoped. He stated that when he left the colonies in May 1778, "Colonel Allen had raised only 152 rank and file- Colonel Chalmers 336- and Colonel Clifton 180.... After the most infatigable exertions, during eight months."<sup>33</sup> Even the initial approval letter from Mackenzie suggests that there was skepticism that a large number of men could be recruited for a Roman Catholic force. He requested that Clifton, before starting to recruit and form his corps, "make known the number of Men you think upon a moderate Computation, can be engaged for immediate service".<sup>34</sup> This shows that even after the approval of the proposal, there was some debate about what number could be reasonably expected to be generated. That said, as argued by Griffin, the RCV should not be singled out as a failure when the other two provincial corps had also failed to garner as many recruits as had been requested.<sup>35</sup> This is further supported by Conway, who argues that loyalists "consistently failed to come forward in the anticipated numbers".<sup>36</sup> Thus the lack of immediate completion of the RCV, as well as its lack of completion for the duration of its tenure, needs to be contextualised within the larger apparatus of loyalist recruitment and provincial corps generation in the American colonies in which recruitment was lower than expected overall, now just in the context of Catholic loyalist recruitment.

Regardless of their being incomplete, the RCV did remain an independent corps and was folded into Clinton's forces. The RCV evacuated Philadelphia and headed to New York with the rest of Clinton's army in summer 1778, where a subsequent effort to complete the corps took place.<sup>37</sup> A recruiting advertisement in the *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury* from July 1778 assert their presence and that they were actively looking for recruits:

For the Encouragement of all Gentlemen Volunteers who are willing to serve his Majesty's Regt of Roman Catholic Volunteers, Commanded by Lieut. Col. Commandant Alfred Clifton During the present wanton and unnatural Rebellion, And no longer. The sum of Four Pounds, Will be given above the usual Bounty, A suit of New Cloaths, And every other necessary to complete a Gentleman soldier. Those who are willing to show their attachment to their King and country by engaging in the above regiment, will call at

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<sup>33</sup> *The narrative of Lieut. General Sir William Howe*, 53.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Mackenzie Esqr to Alfred Clifton, Headquarters Germantown, 7 Oct 1777, PRO 30/55/6, f 698, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>35</sup> Griffin, "The Roman Catholic Regiment of Philadelphia," 7.

<sup>36</sup> Stephen Conway, "To subdue America: British Army officers and the conduct of the Revolutionary War," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (Jul 1986): 381-407, 385.

<sup>37</sup> A. W Haarmann, "The Roman Catholic Volunteers, 1777-1778," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 49, no. 199 (1971): 184-85.

Captain M'Kennon, at No. 51, in Cherry-Street, near the Ship Yards, or at Major Lynch at Yellow-Hook; where they will receive pay and good quarters<sup>38</sup>

This advertisement shows that by the time the RCV had reached New York they seem to be more desperate for recruits, as shown by the additional bounty money of four pounds. It also asserts that a soldier's service in the RCV would be limited to only the American war, so those recruited would not be required to serve long term, nor to serve in conflicts in other places in the empire. However despite these incentives, this recruitment effort was not successful as the muster lists for the RCV do not list any new recruits having joined the RCV after this advertisement.<sup>39</sup> Other provincial corps did experience success recruiting in New York during this period. For example, the VOI reported 37 new recruits in their musters from December 1778, none of which overlap with the recruits they had been given from the RCV.<sup>40</sup> The Pennsylvania Loyalists, which was offering the same terms of service, the same bounty, and the same supplies as the RCV were also recruiting during this period. That said, the advertisements differ in that the RCV advertisement was very informational and succinct with little language which wandered from the necessary logistics. The Pennsylvania Loyalists advertisement had all of the logistical information, but additionally made references to the character of the men they were looking for, describing them as "intrepid able-bodied heroes" who now had "an Opportunity of manifesting their Spirit" by volunteering for their corps. It further stated that this was an opportunity to acquire "the polite Accomplishments of a Soldier" and asserted they would be given everything which was "proper to accommodate a Gentleman Soldier".<sup>41</sup> This language could appeal to those interested in the loyalty and honor of service, as well as their sense of patriotism. Finally, the advertisement claimed that service with the Pennsylvania Loyalists had further rewards once the conclusion of the war had been reached, stating men of this corps would "be rewarded at the End of the War, besides their Laurels, with 50 Acres of Land, where every gallant Hero may retire, and enjoy his Bottle and Lass".<sup>42</sup> The fact that the VOI was receiving recruits at this time, and the Pennsylvania Loyalists were so actively appealing to the

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<sup>38</sup> *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*, 13 and 20 Jul, 1778, cited in Metzger "Some catholic Tories," 283.

<sup>39</sup> All muster lists for the RCV are from Muster Lists for the Roman Catholic Volunteers, RG 8, C Series, reel C-4223, vol 1900, p 188-219, British Military and Naval Records, LAC, online. Moving forward, individual musters will be cited using RCV, Captain's name, date when citing specific muster lists is necessary. RCV, all companies, 11 Jul 1778, and RCV, all companies, 4 Sep 1778.

<sup>40</sup> Muster Lists for the Volunteers of Ireland, all companies, 25 Dec 1778, RG 8, C Series, reel C-4221, vol 1886-1887, p 561-827, British Military and Naval Records, LAC, online.

<sup>41</sup> "Recruiting poster for the 1st Battalion, Pennsylvania Loyalists, commanded by His Excellency Sir William Howe KB," NAM. 1969-07-17-1, Study Collection, National Army Museum, London.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

heroism and economic interest of Loyalists suggests there were recruits to be had, but that service with the RCV was perhaps less appealing than other corps who were also actively seeking recruits.

### **Discipline and desertion**

Though the disciplinary issues of the RCV are mostly laid at the feet of the officers, the rank and file did show a lack of discipline, which can be assessed via the number of desertions present in the muster lists for the RCV. There do not appear to be many anecdotes available about the service of the RCV or the actions of the men or officers of this corps. Lacking those types of sources, the muster lists of the RCV can be used to assess the discipline of the RCV. By using the muster lists to determine the degree to which the RCV was complete over time and the amount and consistency of desertion, a broader picture of the disciplinary track record of the RCV can be established.<sup>43</sup>

According to the letter which outlined the approval of the corps, each company of the RCV needed a captain, lieutenant, ensign, and 57 private men, as well as the necessary non-commissioned officers.<sup>44</sup> The first set of muster lists for the RCV were submitted by major John Lynch, Lt John Connell, and the four approved captains; Martin McEvoy, Kenneth McCulloch, Nicholas Weiregan, and Mathias Hanly. Connell's list was labeled as 'Lt Connell's Recruits', rather than his company, so this list seems to be more of a recruiting return from Connell's efforts rather than a muster list. That said, even with these additional recruits which were not recorded as part of a company, the RCV still fell short of its required numbers. There were five companies reported, one for each captain and one belonging to Major Lynch. Clifton did not recruit a company. As seen in Table 5.1 below, the total number of recruits including Lt Connell's is 176 men. Given the required 57 per company outlined in the approval letter making the total needed for five companies to be 285, this left the RCV wanting 106 men.<sup>45</sup> Major Lynch's company was severely under-recruited with only 13 men listed and no officers other

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<sup>43</sup> All muster lists for the RCV are from Muster Lists for the Roman Catholic Volunteers, RG 8, C Series, reel C-4223, vol 1900, p 188-219, British Military and Naval Records, LAC, online. Moving forward, individual musters will be cited using RCV, Captain's name, date when citing specific muster lists is necessary.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Mackenzie Esqr to Alfred Clifton, Headquarters Germantown, 7 Oct 1777, PRO 30/55/6, f 698, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>45</sup> All of the tables measuring how complete a company or corps was in this chapter count deserters in this calculation, as they are still listed in the number of private men in each muster list



than the major himself.<sup>46</sup> Based on this information it is clear that the first round of recruitment for the RCV was not as effective as had been hoped.

**Table 5.1:** Initial Roman Catholic Volunteers Recruitment 27 November 1777

	Lieutenant Connell	Captain McAvoy	Captain Hanly	Captain McCulloch	Major Lynch	Captain Weiregan	TOTALS
Captain	-	1	1	1	-	1	4
Major	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Lieutenant	1	-	1	1	-	-	3
Ensign	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
Serjeant	-	3	3	3	-	1	10
Corporal	-	3	3	3	-	-	9
Drummer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
privates	21	43	39	30	13	30	176

Moving forward, the RCV remained under-recruited for the duration of its tenure. Wanting at least 26 men to be complete in December 1777, and at most 83 to be complete in September 1778 right before it was disbanded. Table 5.2 shows the total men present and the number of men required, generating a percentage of completeness for the RCV overall over the course of its five series of submitted muster lists. The point at which the RCV was most complete was in February 1778 with around 90% of the requirement met. However, this number is skewed a bit because the muster list for McCulloch's company is not present in the surviving records, so only the numbers of three companies can be analyzed. The subsequent two muster lists report similar percentages, both at around 80%, before dropping in the final set to under 65% complete. The final set does include nine more men that are not listed as privates who were only noted as deserters. If those nine men are added back in, as usually in the RCV musters desertion was noted but the men were still included in the privates list, the completeness percentage increases to 67.54%. This is different than in the 46th Foot muster lists where desertion is listed in the casualties section, so separate from the list of present privates.

<sup>46</sup> RCV, Major Lynch, 27 Nov 1777.

**Table 5.2:** Completeness of the Roman Catholic Volunteers

# of companies	date	Total privates	Total needed	percentage of completeness
5	27Nov1777	176	285	61.75%
4	(Dec)1777	202	228	88.60%
3	22Feb1778	154	171	90.06%
4	11Jul1778	181	228	79.39%
4	4Sep1778	145	228	63.60%

When looking by company rather than the expected numbers of the corps overall it is clear to see that most of the time each company was lacking several men at least. Table 5.3 shows the disbursement of privates in each company. Of the 16 muster lists available, 12 of the reports show under 57 men present in a company. Only four times was a company reported to have 57 men required or more, two of which were Hanly's and two of which were Weiregan's.<sup>47</sup>

**Table 5.3:** Number of privates listed in each company of the Roman Catholic Volunteers

	27Nov1777	(Dec) 1777	22Feb1778	11Jul1778	4Sep1778
McAvoy	43	44	36	39	33
Hanly	39	54	57	66	49
McCulloch	30	45	-	35	33
Lynch	13	-	-	-	-
Weiregan	30	59	61	41	30

Comparing the completeness percentages of the RCV to other regiments or corps helps contextualise these numbers and determine whether or not the RCV was more consistently incomplete than similar corps or regiments in the regular army, as this was one of the reasons it was disbanded. This work has made it clear that there was a constant pressure to fill the ranks as fast and effectively as possible, but this generally did not mean that all regiments or corps were actually filled to capacity consistently. As argued by John Houlding in his analysis of the status, training, and discipline of the British Army in the eighteenth century, the manpower

<sup>47</sup> See RCV, Captain Hanly, 22 Feb 1778 and 11 Jul 1778; RCV, Captain Weiregan (Dec) 1777 and 22 Feb 1778.

problem was one against which regiments and corps “were obligated to continually struggle” as they attempted to maintain the number their establishment required.<sup>48</sup> Regiments serving in the British Isles in 1777 used in Houlding’s analysis averaged 85% complete, 27% of which was new recruits. His numbers for 1781 showed an average of 71% complete, 29% of which was new recruits, and the findings for 1784 were much the same.<sup>49</sup> Houlding also provided data for a set of ten regiments quartered in Britain in 1784, which showed an average of 50% complete and were made up of an average of 28% recruits, but this data is less relevant in terms of the needed comparisons here, as this was post-war and regiments sent home from the American War tended to be reduced or have many of their men transferred to other regiments to continue on foreign service, as was the case with the 46th Foot.<sup>50</sup> Thus these lower percentages in 1784 are interesting, but not comparable to rates of completion during service in the American Revolution. The former numbers of proportion of completion of regiments in the British Isles also are a bit problematic for direct comparison, as these regiments were not actively fighting in war, but do illustrate that even regiments at home remained incomplete during this period.

Table 5.4 shows the completeness percentages of the 46th foot based on the available muster lists, providing a more direct basis for comparison with the RCV percentages, though this is still between a provincial corps and a regular regiment. The documents which outlined the augmented regiments stated that they were to have 477 men, and they were encouraged to recruit several contingent men as well.<sup>51</sup> The muster lists of the 46th foot between 1776 and 1783 usually list 10 companies, which would mean that each company was to have 47-48 private men.

**Table 5.4:** Completeness of the 46th Regiment of Foot

	# of private men	# of companies	% complete
Aug1776	284	9	66.20%
May1777	352	10	77.79%
Feb/Apr 1778	370	10	77.57%
Feb/Apr 1778	412	10	86.37%

<sup>48</sup> J.A. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715-1765*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 132.

<sup>49</sup> The numbers for 1784 were 71% complete, 26% of which was new recruits. Houlding, *Fit for Service*, 136.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 137.

<sup>51</sup> Lord Barrington to General Gage, 26 Aug 1775, PRO 30/55/29, f 2, CP, TNA, Kew.

Aug1778	426	10	89.31%
Aug1780	292	9	68.07%

As can be seen in Table 5.4, the muster lists for the 46th foot show that it was not complete at any time between 1776 and 1780. Its highest percentage of completion was almost 90%, reported in August 1780. There is muster list data available for 1783 as well, as discussed in chapter three, but this is at a time when the 46th was reduced, thus many of them men had been discharged or transferred to other regiments, so comparing the completeness of the 1783 muster lists is not material to this discussion. It must also be noted that, as mentioned above, the 46th did not list their deserters among the privates but rather shunts those to the casualties section, so the numbers in Table 4 do not include deserters, whereas the numbers from the RCV muster lists in Tables 2 and 3 generally do.

What emerges from this data is that there was a similar ratio of completeness overtime between the 46th foot and the RCV, when thought of as 3 stages of the regiment or corps; initial recruitment, service, then ending. Both the 46th and the RCV have percentages in the 60s for the initial recruitment and the ending stages, though the 46th is in the upper 60s and the RCV is in the lower 60s. The service stage of both have a spectrum of percentages, but again the spectrum falls along similar numbers, the 46th having between 77-90% completion, and the RCV between 79-91%. That said, the 46th foot served for much longer than the RCV. The period being discussed here for the 46th is 1776-1780, so four years, whereas for the RCV we are only talking about a period of 11 months. So, while broadened into those three stages these numbers look similar, when the chronology is taken into account it is quite clear that the RCV had more trouble maintaining their numbers than the 46th did, as the rise and fall of their numbers occurred over a much smaller period.

The RCV was allegedly disbanded due to reports of a lack of discipline overall in the corps the culmination of which was the court martial of two of its officers, Captain John McKinnon and Captain Martin McEvoy. In a letter to Germain in October 1778, Sir Henry Clinton made his reasons for terminating the RCV clear, writing “from the inattention of the Officers to the Terms of their Warrant and their utter disregard of all Discipline I found it necessary to reduce”.<sup>52</sup> This clearly cast the fault at the officers of the corps rather than the rank and file. That said, the desertion and imprisonment rates of the private men of the RCV shows

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<sup>52</sup> Clinton to Germain, New York, 23 Oct 1778, PRO 30/55/13, f 1469, CP, TNA, Kew.

that the private men were at fault as well, though arguably less so as more effective officers could have helped increase discipline, recruitment, and overall success of the corps.

A clear way to assess the level of discipline of the RCV is to look at desertion. Some desertion is generally to be expected, especially in this case given the inexperience of the officers of the corps, but the level of desertion of the corps helps develop an idea of how committed the soldiers were to this corps, as well as if they were more trouble than they were worth. The number of deserters in each company of the RCV in each muster list period is listed below in Table 5.5. The musters list a total of 58 deserters during the existence of the RCV, the most occurring in the July 1778 set with a total of 21. The highest desertion reported in one company was also in that set, with 12 deserters listed in Weiregan's company.<sup>53</sup> As stated in chapter 4, the company with the highest desertion in the 46th Foot only reported 17 deserters, and that was over a period of eight years of service.<sup>54</sup> This helps contextualise these numbers, as the RCV reported 58 desertions in a span of just eleven months, showing that desertion was both more common and more consistent in the RCV than in the 46th Foot.

**Table 5.5:** Desertion from the Roman Catholic Volunteers by Company in Each Muster List Period

	27Nov1777	(Dec) 1777	22Feb1778	11Jul1778	4Sep1778
Lt Connell's recruits	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
McAvoy	3	6	1	5	1
Hanly	1	-	2	2	9
McCulloch	3	6	n/a	2	-
Lynch	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Weiregan	-	5	9	12	1
Total	7	17	12	21	11

To further contextualise these numbers in a more direct comparison, Tables 5.6 and 5.7 presents the desertion of the RCV as a percentage of the men present on the muster lists, and that of the Volunteers of Ireland, which will be discussed at length at the end of the chapter.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> RCV, Captain Weiregan, Jul 1778.

<sup>54</sup> 46th Foot, Captain Marsh and Captain Ferguson, 1775-1783, WO 12/5797-1 and WO 12/5796-2.

<sup>55</sup> This chart does include officers in the title, as their desertion was also possible, though no officer desertion occurred in this case.

This comparison is more well-suited than comparing the RCV to the 46th or Dalrymple's corps, as the VOI was a provincial corps raised in a similar manner, and which would also receive some of the men from the RCV when it was disbanded. It must be stated though that the VOI had more men as a whole, ten companies versus the four from the RCV, so more total deserters from the VOI can still mean fewer deserters proportionally. Table 6 shows that the RCV experienced between 3-10% desertion in any given period. Table 7 shows that the desertion percentage in the VOI tended to generally be lower than the RCV, around 4% at the end of 1778, but under 4% and quite low at times in the 1779 muster lists.<sup>56</sup> The exception is the early August musters for the VOI, which showed a much higher rate of 8.52%. Much of this was from Campbell's company, as 14 out of the 44 deserters were reported from just that company alone. This coincides with Campbell's company beginning to appear as 'Grenadiers' in the musters, which could be a related factor as grenadiers were generally sent to handle "specially dangerous and important services".<sup>57</sup> It is also important to state here that the RCV transfers to the VOI were present in the December 1778 muster lists of the VOI, but did not contribute to the level of desertion of the corps because none of them were reported as deserters.<sup>58</sup> When compared to the VOI, it is clear that the RCV did have higher desertion than this other provincial corps which does suggest a lack of discipline in the ranks.

**Table 5.6:** Desertion from the Roman Catholic Volunteers

	27 Nov 1777	(Dec) 1777	22 Feb 1778	11 Jul 1778	4 Sep 1778
total men on muster list	208	232	182	227	195
total deserters	7	17	12	21	11
% of desertion	3.37%	7.33%	6.59%	9.25%	5.64%

<sup>56</sup> All musters for the VOI are from Muster Lists for the Volunteers of Ireland, RG 8, C Series, reel C-4221, vol 1886-1887, p 561-827, British Military and Naval Records, LAC, online. Moving forward, individual musters will be cited using VOI, Captain's name, date when citing specific muster lists is necessary.

<sup>57</sup> VOI, Captain Campbell, 5 Aug 1779; C. T. Atkinson, "Grenadier companies in the British Army: with two original letters on the subject," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 10, no. 40 (1931): 225-231, 225.

<sup>58</sup> VOI, all companies, 25 Dec 1778.

**Table 5.7:** Desertion from the Volunteers of Ireland

	25Dec 1778	Feb/Mar 1779	24Apr 1779	17Jul & 5Aug1779	25Aug 1779	20Sept 1779	24Feb 1780	24Apr 1781	25Jun 1781	24Oct 1781	24Apr 1782
total men on muster list	522	551	560	516	383	442	556	478	472	376	277
total deserters	22	5	10	44	15	0	9	17	6	4	4
percentage of desertion	4.21%	0.36%	1.79%	8.52%	3.92%	0%	1.62%	3.56%	1.27 %	1.06%	1.44 %

In addition to reported desertion, the muster lists also show that the RCV had to imprison their own men. This could relate to conduct unbecoming, fighting, insulting fellow soldiers or officers, etc, or also desertion. Generally with the 46th Foot musters, prisoners noted are 'Prisoners with the rebels'. A similar note appears in the RCV musters, 'with the enemy' followed by the date taken.<sup>59</sup> However, in nine instances the prisoner category on the muster lists for the RCV have 'confined in regtl guard' or 'confined' noted. No reason was provided, but this shows that the RCV was having disciplinary issues within the corps outside of just desertion. None of the eight men that were noted as such have accompanying notes or courts martial, and generally seem to have returned to duty by the next muster report. Also related to the behavior of non-commissioned officers, a serjeant from McEvoy's company in December 1777 and a corporal from Hanly's company in July 1778 were reported as confined, then subsequently returned to duty.<sup>60</sup> The imprisonment of these privates and non-commissioned officers show that the RCV was indeed experiencing a lack of discipline internally throughout the ranks in addition to the consistent desertion.

The court martials of two of the captains of the RCV, Martin McEvoy and John McKinnon, certainly did not help matters. Their court martials were inherently intertwined, as McEvoy was being charged in part for having kicked McKinnon, and McKinnon was being charged in part for an unsatisfactory reaction to having been kicked by McEvoy.<sup>61</sup> These court

<sup>59</sup> See RCV, Captain McEvoy, 11 Jul 1778 for an example, both James Moore and Samuel Humphries are noted as such.

<sup>60</sup> RCV, Captain McEvoy, (Dec) 1777, Serjeant Samuel Taite, and RCV, Captain Hanly, Jul 1778, Corporal Joseph Miles.

<sup>61</sup> "General Court Martial of Martin McEvoy," Flushing Fly, Sept 1778, WO 71/87, f 176-178, Court Martial Proceedings and Board of General Officers' Minutes; Marching Regiments, TNA, Kew; "General Court

martials are generally accepted as the last nail on the coffin of the RCV, something that officials could point to in order to make the final decision that the corps was unuseful and undisciplined.

As McKinnon and McEvoy were being court martialed in part for their behavior toward each other, it makes sense to discuss that part of their court martials in tandem. Both trials were held at the camp at Flushing in New York in September 1778. McKinnon was charged with ungentlemanly behavior, “first plundering in the Jerseys; second suffering himself to be kicked by Captain McEvoy of the same corps, on a parade, without properly resenting it.”<sup>62</sup> The first charge against both of them related to instances of plundering and taking livestock to which they were not entitled. The second charge showed their lack of decorum befitting an officer. Lieutenant Connell, also of the RCV, had witnessed the altercation between McKinnon and McEvoy and testified at McKinnon’s court martial that he had arrested them both before McKinnon had apt time to react to what had occurred.<sup>63</sup> Connell then stated that the two accused officers had then beseeched him to not tell the major about the scene, shook hands, and said they would move on amicably. A witness in McEvoy’s trial, a Captain Murrigan, confirmed that he had also seen McEvoy kick McKinnon while on parade. Several other officers of the RCV gave evidence which corroborated this story, saying both that McEvoy had apologised to McKinnon, and that they had since seen the two “seemingly on good terms”.<sup>64</sup> McKinnon’s own defense confirmed this as well, he did not deny the altercation had occurred, but said they had both been drinking, had said some words to each other, and that both regretted it, McEvoy apologizing both that day in front of Lt Connell, as well as privately the next morning.<sup>65</sup> Much of the text of McEvoy’s trial is focused on the other charge against him, but he did testify “that he was provoked by some abusive language of Capt McKinnon, to offer or give him a Kick”.<sup>66</sup>

The case of McKinnon is of immediate interest because, though he was listed in the court martial as a captain in the RCV, he does not appear as such anywhere in the muster lists for the corps. A ‘McKinnon’ was only mentioned twice in documents relating to the RCV. The first of course being the courts martial of he and McEvoy, and the second an advertisement for

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Martial of John McKinnon,” Flushing Fly, 4 Sept 1778, WO 71/87, f 173-176, Court Martial Proceedings and Board of General Officers’ Minutes; Marching Regiments, TNA, Kew.

<sup>62</sup> “Court Martial of John McKinnon,” WO 71/87, f 173-176, TNA, Kew.

<sup>63</sup> This is Lt John Connell, of Weiregan’s company of RCV. See RCV Captain Weiregan, 4Sept1778.

<sup>64</sup> “Court Martial of John McKinnon,” Flushing Fly, 4 Sept 1778, WO 71/87, f 173-176, Court Martial Proceedings and Board of General Officers’ Minutes; Marching Regiments, TNA, Kew.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> “General Court Martial of Martin McEvoy,” Flushing Fly, Sept 1778, WO 71/87, f 176-178, Court Martial Proceedings and Board of General Officers’ Minutes; Marching Regiments, TNA, Kew.



recruitment for the RCV during their time in New York, in which he a 'Captain M'Kennon' is referenced.<sup>67</sup> McKinnon does not seem to have had his own company in the RCV at any point, nor was his role mentioned in any of the muster lists. He is also not listed on the "List of Officers in America under Clinton" of 1779 which includes the officers of the provincial forces of the British Army, and the 'Late Roman Catholic Volunteers'.<sup>68</sup> This makes identifying his participation and length of service in the RCV difficult, as well as his impact as an officer.

Both McKinnon and McEvoy were found guilty of their crimes, and both were sentenced "to be Discharged from His Majesty's Service, according to the twenty third Article of the fifteenth Section of the Articles of War".<sup>69</sup> The article of war being referenced reads thusly: "Whatsoever Commissioned Officer shall be convicted before a General Court martial, of behaving in a scandalous infamous Manner, such as is unbecoming the Character of an Officer and a Gentleman, shall be discharged from Our Service."<sup>70</sup> The punishment would have likely been more lax if they had not been officers, as cases involving a private striking an officer were more likely to result in lashes.<sup>71</sup>

The court martials of McKinnon and McEvoy seem to have had little to no impact on the military careers of the two captains. They were both discharged, but both are reported as captains in other provincial corps in subsequent years. McKinnon appears in records of Butler's Rangers, a loyalist corps in Canada, in October 1781. He was brought up in a memorial from three officers of Butler's Rangers who had concerns about the legitimacy of his claims that he had previously held an officer's commission and been put on half pay after the dissolution of the RCV. The three officers claim that they could not find any evidence that McKinnon qualified for half pay under the current regulations, concluding both that "it obviously appears if the Regiment has been at all recommended it must have happen'd after he left it", and also provincial officers did not retain their rank upon the reduction of their corps.<sup>72</sup> McKinnon's response stated that he

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<sup>67</sup> *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*, 13 and 20 Jul, 1778, cited in Metzger "Some catholic Tories", 283

<sup>68</sup> This list refers to the RCV as 'late' because it is a list from 1779, which is after their disbandment. "A list of general and staff officers in His Majesty's Provincial forces," PRO 30/55/105, f 57-64, CP, TNA, Kew, 64.

<sup>69</sup> "General Court Martial of John McKinnon," *Flushing Fly*, 4 Sep 1778, WO 71/87, f 173-176, Court Martial Proceedings and Board of General Officers' Minutes; Marching Regiments, TNA, Kew.

<sup>70</sup> "British articles of war of 1765, in force at the beginning of our revolution," Andrew Reiter, <https://andyreiter.com/wp-content/uploads/military-justice/uk/Laws%20and%20Decrees/United%20Kingdom%20-%201765%20-%20British%20Articles%20of%20War.pdf>

<sup>71</sup> Arthur N Gilbert, "The regimental courts martial in the eighteenth century British Army," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 8, no. 1 (1976): 50–66, JSTOR.

<sup>72</sup> "Memorial from Three Captains of the Rangers to their Colonel respecting Capt McKinnon of said Corps," 2 Oct 1781, WO 28/4, f 30, Butler's Rangers 1778-1783, TNA, Kew.

had held a commission as a Captain in the RCV dated 25 February 1778 and that when the RCV had been drafted into other corps, he had been put on half pay with the rest of the officers.<sup>73</sup> McEvoy also continued a military career, joining the Loyal American Rangers as a Captain and serving in the West Indies.<sup>74</sup> Their continued service in provincial corps, and both as captains, suggests their discharge from the RCV was not materially detrimental to their continued military service. This illustrates that while these court martials are seen as the final tipping point which caused the disbandment of the RCV, they were not perhaps as significant as they have been made out to be, at least in terms of the impact they had on the perpetrators.

The impact on the RCV on the other hand was far more profound, providing the excuse needed to be fully rid of the corps. It was quietly disbanded in November 1778 following the court martials of the officers, then little is said of them afterward. The men were being folded into other corps as early as September 1778. None of the documents at the end of their service state where the men went, so tracking them becomes a bit difficult. It is interesting though that despite that everyone seemed to be in agreement on the lack of discipline of the corps in general, and several of the officers in particular, many of the men found success as soldiers in other corps after their service in the RCV. Captain McCulloch for example became a captain in the British Legion in September 1778 and two of his men, Patrick Hamilton and Elias Goodall, became non-commissioned officers in the same corps.<sup>75</sup> Though it is worth noting that by the following set of musters for the British Legion both Hamilton and Goodall are listed as privates rather than officers.<sup>76</sup> McCulloch though remained a captain until his death in 1780, and even served as Judge Advocate during the court martial of a private of that corps, which implies that unlike McKinnon and McEvoy, he did not lack discipline.<sup>77</sup> This reinforces that the RCV was an experiment which had always been expected to fail, and perhaps that the effort to make the corps a success was not given due to the situation under which it was raised, but that this did

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<sup>73</sup> John McKinnon to Lt Colonel Butler, 8 Oct 1781, WO 28/4, f 32, Butler's Rangers 1778-1783, TNA, Kew.

<sup>74</sup> See "Journal of Cptn Martin McEvoy of the Loyal American Rangers," 8 Mar 1781, CO 137/80, f 229-230, COJ, TNA, Kew.

<sup>75</sup> "Muster Roll of Captain McCulloch's Company of the British Legion," Nov 1778, RG 8, C Series, reel C-4221, vol 1883, p 233, British Military and Naval Records, LAC, online; "Muster Roll of Captain McCulloch's Company of the British Legion," Nov 1778, RG 8, C Series, reel C-4221, vol 1883, p 250, British Military and Naval Records, LAC, online.

<sup>76</sup> "Muster Roll of Captain McCulloch's Company of the British Legion," Nov 1778, RG 8, C Series, reel C-4221, vol 1883, p 233, British Military and Naval Records, LAC, online.

<sup>77</sup> "General Court Martial of Thomas Connoly," Mar 1779, WO 71/88, f 341-344, Court Martial Proceedings and Board of General Officers' Minutes; Marching Regiments, TNA, Kew.

not necessarily limit the men of the RCV from moving on to more successful corps and military careers in corps that were not inherently associated with Catholic service.

### Continued service of RCV men

The subsequent service of men from the RCV in various other corps suggests that they still had value as soldiers and were not entirely ineffective. Yes, there was still a lot of pressure for recruitment to fill out other corps and so men were needed overall, so other corps may have been willing to accept the men and get them into fighting shape. Clifton, the head of the RCV, seems to have not continued to serve, only appearing as the Lt Colonel of the 'Late Roman Catholic Volunteers' in the list of provincial officers from 1779.<sup>78</sup> The men of the RCV appear in other provincial corps. John McKinney, drummer for McCulloch's company, claimed that upon the disbandment of the RCV the men were "at liberty to Chuse their Corps", leading "Captain McCulloch and all his Company Joined the British Legion".<sup>79</sup> It has been suggested that McCulloch's whole company choosing to remain together and join the British Legion expresses that an *esprit de corps* had developed within this company.<sup>80</sup> However, this is an exaggeration as the muster lists of the British Legion for November 1778 do list McCulloch as a captain, but only 14 of the men from his company in the RCV are present as well.<sup>81</sup> Analysis of the muster lists of the RCV suggests that eight or nine men from McCulloch's company instead joined the Volunteers of Ireland, which was about a fifth of the men who remained in McCulloch's company at the end of the RCV.<sup>82</sup> This shows that the company was not as unified as that would imply. Additionally, there is no concrete evidence that the men of the RCV had agency over where they served next.

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<sup>78</sup> "A list of general and staff officers in His Majesty's Provincial forces," 1779, PRO 30/55/105, f 57-64, CP, TNA, Kew, 64.

<sup>79</sup> "Statement of John McKinney County of Shelburne," 30 Mar 1830, WO 42/63, f 283, TNA, Kew.

<sup>80</sup> Serjeant McKinney and drummer McKinney are listed in McCulloch's company from the start of the RCV in November 1777, having been recruited on 7 Oct 1777 by Captain McCulloch, and remained there until the final set of muster lists from 4 Sep 1778. The suggestion of an *esprit de corps* is present in Elliot-Wright, "The Officers of the Irish Brigade and the British Army, 1789-98," 19.

<sup>81</sup> "Muster Roll of Captain McCulloch's Company of the British Legion," Nov 1778, RG 8, C Series, reel C-4221, vol 1883, p 250, British Military and Naval Records, LAC, online.

<sup>82</sup> The men who moved from McCulloch's company in the RCV who were integrated into the VOI were Thomas Clarke, James Hamilton, James Kirk, Dennis Marr, Daniel McCarty, Edward O'Neal, John Smith, and Robert Alexander.

Tracking of the careers of the men of the RCV is most accessible when following the men who were transferred into the Volunteers of Ireland after the RCV was disbanded. Clinton stated in a letter to Germain that he had ordered around 80 men from the RCV to join the VOI.<sup>83</sup> Like the RCV, the VOI was raised in Philadelphia, then moved up to New York by 1778. The intention was to raise a corps of Irish emigrants to the American colonies, appealing to their nationality and common connection as Irishmen, as well as their connection to the king, to garner recruits. To that end, Lord Rawdon, previously a captain in the 63rd Regiment of Foot and an Irishman himself, was ordered to lead the corps.<sup>84</sup> Analysis of men who had previously served in the RCV who were now serving in the VOI helps mitigate the influence both the RCV and their Catholic identity had on impressions of their previous service, which allows for a more clean slate when determining their efficacy as soldiers. Some discussion of the formation of the VOI and its distinct Irishness and how this interacts with the recruitment of Irish Catholics is also necessary to further assert how Irish Catholics interacted with the British Army via recruitment into provincial forces, not just regiments sent from the British Isles. The recruitment of the VOI shows definitively that Irishness was not a problem in the British army and could in fact be a celebrated facet of British patriotism, but the lack of comment on the Catholicity of their recruits supports both the continued policy of quiet Irish Catholic recruitment and the idea that celebrating Catholicity could be problematic.

While the VOI did not necessarily seek out Irish Catholics as their basis for recruitment, Irish Catholics were certainly present in this corps as well. Recruitment for the VOI used vague language which would not have excluded Irish Catholics from signing up. A recruiting notice from *The Royal Gazette* in May 1778 stated the following:

All Gentlemen, Natives of Ireland, who are zealous for the Honour and Prosperity of their Country, are hereby informed, that a Corps, to be stiled the Volunteers of Ireland, is now raising by their Countryman, Lord Rawdon.

Those who wish to seize this favourable Opportunity, of manifesting their Attachment to their Native Land, are desired to apply to Captain Bourne, at his Quarters, opposite to Coenties Market-place, or to Lieutenant Moffatt, at the Lines, Kingsbridge; Lieutenant Bingham, Long-Island; Lieutenant Dalton, Powles-Hook, or at Mr. Dean's, at the Sign of the Ship, near the Fly Market, where they shall be honourably entertained.

Any person who shall bring an approved good Recruit, shall receive Half a Guinea for each.

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<sup>83</sup> Clinton to Germain, New York, 23 Oct 1778, PRO 30/55/13, f 1469, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>84</sup> *The Kemble Papers*, 150 & 586.

Good Men of any Country will be received.<sup>85</sup>

The language at the beginning talks about 'Natives of Ireland', making no mention of religion but only citing connection to their 'Native Land'. This term is broad enough to encompass those of any religion from Ireland. This seems like a deliberate way to recruit all Irish regardless of religion, as generally terms like 'traditional Irish' was the more specific term used to mean Irish Catholics. It is unclear to what degree 'native Irish' could be used as a synonym for traditional Irish.

The text of this recruiting advertisement holds no other language which would imply the specific targeting of Irish Catholics, but it does rely on applications to the Irishness of American colonists. Firstly in the name of the corps itself, the Volunteers of Ireland. Then by addressing Ireland as their 'Native Land', as well as emphasizing that the fact that the corps was being created by Rawdon, 'their Countryman'. It is clear that Irishness could be targeted as a favorable trait in this case. At the end though, this advertisement does make it clear that Irishness was not a prerequisite for joining the corps, as 'Good Men of any Country will be received'.<sup>86</sup> Thus while Irishness would be encouraged, men from other places would not be rejected out of hand, which dismisses the argument that the VOI were "exclusively Irish" as has been previously argued.<sup>87</sup>

Clinton asserted that targeting Irishness could be an effective recruiting strategy in a letter to Germain in October 1778. He commented on the pressure to recruit provincial forces, specifically the desire to draw men away from the continental army to serve in the British forces instead. He suggested targeting "Europeans which constituted its principal Force",<sup>88</sup> and wanted to do so without angering people who had already joined the British cause without need for further enticement. He argued that the Irish emigrants were their 'most serious antagonists' in this regard. There is potential here for who he meant by Irish, as he talks about the emigrants that had left Ireland due to 'the real or fancied Oppression of their Landlords' which they had brought upon themselves by their rioting. Regardless of the animosity Clinton claimed they held, he suggested that they were a good pool to target for recruiting, asserting that due to their numbers "national Customs were kept up amongst them; & the pride of having sprung in the Old

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<sup>85</sup> "Volunteers of Ireland Recruiting Notice," *The Royal Gazette*, (New York), 9May1778, Online Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> George Bancroft, *History of the United States from the discovery of the American continent vol 10*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1875), 175.

<sup>88</sup> Clinton to Germain, New York, 23 Oct 1778, PRO 30/55/13, f 1469, CP, TNA, Kew.

Country, notwithstanding the Connection of Interests, prevented them from entirely Assimilating with the Americans”.<sup>89</sup> Thus he saw them as a group which had maintained a uniform identity after immigration, which could be appealed to and used to British advantage, pulling them to the British army via their “latent Seeds of national Attachment” which Clinton interestingly mentioned was “contrary perhaps to the particular Interests of most of them”.<sup>90</sup> This way of speaking about the Irish natives suggests that the population of emigrants Clinton was referring to were either Irish Catholics or Presbyterians, as both experienced restrictions and oppression in Ireland. The creation of the Volunteers of Ireland was in part to take advantage of these assumptions, appealing to the unity of the Irish in America to encourage recruitment to the British army and desertion from the continental army. Clinton wrote of the success of this plan, stating “Great Pains have been taken to propagate the Advertisement of this new Establishment among the Enemy, and they have not been unsuccessful”, the new establishment in question being the VOI. He further asserted that “Under many disadvantages of Situation, above 380 Deserters from the Rebel Army have been collected; and are now in Arms in that Regiment, contented with their Situation, and attached to their Officers.”<sup>91</sup> Thus it is clear that targeting Irishness, regardless of religion, could be employed as an effective tactic to garner more provincial recruits.

While it seems that the recruitment for the VOI was being carried out effectively, they had also received a boost from the recruits they received from the RCV in October 1778. In a letter to Germain from October 1778, Clinton asserted that he transferred near 80 men from the late RCV to the VOI. A concrete number is not given, and but I have been able to identify potentially 63 men who appear in the muster lists of both provincial corps, four of which are tenuous. Given the uncertainty of the paperwork and officers of the RCV discussed previously, it is not entirely surprising that some names are potentially missing. Further the 80 cited by Clinton was only an estimate. There is also potential for some of those 80 men to have deserted upon being assigned to the VOI or other corps. The RCV had been raised specifically for Catholics to serve under Catholic officers, so moving to another corps in which this was not the case could have been unappealing. Additionally, the lack of discipline or treatment by officers when serving in the RCV could have made continued service unappealing. The fact that 63 men of the RCV were transferred to the VOI, and others transferred to various other corps suggests that the men were effective or at least of use. These 63 men make up about a third of the force

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

of the RCV at the time of its disbandment, inclusive of officers. It is reasonable to assert that these 63 men would not have been transferred to another corp if they were unruly and undisciplined, and Clinton having chosen the men implies that some caught his attention as proper soldiers.

The 63 men were identified by comparing the names on the September 1778 muster lists of the RCV with the names on the December 1778 muster list of the VOI. There is no mention or associated note in the VOI muster lists such as “transferred from the RCV” or “from RCV” or even “from x’s company” relating to any names in the VOI muster lists. Nor does the paperwork for the last muster lists for the RCV say where any men were transferred. This makes sense as the last set of RCV musters was from September, after which they were unexpectedly disbanded in October, so the regular process of recording the reduction of a corps and where the men went does not seem to have been followed.<sup>92</sup> Thus in order to track men from one to another, it is necessary to look at the last available set of muster lists from the RCV, which is September 1778, to the earliest VOI muster list following that, which is 25 December 1778, and compare the names present in each.

This process generates similar struggles as mentioned in chapter three when tracking Irish Catholics through the 46th foot. Spellings of names or abbreviations for names can be inconsistent, so some level of manual processing is required in order to compare names that sound similar, but may have different spellings. This method also runs into issues relating to common names and how they can be proven to be the same person. For example, there are three listings for men named ‘John Smith’ between the last set of RCV musters and the December 1778 set of VOI musters. Two of the occurrences appear in the RCV, one in Hanly’s company and the other in McCulloch’s, but there is only one John Smith in the VOI. This means that the man in the VOI called John Smith could be from either company, or indeed could be an entirely new John Smith. The same can be said of Barnabus or Barnaby McMahan, whose name appears in both Hanly and McEvoy’s company, but only once in Campbell’s company in the following muster list for the VOI. It seems more likely that the McMahan that appears in the VOI is the one from Hanly’s company, as the one in McEvoy’s company had been trained as a drummer, but the McMahan in the VOI is a private. Due to these issues, I have counted Smith and McMahan as transfers from the RCV to the VOI, but only once each. These are two of the four men which this analysis is less confident in being able to identify as the same men with confidence.

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<sup>92</sup> RCV, all companies, 4 Sep 1778.

The other two names which I am less confident in having identified as the same man are John Richards and Percy Jenkins. Both served in Hanly's company of the RCV. Regarding John Richards, a John Richardson is listed in the muster lists of the VOI. Regarding Percy Jenkins, there is a Pierce Jenkins listed in the VOI. Neither of these names are significantly different from their potential RCV predecessor, and are within the bounds of name recording changes which I have seen throughout the muster lists, such as Barnabus to Barnaby or Barry.<sup>93</sup>

The majority of the men transferred from the RCV to the VOI had served in the RCV for its whole tenure. 38 of the 63 men appear in all five sets of the muster lists for the RCV, having been recruited in October or November 1777 and served until the disbandment of the RCV in November 1778.<sup>94</sup> Nine of the transferred men had served in the RCV since December 1777, four since February 1778, and 11 since July 1778. None of the 63 men had appeared in only the last set of muster lists from September, so each soldier sent to the VOI from the RCV had served in that corps for a minimum of three months. Most of the men had come from McEvoy and Hanly's companies, each contributing around 20 men. 14 men came from Weiregan's company, and the remaining eight men came from McCulloch's. The fact that so many men came from McEvoy's company is worthy of note, as he was one of the captains who were court martialed. McEvoy's company only reported 33 private men in the September 1778 muster list, so 20 men would have been about two thirds of the men who were serving in his company at this time.<sup>95</sup> This shows that while the discipline and efficacy of McEvoy himself was low, the majority of his men were effective enough, or at least useful enough, to be transferred rather than discharged.

When only presented with the names of these men and no other information, it is basically impossible to confirm with certainty that an individual was Irish. When trying to investigate the surnames, a useful resource has been Edward MacLysaght's *Guide to Irish Surnames*, generated in 1964.<sup>96</sup> MacLysaght attempts to generate a list of Irish surnames accompanied by the potential origin of each, with specific comment as well to potential anglicization of Irish names spelling changes. He also discusses the geography of surnames, where they are and have been most prevalent. What emerges from applying his guide to the names of the men sent from the RCV to the VOI is emphasis on how using surname analysis to

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<sup>93</sup> Barnabus O'Brien Pension Application, WO 119, box 0006, record #23, f 38-40, Kilmainham: Pensioners' Discharge Documents (Certificates of Service), TNA, Kew.

<sup>94</sup> McCulloch's company is missing from one set of musters, but given the names are present before and after the missing list, it is safe to assume they would have appeared on that muster list as well.

<sup>95</sup> RCV, Captain McEvoy, 4 Sep 1778.

<sup>96</sup> Edward MacLysaght, *A Guide to Irish Surnames*, (Dublin: Helicon LTD, 1964).



assert geographic origins would be mostly speculative. Many of the surnames of these men yielded entries which stated the name was potentially an anglicised Irish name, or that it was a name which was traditionally English but had been held by Irish Catholics as well due to migration. In either case, this makes it difficult to assert the regional identity of the person in question. This is true of the entry for the surname 'Clarke', which states it is an 'English name which stands in for O'Clery in Ireland'.<sup>97</sup> The appendix to this volume also lists 'Clarke' as a name which had become prominent in Ireland by the 17th century, particularly in Dublin.<sup>98</sup> Many of the names in the list were also listed as being from Northern Ireland, which would at face value make it more likely that the individuals were presbyterian or protestant. However, as many of these names were also anglicised Irish names, as well as the Clinton's assertion that these men were fleeing from 'the real or fancied Oppression of their Landlords', this suggests Irish presbyterian or Catholic origins.<sup>99</sup> All this to say that an individual with the surname 'Clarke' has a decent chance of being English or Irish, and either Catholic or Protestant. In the case of the Clarke listed in the RCV and VOI, a Thomas Clarke, it is likely he was Catholic because he was coming from the RCV. Given the lack of the possibility of a fruitful and concrete surname analysis, this work will proceed with the idea that even if not all of these 63 trackable soldiers from the RCV to the VOI were Irish Catholics, some of them certainly were and given the recruiting criteria for both corps, potentially a large proportion. Thus following their service into the VOI helps elucidate another facet of Irish Catholic service in the British Army during this period via provincial service, and even if not all of these transferred men were Irish, discussion of them still provides insight into the interaction of Catholic and Irish soldiers.

Twelve of the men who transferred to the VOI were non-commissioned officers during their service with one or both corps. As can be seen in Table 5.8, six of these men were non-commissioned officers in the RCV, and nine were non-commissioned officers in the VOI. Only four held positions in both corps; Edward Dunfee, James Gaff, Alexander Buchanan, and William McCormack. There are three men which complicate this dataset; John Smith, John Bradley and Archibald Stewart. John Smith is complicated in line with the discussion above of multiple John Smiths appearing in the RCV, as well as John Smith being a common name, so it is not possible to confirm with absolute certainty which John Smith this NCO is. The names of both of the other two men appear twice in the each set of muster lists for the VOI, once as a

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<sup>97</sup> MacLysaght, *Irish surnames*, 43.

<sup>98</sup> MacLysaght, *Irish surnames*, 248

<sup>99</sup> Clinton to Germain, New York, 23 Oct 1778, PRO 30/55/13, f 1469, CP, TNA, Kew.

private in one company and once as a non-commissioned officer in another. This means that the man from the RCV could have been either the private or the officer listed.<sup>100</sup>

**Table 5.8:** Ranks of those transferred from the Roman Catholic Volunteers to the Volunteers of Ireland who served as officers in either corps

Name	Rank in RCV	Rank in VOI
Edward O'Neal	---	corporal then serjeant
John Smith	---	corporal
Edward Dunfee	serjeant	serjeant
John Bradly	---	corporal*
Stephen Scarlet	corporal	---
Robert Graham	---	corporal
James Gaff	serjeant	corporal then serjeant
Alexander Buchanan	serjeant	corporal
James Moor	corporal	---
William McCormack	serjeant	corporal then serjeant
Archibald Stewart	---	corporal*
Archibald Dougherty	—	corporal then serjeant

The RCV was supposed to be managed by Catholic officers, so the fact that these men from the RCV were non-commissioned officers in the VOI is significant. Edward O'Neal, John Smith, Archibald Stewart, and Archibald Dougherty arrived in the VOI as privates and must have earned the rank of corporal through their service in this corps. O'Neal and Dougherty also progressed further, both eventually becoming serjeants in the VOI. Robert Graham was listed as a corporal in his first appearance in the VOI musters. Stephen Scarlet and James Moor, though corporals in the RCV, did not receive rank in the VOI. James Gaff, Alexander Buchanan, and William McCormack were serjeants in the RCV but they each appeared as corporals in the VOI at the beginning of their service there, so they were still given rank, but assigned a lesser

<sup>100</sup> For example, Stewart appears as a private in King's company of the VOI and also a corporal in Barry's company. VOI, Captain King, 25 Dec 1778; VOI, Captain Barry, 25 Dec 1778.

position than what they had previously held. McCormack did eventually return to his original rank from the RCV, he became a serjeant in the VOI in June 1781. Gaff was eventually promoted to back serjeant in April 1779. The only NCO to have maintained his serjeant rank from his service in the RCV, to become a serjeant in the VOI was Edward Dunfee. Each of the non-commissioned officers (other than Dunfee) having been demoted one rank upon their arrival in the VOI suggests that the VOI saw these men were potentially of value as facilitators and leaders, but needed to be tested to see if they deserved the rank they had held. This could be due to the impression that the officers of the RCV were undisciplined which was left by the disbandment of the RCV and the court martials of those two captains of the corps. However, these men still receiving rank, then either maintaining or increasing their station shows that while McKinnon and McEvoy had behaved in a manner unbecoming, this was not true of all officers of the RCV. Additionally, the several men having earned rank fresh in the VOI demonstrates their efficacy as soldiers which caused them to move up in the corps.

56 of the 63 men from the RCV present in the muster lists for over half of this period. 41 of the 63 men appear on the musters of the VOI through April 1781, so the majority of the men stayed in the service of the VOI for the most of the period the musters cover. 23 are present until the final set of musters in April 1782.<sup>101</sup> Most of the men who disappear from the musters simply do just that, one set they are there and the next set they are not. This makes it impossible to determine the cause of the disappearance of many of the men. Concrete fates are only given for 18 of these men; four died, five deserted, seven were imprisoned by the rebel army, one was facing disciplinary action, one was invalided, and one was perhaps discharged.<sup>102</sup> 12 of the 23 men who were present for the whole period under consideration had no notes associated with their names except one or two mentions of sickness or wounds. For example both Henry Gorman and William Pogue appear on musters from every period with only their name in the list of privates with no accompanying notes in any of the lists. They also did not move around to different companies like some men did, they were present in Lt Colonel Doyle's company from their joining until the reduction of the VOI.<sup>103</sup>

The fact that only six of the men transferred to the VOI from the RCV had any sort of reported disciplinary issue is telling, and illustrates that his group of men were generally at the

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<sup>101</sup> Men who were listed as 'with the rebels' or 'prisoner with the rebels' sometimes still appear on the muster lists and sometimes are unlisted. This number includes some men who were present on the muster lists but had been taken by the rebels.

<sup>102</sup> I say perhaps because there are two men called Archibald Stuart in the VOI musters, either of which could have been the one transferred from the RCV, and one is listed as having been discharged on 25 Feb 1780. See VOI, Captain King, 24 Feb 1780.

<sup>103</sup> VOI, Lt Colonel Doyle, 25 Dec 1778-24 Apr 1782.

very least unproblematic additions to the VOI. However, the lack of data for 28 men of the VOI who disappeared from the musters means it is not possible to say concretely why almost half of the men from the RCV ended service in the VOI. This could be due to illness, desertion, death, or transferring to another regiment or corps but without any notation accompanying their existence there is no way to know for sure. Four of this number were noted as sick or in hospital before their disappearance which could indicate they left due to illness or injury, but this still leaves 24 men unaccounted for. What can be determined from analysis of this data is that over half of the RCV recruits were present for seven out of the ten muster periods being considered here, and about a third were present for all ten. Further, the 12 men which served with minimal notes attached to their names illustrates that at least 20% of the recruits from the RCV served unproblematically in the VOI, at least in terms of official reporting, from 1778-1782.

### **Discipline in the VOI**

If it was expected by those who had approved the VOI that discipline would be better in the VOI than it had been in other provincial corps, was it in practice materially so? Given the VOI muster lists, the same approach applied to the RCV above can be applied to determine the relative level of discipline of the VOI. Their level of desertion has already been discussed above, as it was a helpful comparison with which to evaluate the desertion rates of the RCV. But what of the level of completeness of the VOI? The VOI seems to have required the same amount of men per company as the RCV, 57 men each. That said, the VOI was much larger than the RCV, with ten companies instead of four. This makes their expected total for a complete corps to be 570 private men, with officers in addition to that number as appropriate. Table 5.9 provides the percentage of completion for the VOI, generated from their muster lists from the end of 1778, through their reduction in April 1782. Other than during its reduction, the VOI was least complete during October 1781 when they were only about 67% complete.<sup>104</sup> This is hardly surprising, given that this muster was reported after the Battle of Yorktown. Further, though low, this is still higher than the completeness percentage of two out of the five reporting periods of the RCV.<sup>105</sup> It is interesting to note however that the VOI experienced their second lowest completion ratio in December 1778, which is the first muster list on which the 64 men from the RCV appear. Without these 63 men the VOI would only have been about 60% complete, which

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<sup>104</sup> VOI, all companies, 24 Oct 1781.

<sup>105</sup> See Table 2.

is lower than any reported by the RCV. Moving on into 1779, the VOI would remain above 75% completion, reaching as high as 98%. The latter percentage is certainly more complete than the RCV ever was, but the percentages reported during the middle of the RCV service, December 1777 to July 1778, are similar to those reported by the VOI. But again, it must be stated that similar to the 46th foot, the VOI maintained these higher numbers for much longer than the RCV. A note from Ward Chipman, the deputy muster master general of Provincial forces at New York, confirmed the status of the VOI in a letter to the Inspector General in September 1779. He wrote that the corps was “more than compleat to the Establishment” and that it seemed to “be compleat in every respect, and that the good appearance of the men is by no means inferior to it's strength”.<sup>106</sup> The muster lists for this month certainly support this claim, as the VOI was 95% complete at the time with a total of 447 men reported by the eight companies whose muster lists are extant.<sup>107</sup> Given this data, as well as the comment from Chipman, it can be asserted that the VOI remained reasonably complete during this period, reaching over 80% completion in most muster list periods. This was facilitated by the generally small numbers of desertion, as well as the consistent successful recruitment efforts of the corps.

**Table 5.9:** Completeness of the Volunteers of Ireland<sup>108</sup>

Muster Date	# of private men	# of companies	% complete
25 Dec 1778	412	10	72.28%
Feb/Mar 1779	440	10	77.19%
24 Apr 1779	447	10	78.42%
17Jul & 5 Aug 1779	516	10	89.42%
25 Aug 1779	383	8	83.99%
20 Sept 1779	433	8	94.96%
24 Feb 1780	556	10	97.54%
24 Apr 1781	478	10	83.86
25 Jun 1781	472	10	82.81%

<sup>106</sup> Ward Chipman to the deputy muster master general of Provincial forces at New York, Sep 1779, M.G. 23, D 1, Series I, Volume 30, part 1, f 158, Ward Chipman Papers, NAC, Ottawa

<sup>107</sup> VOI, all companies, 20 Sep 1779.

<sup>108</sup> VOI, all companies, 25 Dec 1778-24 Oct 1781.

24 Oct 1781	376	10	65.96%
24 Apr 1782	277	10	48.6%

The service of the men transferred from the RCV to the VOI seems to have been for the most part unremarkable in a positive way, meaning few noted disciplinary issues and an overall lack of negative impact on the corps. If desertion had been expected from the RCV transfers, it certainly was not particularly present. Only four, James Kirk, Samuel Gray, John Connelly, and Alexander Buchanan, were listed as having deserted the VOI, and Connelly seems to have been caught and returned to service, as his name appears in muster lists after his desertion was recorded.<sup>109</sup> There were 122 total desertions from the VOI from December 1778 until April 1781, so these four men only make up 3% of the total desertion from this corps. The RCV transfers also are not noted as imprisoned or awaiting court martial save for one man, Edward Warren, who was noted as ‘in provost’.<sup>110</sup> This means he was being detained by the British Army, but a reason is not given. The lack of desertion in large numbers from the RCV transfers which can be discerned through the RCV musters is also significant because it shows that the assumption that they would consistently desert the VOI was false. One historian suggested that high desertion that the VOI had experienced in July 1780 was related to these transfers, but analysis of the musters show that it most certainly was not, as none of the four transferred men who had deserted did so during this period.<sup>111</sup>

If the VOI was so consistently complete and more disciplined than the RCV, why is that so? First and foremost this seems to have been due to officers chosen for command. First of course Lord Rawdon as the head of the corps. Rawdon was well-liked by Clinton and Cornwallis and served as adjutant general of the forces in America from 1778.<sup>112</sup> Rawdon’s reputation as an effective officer combined with his Irish birth made him the ideal candidate to be in charge of the VOI. Clinton certainly thought as much, writing that Rawdon was “the person of that Nation

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<sup>109</sup> VOI, 10th company, 24 Aug 1779 is the desertion listing, but he is present in VOI, Kings, 24 Feb 1780 and VOI, Munro, 24 Apr 1781, though in different companies so potentially could not be the same man. However, no new enlistment date is recorded for the subsequent ‘Connolly’s, which would imply it was the same man.

<sup>110</sup> Warren is noted as such from VOI 5 Aug 1779 -24 Feb 1780, after which he is no longer present in the muster lists.

<sup>111</sup> Martin Griffin, “The Volunteers of Ireland,” *The American Catholic Historical Researches* 3, no. 4 (1907): 339–351. 349.

<sup>112</sup> Cinton to Barrington, Philadelphia, 15 Jun 1778, PRO 30/55/11, f 1241, CP, TNA, Kew.

in the Army whose Situation pointed him out the most strongly for the Command".<sup>113</sup> Thus Rawdon was the perfect man to help Clinton achieve success as he "courted the Irish".<sup>114</sup> The VOI also started on more solid footing because its officers all had previous military experience, some in regular regiments on the British establishment. Of the 28 officers, 11 had served in regular regiments and 19 had served in different officer or logistical roles in a regiment or corps previously, ranging from mate all the way up to Captain. Arguably the least experienced were four of the men who were listed as volunteers from various groups.<sup>115</sup> And then there is of course Rawdon, who served as adjutant general of the army in America before being granted command of his own corps. Clinton expressed his opinions as to why experienced officers were necessary:

The Commissions have been filled in a manner very different from what had been adopted with regard to other Corps on the Provincial Establishment. This Corps has been Officered principally from the regular Regiments one Step alone of Promotion being allowed except in the case of the Lieut. Colonel who was only Capt. Lieut. in the 55th Regiment. My motive for permitting so many regular Officers to serve in this Regiment will I trust be approved by his Majesty, as the present Discipline of this regiment will answer that those Officers could not have been more serviceably employed. Some Commissions have been filled from the Provincial Line, and as those Officers were chosen for meritorious Service, their Appointment will I hope be thought no Bar to the Application I am about to make.<sup>116</sup>

Clinton thus clearly asserted that the previous military experience of the officers was a significant factor in the high level of discipline in the corps.

Despite this more solid footing, the VOI still had trouble among the officers similar to that of the RCV. Captain William Barry, commander of one of the companies of the VOI for this whole period, claimed to have been disrespected by Lt Colonel Doyle and Captain Doyle of the same corps in a letter to Clinton from 26 August 1780, which led him to try to sell his commission in the VOI. He stated that he had already cleared this was Rawdon who had approved of the plan. He claimed that he had received "Nothing but the injuries and ill usage" from the Doyles and that he had experienced "personal Insult" at their hands.<sup>117</sup> He did not go into detail on the exact circumstances or specifics of these insults other than to say that they

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<sup>113</sup> Clinton to Germain, New York, 23 Oct 1778, PRO 30/55/13, f 1469, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>114</sup> Bancroft, *History of the United States vol 10*, 175.

<sup>115</sup> "Officers in the Volunteers of Ireland," vol 44, item 8, Henry Clinton Papers, William Clements Library, Ann Arbor.

<sup>116</sup> Clinton to Germain, New York, 23 Oct 1778, PRO 30/55/13, f 1469, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>117</sup> "Complaint of Captain Barry," 26 Aug 1780, vol 118, item 42, Henry Clinton Papers, WCL, Ann Arbor.

had kept his subsistence from him, claiming that further description was “almost too painful to be expressed in this Address”.<sup>118</sup> Dramatics aside, this complaint shows that there were inter-officer conflicts in the VOI which were arguably handled with less decorum than that of McEvoy and McKinnon of the RCV, who had claimed they immediately made apologies and worked out the issues among themselves.<sup>119</sup> Lt Colonel Doyle’s reaction to this complaint shows the conflict they had was mutually felt. The day following Barry’s letter, Doyle sent his own letter to the adjutant of the VOI demanding that Barry be arrested and face court martial. The charges Doyle listed were “first for Disobedience of Orders, Secondly for Insolent and contemptuous behaviour Towards his Commanding Officers Thirdly for ungrounded and Infamous charges publicly alledged by him against his Lieutenant Coll. and for Publicly and dangerous Threatnings by him made against his Lieutenant Colonel.”<sup>120</sup> These charges can be summed up by general insubordination and insulting and threatening a superior officer.

The only result of the court martial of Barry which I have found is a continued resentful relationship between them. Barry continued to serve in the VOI, certainly holding a grudge against Doyle, which was clearly stated in a memorial he produced in which he continued to assert that he wanted to sell his commission, but that “that Nothing but the bad Treatment he received from Messrs. Doyle could induce him to think of quitting the Service or of accepting of so small a Sum as that he is to receive for his Commission, and that he quits...with a most particular Regret.”<sup>121</sup> That said, Barry can be found as a captain in the VOI as late as 24 June 1781 where he was noted as absent with leave in New York.<sup>122</sup> His continued service in the VOI for a further ten months after his complaint and subsequent court martial shows that while he clearly still did not get along with Lt Col Doyle, this relationship did not result in his discharge. The charges against Barry differ materially from the charges of McKinnon and McEvoy’s court martials, as their conflict had led to an instance of physical violence which was not tolerated. The charges against Barry were only related to verbal assaults, which could be one reason why these proceedings did not lead to his discharge. Another difference between this and the court martials of the RCV is that Barry’s court martial seems to have had little to no effect on the

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> “General Court Martial of Martin McEvoy,” Sep 1778, WO 71/87, f 176-178, Court Martial Proceedings and Board of General Officers’ Minutes; Marching Regiments, TNA, Kew.

<sup>120</sup> Lt Col Doyle to Keens, 27 Aug 1780, vol 119, item 5, Sir Henry Clinton Papers, WCL, Ann Arbor.

<sup>121</sup> “The Memorial of Captain William Barry of the Volunteers of Ireland,” n.d., vol 221, item 13. Henry Clinton Papers, WCL, Ann Arbor.

<sup>122</sup> VOI, Captain Barry, 24 Jun 1781. The subsequent set of muster lists cover the period of 24 Oct 1781-24 Dec 1781, and a Charles McDonnell is listed as the captain of the company previously led by Barry with no note as to where Barry went. VOI, Captain McDonnell, 24 Dec 1781.



reputation of the VOI. Metzger's tour of the RCV and VOI in his discussion of Catholic Tories in the American Revolution makes no mention of this, though it does discuss two other cases in which privates from the corps were court martialed on various charges, but all acquitted. It seems strange to leave out Barry's actions and include this, but perhaps this is a reflection that Barry's complaints and court martial was more related to officer squabbling rather than a serious breach of discipline.

Impressions of the VOI from officers which interacted with them were positive. In comments about the VOI, Clinton wrote: "I may assure your Lordship that they are a fine Body of Men, zealous on Service, and notwithstanding the short time they have been embodied, perfectly obedient and well disciplined. They were with Lord Cornwallis in Jersey; and were honored by his Lordship with the advanced Post both in Camp and in March: His Lordship has complimented their behaviour in both Situations."<sup>123</sup> Cornwallis also was consistently positive toward Rawdon and his corps and mentioned him often in his Correspondence.<sup>124</sup> Rawdon's personal friendship with Clinton and Cornwallis, along with the effective service of his corps, led Clinton to suggest that the VOI be promoted to a regular regiment. Clinton argued that "the Motives on which it was levied, and the light in which it stands, speak strongly for it", as did the behavior of the officers, which had "shewn themselves equal to the Duties of the Ranks they hold".<sup>125</sup> Though not immediately granted, this request did eventually come to fruition as the VOI ended the American Revolution as the 105th regiment of foot.<sup>126</sup> Integration of the VOI within the wider military structure by changing its status from a provincial corps to that of a regular regiment shows the confidence that the British Army had in its success and usefulness.

It was not just the soldiering of the VOI which was well-received, it was also the Irishness of the corps. There certainly was no need to hide the Irishness of the men like there would have been with their Catholicity. This is reflected in newspaper articles which describe the St Patrick's Day celebrations put on by the VOI. One example was from a Saint Patrick's celebration in New York in March 1780. The article opened with the lines "the Anniversary of Saint Patrick, the Tutelar Saint of Ireland, was celebrated in New York by the Natives of that Kingdom, with their accustomed Hilarity."<sup>127</sup> This was followed by notes of decorum on

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<sup>123</sup> Clinton to Germain, New York, 23 Oct 1778, PRO 30/55/13, f 1469, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>124</sup> For an example, see Earl Cornwallis to Germain, Camden, 20 Aug 1780, in *Correspondence of Charles, first marquis Cornwallis edited with notes by Charles Ross, esq vol 1*, (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street 1859) 488-491.

<sup>125</sup> Clinton to Germain, New York, 23 Oct 1778, PRO 30/55/13, f 1469, CP, TNA, Kew.

<sup>126</sup> Martin Griffin, "The Volunteers of Ireland", 351.

<sup>127</sup> "Volunteers of Ireland St. Patrick's Day Celebration," *The New York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury*, (New York) 22 Mar 1779, Online Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies.

Rawdon's part, he complimented several officers, then proceeded to the dinner provided for 500 men, before Rawdon and the officers went to town to dine separately. Comments on the men of the corps were positive:

The soldierly Appearance of the men, their Order of March, Hand in Hand, being all Natives of Ireland, had a striking effect; and many of their Countrymen have since joined them. This single Battalion, though only formed a few Months ago, marched four hundred strapping Fellows, neither influenced by Yankee or Ague<sup>128</sup>

Thus the men of the corps certainly put on a good show, appearing as able bodied and capable, as well as reflecting positively on the quality of Irish troops. The article also had further positive words for the reputation of Irish soldiers, saying they were "naturally gallant and loyal" and necessarily flocked to the VOI to assert their connection to king and country.<sup>129</sup> Another St Patrick's Day celebration the following year created similar reports, again with the VOI mentioned specifically. This article stated that "In the afternoon many entertainments were likewise given, and the night closed with all the real jocundity which ever distinguished that brave & generous nation, Great Britain's beloved Sister."<sup>130</sup> It is of interest here that when the men of Ireland were being helpful in the American colonies, they could be celebrated as a sister nation or brave and generous men, but the majority Irish Catholic population in Ireland was looked upon with skepticism. However, neither article covering these celebrations made any mention of the involvement of Irish Catholics. Though both took place after the integration of the RCV men, so definitively there were Catholics present. These celebrations demonstrate that when Catholicity was not mentioned, Irishness was laudable, and further, the references to camaraderie and honor show that Catholic troops could be integrated into an Irish corps without disrupting its efficacy or identity.

## Conclusion

Comparative study of the treatment of the RCV and VOI makes it clear that Catholic identity was problematic, but Irishness was acceptable. Irish soldiers could be and were celebrated for their efficacy, culminating in the establishment of the VOI as the 105th foot. Further, the RCV was not generated in a way that would have yielded positive results and an

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> "Music & Poetry A St. Patrick's Day Song," *The Royal Gazette*, (New York), 18 Mar 1780, Online Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies.

effective corps, given that they were competing with two other corps for men and that most of their officers had no military experience. It is clear that, as the historiography has asserted, the RCV was never complete and experienced significant disciplinary issues. That said, the VOI had experienced similar court martial offenses between its officers, but this did not leave a lasting mark on the historiographical impressions of the corps. Metzger argues that without a reputation for efficacy or playing a significant role in the American Revolution, the RCV came to “an undistinguished end”, and that “apparently its demise stirred no comment in official circles or elsewhere”.<sup>131</sup> This is certainly accurate for the end of the corps as an entity, but this research has shown that the men of the RCV who were transferred elsewhere generally had at most successful, at least unproblematic, military service after their time with the RCV. Cornwallis noted the bravery of Captain McCulloch, in service of the British Legion, at Hanging Rock, stating that though McCulloch had died of his wounds, he and his men had a significant impact on the preservation of British control.<sup>132</sup> The men transferred to the VOI served in a celebrated corps without issue and presumably with efficacy, as they were not discharged in droves nor did they desert. The service and efficacy of these men in other corps illustrates that while the RCV was a failed experiment at an entirely Catholic corps, this does not mean that the men of the corps were failures as soldiers. This is further supported by the fact that some of these transferred men became non-commissioned officers in the VOI.

After these men were transferred from the RCV, their religious status was not mentioned again. This both puts Catholic recruitment back into obscurity, but also shows their level of integration into the various corps in which they were serving. This reinforces the idea that other identities such as that of a soldier, or in the case of the VOI that of an Irishmen, could be a more unifying factor for camaraderie than Catholicity was a limiting one, demonstrated by the following verse from a song which was sung by the VOI at March 1780 St Patrick’s Day celebration:

This day, (but the year I can’t rightly determine)  
 St. Patrick the vipers did chase from this land,  
 Let’s see if like him we can’t sweep off the vermin  
 Who dare ‘gainst the sons of the shamrogue to stand;  
 Hand in hand! let’s carrol this chorus,  
 “As long as the blessings of Ireland hang o’er us,  
 “The crest of rebellion shall tremble before us,

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<sup>131</sup> Metzger, ‘Some Catholic Tories’, 285.

<sup>132</sup> Earl Cornwallis to Lord George Germain, Camden, 20 Aug 1780, in *Correspondence of Charles, first marquis Cornwallis edited with notes by Charles Ross, esq vol 1*, (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street 1859) 488-491.

“Like brothers while thus we march hand in hand!”<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> “Music & Poetry A St. Patrick's Day Song,” *The Royal Gazette*, (New York), 18 Mar 1780, Online Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies.

## Conclusion

Between 1775 and 1783 Irish Catholic recruitment remained controversial but was still active, significant, and multi-faceted. Despite lack of a consensus on if and how Irish Catholics could be integrated into the British Army they continued to be present there, as they had in secret since at least the middle of the century. This could be seen as an emerging toleration of Catholics in the British empire during this period, but the amount of reactionary writing and events which occurred whenever Irish Catholic recruitment was done more publicly shows that toleration was neither widespread nor uniform. Catholic accommodation in Quebec certainly helped make the government in Britain more willing to think about Catholic accommodation and recruitment in Ireland, but this would not occur quickly or automatically, as the contexts on the ground and historically in Quebec and Ireland were entirely different.

Further, this work has shown that just because the English crown wanted Irish Catholic recruitment to occur, this did not mean that the Irish parliament and public sentiment in Ireland would simply fall in line with this policy. The different ways in which the Irish and British governments handled and reacted to Catholic recruitment in Ireland illustrate the complexity of the relationship between the two. Chapter one discussed this in terms of Lord Lieutenant Harcourt pushing back against over recruitment in Ireland in order to quell local concerns of Irish security and to assert that the Lord Lieutenant held final purview over such decisions. However, the willingness for the British government to acquiesce to these concerns waned significantly as the 1770s progressed. What was treated with patience and understanding when the Lord Lieutenant asserted authority in the 1760s was brushed off in the 1770s as Britain more strongly dictated what the role of Irish soldiers in the American War was to be. This clearly asserted a relationship between Britain and Ireland in which the latter was to be dominated by the former, shattering somewhat the idea that both were 'sister kingdoms' which was common among Irish Protestants.<sup>1</sup>

Irish Catholic recruitment provides an interesting vantage point from which to discuss the development and re-development of ideas of who belongs within the British Empire and the conceptual identity of Britishness both in terms of this discussion of British versus Irish authority on the macro level, and individual Irish recruits on the micro level. This is especially significant during this period of the end of the transition from kingdoms with more malleable borders and in which existence on the lands of it made you a subject, to ideas of countries and nations with

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<sup>1</sup> Bartlett, *The rise and fall of the Irish nation*, 34.

clearly defined borders with more complex ideas about what it meant to be a member of a 'nation'. The shaping and reimagining of what it meant to be a British subject, brought on by diverse issues within the empire illustrates that national identity was "something constructed rather than natural".<sup>2</sup> It could also be broad, swelling to encompass more diverse populations or ideas as needed and accommodating multiple levels of identity. We can see this in the maintenance of single-ethnicity corps such as the Volunteers of Ireland; there Irishness could be celebrated as a component of wider imperial identity without either negating or coming into conflict with the other.

This leads into discussion of not only how national identity is constructed, but by whom. This period saw this become more about individuals asserting their belonging rather than the government prescribing it. The American colonists did this by asserting they did not belong, no longer recognizing the authority of the British Crown in matters from which they were socially and geographically removed. This impacted the Irish case, creating a moment where it was beneficial to assert Irish Catholic belonging in the British empire through addresses of loyalty to the British Crown and volunteering to help with recruitment and quelling the American rebellion. This relates to the dangers of asserting that nationality is created through 'othering', meaning using other groups as a comparison to establish what the building blocks of one nation's identity is by establishing how they are different from another. This does not allow for the ideas of British nationality to be as layered as they were in practice. Further, this does not leave space for Irish Catholics within Britishness, as their religion and culture were used to 'other'.<sup>3</sup> This arbitrarily puts Irish Catholics in their own box separate from Britishness and the Empire, which can problematically obscure their own assertions of belonging and their involvement and complicity throughout the Empire.

It is these questions about and assertions of the place of Irish Catholics within the British Empire which point to larger questions about the degree to which it was possible for Irish Catholics to exist and thrive within the British Empire, as well as the actual shape of increasing Catholic toleration in the late 18th century. For example, does quiet catholic recruitment in which soldiers are not allowed to talk about their religious status even count as toleration? It certainly shows some level of accommodation at the very least, with their restriction against service being ignored in order to allow them to enlist. But again, as with Britt Zerbe's very apt analogy to the U.S. policy of 'don't ask, don't tell', these soldiers hiding their Catholicism does not indicate any actual material change in terms of restructuring either the laws or the regiments to make

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<sup>2</sup> Claydon and McBride, "The trials of the chosen peoples," 4.

<sup>3</sup> Claydon and McBride, "The trials of the chosen peoples," 7.

Catholic participation legal and welcome.<sup>4</sup> However, this was far from substantial integration or assimilation of Irish Catholics. This lack of actual assimilation when men were known to be Catholics can be seen in the treatment of the Loyal Irish Corps and the Roman Catholic Volunteers, both of which were loud about their use of Catholic soldiers and both of which experienced stigma relating to it. The initial drama of the LIC regarding Catholic recruitment set them up as a problematic corps and illustrated in no uncertain terms that anti-Catholicism persisted at the highest levels of the government and military. The treatment of the Roman Catholic Volunteers also illustrates that the British Army was not prepared to restructure in the way that John Dalrymple had suggested. The RCV was similar to his proposal that there should be corps designed to welcome and integrate Catholics in order to help avoid issues relating to anti-Catholicism within the army, but was structured from the beginning in a way that would make them likely to fail and their being the only corps constructed for Catholics left them as an oddity among the ranks. If Irish Catholic recruitment needed then to remain obscured or else face various threats and protests, Irish Catholic recruitment during this period, while a step toward more significant toleration, can be categorised in practice as passive accommodation.

There were clear class based dynamics of this process of belonging as well. The British government certainly seemed more willing to accept the loyalty of Catholic elites like Kenmare than they were to accept the loyalty of the Catholic population at large. This was expressed throughout the period in their courteous accepting of the addresses of loyalty they received, as well as their willingness to rely on Catholic elites to facilitate local Irish Catholic recruitment. The elites did claim to speak for the people of their county or estates in these addresses, but it is doubtful that they made significant efforts to ask these groups their opinions on the British crown before sending these addresses. It is interesting though that Irish Catholic elites could loudly offer to be involved in facilitating recruitment, but when Catholic recruitment was brought up similarly loudly it was labeled shocking and distasteful and followed by reassertions of illegality. It seems that lower class Irish Catholics had to still try to quietly pass as English or Protestant to maintain their safety and access to recruitment, but Irish Catholic elites could declare belonging within the British system by asserting their status, power, and influence over their local communities.

That said, this did provide footing for relief from the Penal Laws for both Irish Catholics. Catholic elites had loudly asserted their loyalty, and Irish Catholic recruits had quietly proven theirs on the battlefield. This led to the first Catholic relief act in 1778 which allowed for

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<sup>4</sup> Zerbe, "A bridge between the gap," 100.

Catholics who took an oath of allegiance to take longer lease terms and also lessened land inheritance restrictions.<sup>5</sup> The text of the act itself referenced the “uniform peaceful behaviour for a long series of years” of the Irish Catholics, implying they had earned this relief with their recent behavior.<sup>6</sup> The two components of the 1778 did not provide substantial reform, but was a step forward relating to the type of reform Kenmare was interested in, relief that would benefit elites. The further 1782 relief act allowed for Catholics to purchase land and removed many of the Penal Laws relating to the existence and abilities of the Catholic clergy.<sup>7</sup> More wide-reaching relief did not occur until 1793, when most of the remaining restrictions were lifted. Significantly for this research, after the 1793 act Catholics were finally permitted to “hold, exercise, and enjoy all civil and military offices, or places of trust or profit under his Majesty”.<sup>8</sup> This meant that Irish Catholic service as privates and officers was now legal. The order in which different restrictions were lifted illustrates a clear bias toward appealing to the elites first before enacting relief which would be helpful to the Irish Catholic populace at large.

Further, the text of the titles of the various acts are also of note relating to subjecthood and treatment of Irish Catholics. The title of the 1778 act stated it was for “relief of His Majesty’s subjects professing the Popish religion”.<sup>9</sup> This broadly encompassed all subjects in Britain and Ireland, but did not single out Ireland in particular, asserting that the Irish were under the larger umbrella of subjecthood. The title of the 1782 act referred to “further relief of His Majesty’s subjects of this kingdom professing the Popish religion”, again speaking broadly and putting Ireland into British subjecthood.<sup>10</sup> The text of the final relief act from the eighteenth century diverged from this, stating it was an act “for the relief of His Majesty’s Popish, or Roman Catholic subjects of Ireland”.<sup>11</sup> This diverged in two ways from the previous titles; first in referencing Ireland in particular, and second by including “Roman Catholic” rather than just referring to them as “Popish”. Popish implied connection to Rome and generally seems to have been employed derogatorily in the contemporary newspapers, but use of Roman Catholic

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<sup>5</sup> “An act for the relief of His Majesty’s subjects professing the Popish religion,” 1778, in *Irish Historical Documents 1172-1922*, ed Edmund Curtis and R B McDowell (London: Methuen, 1943) 194-196.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> “An act for the further relief of His Majesty’s subjects of this kingdom professing the Popish religion”, 1782, in *Irish Historical Documents 1172-1922*, ed Edmund Curtis and R B McDowell (London: Methuen, 1943) 196-198.

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<sup>9</sup> “An act for the relief of His Majesty’s subjects,” 1778.

<sup>10</sup> “An act for the further relief of His Majesty’s subjects,” 1782.

<sup>11</sup> “An act for the relief of His Majesty’s Popish, or Roman Catholic subjects of Ireland,” 1793.



seems to imply an increased level of respect or acceptance of their legitimacy. All of this relief was built on the scaffolding of Irish Catholic assertions of loyalty, or at least of not being problematic, in the aftermath of the Seven Years War and during the American Revolution. This period illustrated that Irish Catholics were not going to jump ship to Britain's enemies during times of tumult in significant numbers or use the chaos of the American rebellion to stage their own.

The methodology employed here of using the official record and the War Office papers in order to personalise the story of recruits that had before just been numbers in more traditional forms of military history is significant in establishing the degree to which this military fraternity was present and felt by Irish Catholic soldiers. This is in line with the work of Kevin Linch and efforts to 're archive the individual' during the end of the early modern period.<sup>12</sup> As historians we are certainly limited in what we can accomplish by what source material is extant, but it is important to use what does exist to its fullest extent in order to reconstruct the past from not just an elite perspective. I have referred to the Irish Catholics recruited as a bargaining chip, talked about who wanted to recruit them and why, and how it related to the reputation of recruiters, nobles, and politicians. But the lived experience of Irish Catholic recruits should not fall through cracks simply because it is difficult to access. The War Office archive gives us plenty of resources from which to gather information on these men, and processed in tandem a lot can be said about overall trends in Irish Catholic service.

The case studies chosen for chapters three, four, and five illustrate the complexity of topics of belonging and loyalty using Irish Catholic recruitment and service into various parts of the British Army as a lens to explore these wider issues. The system of obscurity of Catholic recruitment developed in chapter one was needed because despite the supposed growth of toleration, it had not grown to the level needed for providing Irish Catholics with military training to be acceptable. The obscurity being employed effectively when recruiting the 46th Foot and the lack of controversy or discipline issues that followed illustrates the utility of this system. The 46th recruited Irishmen who met the age, height, and condition criteria with no mention of religion as a limiting factor which allowed them to quietly integrate Catholic recruits as well as to quickly garner the numbers needed for their augmentation. The LIC, through the bungled efforts of Captain Seely, illustrated the other end of the spectrum. The loud Catholic recruitment of the LIC forced the hand of Irish political and military officials into policing the corps and court

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<sup>12</sup> Linch's project is an effort to build a digital database of military documents which can be used to access and connect documents relating to service of British Army officers from 1790-1820. This database is now live at <https://www.georgianarmyofficers.org/> Kevin Linch, "Re-archiving the Individual: British Army Officers, 1790-1820", Arts and Humanities Research Council, University of Leeds, 2022-2024.

marshaling Seely in order to protect their own reputation. All this despite the fact that likely all of these officials were aware of and complicit in carrying out Irish Catholic recruitment. Though the treatment of the LIC cannot be fully laid at the feet of Seely's actions starting off as an independent corps, which was already a novelty, then being immediately embroiled in Catholic recruitment scandals did not bode well for the overall impression of the corps. That said, as John Dalrymple argued, William Dalrymple's willingness to go to bat for his corps both in terms of providing clothing, gear and sustenance as well as arguing with the Earl of Cavan for their ability to serve seems to have appealed to the men of the corps. So while the political structure was against them, in a way Dalrymple actions provided a sticking point for their loyalty as he illustrated that he cared about the composition of the corps, and then men therein. This shows the potential for loyalty to William himself, rather than to either the British monarchy or Army, illustrating that military service and loyalty could have little or nothing to do with a sense of nationalism or patriotism for king and country.

Analysis of these case studies also helps combat negative stereotypes of Irish Catholic soldiers. Desertion of Irish Catholic soldiers when integrated into regiments or corps quietly was quite low, only four likely Irish Catholics deserted from the 46th Foot, and the same for the Volunteers of Ireland. Desertion in the Loyal Irish was higher, but this had more to do with other factors than it did with the Catholicity of the men. Further no court martials were found for any of the Irish Catholics which were identified using their birthplace information. This could be because regiments were able to handle disciplinary issues internally as well which did not always leave a paper trail, but does at the very least indicate that there were no offenses severe enough to lead to a recorded general court martial. The only exception to this is the court martials of two officers of the Roman Catholic Volunteers, and as asserted in chapter five they seem to have been inflated into more serious issues than necessary and were also due to a lack of overall corps discipline stemming from the inexperience of their officers. I certainly did not find consistent disciplinary issues, anecdotes of drunkenness or foul conduct, or mass desertion which would indicate a lack of loyalty on the part of Irish Catholic recruits. This suggests that, as discussed in chapter two, despite the concerns of the Irish parliament as they tried to determine "how dangerous it would be to put arms in the hands of those very men, who by the present system of laws, were prohibited from bearing any", Boyle Roche's assertion that "the Papists made as good soldiers as Protestants" was correct.<sup>13</sup> This proved that Irish Catholics could become a strong subset of the British Army and help provide security

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<sup>13</sup> "Parliamentary Diary," *Freeman's Journal*, vol 13 #29, (Dublin) 28 Oct, INA.

throughout the empire. Their service also undermined the idea that they were inevitably tied to and would choose to ally with Catholic France. Also as the Catholic elites suggested it would, it did provide a way for Irish Catholics to show they were unproblematic at least, loyal at best, to the British state and its priorities.<sup>14</sup> As Stephen Conway suggests, the British military structure created a place of belonging to a pre-existing 'military fraternity', and a sense of occupational solidarity.<sup>15</sup> This provided a place that these soldiers could fit in by being seen as fellow soldiers, rather than separate as Irish Catholics.

As Hagist suggests after presenting the narratives of nine different British soldiers, "the common soldier is not common", meaning the context and experiences of each man recruited for the British army was different.<sup>16</sup> Though homogenised all as 'redcoats' in memory, the British army was not made up of carbon copies of the same type of person. It held Englishmen, Irishmen, Scots, Welsh, Germans, to say nothing of either the multiple religions represented nor the native peoples throughout the empire. The stories from British soldiers themselves that do survive are of course of historical significance and help provide us a glimpse of what life in the British army during this period was like, but those glimpses are not representative of the experience of all soldiers.<sup>17</sup> These narratives can also be problematic because they are sometimes written with remembrance in mind, so the writer both asserts their own biases and constructs a narrative which is trying to communicate certain aspects of their service and themselves. This is similar to the pitfalls of using pension applications to discuss the valor of a soldier, as the soldier is writing that application explicitly to make themselves sound brave, effective, and deserving of a pension.

Moving away from these exceptional and personal narratives to broader data through use of the War Office papers and associated military documents, a more wide reaching data set can be utilised. This certainly is still a curated and biased source as well, but provides a more consistent record of the presence and movement of these men as a group than the narratives do. This gives glimpses into patterns of the composition, treatment, and behavior of groups of recruits in a way that narratives give glimpses into their lives and personal thoughts. This generates a framework of Irish Catholic recruitment and treatment which could be used to help situate and corroborate any narratives generated by these men, should they be found. That

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<sup>14</sup> Lord Gormanston acknowledged the loyalty of the Irish Catholic populace in a letter to princess Ameila. See Gormanston to Amelia, 24 Sep1775, GEO/MAIN/16037, Georgian Papers Online.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Conway, "The British Army, 'Military Europe,' and the American War of Independence," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2010): 69–100. 70.

<sup>16</sup> Hagist, *British soldiers American war*, 267.

<sup>17</sup> Hagist, *British soldiers American war*, epilogue.

said, the methodology used here illustrates that even without narrative sources, some creativity with linking various War Office forms provides a compelling avenue for the study of individual soldiers and patterns of service. This method is also helpful in generating data for comparative projects relating to Irish Catholics service in different locations, or more broadly to comparative service and treatment of different ethnic groups within the British Army. This method makes questions like which group was most likely to desert, how does the level of discipline compare across different types of recruits, as well as questions about the homogeneity of the component forces of the British Army. For example this method could be used to compare the performance of Highlander regiments, Irish Catholic recruits, and Hessian soldiers or German mercenary recruits. This can help cement or correct historical memory and reputation of these groups. Comparison of Irish Catholic service in the British Army versus in the East India Company during this period is also possible using this method, as the EIC was also interested in recruiting them, but did so in a very different context and sent them to a very different geography.<sup>18</sup> In this way, the methodology this project employs serves as a gateway to larger questions about the assimilation of soldiers of different sorts into the British Army in the late eighteenth century.

The title of Wayne Lee's 2012 article sums up the odd space Irish Catholics in the British army inhabited nicely, posing the question "Subjects, Clients, Allies, or Mercenaries?" in his discussion of the use of Irish and Amerindian manpower in the British army.<sup>19</sup> These are words I have considered often in the writing of this research. After completing this analysis it is clear that the identity of Irish Catholic soldiers during this period is complex, and there is certainly space for all four labels to be correct. Without actual opinions or thoughts from these men, trying to assign them an 'identity' or decide how they saw themselves fitting into the British empire is at best presumptuous and at worst problematic. But speaking broadly, there were likely layers of loyalty and multi-faceted, and at times competing, identities within these men. It is unclear whether they would have seen their self-identification as an Irish Catholic inherently at odds with their identity as a British soldier. It is also unclear if their enlistment and continued service in the British army was out of loyalty to the men they enlisted with, their commanding officers, their connection to the tradition of Irish soldiering, loyalty to the British Crown, or a mercenary ideology of loyalty to their way of generating income, no matter the army they found themselves in. Additionally participation in the British military does not automatically mean these men associated themselves with loyalty to the British state and all it stood for. This suggests a layered identity of loyalty in which Irish Catholic recruits did not have to label themselves as

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<sup>18</sup> EIC Directors to Lord Weymouth, East India House, 16 Oct 1777, IOR/H/134, f 447-9, BL, London.

<sup>19</sup> Lee, "Subjects, clients, allies, or mercenaries?".

'British' but in which they did have to navigate within the framework of subjecthood and soldiering. This acceptance of Irish Catholics within this framework illustrates both the flexibility in ideas of subjecthood and the complexity of determining and expressing loyalty, as do the various reactions to their presence.

Irish Catholic recruitment into the British Army for the American Revolution shows that the British definition of belonging was flexible when larger, more global, political and economic ambitions were at stake. Othering based on either Irishness or Catholicism was simply no longer helpful, nor was anti-Catholicism a necessary factor in the cohesion of British identity.<sup>20</sup> That said, removing it from national identity could not be a quick or painless process, as can be seen throughout this work with reactions to loud Catholic recruitment, and culminating at the end of the century with Catholic emancipation not being part of the Act of Union between Britain and Ireland as many had hoped. While it was obscured and left in the shadows of the War Office records, Irish Catholic recruitment was a significant step forward in the story of Catholic relief in Ireland and Catholic integration into the British Empire. While we cannot state their level of loyalty to the British state with any degree of certainty, they were certainly effective participants in the Army and Empire and the need for their enlistment led to addressing more substantially the Catholic question in Ireland. Further, while the British and Irish political structure and social hierarchy had a role in determining or enforcing both belonging and otherness, this was also about individual choice. The choice to be recruited, the choice to serve effectively and long term, the choice to be a soldier loyal to the British Army. In this way Irish Catholic recruitment was both a political process, but also individual relationship with British institutions which increasingly allowed for multifaceted identities and loyalties.

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<sup>20</sup> Stanwood, "Catholics, Protestants", 239-240.

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