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British military recruitment in Ireland during the Crimean War, 1854-6

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ABSTRACT

Ireland has a diverse military historiography, principally within the confines of the British Army. Much has been written to date in relation to Ireland's relationship with that Army, particularly in recent years and with a focus upon the Great War. Yet significant gaps still remain in relation to the long nineteenth century. By analysing the relationship between Irish society and the British Armed Forces, through the lens of recruitment, this article illustrates how and why the Crimean War years represent the positive pinnacle of Ireland's relationship with the empire and the British Army and Royal Navy.

As Tom Bartlett and Keith Jeffery highlighted in *A Military History of Ireland*, the island of Ireland has a diverse military historiography, yet even today substantial gaps exist which serve to limit the wider understanding of Irish society's and Irish individual's interactions with the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom and British Empire.¹ Even though substantial focus has to date been given to the Irish interactions with the British Army especially in the early twentieth century, principally during the Great War, comparatively little has been done in relation to the nineteenth century.² No effort has been made to investigate the Napoleonic Wars in the same way that Bartlett and Jeffery have done for the Irish soldier in general and there is only minimal concern to place the Crimean War within its wider 'social and political contexts'.³ Even the Boer War remains neglected with Donal McCracken's important works being focused on nationalism.⁴ In Britain, and in relation to the Crimean War, Myna Trustrum, Helen Rappaport, Olive Anderson, H.J. Hanham and E.M. Spiers have all shown the emergence of a major popular philanthropic movement, the social reinvention of the common soldier, mass recruitment, and a partial reformation of military structures in the period, but this remains absent from Irish military historiography.⁵

Be that as it may, the Crimean War was, not simply a distinct event in nineteenth-century Irish history during which a large cross-section of people supported it or showed great interest, but also, a distinct period in Ireland's long and distinguished military tradition within the British Armed Forces. Although it did not alter the trend in what most historians agree to have been a diminishing Irish presence, being 42.2% of the Army in 1830 and only 12.9% in 1898, the conflict still saw thousands of Irish civilians, from a variety of localities and backgrounds, and for multiple reasons, volunteer for military service. To these can be added the thousands of men already serving in the Irish garrison who eagerly volunteered to serve with other units in the East. These perhaps numbered several thousands, although they are not analysed in this paper.⁶ Neither will this paper consider the private individuals who proposed the raising of volunteer units in Ireland to aid the war effort in a manner which foreshadowed the imperial yeomanry of the Boer War.⁷

¹ Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (eds), 'Preface' in *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. xxi.

² The principal works on Irish society and the Great War include Callan, Denman, Jeffery, Grayson and Fitzpatrick.

³ Bartlett and Jeffery, 'Preface', p. xxi.

⁴ D. P. McCracken, *The Irish Pro-Boers 1877-1902* (Johannesburg: Perskor, 1989); *ibid*, *MacBride's Brigade: Irish Commandos in the Anglo-Boer War* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1999); *ibid*, *Forgotten Protest, Ireland and the Anglo-Boer War* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2003).

⁵ Myna Trustrum, *Women of the Regiment: Marriage and the Victorian Army* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 149-80; Helen Rappaport, *No Place for Ladies: the Untold Story of Women in the Crimean War* (London: Aurum, 2007), pp. 14, 16-17, 27, 96; Olive Anderson, 'The Growth of Christian Militarism in Mid-Victorian Britain' in *English Historical Review*, lxxvii, no. 338 (January, 1971), pp. 46-72.

⁶ For more on the regimental histories of units garrisoned in and with depots in Ireland between 1854 and 1856, for example the 5th Dragoon Guards, 4th Dragoons and the 14th Foot see Major Ralph Legge Pomeroy, *The Story of a Regiment of Horse being the Regimental History from 1685-1922 of the 5th Princess Charlotte of Wales's Dragoon Guards* (Edinburgh and London, 1924); J.M. Brereton, *A History of the 4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards* (Cattrick, 1987; Captain H. O'Donnell, *Historical Records of 14th Regiment* (Devonport, 1893).

⁷ For more on this see the letters of Mr Henry Grattan, Mr Beamish and Mr Henry Rice to Colonel Thomas Larcom and the Earl of St Germans between 1854 and 1855 in the Chief Secretary's Papers held at the National Archives of Ireland, MSS 2720, 21116 and 22029.

The aim of this paper is not to recount the exploits of Irishmen in the various battles and expeditions of the Crimean War (something which has already been done by David Murphy and Brian Griffin), rather it is to analyse the relationship between Irish society and the British military at a specific point during the period of the union.⁸ By looking at the issue through the lens of recruitment, and by answering three broad questions, it will illustrate how and why the Crimean War years represent the positive pinnacle of Ireland's relationship with the empire and especially the British Armed Forces. Those three questions are: where does the war fit into Ireland's long tradition of recruitment into the British Armed Forces and its declining presence within the same during the nineteenth century? What were the numbers, motivations and patterns of recruitment of Irishmen into the forces? How did these differ by location, region and over time?

The Crimean War was a distinct period in Ireland's history: in its parliamentary relationship with the empire; in the context of militant nationalists' subversive activities and in British governance and peace-preservation in Ireland; in the relationship of the various Christian denominations in Ireland not only with the military, the state and the empire but also with one another; in Ireland's post-Famine recovery and Irish society's economic interaction with the British state; in Ireland's long tradition of philanthropy; but also in the Irish public's general relationship with the empire and British Armed Forces. The military sphere not only saw an outburst of empire-wide popular philanthropy 'from the Queen to the beggar' in 1854 it also saw a rush to the colours and the first period of major and especially popular recruitment across the United Kingdom since the Napoleonic Wars.⁹

The war with Russia occurred in the midst of a century-long decline in the numbers of Irishmen willing to enlist into the Army.¹⁰ However, this was part of a wider and persistent problem that was also experienced in Great Britain right throughout the same century.¹¹ In fact the inability of the British military authorities to induce the requisite numbers of men from throughout the United Kingdom to enter the Army (and the Navy) led, as other historians have argued, to British forces failing to achieve their designated establishments on multiple occasions during the nineteenth century.¹² In the case of the Army this was principally due to the poor rates of pay and conditions and the decline in the numbers of Scots and rural English and Welsh (as well as Irishmen) willing to join the colours.¹³

There is no evidence to show that the war brought about an increase in the proportion of Irishmen in the Army or Navy during the Crimean War even though the numbers of Irishmen as a whole, with the British Army's establishment rising from 112,977 in 1854 to 246,716 in 1856. Although the Irish-born Army officer corps and rank-and-file were, as Peter Karsten argues, 'slightly' and 'grossly' overrepresented respectively in the peacetime Army, given the lack of appeal which the career had to men in Britain with greater career prospects, any numerical increase in the proportion of Irishmen during the war would have been offset by a similar increase in English, Welsh and Scots during the war, especially the former.¹⁴

Although the official reports and the composite tables of Hanham and Spiers show that the proportion of Irish continued to fall between the decade that preceded the war and the decade that followed, the years 1854 to 1856 saw thousands of Irishmen from a variety of backgrounds and for a variety of reasons, enlisting and obtaining commissions in the forces. That being said, analysis of the numbers recruited during the early years of the Irish Famine¹⁵ suggests that, in spite of the fall in Irish numbers in the Army between 1840 and 1861, the Irish proportion may have in fact been higher at the outbreak of the war, and thus closer to the Brian Griffin's and Hanham's estimates – 40% and circa 50%

⁸ David Murphy, *Ireland and the Crimean War* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2002); Brian Griffin, 'Ireland and the Crimean War' in *Irish Sword*, xxii, no. 89 (Summer 2001), pp. 281-312.

⁹ Richard Cobden to William Sharman Crawford, 27 July 1855, D 856/D/125, William Sharman Crawford papers, PRONI.

¹⁰ H. J. Hanham, 'Religion and Nationality in the Mid-Victorian Army' in M.D.R. Foot (ed.), *War and Society: Historical Essays in Honour and Memory of J.R. Western 1928-1971* (London: Elek, 1973), p. 162.

¹¹ A. R. Skelley, *The Victorian Army at Home: the Recruitment and Terms and Conditions of the British Regular, 1859-1899* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), pp. 19, 235-6.

¹² E. M. Spiers, *The Army and Society, 1815-1914* (London: Longman, 1980), p.37; Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1977), p. 201.

¹³ Skelley, *The Victorian Army*, p. 287.

¹⁴ Peter Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army 1792-1922: Suborned or Subordinate?' in *Journal of Social History*, xvii, no. 1 (Autumn 1983), p. 36.

¹⁵ *Returns of the Establishment of the British Army at Home and Abroad in 1846, 1847 and 1848, and on the 1st January 1845 and 1848; also, Number of Recruits for the British Army Admitted from 1844 to 1847, Parliamentary Papers (PP), 1847-48, (228), vol. 41, 23.*

respectively – than David Murphy’s estimate of circa 33%.¹⁶ The former’s estimates are bolstered by unofficial, contemporary, figures offered by the Licensed Vintners and Grocers Association in 1854 (43,000 or 42.3%) and the *Freeman’s Journal* in 1857 (43,000 or 33.9%). Both of which still conform in general to Hanham’s table and its message of decline.¹⁷ Griffin argues that ‘even if one cannot give a precise figure of the number of Irishmen serving in the British Army in the 1850s’, or who entered service during the war, it should not be doubted that Irish soldiers ‘played a substantial role in the Crimean conflict’.¹⁸ Yet before they could play that role many civilians had first to enlist or to obtain commissions, while serving personnel had to transfer from the Militia or other regular units (in both Ireland and Britain) to those that were designated for active service.

The reason for the overall and proportional decline in the numbers of Irishmen within the Army during the nineteenth century was primarily due to a decline in the portion of Irish society that supplied them – unskilled rural labourers, who were often ‘encouraged to enlist by want of alternative employment’.¹⁹ Although they accounted for a higher proportion of Irish recruits, such rural-born men were not absent amongst their mainland counterparts. In London especially ‘north countrymen, generally ... from Scotland, from Yorkshire, and Northumberland’ were heavily recruited, having ‘come up for employment’ but then failing to find any.²⁰ As Spiers and Skelley have shown, abatement in their numbers throughout the century was due to continued industrialisation and urbanisation, coupled with emigration and increased agricultural wages (and the latter was more prominent in Ireland). This was counterbalanced by a corresponding rise in the numbers of men enlisting from urban areas.²¹ Although their numbers declined dramatically throughout the century, Peter Karsten argues that rural labourers were still prevalent among Irish recruits on the eve of the First World War.²² The prominence of these labouring classes in the ranks of the Army during the Crimean War is perhaps most evident, outside of the regimental muster rolls, in the entries of the out-pensioners’ roll books of the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham. Taking the cavalry and infantry personnel entered in February 1857 as an illustrative sample, the proportion of labourers amongst them was 33% and 87.5% respectively. This trend persists throughout the entries for that year, as well as in other years before and after the Crimean War. The prominence of the ‘labourer’, which too often could mean unemployed person or even vagrant, is also seen in the Militia.²³

Spiers has also shown that the proportion of Irish and Roman Catholics in the Army was almost equal throughout much of the century.²⁴ This confirms that the majority of the labourers, and Irish recruits in general, were Roman Catholics. During the war the prevalence of Catholics amongst Irish recruits into the Army was highlighted by both the *Belfast News-Letter* and the *Banner of Ulster*; neither of which had traditionally been a friend to Catholicism. In March 1854 the *Banner* reported that the majority of people in Belfast that had ‘mounted the cockade’ in the preceding six months had been Catholics. While in December the *News-Letter* described ‘the ardour and enthusiasm’ with which Catholics had flocked, and were deemed still to be flocking in every town and rural district, to enlist into both the Army and the Militia. This it suggested clearly illustrated their ‘loyalty and patriotism’.²⁵ On the other hand the middle (and urban working) classes were, especially during peacetime, largely absent from the enlisted ranks and those commissioned, as they generally did not have a problem obtaining employment and could more often rely on steady wages. This meant they were much less likely to take up a military profession that required the acceptance of ‘fierce discipline, spartan conditions of service and minimal reward’.²⁶ For example in 1861 only 4 out of every 1,000 recruits examined in Ireland were described as coming from ‘Professional occupations’ or being ‘students’, and only sixty-eight as ‘Shop men and clerks’, the remainder were labourers or in trade, as can be seen in Table 1.²⁷

¹⁶ Murphy, *Crimean War*, pp. 21-2; Brian Griffin, ‘Irish Identity and the Crimean War’ in Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thornton (eds), *War: Identities in Conflict 1300-2000* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998), pp 115; Hanham, ‘Religion and Nationality’, pp. 160, 162; General Frederick Peel, Speech to the House of Commons, 4 March 1859, *Parliamentary Debates, Commons (PD)*, 3rd ser., vol, 152 (1859), col. 152.

¹⁷ *Freeman’s Journal*, 13 March 1854, 31 October 1857.

¹⁸ Griffin, ‘Irish Identity’, p. 113.

¹⁹ Hanham, ‘Religion and Nationality’, p. 162; Peter Karsten, ‘Irish Soldiers’, p. 37.

²⁰ Spiers, *Army and Society*, pp. 40-1.

²¹ Skelley, *The Victorian Army*, p. 294; Spiers, *Army and Society*, pp. 47-9.

²² Karsten, ‘Irish Soldiers’, p. 37.

²³ Examination Report, 1857, MS 23-2-1857, Royal Hospital Kilmainham Papers (RHK), National Archives of Ireland (NAI); Thomas Larcom to the War Office, 4 February. 1859, MS 1130, Chief Secretary’s Office, Registered Papers (CSORP), NAI.

²⁴ E. M. Spiers, ‘Army Organisation and Society in the Nineteenth Century’ in *A Military History*, p. 337.

²⁵ *Banner of Ulster*, 7 Mar. 1854; *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 December 1854.

²⁶ Spiers, ‘Army Organisation’, p. 335.

²⁷ The figures in Table 1 are derived from *Army Medical Department. Statistical, Sanitary, and Medical Reports for the Year 1861*, PP, 1863 [3233], vol, 34, 1.

	England & Wales	Scotland	Ireland	UK
	%	%	%	%
Labourers, husbandmen and servants	49.8	33.4	57.1	48.4
Manufacturing artisans, cloth workers, weavers, lace makers etc)	14.7	20.8	11.3	15.1
Mechanics employed in occupations favourable to physical development (as carpenters, smiths, masons etc)	21.8	38.2	20.6	24.3
Shop men and clerks	11.3	6.4	6.8	9.6
Professional occupations, students	0.5	0.7	0.4	0.6
Boys	1.9	0.5	3.8	2.0

Table 1: Occupations of every 1,000 recruits examined in 1861.

This trend was evident during the Crimean War, especially in the north where employment was steady. Ulstermen showed a reluctance to enlist until after the war had been declared and a similar apprehension persisted among farmers. Yet war could change that. At its annual meeting in March 1854, the Licensed Grocers and Vintners Association declared,

after the late few weeks of enlistment, that 1,300 men had been enlisted here [in Dublin]; not men who entered the Army through want, as was the general motive, but men who had left good employments, and some from their own houses, too.²⁸

A similar occurrence was reported in the enlistment *en masse* of twenty-five Dublin cab drivers in the previous month. It was believed by both the paper and the Vintners Association that it had been some sense of chivalry that had spurred these men to take the shilling.²⁹

As Karsten argues there were multiple reasons why men in Ireland enlisted or took commissions in the military; these could be financial, adventure, escape, religion, patriotism and even tradition.³⁰ While the latter was quite prevalent among the enlisted ranks, as illustrated by the case of David Browne of the 20th Foot (who was 'born in the 50th Regt', whose wife's father had served and whose own daughter married a soldier), it was even more so among the officer corps.³¹ The sons of the Irish landowners and wealthy or professional men, especially those who would not inherit and did not wish to become lawyers or clergymen, provided the majority of Ireland's officers (primarily Army).³² Although their Anglican peers in Britain followed a similar trend the Irish still remained slightly overrepresented in the Army's overall officer corps owing to a lack of alternative prospects in Ireland compared to those found across the Irish Sea.³³

Yet in the case of the enlisted man there existed one factor that would not have been prevalent among the officers – drunkenness. The enlistment of men who 'frequented "haunts of dissipation and inebriation"' was one of the most common and traditional practices of the nineteenth century and those that preceded it.³⁴ Men were either approached in such places while under the influence of alcohol, or potential recruits were deliberately inebriated in order to loosen their inhibitions. This practice was utilised by both the Army, the Navy and the Militia and can be seen in the case of Private Thomas Coffey of the City of Dublin Militia, who 'unfortunately enlisted ... through the advice of bad advisers and drunkenness' in early 1855.³⁵

²⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 13 March 1854.

²⁹ *Leinster Express*, 18 February 1854.

³⁰ Philip O'Flaherty, *Philip O'Flaherty the Young Soldier: Containing Interesting Particulars of the War in the Crimea* (Edinburgh: John Shepard, 1855), p. 7; Aidan Fee, 'From the Crimea to Coney Island – the Life and Times of James Alfred Caulfield' in *The Bell: Journal of Stewartstown and District Local Historical Society*, no. 9 (2003), p. 22; Lady Cloncurry to Lord Donoughmore, 16 February 1855, H/15/1/62, Donoughmore Papers, Trinity College Dublin (TCD); E. H. Nolan, *The Illustrated History of the War against Russia* (2 vols, London: J.S. Virtue, 1856-7), i, p. 161.

³¹ Wolseley Forms 1892-4 (R.H.K., 2B-27-35).

³² As with the enlisted ranks Ireland was 'essentially a nursery' for officers of 'the land forces'. *Belfast News-Letter*, 19 April 1854.

³³ Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers', p. 36; R. V. Comerford, *Fenians in Context: Irish Politics and Society 1848-82* (2nd ed., Dublin: Wolfhound, 1998), p. 13.

³⁴ Spiers, 'Army Organisation', p. 339.

³⁵ Margaret Coffey to Lord St Germans, 1 March 1855, MS 2768, CSORP, NAI.

It cannot be underestimated how influential the visual and aural military display was upon individuals. Recruiting sergeants and parties with bright red jackets, fife and drum and coloured ribbons flowing from their hats were often said to be an inducement. So important was this element of enlistment during the war, that the *Mayo Constitution* lamented the local Militia regiment's use of posters which highlighted the £6 bounty payable upon enlistment in lieu of 'martial music and gaily-dressed Militiamen'. The latter it was conceived would much better excite the enthusiasm of the peasantry and offer more inducements to them than the 'liberal offers of bounty on paper'.³⁶ In Louth too, in 1855, the failure of the local Militia to play spirited music or to hold themselves in a pristine martial manner was deemed to be one of the contributing factors to a failed recruitment drive.³⁷ Unlike the period of the Boer War when such parties were thwarted and harassed at every turn by the Irish Transvaal Committee, during the Crimean War parties of that nature were generally well received in most localities.³⁸

Although born over a decade after the Crimean War, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Octavius Head recalled how in his youth he always enjoyed travelling into the local town of Birr in King's County. There he would see 'the red-coated soldiers walking along the road' looking like 'such gentlemen compared with the local inhabitants' and the officers of the garrison regiments who 'always appeared to me to be veritable gods from Olympus'.³⁹

Yet the path to become such a 'god' was a more complex affair than simply taking the Queen's shilling as an enlisted soldier. During the war men eagerly sought and obtained commission in the regular Army and the Militia by three mechanisms. The first of these was the use of written petitions to senior military figures such as the commander of the forces in Ireland, the commander-in-chief at Horse Guards and Militia colonels. These were termed 'memorials'. During the war the commander of the forces in Ireland was inundated with requests from fathers, mothers, acquaintances and applicants themselves for commissions, both with and without purchase, in the regular Army, the Militia and in one instance the Navy. On other occasions the Militia colonels were contacted directly.⁴⁰ The second was that they benefited from the patronage of a family member or a friend being perhaps the colonel or lieutenant-colonel of a Militia regiment. This enabled young men who met the appropriate property requirements (or their families did) to be nominated for a commissioned appointment.⁴¹ The power of colonels, who were often prominent local landowners and peers, to recommend men for appointments was one which often saw multiple members of their own families or other prominent local families holding commissions in the same regiment.⁴² This was also seen in the regular Army; Lord Raglan's staff in the East contained five of his nephews.⁴³ The third was the same form of patronage was applied to the regulars through 'ensigns' commissions which were given by the commander-in-chief to Militia colonels 'for every 75 men who were given to the line [regular Army]'. Those commissions were placed at the sole disposal of the Militia colonels.⁴⁴

Recruitment during the Crimean War was also subject to other factors beyond the personal motivations and the social status of the soldier; the location, time, corps and method employed were also important. Although war was not declared by Britain (or France) until late March 1854, the government put the military on a war footing from early February. In that month the Army and Navy were ordered to meet their establishments, as they had both fallen well below target during the forty years of general European peace and as a result of British fiscal retrenchment.⁴⁵ The first strategy employed to obtain recruits was that of multiple recruitment parties. In many instances multiple parties from the same regiment or corps were found operating in a single area; Dublin was the home of several recruiting parties at

³⁶ *Mayo Constitution*, 12 December 1854.

³⁷ *Newry Examiner*, 24 January 1855.

³⁸ Terence Denman, "'The Red Livery of Shame': the Campaign against Army Recruitment in Ireland, 1899-1914" in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxix, no. 114 (Nov. 1994), pp. 212-13.

³⁹ Lieutenant-Colonel C.O. Head, *No Great Shakes: An Autobiography* (London: R. Hale, 1943), pp. 24-5.

⁴⁰ Military Secretary to George E. Bingham, Esq., 20 January 1855; *ibid.*, to Mrs. Blake, 1 February 1855; *ibid.*, to Sir J. Stewart, Bart., 8 December 1854; *ibid.*, to Mrs. W. Benson, 6 December 1854, MS 1221, Kilmainham Papers (KP), National Library of Ireland (NLI); Copy of Francis J. Graham to Lord Clanricarde, 25 October 1854, T 3171/M, Clanricarde Papers, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI); Cloncurry to Donoughmore, 16 February 1855, H/15/1/62.

⁴¹ 'Instructions Relative to Raising Volunteers for the Militia and the Establishment of Officers and Permanent Staff', 26 October 1854. D 286/39, PRONI.

⁴² *Hart's Army List, 1855*, pp. 323, 326, 328.

⁴³ *The Times*, 29 January 56.

⁴⁴ *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Present System of Recruiting in the Army; Together with the Minutes of Evidence*, [2762], PP, 1861, vol. 15, 1; *Daily News*, 15 November 1855.

⁴⁵ A. E. C. Bredin, *A History of the Irish Soldier* (Belfast: Century Books, 1987), p. 324.

that stage. In June Belfast had six parties from the Scots Fusiliers, 13th, 45th and 67th Foot, the Royal Marines and the Royal Artillery all plying their trade and in the following month that number rose to ten.⁴⁶

While urban areas had large concentrations of people from whom the sergeants could recruit, in the countryside regiments had to rely on events or places which concentrated the population, such as fairs or taverns. From the beginning until the end of the war recruiting parties for both the regular and Militia regiments used county and town fairs as areas for recruiting.⁴⁷ At that early stage a more complex strategy was not necessary as men came forward eagerly and in large numbers, for any of the aforementioned reasons. Even before the declaration of war Dublin was described as having no difficulty 'in obtaining the requisite supply of able-bodied young men to complete the required augmentation of the land forces'. Recruitment in Dublin in mid-February was described as 'brisk', in spite of the bounty being low. In the second week alone 500 men reportedly enlisted at various depots in the city, while at the end of the following month the city's depots were reportedly 'thronged with fine young fellows entering upon the service'.⁴⁸ In fact so great were the numbers of men coming forward in Belfast in those early months that the recruiting staff of the northern circuit under Lieutenant-Colonel Adair moved from Newry, in order to better coordinate the intake.⁴⁹

As previously mentioned Ulstermen, or at least Ulster Protestants, demonstrated an initial reluctance to enlist and give up decent wages before the war was a certainty. Yet by the latter part of March the numbers of Ulster Protestants coming forward had increased substantially in the areas of Dromore, Lurgan and Banbridge, where several recruiting parties made 'successful efforts'. Although this tapered off somewhat around July, by December (and most likely due to the Battle of Inkerman - the third battle of the war), good numbers of 'fine young men' with 'warlike thoughts' were being recruited into both the regular and the local Militia regiments in Armagh and Newry. This mirrored similar trends in both Dublin and London.⁵⁰ By that month it was reported that 800 men were being recruited per week in Ireland. Yet due to its smaller population, continued emigration, and the increase in agricultural wages, Connacht was the worst province for recruiting, once Ulster had become active.⁵¹

Although Ireland was predominantly an Army recruitment ground where neither 'marine nor seaman would have any chance before a "regular" red coat', it did still annually provided a large body of men for the Navy in the 1850s. According to David Murphy the Royal Navy in this period was comprised of about 20% Irishmen, and while that might be true (a lack of official figures makes it hard to confirm), the official recruitment figures for 1852, and the figures closest to the war years, puts the percentage of Irish recruits at about 10%.⁵² Regardless of this disparity it still highlights the fact that Irishmen constituted the second most prominent national group in the Navy at the time of the war, far out-stripping the Scots or the Welsh.

While the total Irish representation for the period is in debate, what is not is their origins. According to the aforementioned figures (visible in Tables 2 and 3) the majority of Irishmen who entered into the Royal Navy or the Royal Naval Coast Volunteers (RNCV) at that time came from the western and southern coasts. This was in spite of the fact that direct recruitment into the Royal Navy was conducted by various naval officers in others parts of the country throughout the war, but especially before the departure of the Baltic Fleet in March 1854. For example in mid-February an officer was reported as having success enrolling 'able seamen, landsmen, and first-class boys for service afloat' at Waterford, and only a week later the captain of the 'war steamer *Bosphur* took on board 40 'lively young fellows' at Kingstown, In March Captain Chambers travelled along the northern and eastern coasts recruiting men and also collecting members of the Coast Guard for regular service.⁵³

In 1854 both the Coast Guard and the RNCV comprised the Royal Navy's reserve. Although the former officially came under the control of the Board of Trade, from 1831 it was managed by the Admiralty. It was also staffed by ex-naval seamen. The latter service was the new 'Sea Militia' or part-time naval reserve that was established by parliament in August 1853 and only began recruiting in January 1854.⁵⁴ Although the Coast Guard in Ireland did represent a potential pool of several hundred men for the Navy to draft (as not all were eligible to serve afloat), it had additional roles. These

⁴⁶ *The Times*, 11 February 1854; *Belfast News-Letter*, 16 June 1854; *Freeman's Journal*, 15 July 1854.

⁴⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 15 October 1855, 11 February 1856.

⁴⁸ *The Times*, 14 Feb. 1854; C.S.R., 30 March 1854.

⁴⁹ *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 March, 21 April 1854.

⁵⁰ *Recruiting in the Army, 1861*, p. 91; *Belfast News-Letter*, 24 March, 15 November, 8, 22 December, 1854.

⁵¹ *Belfast News-Letter*, 17; 29 December 1854.

⁵² *Belfast News-Letter*, 19 April 1854; Murphy, *Crimean War*, pp. 82-3.

⁵³ *The Times*, 14 February 1854; *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Feb. 1854; *Belfast News-Letter*, 13 March 1854.

⁵⁴ *Copies of a correspondence between the Board of Treasury and the Board of Admiralty on the subject of the manning of the Royal Navy, together with copies of a report of a committee of naval officers, and of Her Majesty's order in council relating thereto*, p. 27, PP, 1852-53 [1628], vol, 60, 9.

were to 'guard the coasts', but primarily against smuggling and not against invasion, and to undertake life-saving duties. Its men were based in hundreds of 'stations' on the coasts of the United Kingdom and had a total strength of 5,691 in 1852 (down from 6,149 in 1848). In 1852 there were 1,485 men in the Coast Guard in Ireland, 198 in Scotland and 4,008 in England and Wales.⁵⁵ This again reflects Ireland's prominent place within the naval services of the United Kingdom at that time. During the early part of the war Irish newspapers regularly reported the numbers of Irish Coast Guards who were drafted into the naval service, but as those men were already full-time employees of the state they were not actually recruits. Thus they do not come under the remit of this paper. Also many of those men were from other parts of the United Kingdom, and perhaps even abroad. That being said, given that by mid-February some 1,500 Coast Guards (from all over the United Kingdom) had been drafted into the fleet, they do represent a definite part of Ireland's contribution to the manning of the Navy of Navy during the Crimean War.⁵⁶

Between February and May 1854 Captain A.W. Jerningham, Inspecting Commander of the Coast Guard in Ireland,⁵⁷ having been especially tasked by the Admiralty, travelled between Galway and Cork in order to enlist at least 1,000 'seafaring men' – fishermen, turf boat men, quayside labourers and 'lumpers' (men who had serve a few years afloat) – into the RNCV from the 'coastal settlements'.⁵⁸ As is evident from the recruitment reports of both the Royal Navy and the RNCV the naval services only recruited men from a sea-faring background and coastal localities. This differed greatly to the regular Army and 'land Militia', which could enlist men from any background (including the Coast Guard).⁵⁹ Between 1 October 1853 and 31 December 1855 a total of 13,974 men joined the Royal Navy, of those 258 were from the merchant Navy the remainder were 'from the shore' and were described as 'seafaring men'.⁶⁰ Not only does this show the social origins of naval recruits, it also shows the failure of the Maritime Register. This was an established mechanism used by the Admiralty in the decades preceding the war to try and draw upon the its traditionally favoured manpower pool: merchant seamen.

As in Ireland seafarers in England, Wales and Scotland were recruited to the naval services from coastal towns and cities. Although the traditional recruiting tool – the press gang – was not employed during the war with Russia (or indeed any time after 1815) the fear of it persisted in isolated rural communities. The nationalist newspaper *The Nation* alleged that such fear had scared people from the coastal communities into emigrating in early 1854.⁶¹ While this was no doubt an exaggeration the fear did persist in some regions of the United Kingdom right into the 1880s.⁶² In fact, and contrary to such claims, an enthusiasm, similar to that seen for the land forces, was present within coastal communities. The following February a report in the *Belfast News-Letter* most clearly illustrates this by the state of affairs in Cork at that time. It declared that 'the enrolment of volunteers for the defence of the coast by Captain Jerningham, R.N., is proceeding with unexpected rapidity. The number of eager applicants is quite prodigious, and the office of the Mercantile Marine Board is completely besieged by persons offering themselves. On Friday over one hundred were enrolled, which, considering that each individual has to undergo medical inspection and receive a certificate, may be considered rapid work ... There is no doubt that the coast volunteers of this port will soon amount to a very formidable body'.⁶³

This enthusiasm continued into May 1855 when the Cork press reported, not only that Jerningham was still present at Cork, but that he was still enlisting large numbers of men into the RNCV, and that 'the anxiety to enlist being so great that many run after him in the streets requesting to be enrolled'.⁶⁴ While the main naval recruitment towns in Ireland were Belfast and Londonderry in Ulster, Cork, Kinsale, Queenstown, Limerick and Waterford in Munster, Dublin in

⁵⁵ *Return to an Order of the Honourable the House of Commons, Dated 4 March 1859;—for, Copies or Extracts of the Report and Appendix of the Committee of 1852 on Manning the Navy*, PP, 1859, (45), vol, 17, 3387.

⁵⁶ *British Army Dispatch*, 10 Feb. 1854; *Galway Vindicator*, 22 February 1854.

⁵⁷ Arthur William Jerningham was employed as Inspecting Commander of the Coast Guard and then Inspector of Small-arms Exercises until the war. *A Naval Biographical Dictionary 1849*, p. 582; Edmund Lodge, Esq., *The Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1867), p. 515; *The Times*, 27 November 1889. Murphy, *Crimean War*, pp. 84-5.

⁵⁸ *Belfast News-Letter*, 22 Feb. 1854; *Cork Constitution*, 2 February 1854.

⁵⁹ Colonel Hodder to Sir John Young, 27 November 1854, MS 20716, CSORP, NAI; B. Hawes to Sir John Young, 9 December 1854, MS 21301, CSORP, NAI.

⁶⁰ *Return Showing the Number of Able Seamen, Ordinary Seamen, and Second Class Ordinary Seamen (Late Landmen), who Volunteered from the Merchant Service into the Royal Navy from the 1st October 1853 to the 31st December 1854, and from the 1st January to the 31st December 1855; Distinguishing Those who had Never Before Served in the Navy*, PP, 1857-8, (447), vol, 39, 353; *Manning the Navy, 1852*, p. 66

⁶¹ *The Nation*, 25 February 1854.

⁶² Brian Lavery, *Shield of Empire: the Royal Navy and Scotland* (Edinburgh: Bilinn Limited, 2007), p. 153.

⁶³ *Belfast News-Letter*, 22 February 1854.

⁶⁴ *Cork Examiner*, 2 May 1855.

Leinster and Galway in Connacht, in 1852 56% of the 2,375 Irish men and boys recruited into the Royal Navy came from Cork alone with another 7.6% coming from the western and southern counties of Clare, Galway and Kerry. Thus the recruitment focus of the most senior figure of the RNCV in Ireland and of the contemporary press on the region which gave the Navy over 60% of its Irish recruits is understandable.⁶⁵ Yet, while it can be seen in Tables 2 and 3 below that every county in Ireland gave at least one man or boy to the service the fact certain counties gave substantially more needs some explanation.

The reasons why so many men were recruited from so few localities stemmed principally from their maritime natures – all such counties bordered the sea – and the fact that they were all consequently home to substantial maritime, or more specifically fishing, populations. In the case of Cork, at this time it was the foremost maritime county in Ireland; it boasted three times as many ‘fishing districts’, four times as much coastline, ten times as many boats and five times as many fishermen and boys than its nearest rival and second largest contributor to the service: Dublin.⁶⁶ This was partly due to the fact that Cork was the largest county in Ireland. The same factors can be attributed to Dublin and the other principal counties of Antrim, Galway, Kerry, and Waterford. That being said there were some counties with similar large populations: Down, Mayo and Wexford, which did not give as many. This might be attributed to a lack of exposure to the Navy. According to Daira Brunicardi, the isolated maritime communities of the Atlantic coastline, which in the case of Jerningham’s recruitment activity in 1854-5 stretched from Galway to Cork, had regular contact with patrolling Royal Navy vessels and thus formed lasting relationships and economic ties with the service. The popularity of the RNCV more especially during the war might also be attributed to what Brunicardi refers to as the unparalleled respect which the Coast Guard received along the coast.⁶⁷ As a new adjunct to that old reserve the RNCV, which comprised men of the locality, may have inherited the population’s positive perception of the other service. The enthusiasm may have also simply been a maritime version of the same enthusiasm and feelings shown by ‘landsmen’ for the Army and more importantly the Militia during the war. In contrast the fact that other counties, which had small maritime populations (Antrim, Dublin and Waterford) gave far more than their share to the Navy, might be explained by the prominence of steam packet shipping and shipbuilding in their ports.

	Men	Boys	Total		Men	Boys	Total
Antrim	87	5	92	Londonderry	25	3	28
Armagh	8	2	10	Longford	1	1	2
Carlow	2	0	2	Louth	28	6	34
Cavan	4	1	5	Mayo	33	9	42
Clare	29	4	33	Meath	4	0	4
Cork	1,104	233	1,347	Monaghan	5	1	6
Donegal	27	5	32	Queen’s County	3	0	3
Down	45	2	42	Roscommon	5	3	8
Dublin	207	25	232	Sligo	11	6	17
Fermanagh	7	0	7	Tipperary	20	1	21
Galway	42	8	50	Tyrone	6	1	7
Kerry	85	13	98	Waterford	65	13	78
Kildare	5	0	5	Westmeath	7	2	9
Kilkenny	7	2	9	Wexford	46	5	51
King’s County	5	0	5	Wicklow	22	5	27
Leitrim	1	0	1	Not known	21	10	31
Limerick	38	4	42	Total	2,005	370	2,375

Table 2: Origin of Royal Navy recruits from Ireland in 1852.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ The figures in Tables 2 and 3 are derived from *Manning the Navy, 1852*, p. 66.

⁶⁶ *Thom’s directory, 1854*, pp. 612-13; 628-9.

⁶⁷ Daira Brunicardi, *Haulbowline: the Naval Base & Ships of Cork Harbour* (Dublin: History Press Ireland, 2012), pp. 35, 39, 67.

⁶⁸ *Manning the Navy, 1852*, p. 66.

	Men	Boys	Total
England	14,756	3,053	17,809 (79.7%)
Wales	340	32	372 (1.6%)
Scotland	796	28	824 (3.6%)
Ireland	2,005	370	2,375 (10.6%)

Table 3: Origin of Royal Navy recruits from the United Kingdom in 1852.

Cork's supremacy was due to additional factors not present for other Irish counties. It stood, geographically, on 'the western approaches to Europe' and its large natural deep-water harbour principally sited at the town of Cove (later Queenstown) offered the large convoys during the North American and Napoleonic Wars the perfect place to assemble, shelter, get orders and resupply. During those years Cork Harbour developed rapidly from a poor little fishing village into 'a centre of intense naval and maritime activity' and 'the Holy Ground ... sacred to every species of maritime frolic and disposition', which could regularly have 300 sails moored within its confines.⁶⁹ Cove by the time of the Crimean War 'was fully immersed in the life and work of the Navy'; it was home to extremely large victualing yards and storehouses, ordnance stores, repair facilities and even a hospital. Cove's economy was especially orientated towards all things maritime and naval and this gave rise to and was supported by scores of secondary industries and trades, including coopering, provisioning and the making of butter and ropes.⁷⁰ All of this work coupled with that generally done around the harbour required huge numbers of labourers. These men, if not actually coming from sea-faring backgrounds or communities, knew the shipping and sailing trade by association and formed a cohort of potential recruits for both the RNCV and the Royal Navy, as is evident from the Cork newspaper reports during the war. It is also very possible that a long-established and wide-spread practice of naval service existed in Cork by the time of the Crimean War, which, as in the case of the Army, ensured a steady supply of men simply owing to family tradition.

Although no corroborating accounts of figures have yet been found, one editorial from the *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette* in 1856 reported that a total of 3,500 sailors were discharged in Belfast in that year and that also that 600 of those men were 'of that port'. Whether or not this was the case is unclear, but given the general numbers of Coast Guard reportedly 'collected' along the coast during early 1854, the numbers of men who enrolled in the RNCV in 1854 and 1855 and the numbers who joined ships in port, coupled with all the unaccounted volunteers, it is certainly very plausible that those sailors account for all, or part of, the Irish naval contribution to the Crimean War. This is enforced by the fact that throughout 1855 2,000 invalided soldiers, all Irish of connected to Ireland, were returned to Ireland by the Army authorities.

While the Royal Navy's reserve arm had remained functional in the years after Waterloo, in the form of the Coast Guard (to which was added the RNCV from early 1854), albeit far below its optimum establishment, its Army equivalent had not. The Militia existed in a disembodied state, comprising only a small officer cadre from the late 1820s until 1852 when the English and Welsh regiments were re-embodied in response to Louis-Napoleon's coup in France.⁷¹ Yet it was not until 1854 and 1855 that the Irish and Scottish regiments were obliged to follow. As Olive Anderson argues, during the war the dominant school of thought was (as during the Napoleonic Wars) that the Militia would be the primary source of recruits for the Army regiments, or 'the line'.⁷² This was partly the aim for the RNCV. As this became the case after the enlistment rushes in early and late 1854 it is from them that the clearest picture of Irish enlistment can be gleaned.⁷³ Recruitment for the Militia was conducted all over Ireland and as for the regulars the numbers attested and the levels of success differed both by locality and the time of year. Enrolment was especially high in the early months of 1855 following the initial re-embodiment of the Irish Militias, however the numbers declined substantially in the middle months of 1855 due to what was perceived as a stalemate in the war but also because the demands of the agricultural calendar redirected to the land many men who would have otherwise enlisted. The

⁶⁹ Brunicardi, *Haulbowline*, pp. 14-15.

⁷⁰ Brunicardi, *Haulbowline*, pp. 23, 27; Maura Cronin, *County, Class or Craft?: the Politicisation of the Skilled Artisan in Nineteenth-Century Cork* (Cork: Cork University Press), pp. 1, 3, 40-1.

⁷¹ *Manning the Navy, 1852*, p. 81; General George De Lacy Evans, Speech to the House of Commons, 19 July 1855, *PD*, 3rd ser., vol, 139 (1855), cols. 1116-1126.

⁷² Olive Anderson, 'Early Experiences of Manpower problems in an Industrial Society at War: Great Britain, 1854-56' in *Political Science Quarterly*, lxxxii, no. 4 (December 1967), pp. 526-45; General George De Lacy Evans, Speech to the House of Commons, 14 August 1855, *PD*, 3rd ser., vol, 139 (1855), col. 2151.

⁷³ Unlike 1793 there was no major opposition to the re-embodiment of the Irish Militia during the Russian war, rather considerable enthusiasm was expressed for it. Thomas Bartlett, *The Fall and Rise of the Irish Nation: the Catholic Question 1690-1830* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1992), pp. 182-3.

counties of Antrim, Donegal, Kerry and Mayo gave the largest numbers of men to the Militia, and consequently to the line regiments as well. However, many other counties gave large numbers of men to the regulars but were unable also to maintain their own Militia establishments. The constant drain of men from Militia regiments was a matter of frustration for some colonels, such as the Marquis of Clanricarde. In a letter dated 20 April 1855 he described the Galway (Infantry) Militia as having been 'almost ruined by sending off last week, about 150 of our best soldiers to the Line'.⁷⁴ On a single parade in September 1855 ninety-six men of the South Cork Militia volunteered for the Army.⁷⁵ Yet in spite of the frustration which some colonels may have felt, the government and Dublin Castle did offer substantial inducements for the Militia to support the line. These were the enlistment bounty of 7s. 6d. which was given to Militia sergeants 'for every volunteer to the line received' but also the threat to withhold the pay of any regiment's officers should its contributions to the line be deficient.⁷⁶ The numbers of men enlisted to the line from the Irish regiments between 1854 and 1856 can be seen in Tables 4 to 6 on a county, provincial and United Kingdom basis.⁷⁷

<i>Regiment</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>	<i>Regiment</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>
Antrim Infantry	455	North Cork	308
Limerick County	437	Fermanagh	283
Armagh Infantry	407	Wexford	252
Kerry	398	Galway Infantry	250
North Down	386	Dublin City Artillery	237
Royal Dublin City	362	Donegal Infantry	231
Dublin County	343	South Mayo	229
Londonderry Infantry	324		

Table 4: Top fifteen providers of volunteers, 1854 to 1856.

	<i>No. of Regiments</i>	<i>1854</i>	<i>1855</i>	<i>1856</i>	<i>Total</i>
Connacht	6	0	769	275	1044
Leinster	14	27	1820	1109	2956
Munster	11	176	1438	820	2434
Ulster	14	57	2051	1141	3249
	45	260	6078	3345	9683

Table 5: Volunteers to the line from each province, 1854 to 1856.

	<i>1854</i>	<i>1856</i>	<i>1856</i>
	<i>Volunteered</i>	<i>Volunteered</i>	<i>Volunteered</i>
England & Wales	11,809	13,538	3,963
Scotland	196	2,306	697
Ireland	260	6,078	3,345
Total	12,265	21,922	8,005

Table 6: United Kingdom volunteers to the line, 1854 1856.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Copy of Lord Clanricarde to A. Borthwick Esq., 20 April 1855, T 3174/M, PRONI.

⁷⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 7 September 1855.

⁷⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 19 March 1855; *Anglo-Celt*, 29 November 1855.

⁷⁷ The figures in Tables 4 to 6 are derived from *Return of Number of Volunteers from Each Regiment of Militia into the Regular Service, Between 1 January and 31 December 1854, Stating the Quota of Each Regiment, and also Whether the Men have Volunteered With or Without Previous Sanction*, PP, 1854-55, (235), vol, 32, 479; *Return Showing, by Regiments, the Number of Militia Volunteers Released from their Militia Engagement to Serve in the Regular Forces of Her Majesty, Between 1 January 1854 and 31 December 1858; Showing Also the Quota of Each Regiment (So Far as is Practicable From the Records at the Horse Guards)*, PP, 1859, (233), vol, 15, 403.

⁷⁸ All three tables were compiled using the *Number of Volunteers, 1854-55; Return Showing, by Regiments, the Number of Militia Volunteers Released from Their Militia Engagement to Serve in the Regular Forces of Her Majesty, Between 1 January 1854 and 31 December 1858; Showing also the Quota of Each Regiment (So Far as is Practicable from the Records at the Horse Guards)*, pp 2-4, PP. 1859 (233), vol, 15, 403.

What can be seen in the tables above is that the Irish Militia responded very positively to the need for men in the East, especially in 1855. Proportionately, although not numerically, Ireland (and Scotland) gave more men than England and Wales during the latter years of the war, while Ulster can be seen to have contributed the most of the four provinces. This was largely due to the lateness of the latter's embodiments; by 1855 the numbers in English regiments were falling. Ireland's Militia contribution conformed largely to its traditional contribution to the line, being largely from the infantry units. The predominance of Ulstermen can be attributed to two factors; firstly that Ulster contained the majority of Ireland's population in those years – over 2,000,000 out of 6,500,000 – and secondly, Ireland's linen trade suffered greatly during 1855 due to the interruptions of both imports of flax seed from Russia and exports of British manufactured goods to Australia and the United States.⁷⁹ While Ulstermen were reluctant to enlist in early 1854 due to good wages and stable employment, in the absence of these in 1855 their mind-sets transposed. This contrasted with the vastly improved state of agriculture (more predominant in the southern provinces) at the same time, which saw prices, production and most importantly the wages of (and demand for) labourers rise.⁸⁰ The population factor also applies to every other county in Table 4.⁸¹ While the Irish Militia as a whole surpassed its quota in 1855 by nearly 17 per cent, eight of the thirty-five infantry and seven of the ten artillery regiments failed to do so. The primary reason for this would appear to have been the smaller populations and rural disposition of those counties. The latter factor is supported by the fact that all three of the artillery units that did surpass their quotas were city regiments: Cork, Dublin and Limerick; Antrim also came close, most likely owing to Belfast.⁸²

However positive the responses were to the initial embodiment of and recruitment for the Irish Militia and the need for men to transfer to the line, the process of disembodiment of those same regiments less than two years later became mired in scandal in the form of a mutiny in the town of Nenagh in County Tipperary. Although occurring within the Crimean War context, the Nenagh Mutiny, which saw the men of the North Tipperary Militia disobey their officers, attack the local constabulary and civil authorities, terrorise the local populace, destroy property and engage in street fighting with regular troops during a twenty-four hour period of 7–8 July 1856, it was not a wholly unique event of the war nor was it a simple negative response to disembodiment alone. Rather it was part of a wider trend of Militia rioting in the United Kingdom before, during and after the war. On 13 May 1855 a 'riot of a very serious character' occurred at Plymouth between the Royal Marines and the 2nd Royal Cheshire Militia, having developed from 'disputes at the beerhouses in the town', while on 29 May 1856 the 3rd West York Militia became involved in 'a *melee*' with civilians on the quayside at Belfast during their embarkation. Throughout the war years Kilmainham was inundated with reports of confrontations of this nature. That being said the use of firearms and the loss of life at Nenagh were new.⁸³

While Irish parliamentarians did respond to the matter in both Houses of Parliament during the days and weeks which followed, the primary respondent to the outrage was the Commander of the Forces in Ireland, Lord Seaton. Having received the report of the mutiny he contacted, via telegram, Major-General Sir James Charles Chatterton, Commander of the Limerick District, and the commanders of the 41st, 47th and 55th Foot at Birr and Templemore, with the aim of suppressing the riot.⁸⁴ Following this successful completion of this Seaton recommended to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Earl of Carlisle, that it was 'expedient' that '[a] few examples' be made of the mutineers in order to 'mark the misconduct of a corps nearly all the men of which were implicated in the atrocious outrages committed' – ten were chosen. Yet 'the Executive' – Carlisle – felt it pertinent to show leniency to the guilty parties (as the *Limerick Reporter* had hoped) and they received a variety of sentences ranging from transportation for life (later commuted) to two years

⁷⁹ Between 1854 and 1855 British exports to Australia and the US halved, due to the government's tendering of 300 merchant ships as military transports, and the subsequent rise in the rates of the remaining trading vessels. Due to the lack of Russia flax seed and demand from Britain and overseas Ireland's flax crop fell from 151,000 acres to 97,000, these combined factors led to Ulster linen mill closures and lay-offs and a 17.6% increase in workhouse inmates in industrial areas, the latter at a time when inmate numbers fell by an average of 20.3% in Leinster, Munster and Connacht. *Agricultural Statistics, 1855* (National Library of Ireland, Larcom papers, MS 7600); *Eighth Annual Report of the Commissioners for Administering the Laws for Relief of the Poor in Ireland; with Appendices, PP, 1854-55, (1945), vol, 24, 523; Anderson, 'Manpower Problems', p. 540.*

⁸⁰ See *Statistics, 1855 (MS 7600) and Eighth Annual Report.*

⁸¹ *Thom's Almanac, 1855, p. 358.*

⁸² *Return of the Quota of Militia for Each County in England and Wales for 1853; of the Number of Volunteers for the Militia Enrolled in Each County; and of the Number Who in 1853 Attended Training and Exercise; Also Expenses Incurred in Providing Store-rooms and Places for Keeping Arms and Clothing for the Militia, pp. 3-5, PP, 1854 (153), vol, 41, 89; Return Showing, by Regiments, 1859, pp. 2-4.*

⁸³ Galway Militia to Lord Seaton, 22 September 1855; Donegal Infantry to Lord Seaton, 3, 4 July 1856, MS 1290, KP, NAI; *Derby Mercury*, 16 May 1855; *Belfast News-Letter*, 30 May 1856.

⁸⁴ Military Secretary to Thomas Lacrom, 10 July 1856, MS 17074, CSORP, NAI.

in prison with hard labour, instead of death.⁸⁵ Seaton followed up what might be termed as his 'stick' approach with a 'carrot' one. The regiment was disembodied like the rest of the Irish Militia, and not disbanded as he had previously considered as a form of punishment, and a new circular was issued to all the Militia colonels explicitly explaining 'the amount which Militia men will be entitled to ... [when] ... disembodied'.⁸⁶ The North Tipperary regiment was also specifically addressed on the day of its disembodiment so that any 'misapprehensions which have been alleged in extenuation of the insubordinate conduct of the corps' would be removed.⁸⁷ Finally, along with any and all pay due to them, Seaton ensured, through a direct request to Carlisle's Under-Secretary, Thomas Larcom, that given the worn out state of the men's clothing their gratuity money ought to be spent on new clothes. This he argued 'they should [do] without delay' so that the men 'may be dismissed in a state which will not call forth the compassion of the country'.⁸⁸ Although the mutiny was an isolated affair largely instigated by a combination of local factors – the 'ragged' condition of their uniforms due to clothier's delay, the failure of officers to properly inform the men about pay, and the decision of the commander to confiscate the men's best trousers⁸⁹ – these subsequent measures may well have more fully ensured no additional discontent, and ensured that the other Irish regiments like the North Tipperary Militia returned to their homes in 'remarkably good' temper.⁹⁰

As Tom Bartlett and Keith Jeffery argue, Ireland's military tradition is more discontinuous and incoherent than is the 'commonly agreed assumption' and one such 'discontinuity' was the spike in patriotism and enthusiasm for the British military and war in general during the Crimean campaign, following a period of forty years of peace.⁹¹ Interestingly, this was seen again sixty years later with the outbreak of the Great War, and much more so in the Irish context than during the preceding Boer War. The war against Russia between 1854 and 1856 was an important and influential event in Irish nineteenth-century history, politically, socially, religiously, economically and of course militarily, and in Irish society's relationship with the British Armed Forces and Irishmen's individual decisions to enter those services. However absent Ireland's Catholic population was from the subscription lists of wartime charities such as the Central Association in Aid of Soldiers' Wives on Active Service and the Royal Patriotic Fund Catholics were found in plentiful numbers in the enlistment rolls of the Army and Navy, both regular and reserve. Whether out of financial necessity, as in the case of so many labourers in early 1854 and linen workers in 1855, a patriotic or adventurous spirit as in the case of the group of Dublin cab drivers, or a sense of obligation due to family tradition and many other reasons, men from every county and all social backgrounds entered the various arms and corps of the military throughout the Crimean War with the poorer classes enlisting while the richer classes obtained commissions.

The numbers of men who came forward in Ireland declined between 1854 and 1856, as the same was seen across the United Kingdom, but they rose in the wake of the Battle of Inkerman and the siege operations. The Irish Militia provided proportionately more men to the regular Army than England and Wales, while the seafaring men at Queenstown were still found pursuing the naval recruitment officer for enlistment as late as May 1855 (fourteen months after the war had broken out and nine months after siege operations had begun in the Crimea). No active or national anti-recruitment campaign was conducted during those years, and sentiments of any such nature were limited.⁹² Although they had various reasons for their actions, the efforts of thousands of civilians who volunteered to serve in all branches of the military demonstrates the appeal the war had to many. The Crimean War in one way marked a turning point in Irish society's relationship with the British military in the nineteenth century, in others it simply saw a continuation of existing trends. In the case of the popular perceptions of the common soldier and his wife, people in Ireland, like their peers in Britain, came to view the former with a greater respect and even reverence and the latter with a greater degree of compassion and humility. Yet it saw the pre-war traditions of military service and philanthropy continue (although the latter was partially redirected towards the individual soldiers and their families) alongside the slow and steady decline in the numbers of Irishmen within the British military. In spite of the Crimean War the long term and downward trend in Irish participation in Great Britain's armed continued.

⁸⁵ The lord lieutenant of Ireland had the 'prerogative of mercy'. See R. B. McDowell, *The Irish Administration 1801-1914* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), p. 52. See also *Limerick Reporter*, 15 Jul. 1856; Memorandum for the Military Department to be communicated to the government, 1 August 1856, MS 20790, CSORP, NAI.

⁸⁶ Military Secretary to Thomas Larcom, 5 August 1856, MS 20791, CSORP, NAI.

⁸⁷ Deputy-Adjutant-General, Colonel R.B. Wood, to Major-General J. C. Chatterton, 29 August 1856, MS 22042, CSORP, NAI.

⁸⁸ Military Secretary to Larcom, MS 20791.

⁸⁹ Dep.-Adj.-Gen. to Thomas Larcom, 1 August 1856, MS 20792, CSORP, NAI; Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry, 1 August 1856, MS 20792, Memorandum No. 2, CSORP, NAI.

⁹⁰ Maj.-Gen. Chatterton to the Dep.-Adj.-Gen., Dublin, 1 September 1856, MS 20793, CSORP, NAI.

⁹¹ Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery. 'An Irish Military Tradition?' in *A Military History*, p. 2.

⁹² *Freeman's Journal*, 13 May, 23 December 1854; *The Times*, 16 February 1854.

As was stated at the beginning of the essay Ireland's military historiography and the synthesis of the same manifest by *A Military History of Ireland*, clearly illustrates Ireland's diverse and lengthy military history. This exists both within the context of the battlefield but also in the 'social and political' context of everyday life and society; to this expansive existing military historiography can also be added the Crimean War. It not only impacted Irish society within the military history sphere, principally through recruitment, but also through its role (and the role of military warfare more generally) in shaping and influencing Ireland's and Irish society's relationships with the British Armed Forces and even the British state, monarchy and empire during the union period. As a consequence of not only the Land Wars and Home Rule agitation in Ireland, but also the Indian Mutiny, the wars of Italian reunification, the US Civil War, the Franco-Prussian War and the Boer War, both the Irish population and the Army underwent a substantial politicisation in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Crimea War represents the pinnacle of Ireland's relationship with the British Empire and the last popular surge in Irish recruitment as well as enthusiasm for the military before the First World War.⁹³

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⁹³ Virginia Crossman, 'The Army and Law and Order in the Nineteenth Century' in *A Military History*, pp. 358-78; Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers', p. 41.