RUINOUS PRIDE: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SCOTTISH MILITARY IDENTITY,

1745-1918

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CHAPTER I

THE HIGHLAND WARRIOR MYTH

Looking back over nearly a century, it is tempting to see the First World War as Britain's Armageddon. The tranquil peace of the Edwardian age was shattered as armies all over Europe marched into years of hellish destruction. It is easy to think of the crowds of men who thronged recruiting offices across the British Empire as hopelessly naïve or even stupid, the last expression of chivalry before British innocence would drown in the mud of Flanders. Britain was trapped in an older conception of warfare, one that valued martial spirit over technological efficiency. Scholars can read the exuberant letters of the August recruits with jaded pity, wincing at promises to be home by Christmas and mentally filing them as examples of the "Short War Illusion."

Of course historians have attempted to explain why so many young men heeded the call to enlist; indeed, one could be cast away forever on the vast oceans of ink spilled in the analysis of the British soldier's psychology, morale, and motivations. None of this work, however, can properly explain why British soldiers fought unless it first disavows the unitary concept of a "British" soldier. The men who fought for the British Empire were all raised in distinctive national cultures, and no study that fails to acknowledge this fact can explain the enlistment or conduct of Britain's army in the First World War. Among the peoples of the British Empire, Scots disproportionately filled the ranks from the outbreak of war to the collapse of German power in November 1918.

Scots contributed more men, and received more casualties, than any other British group.[1]

Throughout most of the period between the end of the last Jacobite Rebellion in 1746 and the First World War, Scottish soldiers were strongly overrepresented in the British Army—and particularly overrepresented on its casualty rolls. "In every war in which they fought for their country," Colin Calloway wrote, "they contributed a disproportionately high number of soldiers" and "suffered a disproportionately high rate of casualties."[2] Prolonged and effective service in North America during the second half of the eighteenth century proved the value of Scottish troops, who were eventually to fight around the world, from the forests of Quebec to the plains of Europe, in the miserable Crimean winter and the tropics of India. Yet after the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, Scottish enlistment rates began to fall, and they would not recover until the outbreak of war in August 1914. From perhaps twenty-five percent of Britain's American forces in the Seven Years War, the Scottish contribution to the British army was less than eight percent in 1912. Patriotic campaigning failed to make much impression in the Highlands during the height of the Clearances as men on the Highland estates were replaced with sheep. Potential soldiers were vastly outnumbered by potential haggises by the time the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was buried. And yet

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[1] The terms "Highlander," "Gael," "Lowlander," et cetera, are all somewhat imprecise. Used here, in reference to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, "Highlander" and "Gael" denote the largely Gaelic-speaking people of the Scottish Highlands and the Hebrides. "Scots" are all the peoples of Scotland and "Lowlanders" are those from the traditionally English-speaking parts of the country. These definitions become conflated in the twentieth century, especially as people from England and the Lowlands served in "Highland" regiments, so an attempt is made to be clear about which groups of people are being discussed.
[2] Colin Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders: Tribal Peoples and Colonial Encounters in Scotland and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 116.

Scotland's men turned out in huge numbers to enlist, forming Britain's best regiments on the Western Front.

This study attempts to explain why so many Scots chose to fight and die in defense of the British Empire. Answering this question requires examining how the Scottish military identity was formed between the aftermath of Culloden and the horror of the First World War. A romantic conception of the Highland Scottish warrior drew men into an Army that would destroy their nation, even as it defended their empire. Highlanders were long depicted as a "martial race," but nineteenth century literature and history changed the image of the Highland warrior from savage to hero. Over the course of the century, the Highland warrior became a national identity for all Scots, previously divided by language, culture and geography. This image was a myth, historically inaccurate, as the eighteenth century Highlanders it valorized performed their service primarily out of economic necessity rather than some inborn bloodlust or adherence to tribalism.

That the Highland military image is a myth does not mean that Scottish soldiers didn't fight well. All the evidence suggests that they did. Highland military service is a myth in the sense that it was a story presented in narrative terms with certain recurrent archetypal aspects used to teach a lesson to the present. This became a self-fulfilling prophecy because although the Highlands may not have been a warrior culture, over time as more men were drawn into the army, they became militarized. By the time of the First World War, Scottish soldiers had centuries of supposedly heroic military tradition behind them which may partially explain why they fought so valiantly and died

in such large numbers. Nineteenth century myth may not have matched eighteenth century reality, but by the time of the First World War, the myth had become reality.

National biases warp the historiography of this issue. The romantic conception of Scotland still turns up in the work of some historians who study Highland soldiering. Even official regimental histories borrow heavily from romantic authors. Those who focus on Scotland perpetuate some of the old misconceptions about the clan system and supposed militarism of Highland society. On the other hand, many discount the Scottish military contribution altogether. Although it was once common to describe Great Britain as "England" and portray English and British interests as identical, it is now more common to generalize about the "British" experience, which usually ignores the contributions of Scots and focuses only on the English. This is certainly the case in the historiography of the First World War, which tends to overlook the unique aspects of Scottish identity when it deals with British soldiers as a whole.

This study proceeds in three parts. The second chapter discusses the experience of Scottish Highland soldiers in the eighteenth century. These early Highland soldiers provided the material for later romanticism . Although many Highlanders were loyal to the Hanoverian dynasty, they were lumped together as real or potential Jacobites following the Rebellion of 1745-1746. The first impression made by Highlanders on their southern neighbors was a military one, and due to a desperate shortage of troops, they were soon recruited into the British army. This process was facilitated by their landlords who sought to clear men from their land and reap the financial and social rewards of raising regiments. It was this section of the Scottish gentry that fostered the idea of innate Highland military virtue. The men themselves

generally fought out of economic necessity and the hopes that their service would be rewarded with land in Scotland or America.

Chapter three describes the elaboration of the romantic myth from the seed planted by the Scottish gentry. Highlanders were depicted as enthusiastic warriors, fighting out of an timeless devotion to the clan system and a love of war. The Jacobitism of some Highlanders in the '45 was turned from a liability into an asset as nineteenth century romantics argued that loyalty was an innate Highland virtue, and was simply misplaced in the defense of the House of Stuart. Jacobitism itself was rehabilitated, not as an ideology but as an affect. Sir Walter Scott, David Stewart of Garth and others of their kind would create an image of the Highlands as a birthplace of heroes. A darker romantic trope would also weave through this story—that of the "lost cause" which would present Highland losses as inevitable and natural, fitting into a narrative of doomed but noble sacrifice. The myth of the Highland soldier would come to form a united Scottish identity, finally obscuring the divisions between Lowland and Highland just as the Clearances were extinguishing traditional Gaelic ways of life. Highland culture, heavily romanticized and now representing all Scots, would be accepted as a bulwark of Empire just as it ceased to function.

The fourth chapter documents the participation of Scottish soldiers in the First World War. Although enlistment had been declining steadily since 1815, the romantic image of eighteenth century Highland warriors developed over the course of the nineteenth century would be successfully redeployed to encourage voluntary participation in the First World War. Opposition to the Union, the violence following Culloden, the betrayals of the Clearances, and the realities of bygone Gaelic life would

be erased by the mythic representation of Highland valor. As a consequence, Scottish men, now united under a single military identity, would pour into the British regiments. They would not only enlist in large numbers and fight with exceptional bravery, they would ultimately die by the tens of thousands, motivated to fight for the British crown by a myth that grew from the Jacobite resistance to the Hanoverian monarchy. "By the time of the First World War, the service of Highland Scots was a long-established tradition," says Calloway, adding that "high casualty rates were also a long-established tradition."[3] In a quite literal sense, Scotland would die so that Britain should live.

Scottish losses would fit neatly into the expectation of tragic sacrifice, but they would also breed disillusionment and resentment. The conclusion will discuss the Scottish memory of the First World War and the persistent feeling of abandonment and betrayal. There has never been a good book devoted to the memory of the war in Scotland, and what has been written about Britain as a whole is inadequate for this purpose. Scottish soldiers became bitter after the Armistice when it became clear that their hopes for a better society would remain unrealized, but they never portrayed the war in the same way that their English counterparts did. Scottish soldiers, although sometimes angry or self-hating, were remarkably willing to accept the war itself.

Due to the nature of this investigation, the categories of primary and secondary sources are somewhat blurry. Because this is a story about the manipulation of history over a fairly long period of time, some works qualify as both. For example, David Stewart of Garth's history of the Highland regiments, published in the 1820s, is secondary as it relates to the Seven Years War but primary as it relates to the First World War since it played a large role in creating the Scottish military identity. Frederick

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[3] Colin Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders*, 112.

Watson's *The Story of the Highland Regiments* is presented as a conventional history of Scotland's military units, but as it appeared in 1915 its romantic vision of Scotland's past means that it should be read as a piece of (perhaps unintentional) propaganda. Wherever possible, the evidence provided by eyewitnesses and participants is used, but due to the focus on long-term historical change, this is not always feasible. Particularly unfortunate is the lack of accessible Gaelic-language accounts of Scotland's many wars, as many Highland soldiers during the period covered either spoke no English or spoke it poorly. Poetry was much more common, however, and the inclusion of Gaelic verse will hopefully provide some window into the attitudes of these men.[4]

Finally, this work presents an historiographical challenge. Underlying the formation of Scottish military identity is the inescapable question of Jacobitism. The men who lined up at Culloden with the rain in their faces fought, not all of them willingly, for the deposed Stuarts against the ascendant Hanoverians, and this fact is never far from the surface in Scottish military history. The struggle between these houses is now reflected in the very structure of Scottish historiography. Against a Whig ("typological") historiography characterized by the belief in progress and inevitable outcomes, Murray Pittock has posed a competing Jacobite theme of messianic history infused with the ideas of recurrence and myth. "Typological history, history as recurrence, myth, archetype and image is often the history sought by the defeated," he writes, "whose linearity and incrementality have been exiled into colonialism or absorbed in a greater identity (as 'British' history so often absorbs its peripheries)." Incremental history, on

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[4] Gaelic poetry is presented in both English and Gaelic to retain some sense of the original in cases where the author was not also the translator of their own work. For some, such as Sorley MacLean, who did the translations themselves, the English is presented alone.

the other hand, is "the language of victory, that of the British state over Scotland."[5] The

romantic vision fits easily with the Whig notion of progress. As Pittock argues, romantic

depictions of Jacobitism implicitly portray it as doomed to failure, which is a necessary

position for a teleological Whig history that seeks to present the current order as

inevitable.[6]

Many ideas and themes reoccur throughout the period covered here, and it is

thus tempting to write in a "Jacobite" mode, as Pittock implies is proper. Perhaps

following *Flower of Scotland*, the unofficial anthem of the nation, one could suggest that

Scotland's past military glories must remain in the past, but "we can still rise now/and be

the nation again" that won at Bannockburn and fought for Scottish pride. Indeed, it is

common for lazy writers covering depressing historical subjects to end with a positive

prediction for the future, especially if one belongs to the worsted group, a kind of

academic "we'll get 'em next time." Perhaps this is an example of the culture of defeat

refracted through the various layers that separate author and subject.

To engage history in either the Whig or Jacobite modes, however, is

inappropriate. Both the historical determinism of incremental history and the messianic

hope of mythic history have the same basic flaw, in that they remove human beings

from the story. Good and evil mean nothing in a world controlled by vast historical

forces, and one has little incentive to improve the conditions of the world if, one way or

another, the passage of time will correct them. Ultimately histories that deal with broad

forces of change over time must recognize those forces as the accumulation of

innumerable individual decisions. The Duke of Cumberland didn't have to preside over

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[5] Murray Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 5-6.
[6] Murray Pittock, *The Myth of the Jacobite Clans* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 5-6.

the massacre of defeated Jacobites, but he did. The Duke of Argyll didn't have to play

on early romanticism to lure men into the army and cement his political power, but he

did. Douglas Haig didn't need to insist on the profligate expenditure of his men's lives in

Flanders, but he did. History is contingent and chaotic, and the best works will

recognize that nothing left up to human beings is truly inevitable. A decade after

Scotland's Parliament reopened its doors, many of the issues discussed here have

taken on a renewed, often bitterly polemical, life. The purpose of this study is not to

write Jacobite history, Whig history, nationalist or "British" history. The purpose is

merely, to the greatest degree possible given inevitable biases and ignorance, to

explain one aspect of Scotland's military history without losing sight of the central force

behind it: the hundreds of thousands of Scots, Highland and Lowland, who fought for

the British army during the height of Empire. This story is about them.

CHAPTER II

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: THE BUTCHER'S BILL

In one sense the story of the Highland soldier both begins and ends in Flanders. Prior to the Battle of Culloden, Highland soldiers of the Black Watch fought for the British Crown at Fontenoy where they performed well covering the retreat of the main force.[7] They were commanded by the Duke of Cumberland, who would soon ravage the Highlands and become known to Scots as "Billy the Butcher," but at this time seemed popular among his Scottish subordinates. An officer named John Munro wrote to the Scottish Lord President of the Session Duncan Forbes that "we Highlanders were told by his Royal Highness, that we did our duty well. I cannot fail telling you, that the Duke shewed as much real courage and temper as ever Cæsar or Hannibal did…the Duke made so friendly and favourable a speech to us, that if we had been ordered to attack their lines afresh, I dare say our poor fellows would have done it."[8] Cumberland's esteem would not last long.

Despite this service at Fontenoy, Highland soldiers would only make up a large percentage of the British army after the unsuccessful Jacobite rising of 1745-1746. An explanation for the eighteenth century recruitment of Highlanders must explain agency at three different levels: that of the central government, the Highland elite, and the men who actually joined the regiments. Without a central government motivation, there is no demand for troops. Given the central government's remoteness from and ignorance of the Highlands, demand could not be married with supply without the intercession of a

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[7] Tim Newark, *Highlander: The History of the Legendary Highland Soldier* (New York, NY: Skyhorse Publishing, 2010), 42-50. At this time the Black Watch was the 43rd Foot, but the dissolution of a more senior unit would soon make it the 42nd, as it will be referred to here.
[8] Munro, John. "No. CCXLIII" in *Culloden Papers* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1815), 200-201.

middle level—the Highland gentry. But without the men to fill them, the regiments would

never have come into being. That interests converged among actors at all three of

these levels was by no means a foregone conclusion.

Prior to the '45, Highlanders had been portrayed as warlike, but rarely as a

serious threat. Highlanders were depicted as lice-ridden cannibals, too stupid to use a

lavatory or keep themselves clean.[9] Lowland Scots had little affection for Highlanders,

a fact attested to by the existence of a poem entitled "How the first helandman of God

was maid of Ane horse turd in Argylle as is said." The Lowland elite saw Highlanders

as foreign pagans.[10] In 1753, discussing popular views before Culloden Andrew

Henderson wrote of the powerful Clan MacDonald that no "Arts or Sciences prevail

among them, except the Sword, at which they play with more Fierceness than Skill."[11]

Edward Burt, who toured the Highlands in 1726 and was unusually sympathetic towards

those he met there, wrote that the very clothes they wore were "calculated for the

encouragement of an idle life in lying about the heath," and rendered them "ready at a

moment's warning to join in any rebellion, as they carry continually their tents about

them."[12]

Highlanders, for their part, often did not distinguish between Lowlanders and the

English, seeing them as equally foreign.[13] The Gaelic word *Sasunnach*, meaning

"Saxons," was applied indiscriminately to both according to many scholars. Michael

Newton is one of the few who disagree, but even he concedes that the Highlanders

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[9] Pittock, *The Myth of the Jacobite Clans,* 9-10.

[10] Thomas Devine, *The Scottish Nation: 1700-2000* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1999), 232.

[11] Andrew Henderson, *The history of the rebellion, MDCCXLV and MDCCXLVI* (London: J. Swan, 1753), 22.

[12] Edward Burt, "Edward Burt," in A.J. Youngson, *Beyond the Highland Line: Three Journals of Travel in Eighteenth Century Scotland: Burt, Pennant, Thornton* (London: Collins, 1974), 116.

[13] Neil Davidson, *The Origins of Scottish Nationhood* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 72.

used disparaging, homogenizing terms, such as *Gall* for all non-Celts, or the dismissive

term *luchd na Beurla*, "the people of the English tongue."[14]

The English attitude would change with the early successes of the Jacobite

Army. Henderson wrote that at the time of Prince Charles Edward Stuart's landing

"such as knew the *Highlanders* were justly afraid, while the ignorant ridicul'd and

despis'd them."[15] While the Lowlanders and English may once have mocked the

"inferior" Gaels, the stunning Jacobite victory at Prestonpans began an atmosphere of

panic that would not end until after Culloden.[16] Stories circulated throughout England

and the Lowlands about a field slick with blood where the Highlanders had

dismembered their opponents after they broke before the Highland charge. This was

essentially the first contact between the English and the Highland Clans, who had lived

with little interaction on their shared island until that point. Wealthy, urbane Donald

Cameron of Lochiel, later to be idolized as "the Gentle Lochiel," was billeted in an

English home during the '45 and was bewildered by his host's hysteria. She begged for

the lives of her children, but calmed down once she was sure that the Highland chief

was not interested in making haggis of her offspring. Explaining her fear, she told him

that "every one said that the Highlanders ate children, and made them their ordinary

food."[17] Even thirty years later, Dr. Samuel Johnson could say that to the English, the

lands north of the Highland line were "equally unknown with that of Borneo or

Sumatra."[18] The fact that England's first introduction to the Highlanders was a violent

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[14] Michael Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough: The Legacy of the Scottish Highlanders in the United States* (Saorsa Media, 2001), 15-28.
[15] Henderson, *The history of the rebellion,* 30. Italics in original.
[16] William Speck, *The Butcher: The Duke of Cumberland and the Suppression of the '45* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 53-54.
[17] Helen McCorry, *The Thistle at War* (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland Publishing, 1997), 9.
[18] A.J. Youngson, "Introduction," in *Beyond the Highland Line*, 36.

one meant that military aspects of Highland culture were overemphasized in the English imagination, as they were the only parts of Highland society represented to the outside world.[19] Highlanders thus rushed into the British imagination, and although ultimately defeated, they had created the impression of a militaristic, violent race, not just prone to bloodshed but proficient in it.

Jacobitism was "the most serious crisis to affect the eighteenth-century British state" and, although ultimately defeated, had posed a real challenge.[20] Jacobites and Highlanders were not synonymous—Murray Pittock has taken great pains to remind scholars of the '45 that Prince Charles (or more accurately, Lord George Murray) also commanded a large force of Lowlanders.[21] The most powerful Highland clans, such as Clan Campbell under the Duke of Argyll, were allied with the Hanoverian government.[22] Yet the British government still perceived Highlanders as Jacobites and Jacobites as Highlanders. Cumberland's scourging of the Highlands was largely indiscriminate, penalizing both loyal and rebellious clans. Highlanders suffered from a "double stigma" as both savages and rebels.[23] As subjects of the Crown, they could be guilty of treason, but as members of an excluded ethnic group, they could not benefit fully from inclusion in the British Empire. It is in some ways surprising then that the Hanoverian regime would accept thousands of them into the British army and rely on them to protect the King's interests around the world. Before explaining how this situation came about, it is worthwhile to examine just how deep the rift between Highlander and Hanoverian was.

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[19] Peter Womack, *Improvement and Romance: Constructing the Myth of the Highlands* (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1989), 27-28.

[20] Jeremy Black, *Culloden and the '45* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2000), vii-x.

[21] Pittock, *The Myth of the Jacobite Clans,* 8.

[22] Andrew Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil: Army, Empire, and the Scottish Highlands, 1715-1815* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 41.

[23] Geoffrey Plank, *Rebellion and Savagery: The Jacobite Rising of 1745 and the British Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 8.

Although Cumberland had praised Highland valor at Fontenoy, his opinion would harden during the '45. While John MacLeod is probably guilty of some hyperbole in saying that "the Gaels were not remotely human" in the eyes of Cumberland and his men, the Hanoverian treatment of former Jacobites and Highlanders in general was nonetheless brutal.[24] William Arthur Speck, author of the only full-length biography of Cumberland, generally seeks to present a balanced picture of the Duke and rebut the many charges brought against him. "There are difficulties" he writes, in studying Culloden, because "intense partisanship, more often than not on behalf of those who lost…has coloured accounts, giving rise to legends of superhuman bravery on one side, and subhuman barbarity on the other."[25] That Speck himself provides a great deal of evidence for atrocities committed by Hanoverian officers is thus very significant. At least two accounts exist of Hanoverian supporters using the skins of dead Jacobites in leather garments. Cumberland, Pelham, and the Duke of Richmond spoke of Highlanders as "vermin." Richmond wrote that "it would be much better to have destroyed them," rather than to keep prisoners.[26] Cumberland's aide de camp Joseph Yorke hoped that they would "extirpate the Race" if not "stopped by lenity."[27] Loyal clans were rarely distinguished from disloyal ones. One Hanoverian officer sent Campbells under his command to steal cattle from other Highlanders, saying that "all highlanders are naturally thieves…but to as it is done by their own countrymen, it is only diamond cut diamond."[28] The fact that the Highlanders were so alien in speech, culture, and clothing made it difficult for the English or Lowlanders to see them as worth of

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[24] John MacLeod. *No Great Mischief if you Fall: A Highland Experience* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1993), 39.
[25] Speck, *The Butcher,* 138-139.
[26] Ibid., 95-96.
[27] Ibid., 113.
[28] Ibid., 128.

mercy. The wounded were murdered on Culloden Moor, with survivors hunted down like animals—to which they were frequently compared. The enemy was seen as foreign, savage, "a disease entering the blood stream of a previously healthy patient."[29] To the English, the Jacobite Rebellion had been a foreign invasion, but it was Lowland officers who were particularly notorious in their persecution of Highland rebels.

While the Black Watch (*am Freiceadan Dubh* in Gaelic) had its origins in the Highland Independent Companies chartered by royal warrant in 1725 (and following a previous charter in 1667), there was much opposition to a large-scale expansion of Highland regiments. Duncan Forbes had suggested such a course of action in 1738 but was turned down because of government fears that new Highland units would simply be taken over by Jacobites.[30] Lord Chesterfield opposed the idea during and after the '45, writing that "upon my word, if you give way to Scotch importunitys and jobs on this occassion, you will have a rebellion every seven years at least."[31] Forbes himself seems to have changed his mind after the Jacobite Rebellion. In "Some Thoughts concerning the State of the Highlands of Scotland," he not only supported the disarming of the clans, but also the denial of military training to them. "Arms in the hands of men accustomed to the use of them, brought up so hardily as the Highlanders are…and who entertain strong notions of their own military prowess, are dangerous to the public peace," he wrote. "Tho' all the Arms not in the possession of Highlanders were taken from them, the Government would not be absolutely secure," because "France or Spain, by supplying them with arms, might make them hurtful." The only solution was to

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[29] Ibid., 188.
[30] Bruce Lenman, *Integration and Enlightenment: Scotland, 1746-1832* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1993) 65-66.
[31] Quoted in Speck, *The Butcher,* 103.

entirely demilitarize the Highlanders until "the present generation die out," and their

successors "unacquainted with the use of Gun, Sword, or Durk, must be as harmless as

the commonality of the adjacent Low Countries; and when they can no longer live by

Rapine, must think of living by Industry."[32] Lord Kindlater opposed recruiting on similar

grounds.[33] Finally, John Cardwell argues that there was a real fear of invasion in 1755-

1756, a kind of miniature Jacobite scare. Pitt the Elder, who would support the

recruitment of Highlanders, was taking a real political risk, as he was also being

accused of having helped to precipitate the '45 through his criticism at the time of

government policy.[34] Simon Fraser was given command of the 78th Regiment of Foot.

Because he himself had been a Jacobite and his wily father, Lord Lovat, had met his

maker with an executioner's assistance on Tower Hill, some feared that the creation of

the 78th would be "the raising of the Jacobite Clan Fraser under this young Lovat."[35]

Two factors conspired to change the government position and spark a massive

recruiting effort from 1756 to 1783. First, the Seven Years War began to go badly for

the British in North America. Reverses in 1756 combined with a troop shortage posed a

serious problem for the government. To avoid withdrawing troops from Flanders, the

government would be forced to find a supply at home. This ultimately convinced

Cumberland, who had initially opposed the idea, to support Pitt in his efforts to persuade

George II.[36] The second factor was the influence of the Duke of Argyll. Later, Pitt

would famously take credit for the idea: "I have no local attachments," he said, "it is

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[32] *Culloden Papers* CCCXLIII, 298.
[33] Bruce Lenman, *Integration and Enlightenment,* 65.
[34] John Cardwell, *Arts and Arms: Literature, Politics, and Patriotism During the Seven Years War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 30-31.
[35] Ian McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains: The Highland Regiments in the French & Indian War* (Fleischmans: Purple Mountain Press, 2006), 24.
[36] Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: the British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 269.

indifferent to me, whether a man was rocked in his cradle on this side or that side of the Tweed. I sought for merit wherever it was to be found…and I found it in the mountains of the north." Here was "an intrepid race of men, who, when left by your jealousy, became prey to the artifices of your enemies and had gone nigh to have overturned the state" in the Jacobite rebellion. He portrayed Highland Jacobites as dupes of Charles Edward Stuart, rather than the vicious savages who sought to impose rule by sword and torch. In the Seven Years war, they "were brought to combat on your side: they served with fidelity, as they fought with valour, and conquered for you in every part of the world." Prejudice and suspicion of Highlanders should be "detested" as "unjust, groundless, illiberal, unmanly."[37] The fact that Pitt felt it necessary to reply to anti-Highland prejudice, however, should be seen as evidence that it persisted.

The idea of Highland recruiting, however, did not come from Pitt himself. He had in fact opposed the idea at first, and was convinced by the Duke of Argyll, who managed to overcome all the several objections of Pitt, Cumberland, and the King.[38] In the hands of Argyll and his aristocratic Highland allies, the image of the Highlander as savage was used to justify military recruiting. Both positive and negative representations served the same end. The Highland clan system had been falling apart since at least the seventeenth century. Nonetheless, the "popular myth that the Highlands were brimming with intrepid, hardy, and battle-ready men loyal to their chiefs was actually propagated by Argyll and the Highland elite who succeeded in convincing some of London's brightest politicians that 'Scotia's warlike race' was still an effective

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[37] Speech of William Pitt, 1766, in Thomas Hansard, *The Parliamentary Debates* Vol 16, (London: T.C. Hansard, 1813), 98.
[38] McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains,* 17-22.

kin-oriented military society that could call forth clan levies at the drop of a bonnet."[39]

This is the origin of the Highland warrior trope in the British army. Argyll and others benefited from the Highland regiments financially and politically, and thus maintained the myth of a warrior race organized by clan and loyal to its chieftains—the men who were now Highland landlords and would receive commissions in the King's army. "The state hardly doubted that the Highlander was nonetheless a natural warrior, not least because landowners seeking to establish family regiments constantly milked the glamorous image of clanship in order to gain a favourable response."[40] The speed of recruiting convinced the central government that clanship was still viable, allowing Highland gentry to get commissions for entire battalions where others might only have been put in charge of independent companies.[41] This warrior myth would persist for at least the next hundred and sixty years, feeding on itself as the Highland regiments performed well in battle, justifying the belief and giving rise to new expressions of it.

The Highland reality was much different. The old ties of clanship were effectively dead. Scottish elites, including those in the Highlands, had enthusiastically embraced the Union after 1707. This class was thoroughly Anglicized, spoke English, looked down on Gaelic culture, and viewed their own tenants as barbarians. State power had expanded, clan warfare was dead, and an atmosphere of competitive consumption had turned chiefs into capitalist landlords.[42] The marketization of Highland society was underway even the western Highlands and Hebrides by the end of the sixteenth century. By the time of Culloden, traditional bonds were eroding because Highland

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[39] Ibid., 27.
[40] Thomas Devine, *Scotland's Empire and the Shaping of the Americas 1600-1815* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2003), 312.
[41] Mackillop, *More Fruitful Than the Soil,* 58-60, 75.
[42] Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, 170-186.

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landowners gradually came to see their relationship with their tenants in economic terms. This period saw the beginning of the population movements that would ultimately become the Clearances, when people were displaced in large numbers to make room for sheep and cattle grazing.

It is important to note that Highland landlords do not have to be depicted as venal monsters to explain their actions at the time. While writers such as Neil Davidson and Thomas Devine have clear anti-capitalist beliefs (quite explicitly in Davidson's case), blame should not fall solely on the Highland landlords—at least not in the eighteenth century.[43] The integration of the Highlands into a larger British market tended to favor the raising of animals because they alone among agricultural products could be delivered live and thus unspoiled, which was important given the high costs and long distances necessary for Highland products to reach the Lowlands or England.[44] Overpopulation was a serious concern, and making ethical judgments about the *idea* of relocation, rather than its conduct, requires answering the counterfactual question of what would have happened had the Highland population continued to grow without reprieve. Eric Richards has asked this question and others in reassessing the population movements following Culloden and the Clearances in the nineteenth century. Some landlords held out for a time without displacing their people.[45] But this qualification is a small one. Even though some humanitarian landlords existed, such as the Earl of Dunmore, Sir James Matheson, and Sir William MacKenzie, "every landlord, without exception, dominated and occasionally evicted as it suited him," as MacLeod

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[43] Devine's previously cited work suggests this; also see Davidson *The Origins of Scottish Nationhood,* 210.
[44] Robert Dodgson, From Chiefs to Landlords: Social and Economic Change in the Western Highlands and Islands, c. 1493-1820 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 236-242.
[45] Ibid., 242.

says.[46]   Even if the landlords are partially redeemed, and Richards argues that they

should be, he acknowledges that the period was a tragic one for all Scottish parties

involved.[47] His work demands careful attention (and in fact requires it since the index is

not in proper alphabetical order).

If the positive portrayal of Highland military virtues was one method to overcome

English trepidation, military recruiting also dealt with the concerns of those who saw

them Highlanders as irredeemably dangerous. James Wolfe, who was a captain in the

Hanoverian forces at Culloden and would later command Highlanders in the Seven

Years War as a general, wrote perhaps the most infamous passage among historians of

Scotland: "They are hardy and intrepid, accustomed to a rough country, and no great

mischief if they fall. How can you better employ a secret enemy than by making his end

conducive to the common good?"[48] Bruce Lenman argues that this sentiment was

widespread: "The avowed objective was to transport potential Jacobites to foreign

battlefields where they could be slaughtered fighting the French, rather than leave them

to plot subversion at home."[49] In 1748 Lord Barrington wanted "as many Highlanders as

possible," enlisted for life to get them out of Great Britain.[50] The same logic may have

appealed to Cumberland himself, as he had originally favored transportation to the

colonies for the Highland clans, writing that "while they remain in this island their

rebellious and thievish nature is not to be kept under without an army always within

reach of them."[51]

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[46] MacLeod, *No Great Mischief,* 55.
[47] Eric Richards, *The Highland Clearances* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2000) *passim*.
[48] Beckles Willson, *The Life and Letters of James Wolfe* (London: William Heinemann, 1909), 140.
[49] Bruce Lenman, *Integration and Enlightenment,* 66.
[50] Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil,* 58.
[51] Speck, *The Butcher,* 168.

Highlanders were believed to be less important than Lowlanders for the same reason that they would make good soldiers—they were not engaged in productive industry. In his history of the '45 Henderson wrote that the Lowlands had become "civilized," and "from Soldiers they are become Merchants and Tradesmen…better that the [English and Lowland] Inhabitants of *Britain* should be enriched by an honest Industry, so as to live in a comfortable Mannor, than be reduced to the miserable State of being obliged to fly to a Drum for a scrimp Subsistence. In time we might be like the *McDonalds*, become a Source of Recruits for the House of *Bourbon.*"[52] Here Henderson also seems to fear the erosion of English values by the fostering of a mercenary ethic. Others believed that the English had grown too decadent due to the luxury of their society, so that Celtic savages, who were incapable of high culture, should be enlisted to defend them.[53]   Some saw Highlanders as ideal counterrevolutionary troops. The government's belief that clanship persisted reinforced the notion that Highlanders would be unquestioningly loyal to their commanders and, during the French Revolution, too simple to understand the doctrines of liberty that motivated it.[54] Finally, for those who remained convinced that Highlanders were dangerous barbarians, they may still have been preferable to the alternative of foreign mercenary troops. Some in the House of Lords attacked the Hessian mercenaries directly for their supposed barbarity: "Hessian troops who were to be employed against America, were mercenaries in the truest, worst, sense of the word…devourers and destroyers of all places and countries whereinto they are drawn; as being held by no

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[52] Henderson, *The History of the Rebellion,* 121.
[53] Pittock, *Myth of the Jacobite Clans,* 35.
[54] Robert Clyde, *From Rebel to Hero: the Image of the Highlander, 1745-1830* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998), 156.

other bond, than their own commodity."[55] The notion then that Highlanders were driven

by loyalty, even if the object of that loyalty had been mistaken in the '45, created a

convenient contrast. The Duke of Cumberland, clearly no friend of the Highlander and

still wary of forming them into British regiments, had nonetheless complemented the

Highlanders in his service at Culloden, some of whom fought in minor engagements

with the Jacobites despite the Hanoverian commanders' efforts to keep them out of

action. In a message delivered to the *London Gazette* Cumberland referred to "our

Highlanders," who "behaved extremely well" against the "rebels."[56]

Some evidence exists that Highland soldiers themselves believed that military

recruiting was a plot to break them. Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, at the time aide de

camp of the Marquis de Montcalm, argued in Paris that France should establish its own

Highland regiments in North America because Britain's Highland soldiers "understand

very well they are sent to America to depopulate their lands and even in hopes of

seeing some of them killed. Those that we have captured have told us a hundred times

and over that if they saw in our army a troop of their own compatriots and a chief known

to them a great number of them would come over to our flag."[57] There is little reason to

doubt this statement, as the French were very familiar with Highland soldiers and

officers already. Not only did many Jacobites flee to France (some, such as Cameron

of Lochiel, commanded French units), but Highlanders had a long history of service in

the French army.

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[55] *Edinburgh Advertiser*, "House of Lords debate on the Duke of Richmond's motion on the Foreign Troops," March 12, 1776, 1.
[56] Duke of Cumberland, *London Gazette* April 26, 1746, 5.
[57] McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountain,* 103.

The motivations of the Highland men who actually joined should be examined. The scholarship on this issue is relatively more diverse, if not necessarily always erudite. Explanations can ultimately be categorized as either economic or cultural. Diana Henderson seems to believe that Highland militarism had a significant effect on eighteenth century recruitment. "In the wild country and equally wild climate," she writes, echoing the romanticism of Sir Walter Scott, "a tough, self-reliant and warlike people survived, who were accustomed to battle and skilled in arms."[58] This is much stronger than the argument that Scots were simply not *averse* to military life. Edward Spiers notes the difficulty in persuading Englishmen to enlist.[59] This was due, at least in part, to the low opinion in which the army was held in English society.[60] Stephen Wood argues that this factor was less relevant in Scotland: it was (and is) unique among Western European nations, he argues, in the degree to which soldiers were popular, but this does not make it a militaristic country.[61] Henderson, however, seems to believe that Highland culture was inherently militaristic, and because its men were "accustomed to battle and skilled in arms," they made natural warriors. She quotes David Stewart of Garth (whose views are explained more fully in Chapter Three) to support this claim.[62] John Prebble, perhaps the most widely-cited authority on the subject of Highland soldiers, acknowledges the danger of romanticism. Still, he asserts that "English drums meant little to a race whose pipers cried to God for three hands, one for the claymore and two for the pipes…The southern world…could as well have been separated by

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[58] Diana Henderson, *Highland Soldier: A Social Study of the Highland Regiments, 1820-1920* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1989), 3-4.
[59] Edward Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914* (London: Longman Group, 1980), 35-37.
[60] Ibid., 52.
[61] Stephen Wood, *The Scottish Soldier* (Manchester: Archive Publications, 1987) p. 7.
[62] Henderson, *Highland Soldier,* 20.

three centuries."[63] A.J. Youngson wrote that Highlanders had fought for the Jacobites

"either from loyalty to their chiefs or out of a love of war and plunder," ignoring that most

men were coerced into the Stuart army.[64]

The British government certainly seemed to share such a view. Propaganda

aimed at enlistment used the supposed Highland warrior ethos "quite cynically and

ruthlessly to draw the ordinary Highlander into the ranks of the army" according to Leah

Lenman's valuable social study of Atholl which relied on surviving documents from the

estate. The "New Song," written in Gaelic to recruit Highlanders for the Seven Years

War, reads in translation "Recruit me none but the old Clans/ For they are brought up to

the Sword,/ Such warlike men Lord Loudoun wants."[65] Gaelic-language propaganda

emphasized militaristic themes such as glorious death and "noble wounds."[66]

Little evidence exists to support the notion that Highlanders were Britain's

"warlike race," or that this had much influence on their decision to enlist in the

eighteenth century. The same qualities that supposedly marked Highlanders as natural

soldiers also existed amongst other Celtic peoples—significantly, the Welsh and the

Irish.[67] Although the Irish were also disproportionately represented, enlistment efforts

did not emphasize these supposed virtues of the Celtic warrior race to the same degree

as they did in the Scottish Highlands. The Scottish Borders also have their own long

history of conflict. The last major clan battle had occurred in the seventeenth century,

and clan warfare had always been a small-scale affair, as the geography and low output

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[63] John Prebble, Mutiny: Highland Regiments in Revolt 1743-1804 (New York: Penguin Books, 1977) p. 29.
[64] Youngson, "Introduction," p. 24.
[65] McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountain*, 6.
[66] Leah Leneman, *Living in Atholl: A Social History of the Estates* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1986), 131.
[67] Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough,* 103.

of the Highlands did not require large standing forces.[68] Clan prestige had been based

primarily on the scale of feasting anyway, rather than military conquest.[69] Highland

agriculture was too labor-intensive to support constant warfare; most men recruited in

1756 were too young to have fought at Culloden; and the Disarming Act meant that they

were unlikely to ever have held a weapon.[70] The day before an assault against a

French fort in Guadeloupe, one horrified Highland officer discovered that fifteen of his

twenty-five men loaded their musket balls before their cartridges.[71] Thomas Pennant

traveled in the Highlands in 1769, observing that the effects of the Disarming Act and

changing employment opportunities would mean that "the Highlanders in a few years

will scarce know the use of any weapon."[72]

      Whatever traditions of clan warfare survived were not necessarily compatible

with British military service. Clan conflicts had always been short, and men typically

fought only for a single battle before considering the campaign over and returning

home. The Highlands were above all an agricultural society, and military action

reflected this fact. Armed formations existed primarily to protect crops, and warfare was

a subordinate concern. Even after the spectacular Jacobite victory at Prestonpans,

many Highlanders deserted to travel home and tend to their crops.[73] The primary

romantic explanation for Scottish military service is therefore wrong. What militaristic

culture as existed was at least partly a result of high enlistment, rather than a cause of

it. As more and more men gained military experience a tradition of service was

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[68] Dodgson, *From Chiefs to Landlords,* 14.
[69] Ibid., 98.
[70] McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, 33-34.
[71] Ian McCulloch, Highlander in the French-Indian War, 1756-67 (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2008), 19.
[72] Thomas Pennant, "Thomas Pennant," in *Beyond the Highland Line*, 152.
[73] Mackillop, *More Fruitful Than the Soil,* 8.

established in the Highlands, thus actually creating the warrior society that was supposed to exist.

Another romantic cultural explanation has to do with redemption after the '45. According to this line of argument, Scottish Highlanders fought in such large numbers for the Crown because they had to overcome the stigma of Jacobitism and prove their loyalty to the Hanoverian regime. Hew Strachan argues that through military service Scots became "ultra-loyal Britons," banishing the image of sedition.[74] The Edinburgh Advertiser printed several letters to the publisher in 1776 reflecting the desire for Scotland to rehabilitate its military image, although these were usually contributions to the debate over a national militia. A statement by an anonymous (probably Lowland) Scot writing as "Pro Patria" is evidence: "It must be allowed that our ancestors had too great a passion for war, and the restless ardour of their courage often involved the nation in unnecessary dangers: to that, however, we owe that, although neither possessed of numbers nor of riches, we have contended for a series of ages, with honour, against a great and gallant nation, our superior in every thing but courage."[75] This idea that Scotland was inferior in a material sense but superior in courage will be dealt with in Chapter Four as part of the "culture of defeat."

A 1756 letter in the *London Gazette* provides an even earlier example of identification with the Hanoverian victors. Addressed to the King, an Inverness assembly of local landowners declared "zealous Attachment to your Royal Person and Family," and celebrates "the happy Extinction" of the Jacobite uprising by Cumberland, claiming that "it only terminated in the just Punishment of some of those, who were

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[74] Hew Strachan. "Scotland's Military Identity," *Scottish Historical Review* 85:2 (October 2006), 328.
[75] *Edinburgh Advertiser*, "To the Printer of the Edinburgh Advertiser: Considerations on a Militia ," January 2, 1776, 1.

either so weak or so wicked as to have been signally active in promoting it," ignoring the indiscriminate violence of Cumberland's army following Culloden. All of this was in the context of a scheme to raise Highland troops for royal service: "we found all Ranks of People within the County extremely willing to contribute to" such a scheme.[76] Thomas Devine also argues that rehabilitation may have been a motive, although it is not the focus of his work: "The Scottish contribution in blood was so great that it helped reassert equality with England."[77] This sentiment appears fairly often in the Highland historiography. Finally, Highland recruiting may have encouraged Hanoverian clans to work together with formerly Jacobite ones, helping to overcome their mutual suspicion.[78]

The primary sources quoted so far have come from Lowlanders, however. As mentioned previously, Lowlanders and Highlanders saw themselves as distinct, and although the Jacobites had raised some support throughout Scotland (quite considerable, according to Pittock), it was the Highlands which were seen as disloyal and seditious. Some evidence exists, however, that Highlanders also held this view. Simon Fraser, son of Lord Lovat and colonel of the 78th Foot, had his estate restored surprisingly quickly. A Gaelic poem survives commemorating this event:

> Rinn sibh onair d'ar
> Rìoghachd Ann am fìrinn gun teagamh
> 'S rinn thusa caraide dìleas
> De'n cheart Rìgh air am bu bheag thu
>
> You have done honor for our Kingdom
> That is a certain fact
> And you made a fast friend
> Of the very King who once thought little of you[79]

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[76] *London Gazette*, "The humble Address of the Country of Inverness, North Britain, in a General Meeting of the Freeholders, Justices of Peace, and Commissioners of Supply, assembled at Inverness," May 25, 1756, 3.
[77] Devine, *Scotland's Empire*, 304.
[78] Plank, *Rebellion and Savagery,* 26.
[79] Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough,* 84.

An American Revolutionary War-era poem celebrates the escape of Sir Allan

Cameron from an American prison, including the line "'S dh'fhàg suid miosail thu fhèin

aig Lunnainnich" (And that made Londoners fond of you).[80] Another exhorted

Highlanders to bravery with the line "Bidh gach suil 's an Roinn Eòrpa/ A' geur-

choimhead airbh comhluath" (Every eye in Europe/Will be watching you closely).[81]

Robert Kirkwood, who served in the Black Watch during the Seven Years War, identifies

himself in his memoirs as having been born in "North Britain," a very Whiggish term for

a Scot indeed.[82] Perhaps in making England dependent on Scots, former Jacobites

could pull the fangs from English chauvinism. The former Jacobite commander Lord

Elcho, apparently responding to the agitations of John Wilkes and opposition to the Earl

of Bute, wrote that English "animosity against their own compatriots in Scotland is such

that a turmoil arises when the King appoints a Scotsman to be his minister; yet without

Scotland what would they do? The Scots are the mainstay of all their wars."[83]

Although this evidence suggests that redemption should not be dismissed as a

motive for enlistment, there are reasons to doubt its salience for a large number of

Highlanders. Common Highlanders would have little to overcome. While their lords

may have "been out" in the '45, common soldiers who had not been transported or

executed by 1756 had little to fear, and no reason to "clear their names." Most of them

could not speak English and had little interaction with the Sassunachs before enlisting in

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[80] Ibid., 113.
[81] Ibid., 146.
[82] Robert Kirkwood, *Through so many dangers: the Memoirs and Adventures of Robert Kirk, Late of the Royal Highland Regiment* (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 2004), 33. Kirkwood claims to have been born in "Air," which is presumably "Ayr," a traditionally Whiggish part of Scotland.
[83] David Wemyss Lord Elcho, *A Short Account of the Affairs of Scotland in the Years 1744, 1745, 1746* (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1973), 220. Elcho is also famous for shouting after Prince Charles as the Prince fled the field at Culloden: "There you go for a damned cowardly Italian!" If true, this should certainly give pause to those who wish to see the Prince as a Scottish national hero.

the British army. As communities tended to enlist together in the Jacobite rebellion

(voluntarily or not), they would have returned home to a glen full of others who had

shared their experience. It is significant that the poems quoted above are directed

towards officers, who would have come from the Highland gentry.

In addition to this, many of the officers in the Highland regiments and particularly

in the Black Watch were Campbells. David Dobson has performed the unenviable task

of compiling the surviving records for Highland soldiers in the period. The surname

"Campbell" appears to be the most common.[84] John Peebles, a grenadier lieutenant of

the Black Watch who served during the American Revolution, had sixteen officers in his

unit named Campbell.[85] These men would not have needed redemption—in their eyes,

they had proven their loyalty in the '45. Only a minority of the clans turned out in

support of Prince Charles, and the most powerful ones tended to be Hanoverian or

neutral.

It is more plausible that the clans saw military recruiting as a means of winning

favors from the central government. Although some, like the Frasers, may have been

rehabilitated as a result, the political windfall for politicians like the Duke of Argyll is

more significant explanation for Highlanders as a group.[86] Those who had been

Jacobites had motivations other than redemption. Malcolm Macpherson, one

(formerly?) Jacobite soldier justified his service to the Crown during the Seven Years

War by claiming "a desire of being revenged on the French for their treacherous

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[84] David Dobson, *Scottish Soldiers in Colonial America Part One and Part Two* (Baltimore: Clearfield, 2002), *passim*; David Dobson, *Scottish Soldiers in Colonial America, Part Three* (Baltimore: Clearfield, 2004), *passim*.
[85] John Peebles, *John Peebles' American War: The Diary of a Scottish Grenadier 1776-1782* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1998), 567.
[86] Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil,* 41-48.

promises in 1745."[87] As for healing the rifts between Hanoverian Highlanders and their

formerly Jacobite peers, the Campbells (from Gaelic *Caim-beul*, "twisted mouth")

continued to be hated by many Highlanders. This hatred had been an incentive for

some to join the Jacobite cause in the first place in order to get revenge for the "plunder

and pillage that the Cambells wrought."[88] Indeed, hatred of the Campbells persists until

the present day, as shown by John MacLeod's matter-of-fact description of them as the

"scum of Highland history."[89]

One 1778 Gaelic poem does acknowledge Government propaganda both of the

"warrior race" and "redemption" variety, but it seems to be written more with the intent of

mocking the English for cowardice than inspiring Highlanders to join the ranks:

> Thàinig teachdair' o'n Rìgh
> Gu roobh cruas air a Rìoghachd
> On rinn Saghsannaich strìochdadh thar fairge;
> Ach nan èireadh na gillean
> 'Gam bheil cliù bhith 's an iormairt
> Gum pilleadh a-rìs an t-sealbh riu.
>
> Cha robh Saghsannaich glic
> Ann an dùsgadh a' mhiostaidh
> Nuair dhiùlt iad milìsi do Albainn;
> Nuair theannaich an èiginn
> B'e fosgladh gach beul diubh
> Gum b'fheumail fir threubhach nan Garbh-Chrìoch.
>
> A message came from the King
> That his Kingdom was in distress
> Since the English were surrendering across the ocean;
> But if the lads would rise
> Who are renowned for warfare
> They would return their possessions to them.

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[87] Brumwell, *Redcoats,* 271. Fraser's Highlanders (78th Foot) were primarily drawn from the ranks of the former Jacobite clans.
[88] Newton, *We're Indians sure Enough,* 33. This line in a Gaelic Jacobite poem presumably refers to the 1692 massacre at Glencoe, for which some still have not forgiven them.
[89] MacLeod, *No Great Mischief,* 18.

> The English were not wise
> To initiate the mischief
> When they refused Scotland a militia;
> When their distress began
> The first thing that came out of every mouth
> Was that the mighty men of the Highlands would be of great use.[90]

Government propaganda appears to have had little effect. Although it was common in Atholl, the appeal to Gaelic militarism was not effective enough to fill the ranks. Men were still impressed into the army. For those who joined voluntarily, the warrior ethos may have "sweetened the pill," in Leah Leneman's words, but a different consideration was decisive.[91]

That factor, which is most likely to have had the greatest influence on the largest number, is economics. As previously noted, the Highlands were undergoing rapid change in this period as traditional chieftains continued to transform into modern landlords. Because land was most profitably used raising livestock and supporting the labor-intensive kelp industry on the coasts, Highlanders were frequently relocated or evicted from the straths and glens. Clearing tenants from their land created one "push" factor, but landowner chiefs created other powerful influences on their male tenants which pressured them into military service. Landowners raised regiments for the social standing and cash they brought from the British treasury, often accompanied by the royal promise of land in British America when the war was over. A large portion of the Scottish gentry and tacksmen could maintain their social positions only by raising regiments for royal service from amongst their tenants.

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[90] Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough,* 146.
[91] Leneman, *Living in Atholl,* 134-145.

Pressure by Scottish elites pushed men into the Army. Tenant families were threatened with eviction if they were unable to provide male recruits in sometimes explicit deals of "Land for Sons."[92] On the Sutherland estate, where the largest and most notorious clearances were to occur near the end of the century, the Duchess made clear that military service was the only factor making people more valuable than sheep, and punished with eviction those who didn't enlist or joined the wrong regiments.[93] In contrast to the possibility of land in America, many Highlanders faced famine at home due to overpopulation and poor soils. The enlistment bounty given to a former Jacobite, however, might protect his family from hard economic times while he was away.[94]

In addition to the "sticks," therefore, there were also "carrots," the promise of land being chief among them. A 1776 recruiting bill for the Fraser Highlanders promises that the "advantages that will arise to those that enlist in this corps, are very great…the land of the rebels will be divided amongst you, and every one of you will become lairds."[95] Emigration to America was expensive—often beyond the means of poor Highlanders.[96] Recruiting was extraordinarily successful because it promised state-subsidized emigration to those who could not otherwise afford it. A letter written by emigrants and directed towards other Highlanders appeared in the *South Carolina Gazette* in 1773. Emigrants explained that in America "the price of land is so low…that forty or fifty pounds will purchase as much ground there as one thousand in [Scotland]." The letter

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[92] Devine *Scotland's Empire*, 318-319.
[93] Richards, *The Clearances,* 125.
[94] McCulloch *Sons of the Mountain*, p. 29.
[95] Reproduced in Stuart Allan and Allan Carswell, *The Thin Red Line: War, Empire, and Visions of Scotland* (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 2004), 96.
[96] J.M. Bumstead, "The Scottish Diaspora: Emigration to British North America, 1763-1815," in Landsman, Ned. *Nation and Province in the First British Empire: Scotland and the Americas, 1600-1800* (Lewisberg: Bucknell University Press, 2001), 140.

promised that there were "no beggars in North-America, the poor, when they appear, are amply provided for. Lastly, there are no titled, proud lords to tyrannize over the lower sort of people, men there being upon a level and more valued, in proportion to their abilities, than they are in Scotland."[97] Both the *Gazette* article and Fraser's recruiting poster seem to offer an escape from the control of landowners, suggesting that Highland dissatisfaction with the gentry had already begun. Rather than joining the army out of traditional clan obligations as the romantics would have it, they may have joined precisely because they saw those obligations being broken by their landlords.

Although much of this discussion is relevant to the entire period of 1746-1783, the American Revolution deserves separate attention as a number of issues distinguish it from the Seven Years War. First, there was a genuine alternative for those wished to fight but were not loyal to the Crown—siding with the Continental Army and the American rebels. For the British military establishment, the Seven Years War was therefore possibly a lesser test of Highland loyalty because it did not provide the same opportunity for challenge to central authority, even if it did establish that Highlanders would make effective British soldiers in the abstract. According to Stephen Wood, the American War of Independence, served as a "proving ground" for the Highland soldier.[98] Although the government apparently assumed that Highlanders in colonies like South Carolina would remain loyal, it was surprised by the extent of their support.[99] Ninety percent of Loyalists recruited into the British Army in America between 1775 and 1776 were Scottish—primarily Highland veterans. This is especially surprising given that

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[97] Devine, *The Scottish Nation,* 132.
[98] Wood, *The Scottish Soldier,* 39.
[99] Paul Smith, *Loyalists and Redcoats: A Study in British Revolutionary Policy* (Durham: North Carolina University Press, 1964), 21.

three separate regiments competed against each other for recruits, all seeking experienced Highlanders.[100] The Americans, too, tried hard to recruit Highlanders for their supposed martial values, yet largely failed to sway them.[101]

In a comprehensive study of Loyalists who claimed compensation from the Crown for losses during the American War, Wallace Brown discovered that in state after state, Scots (including Highlanders) were greatly overrepresented relative to their small percentage of total population. In Virginia, for example, Loyalism "was mainly a British, and more specifically a Scottish, affair," as Scots filed forty percent of claims. "All the evidence confirms that Scots made up the backbone of Virginia Loyalism."[102] Of the 1,144 European-born claimants, 471 were Scottish.

Not only was a Royal Highland Emigrant regiment raised, but Highlanders already in America formed military units without direction from the British government. At the battle of Moore's Creek, Highland Scots complete with broadswords, kilts, and bagpipes fought unsuccessfully against the American rebels. These veterans of the '45 were encouraged by Major Allan MacDonald, whose wife Flora was famous in Highland myth for helping Prince Charles to escape after Culloden.[103] Highlanders in the American South became so notorious for their loyalism that Georgia prohibited their settlement in that state unless they had served the rebels, possibly in memory of the 1778 campaign of the 71st (Fraser) Highlanders.[104] All of this was in addition to the Highland Emigrant Regiment which fought notably in South Carolina.

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[100] Ibid.., 67-68.
[101] Clyde, *From Rebel to Hero,* 158.
[102] Wallace Brown, *The King's Friends: The Composition and Motives of the American Loyalist Claimants* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1965), 180-181.
[103] North Callahan, *Royal Raiders: The Tories of the American Revolution* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs Merrill Company, 1963),15-16.
[104] Allan and Carswell, *Thin Red Line,* 43.

In the American Revolutionary War, land motivated Highland emigrants already in America. Besides the direct promise of reward, some fought loyally because they feared retributions by the British state of the kind that followed Culloden in 1746, either against the emigrants themselves or against their kin in Scotland in the event that they were disloyal.[105] Most emigrants who relocated to America voluntarily outside of the military did so not because they opposed the Crown but because they opposed the high land rents of Scotland.[106] The dream of American land came true for some of the officer elites, such as Lieutenant Colonel MacLean and Major Smalls of the Highland Emigrant Regiment, who were given vast lands in Canada, held in trust for division amongst their troops. These men mimicked the behavior of absentee landlords at home, failing to provide for their tenants, keeping title to their land, and returning to Scotland.[107]

Murray Pittock's rather lame suggestion is that former Jacobites may have defended the Hanoverian dynasty "on the principle that any king was better than none."[108] This seems implausible, however, as there is no evidence that the Highland devotion to the institution of monarchy was so strong that men were willing to risk their lives for it.   Some Highlanders, especially Catholic ones, may have seen the British Empire as a means of protection against the non-Scottish majority, as many other minorities groups did.[109] This too is probably not enough to explain the charge at Moore's Creek, however, as the likelihood of being injured by the non-Scottish majority is much higher if one places oneself in the path of their muskets. This is doubly true

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[105] Callahan, *Royal Raiders*, 16.
[106] William Brock, *Scotus Americanus: a survey of the sources for links between Scotland and America in the eighteenth century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982), 129.
[107] G. Murray Logan, *Scottish Highlanders and the American Revolution* (Halifax: McCurdy Printing Co. Ltd, 1976), 118-119.
[108] Pittock *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 208.
[109] Wallace Brown, *The Good Americans: Loyalists in the American Revolution* (New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, 1969), 47-48.

because the British Empire was not especially tolerant of Catholics—or Episcopalians,

for that matter, the dominant religion amongst the Jacobites. Instead, Highland loyalism

should be seen as evidence that Jacobitism was truly dead. As Highlanders were

assimilated into the British Empire, allowed to keep the trappings of their identity in

regimental uniforms and pipe bands, they became acclimated to the status quo. This

became possible after the Seven Years War, "now that Scotland as a whole, and not

just the Lowlands had invested in British patriotism."[110]

Whatever their motivation, Highland soldiers who joined the British army in the

second half of the late eighteenth century did so in huge numbers. Ian McCulloch

states that of the 24,000 British troops in North America in 1758, 4,200 of them were in

kilted regiments.[111] This figure does not include Highlanders who served as

Saighdearan Dearg (Gaelic "Red Soldiers," i.e., redcoats) in other regiments. Michael

McConnell estimates that in the period of 1756-1775, over twenty-five percent of British

troops in America were Scottish.[112] A disproportionate number of Scots also served in

the American Revolution, as established above.

Given these numbers, it is surprising that studies of the Seven Years War and

the American Revolution often ignore or confuse the facts of Scottish service. The

author of the #1 Bestselling book *1776*, David McCullough (who, judging by the name,

ought to know better) barely mentions them. Where they do appear, they are depicted

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[110] Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 103. Colley's treatment of Highlanders in general is surprisingly weak. She says for example that Jacobite clans became "the cannon-fodder of Imperial war," neglecting the fact, documented above, that the dominant presence in Highland regiments excepting Fraser's was always Hanoverian.
[111] McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountain,* 2006, p. xxi. The same estimate appears in Brumwell, *Redcoats,* 266.
[112] Michael McConnell, *British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758-1775* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 57.

as savages "armed with their murderous broadswords."[113] He seems unaware that

although in the Seven Years War Highland soldiers used their traditional weapons and

dressed in kilts throughout the conflict, by 1776 the broadsword was being replaced by

bayonets in these units.[114] Elsewhere, he recounts the "commonplace" reports of

"British, Scottish, and Hessian soldiers" bayoneting (note: *bayoneting*) helpless

American prisoners.[115] Elsewhere he repeats the mistake of distinguishing between

"British" and "Highland," as if the two were mutually exclusive.[116] Lest this attack on

such an esteemed popular historian be accused of cherry-picking, one should note that

Scottish units are mentioned only four times in the book. These examples cover three

of those times.

A more scholarly example of Highland invisibility can be found in Sylvia Frey's

book *The British Soldier in America: A social history of military life in the Revolutionary

Period.[117]* Frey bemoans the lack of careful analysis of the British army, writing that

among the most fundamental questions, it should be asked "were they markedly

different as a group from the general character of the English population?"[118] One must

hazard a guess that yes, they were, given that perhaps a quarter of them were Gaelic-

speaking Scottish Highlanders. Frey also refers to the Jacobite Rebellion as the

"Scottish rebellion of 1745," which is an inappropriate way to refer to an event which

was a dynastic struggle for the British throne rather than a nationalist uprising. The

body of her book analyzes the social structure of the British army based on a study of

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[113] David McCullough, *1776* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 142.
[114] Newark, *Highlander,* 62-63.
[115] McCullough, *1776,* 181.
[116] Ibid, 241.
[117] Sylvia Frey, *The British Soldier in America: A social history of military life in the Revolutionary Period* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981).
[118] Ibid., xi.

two units, the Coldstream Guards and the 58th Regiment (Northamptonshire), chosen because they closely mirror overall British demographic data (e.g., drawing about 10% of their strength from Scots), which suggests to her that they were typical of the British army.[119] Finally, she discusses regimental bonding, using three examples, two of which come from Scottish Highland regiments. They apparently can teach us much about what she calls "English military practice."[120]

There seems to be a consensus amongst those who include Highlanders in their scholarship that Scottish units performed notably well in North America. Their success and conduct were "strong catalysts in propagating a wider acceptance of the Highlanders as an integral and important addition to the British Army," writes Ian McCulloch. "In a relatively short span of years, Highlanders went from rebels to…national icons for their homeland."[121] Devine argues that Highland regiments were a "major factor in the alteration of perceptions of Highland society after the '45."[122] British soldiers who observed the costly Highland attack at Ticonderoga wrote home about their gallantry, one officer in the 55th Foot comparing them to "roaring lions breaking from their chains." Anecdotes spread about their "almost superhuman qualities," but "the service record of the Highland battalions in the Americas required no exaggeration." Officers such as Thomas Mante and Henry Bouquet spoke highly of them, Bouquet even calling them "the bravest men I ever saw."[123] Even Wolfe,

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[119] Ibid., 10.
[120] Ibid., 118.
[121] McCulloch *Sons of the Mountain*, xxi.
[122] Devine *Scottish Nation*, 240.
[123] Brumwell, *Redcoats,* 265-266. A bizarre and relatively modern example of the "superhuman" abilities attributed to Scottish soldiers of the period comes from Michael Brander, who retells an old legend about a private soldier who foretold Wolfe's death, saying apparently in all seriousness that it "appears to be an authentic instance of second sight, E.S.P., or call it what you will." One wonders how Prince Charles lost at Culloden with men such as these, and one is jealous of those who lived through the late 1960s.

Hanoverian veteran of Culloden, seemed to have changed his tune from "no great mischief if they fall." "The Highlanders are very useful serviceable soldiers," he wrote, "commanded by the most manly corps of officers I ever saw."[124] Perhaps Divine's "Scottish contribution in blood" really was "reasserting equality with England."

There was certainly no lack of blood. The average casualty rate among Anglo-American unites in the Seven Years War was around nine percent. For Highland units, that figure leapt to a stunning 32%.[125] Commenting on this number, Murray Pittock observes that "they might as well have been at Culloden."[126] The view of Highland lives as cheap, discussed previously, may have been one factor. The warrior myth itself may have been another. The belief that Highlanders were natural warriors "frequently earned them assignments that placed them in the thick of danger," and "the belief that they were expendable no doubt played a role."[127] To make matters worse, the supposedly martial qualities of Highlanders were taken to mean that they did not require adequate training before being thrust into battle.[128]

Few have ventured to explain why Highland troops were so effective, beyond invoking the "warrior race" trope. One explanation that crops up with some regularity has to do with Scottish tactics. A book published by the National Museums of Scotland argues that "North America demanded a kind of warfare that particularly suited the Highland soldier," where standard European tactical doctrine was inappropriate and "the kind of irregular tactics they were used to were needed." Despite the skills of Highland

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Michael Brander, *The Scottish Highlanders and their Regiments.* (London: Seely, Service & Co. Ltd, 1971), 120.

[124] Willson, *Life and Letters,* 363.

[125] Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders,* 96.

[126] Pittock, *Myth of the Jacobite Clans,* 40.

[127] Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders,* 116.

[128] Ibid., 91.

soldiers at their disposal, "the lessons of wilderness fighting were not put to good use…British commanders tended to forget that this was not a large-scale European war, which was certainly one reason for defeat" in the American Revolutionary War.[129] Another suggests that British triumph in colonial warfare was only possible once "disciplined English gunfire" was combined with the "shattering Celtic charge," which resulted in a "breathtaking ability to win battles that was quickly exported around the world…the violent engine that forged British world dominion over the next 150 years."[130]

There are two serious flaws with this claim. First, it ignores the actual equipment and tactics of Highland units. While there was indeed a "Highland Charge" at Moore's Creek which might have resembled that of Culloden, this was an isolated action by Loyalist irregulars. The Highland units of the regular Army quickly had their broadswords replaced with bayonets precisely because they were to be employed in the same manner as other British forces—a fact even noted by Tim Newark, cited above.[131] The equipment of the 84th Foot (Royal Highland Emigrants) did indeed include kilt and broadsword—in the dress uniform only.[132] If there was an argument to be made for the uniqueness of the Highland soldier, "such uniqueness as existed was *weakened* by the wars in America…and The King's red coat masked any few remaining idiosyncrasies."[133] The broadsword was not even intended for use in "irregular warfare," but worked best when used in a charge against a massed, regularly-deployed enemy.

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[129] Jenni Calder, *The Story of the Scottish Soldier 1600-1914* (Edinburgh: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1987), 16-17.

[130] Newark, *Highlander,* 62.

[131] Stephen Brumwell goes even farther, arguing that all the men of the Royal Highland Regiment (Black Watch) preferred their bayonets, and that officers had requested permission to leave them behind on campaigns, as they were merely an encumbrance. Brumwell, *Redcoats,* 287.

[132] Logan, *Scottish Highlanders,* 89.

[133] Wood, *Scottish Soldier,* 7. Italics mine. This argument can be taken too far, however, as Highland units retained their separate identities to a great extent, and were soon to be put back in their kilts.

Second, this argument contains an unwarranted degree of American exceptionalism. Combat in America did not create unique conditions that rendered the lessons of European warfare obsolete. The British certainly did not lose the war because they relied too heavily on massed fire to the exclusion of the Highland charge—in fact, British success in America came from the judicious use of defensive European tactical doctrines, not from their abandonment.[134] The Loyalist charge at Moore's Creek did fail, after all.

What then might explain the martial efficacy of Highlanders? Several possibilities exist. One is recruit quality. The British army as a whole pulled from the dregs of society. Wellington famously described his soldiers at Waterloo as "the scum of the earth," calling the men of the British army the "most drunken," "worst" specimens of humanity.[135] This was a product of the army's poor social image, which guaranteed that it would attract largely rejects and criminals. The aforementioned Scottish acceptance of military life, however, suggests that Highlanders who served the King might not have come primarily from the most degenerate recesses of their society. Tacksmen, traditionally filling the roles of non-commissioned officers in clan armies, were particularly hard-hit by the economic changes of the eighteenth century as they were no longer needed to collect rent.[136] Highlanders in general who joined the army used it as a means of emigration. One would thus expect them to be fairly intrepid, at least willing to take the risk of leaving their native land. Edward Burt noted as early as 1726 that the strongest, healthiest men in the Highlands were precisely those who intended to leave

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[134] Guy Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 145.
[135] Spiers, *Army and Society*, 77.
[136] Dodgson, *Chiefs into Landlords,* 94.

for military service.[137] The most educated, capable men continued to exploit this outlet

to leave the increasingly stricken Highlands throughout the eighteenth century.[138] This

positive factor was set off by a negative one. Scottish Highlanders spoke Gaelic, and

thus had fewer opportunities to desert and blend into local communities. For this

reason, Massachusetts colonists had requested Highland troops in the event that British

forces would be quartered there.

But did these soldiers who had made such strong impressions on their officers

banish the shadow of savagery and sedition? The short answer is that they did not.

While Highlanders may have impressed the soldiers that they served with, broader

acceptance of Highland culture seems to have developed much more slowly.

Statements about how the military triumphs of Highlanders changed the opinions of

mainstream British society, such as those quoted above, are common, but are rarely

supported with any hard evidence. There is some evidence to the contrary, however.

The funniest, and most harmless, example is of a Black Watch officer who was in

London on his way back home from America. Wearing his full uniform, including the kilt,

he was approached by a frightened spectator: "Pray, sir, forgive me for asking whether

you be with us or against—for I never saw such a dress before."[139] A more serious

episode was reported by James Boswell when two Scottish officers, returning from

service in the Caribbean, attended a play in London. Rather than being cheered for

their service to the Empire abroad, their fellow Britons threw apples at them, screaming

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[137] Burt, "Edward Burt," 97.
[138] Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough,* 37-38.
[139] Brumwell, *Redcoats,* 272.

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"No Scots! No Scots! Out with them!"[140] Brumwell and Calloway both cite the incident

as evidence that the acceptance of Highlanders did not extend into civilian society.[141]

Curiously, however, in recounting this scene at the theater, both authors omit a part of

Boswell's reaction which is reported in the original. The offended Scotsman writes "I

hated the English; I wished from my soul that the Union was broke and that we might

give them another battle of Bannockburn."[142] This is a strong sentiment for a genteel

Lowland Scot, and illustrates the beginning of a process by which Highlanders,

especially soldiers, would come to represent the whole of Scotland.

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[140] James Boswell, *Boswell's London Journal 1762-1763* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 71.
[141] Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders,* 97; Brumwell, *Redcoats,* 288-289.
[142] Boswell, *Boswell's London Journal,* 72.

CHAPTER III

NINETEENTH CENTURY: THE THIN RED STREAK

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the Scottish Highlands were

overpopulated.[143] The region is not only mountainous, which limits the amount of arable

land, but also suffers from poor soils, which reduce the productivity of farming. The

prospect of hunger motivated some to join the army, especially before large-scale

emigration took off after 1750. The winter of 1756-1757 was a particularly bad one,

which coincided nicely with the government's decision to raise Highland regiments

under the pressure of Argyll and other Highland elites.[144]

By the end of the century, however, an inexorable trend toward depopulation had

begun. Pennant noted in 1772 that higher rents, a product of the commercialization of

estates explained in the last chapter, were already causing pockets of depopulation in

the Highlands.[145] He was concerned that this would undermine the viability of the

region as a recruiting center as men chose to emigrate rather than raise families.[146]

This sentiment was shared by others. A pamphlet written by an anonymous Highlander

in 1773 warned that the actions of landlords were undermining British security. Not only

did they decrease the pool of available recruits, but by encouraging emigration to

America, they created a military resource "perhaps to be some day dangerous to the

mother country…they will make excellent partizans for the first enterprising genius that

shall aspire to form an independent establishment."[147]

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[143] Henderson, *Highland Soldier,* 1989, 15-17, Richards, *The Clearances,* 45-48.
[144] Brumwell, *Redcoats,* 274.
[145] Pennant, "Thomas Pennant," 156.
[146] Ibid., 187.
[147] Clyde, *Rebel to Hero,* 157-158.

The link between depopulation and recruiting was not lost upon those living in the Highlands, both landlord and tenant. In 1792 attempts at recruiting on the traditionally reliable Argyll estates were declining. A Highland minister wrote that "military spirit prevails much among the gentlemen of this country; they wish to keep the men, but their lands give so much more rent by stocking them with sheep that they can't withstand the gain."[148] Gaelic-speaking poets observed the connection as well. John MacCordrum, one of the last poets employed by a Highland chieftain, wrote a bitter poem about emigration from the Isle of Skye to North Carolina. Skye lost a fifth of its population towards the end of the eighteenth century.

> O nach fhuiling iad beò sibh
> Ann an crìochaibh ur n-eòlas
> 'S fear dhuibh falbh dh'ur deòin
> Na bhith fodha mar thràillean.
>
> 'S iad na h-uachdarain ghòrach
> Chuir fuaradh fo'r srònaibh
> Bhris muineal Rìgh Deòrsa
> Nuair dh'fhògradh na Gàidheil.
>
> Ma thig cogadh is creachan
> Mar as minig a thachair
> 'S ann a bhitheas sibh 'nur stairsnich
> Fo chasaibh ur nàmhaid.
>
> Tha sibh soirbh ri ur casgairt
> 'S gun neach ann gu'm bacadh:
> Tha ur guaillean gun taicse
> 'S na gaisgich 'gur fàgail.
> …
> 'S truagh 'n gnothach ri smaoineach':
> Tha 'm fearann 'ga dhaorach'.
> Ghrad fhalbh ar cuid daoine
> 'S thàinig caoraich 'nan àite

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[148] Quoted in Eric Cregeen, "The Changing Role of the House of Argyll in the Scottish Highlands," in *Scotland in the Age of Improvement: Essays in Scottish History in the Eighteenth Century* ed. N.T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 13.

Because they will not suffer you to live
In the lands which are familiar to you
It is better for you to leave willingly
Than to descend like slaves.

It is the foolish landlords
Who have set you out to sea,
Who broke King George's very breast
When the Gaels were expelled.

If war and strife come
As has happened many times
You (nobles) will become a foot-path
Under the feet of your enemy.

You go easily to the slaughter
Without anyone to hold them back:
Your shoulders lack support
Since the soldiers have deserted you.
…
It is a sad thing to contemplate:
The land is being raised in price.
Our people have suddenly vanished
And sheep have taken their place."[149]

The poem continues about sheep for quite some time, making the military incompetence of these animals unmistakably clear to any reader. The author notes for example that sheep are unable to lift broadswords, but sadly does not document the experiments through which this knowledge was discovered.

Even as Highland "improvers" continued to fit their estates into the British market economy, many Highland tenants clung to the concept of *dùthchas*.[150] Lacking an exact English equivalent, this word connotes honor and mutual obligation. Chieftains were supposed to have an obligation to their tenants, who in return would honor the chief and provide military service when necessary. This reciprocal obligation began to erode,

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[149] Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough,* 90-91.
[150] Devine, *Scottish Nation,* 182.

undermining whatever last vestiges of the clan system allowed Highland landlords to raise their regiments quickly.[151] The Highland nobility had long been Anglicized and come to see its tenants as inferior savages. The logic of market forces exacerbated the decline. The end of the rank-for-recruitment system in the last decade of the eighteenth century also blunted the enthusiasm for military life among Scotland's gentry, making them less likely to exert much energy in seeking a royal warrant or coercing their tenants to fill the ranks.[152]

Even military casualties were so high that they may have had a role in Scotland's depopulation.[153] Disease was particularly damaging due to sometimes awful conditions abroad made worse by army itself. Captain Alexander MacDonald, who raised and commanded a battalion of what would become the 84th Foot (Royal Highland Emigrants Regiment), wrote a letter to his superior Major Small in 1776. "Some of the Recruits died on the Passage," he wrote, from New York to Halifax with one hundred men, "to the Number of About 20 Men, & I am Affraid A great Many more will die, they having contracted a Malignant fever on board the Ships, being Served with bad Provisions & Stinking Water, & Allmost Naked for want of cloaths – We have About 58 Sick Now."[154] Conditions during the Seven Years War had been even worse, where disease ravaged the 42nd and 77th Regiments during their service in the Caribbean.[155]

In addition to the decline in quantity, the quality of men who served in Highland units also declined over the course of the century as a result of high rates of enlistment,

[151] Ibid., 172.
[152] Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil,* 72.
[153] Calloway, *White, People, Indians, and Highlanders,* 97.
[154] Logan, *Scottish Highlanders,* 66-67.
[155] McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, 280.

emigration, and casualties.[156] As farmers were forced out of the glens to Highland

coasts, many turned to the sea, and became expert sailors. As a consequence, the

army soon had to compete for high-quality recruits with the British navy: "the

resourcefulness and skill of Hebridean sailors made them highly sought by the

Admiralty; useful, brave, and eminently expendable."[157]

Paradoxically, the decline of traditional recruiting in the Highlands coincided with

the final solidification of Scotland's military reputation. The Black Watch, Royal Scots

Greys, and other Scottish units performed valiantly at Quatre Bras and Waterloo.

Waterloo especially was a "volte-face in public and Government opinion, with regards to

the Highland Regiments and the Highlands in general." By 1815, all ten Highland

regiments had seen extensive combat, and "if there had been doubts about their fidelity,

these doubts were completely dispelled. Their coveted Battle Honours, particularly

'Waterloo', spoke for themselves."[158] Scottish successes even made an impression

abroad. Johann Eckermann told Johann van Goethe of seeing Highlanders at

Waterloo. "They were men! All strong, nimble and free as if they had come straight

from the hand of God. They carried their heads so freely and gaily and marched so

lightly, swinging along with their bare knees, that you would have thought they had

never heard of original sin or the primal curse."[159] The next time the Germans

encountered them the language would be less pleasant.

Waterloo was a powerful symbol in British imagination. One of the most

influential literary works about the battle was Sir Walter Scott's "Field of Waterloo,"

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[156] Ibid., 146.
[157] MacLeod, *No Great Mischief,* 64.
[158] Henderson, *Highland Soldier*, 8.
[159] James Campbell, *Invisible Country: A Journey through Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 98.

which contains references to the lost cause of Jacobitism and the sacrifice of Scottish

soldiers. While the theme of sacrifice will be treated later in more detail, it is significant

to note that Walter Scott was the author of this piece, as he would become one of the

primary figures in the rehabilitation of a coopted Jacobitism and the establishment of a

"cult of tartanry" that would complete the transformation of the Highland image

described by Robert Clyde—"from threat to pet."[160]

The romanticization of Scotland had begun before Scott's first novel with the

"translations" of supposedly ancient Gaelic epics by James Macpherson.[161] An intense

debate over the authenticity of Macpherson's "Ossian" poetry occupied educated circles

in Europe for years in the mid-eighteenth century and raised the possibility that the

Scottish Highlands could produce valuable cultural contributions. Following the Ossian

controversy, Scottish authors and songwriters began the rehabilitation of Jacobitism.

The poetry of Robert Burns was inspired by Jacobitism, but the song "Scot's Wha Hae"

became a kind of unofficial national anthem.[162] Jacobite symbols and words were

retained, shorn of their meaning and redeployed as examples of a united Scottish

culture, something that had never existed before. Figures such as Cameron of Lochiel,

a prominent commander in Prince Charles' army, began to form a sort of Jacobite

hagiography, made possible by the conviction that Jacobitism was finally dead.[163] In

1815, the preface to the *Culloden Papers*, a collection of documents relating to

Jacobitism, included the sentiment that "Time, which buries in promiscuous ruin and

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[160] Clyde, *Rebel to Hero,* i.
[161] Dafydd Moore, "The critical response to Ossian's Romantic bequest," in Gerard Carruthers and Alan Rawes, *English Romanticism and the Celtic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 39-40.
[162] Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 237.
[163] John Gibson, *Lochiel of the '45: the Jacobite chief and the prince* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 170-171.

oblivion the hopes and fears of mankind, has long disarmed this subject of its acrimony, and justly appreciated its merits."[164] The transition from hatred of the Highlanders to adoration of them happened the minute that they were pacified and rendered a harmless and potentially useful resource for the empire. Thomas Babington Macaulay wrote in the late nineteenth century that as long as there were "Gaelic marauders, they had been regarded by the Saxon population as hateful vermin, who ought to be exterminated without mercy. As soon as the extermination had been accomplished…the freebooter was exalted into a hero of romance."[165] The Hanoverian consensus could safely redeploy Stuart images as their own. Even the familiar song "God Save the King" was originally Jacobite until its cooption in the late eighteenth century.[166]

The Highlands came to represent all of Scotland, and Jacobitism came to represent all of the Highlands in its new sentimental form. "In the romantic and pageant-ridden zone of the early nineteenth century," writes Murray Pittock, "when the conduct of Highlanders in the Napoleonic wars had valorized the heroic Celt to an unequalled degree, the rehabilitation of Jacobitism was an important factor in sustaining the Highland cult." Sir Walter Scott's novels, beginning with *Waverly* in 1814, constructed an immensely popular vision of Scotland's past featuring Jacobite Highland heroes who embodied the romantic image of the noble savage. The string of twenty-seven historical novels established Walter Scott as "the most prestigious author in

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[164] *Culloden Papers*, p. vi.
[165] Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England from the Accession of James II Volume III* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1881), 246.
[166] Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics,* p. 209.

Europe and the greatest Scotsman alive."[167] *Redgauntlet* made Jacobitism the ultimate

lost cause. The story deals with a plot for a new Jacobite revolt, the '65, which is

discovered and broken up before it even begins. The real political movement of

Jacobitism, once a potentially lethal threat to the British state, became domesticated,

locked forever in the past and thus robbed of its power as a viable political

movement.[168] Scott's depiction of Gaeldom was one of violence and savagery—the

society was romantic, but it was also thoroughly militaristic.[169]

The domesticated Jacobite identity came to define a unified Scottish myth.

James Hogg collected Jacobite songs and wrote many of his own, passing them off as

originals. Hogg deliberately conflated Highland and Lowland, helping to establish the

traditional symbols of the Highlands as those of Scotland overall.[170] Scott's work

similarly blurred the Highland boundary. The result was a romantic, inherently military

identity that would form the basis for the twentieth century image of Scotland as a land

of breathtaking Highland scenery and warrior traditions devoted to a doomed but stirring

cause. "A race formerly believed to be pagan barbarians whose delight in the theft of

cattle and sheep was exceeded only by that provided by the indiscriminate slaughter of

women and children, had become the faithful followers of the Prince and the resolute

defenders of Scottish nationhood."[171]

David Stewart of Garth, a Highland landowner and former officer of the Black

Watch, was singularly important in the creation specifically military romance. His 1822

book distilled the military romanticism surrounding Highlanders into what was supposed

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[167] Magnus Magnusson, *Scotland: The Story of a Nation* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 633-634.
[168] Ibid., 637.
[169] Clyde, *Rebel to Hero,* 121.
[170] Ibid., 226.
[171] Ibid., 136.

to be a work of history but in fact obliterated the brutal history of the Highlands after Culloden by replacing it with at sanitized landscape full of noble, doomed warriors. Repeating the trope of the Highlander as natural warrior, Stewart wrote that "an habitual contempt of danger was nourished by their solitary musings, of which the honour of their clan , and a long descent from brave and warlike ancestors, formed the frequent theme. Thus, their…motives of action, their prejudices, and their superstitions, became characteristic, permanent, and peculiar."[172]

Stewart also obscured the conflict between hereditary landowners and Highland tenants that had virtually extinguished by the time he published his book. "The long unbroken line of chiefs," he said, referencing those who fought under Robert the Bruce at Bannockburn, was "proof of the general mildness of their sway, as of the fidelity of their followers; for the independent spirit displayed on various occasions by the people, proves that they would not have brooked oppression, where they looked for kindness and protection."[173] When he does admit that the Highlands were not a static medieval society, Stewart seems puzzled as to the causes: "The rude Highlanders are undergoing a process of civilization by new manners, new morals, and new religion, the progress of which is at once rapid and deplorable. An inquiry into the cause of this loss of principles and morals in an age when so much is done to enlighten and educate, would certainly be extremely interesting."[174]

David Stewart's writing would have a long-term effect on Scottish military historiography. Despite the many inaccuracies in his work, Stewart's tales were

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[172] David Stewart, *Sketches of the character, manors and present state of the Highlanders of Scotland; with details of the military service of the Highland Regiments, Vol I* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company, 1822), 7.
[173] Ibid., 27-28.
[174] Ibid., 37.

sometimes copied directly into regimental histories. He would do "more than anyone to

create the modern image of the Highlander," truthful or not. Nearly every study cited in

this current work that relates directly to the eighteenth-century Highland military

experience cites Stewart in some capacity or another—often noting his inaccuracies in

one place and using his claims as evidence of a "warrior spirit" in another. John

Prebble, despite his own romanticization of Highland warriors, wrote the most powerful

condemnation of the omissions in Stewart's work. The *Sketches* "have the sweet smell

of the romantic anaesthesia that softened any guilty pain his class may have felt at the

manner in which an old way of life had passed." Between Stewart and the first soldiers

of his former regiment "was a black gulf across which the Gaelic people had been

brutally dragged. Between his colorful pen and the past was the spine-breaking blow of

Culloden, the despoiling of the glens, the bloody sewer of the French wars, the coming

of the great Cheviot sheep and the beginning of eviction and dispersal."[175] Stewart also

avoided mention of *mi-run mor nan Gall*—the anti-Celtic sentiments of the Lowlanders

and English in the eighteenth century and before.[176] Scottish Highlanders had long

been depicted as a warrior culture, but in the hands of romantic authors and historians

this savagery was presented as a virtue to them and Highland identity was extended to

all the peoples of Scotland.

     The cult of "Highlandism" secured a deep and lasting hold on the British

imagination when King George IV visited Edinburgh Castle in 1822. This was the first

royal visit since Charles II had landed in Garmouth in 1650. Roads were constructed,

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[175] Prebble, *Mutiny,* 27.
[176] McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountain*, xvii.

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buildings torn down, and the city of Edinburgh remade to suit the occasion.[177] Sir

Walter Scott was chosen to oversee the event, including the costumes and composition

of those who would be privileged to meet the King. The portly monarch was dressed in

the uniform of an admiral when he landed, a thistle and a sprig of heather stuck in his

hat as a nod to Scotland, a country that he had never seen. Sentimental Jacobitism

was symbolically redeemed when Peter Grant, supposedly aged 108 and the last living

Jacobite veteran of Culloden, travelled to Edinburgh and was granted a pension and a

royal pardon by the King himself. A portrait of Grant in full Highland dress was

commissioned, and at his funeral two years later, pipers played "Wha Wadna Fecht for

Charlie."[178]

It would be the sartorial displays over days that followed Grant's royal pardon,

however, that would truly earn this visit a place in Scottish history. The reliable Colonel

David Stewart of Garth was responsible for the King's appearance at Holyrood.[179]

George appeared in a full Highland costume complete with kilt, bonnet, dirk, and

broadsword.[180] Cartoonists had "a field day" with this spectacle, accompanied as the

King was by the "even more ample Lord Mayor of London…in what was portrayed as a

mini-kilt."[181] The appearance generally had its intended effect though, and the King's

display was romanticized even further by paintings that were made of it at the time.[182]

Scott and Garth represented all of Scotland with Highland symbolism, using tartan and

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[177] Magnusson, *Scotland,* 648.
[178] Dane Love, *Jacobite Stories* (Glasgow: Neil Wilson Publishers, 2007), 233-235.
[179] Clyde, *Rebel to Hero,* 129.
[180] The day that the cult of tartanry was firmly established was the very same day that the tradition of ripping off tourists for tartan souvenirs was born. The Crown was charged £1, 254.18*s* by one George Hunter of Edinburgh. See Magnusson, *Scotland,* 650-651.
[181] Ibid., 651.
[182] Charles Withers, "The Historical creation of the Scottish Highlands," in *The Manufacture of Scottish History* ed. Ian Donnachie and Christopher Whatley (Edinburgh: Polygon Press, 1992), 152-153.

the kilt to stand in for the whole country, erasing the distinction between Lowland and Highland. He arranged a "Gathering of the Clans" which the King as Chief of Chiefs.

The kilt had been prohibited following the Jacobite Rebellion as a symbol of Highlanders—what Cumberland described as their "uniform." The one exception was for men serving in the King's army. Historians such as Hugh Trevor Roper (created Lord Dacre) have claimed that tartan and the kilt were not authentic Highland dress. Trevor-Roper argued that the patterns, or setts, of tartan which are now associated with particular families did not originally have this meaning. He went on to say that the kilt is a relatively modern invention of an English Quaker, who modified the local dress to make men more efficient in their work.   Combined with his criticism of Jacobite songs, Highland Gaelic poetry, and so forth, Trevor-Roper used tartan and the kilt as evidence that Scottish national symbols are inauthentic, and that they nation is therefore in some sense imaginary.[183]

Lord Dacre's credentials as an historian, especially one devoted to the uncovering of fraud, were severely damaged by his authentication of the Hitler Diaries, where William Ferguson writes that "the ill-judging, but ever-ready Lord Dacre suffered a disaster." The diaries promoted by Trevor-Roper were shown to be "the crudest of forgeries" when examined by experts, Lord Dacre was "utterly humiliated;" his "efforts to justify himself were incoherent and puerile, and his reputation as a historian was severely impugned."[184] That said, Trevor-Roper was partially correct. Paintings and written accounts abound showing that Highlanders wore a tartan garment (Gaelic

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[183] Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Invention of Scotland: Myth and History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).
[184] William Ferguson, "A Reply to Professor Colin Kidd on Lord Dacre's Contribution to the Study of Scottish History and the Scottish Enlightenment," *Scottish Historical Review* 86, 1: No. 221.

Féileadh Mòr) wrapped around the body and fastened over the shoulder, the lower part of which would resemble the modern kilt. These same garments were worn by Highland soldiers in America during the Seven Years War. The idea that particular tartan setts represent particular families, however, is largely a myth. Two brothers, the "Sobieski Stewarts" presented themselves as Stewart heirs, and invented modern "clan" tartans from whole cloth, as it were, in a commercial scam.[185]

Some historians, such as Ian McCulloch, believe that the opportunity to wear the kilt was one enticement to join the British army.[186] The kilt was a cultural symbol of the Highlands—although, importantly for Trevor-Roper's argument and the later course of military romanticism, it was a symbol *only* of the Highlands. Men may even have fought in the hopes that parts of the 1746 Proscription Act would be overturned. One Gaelic poet told members of the Black Watch in 1756 that "excellent conduct" would "convince King George to return our cheerful ancient uniform since the age of Adam and Eve."[187]

Fairly little evidence exists for this view, however. The economic realities of the eighteenth century explained in the last chapter are far more plausible explanations, especially as the Highland regiments generally wore the red coat of the British Army after the Seven Years War. John Peebles, the Black Watch grenadier who served in during the American Revolution, came to America in a kilt, but spent a good deal of time trying to get regulation trousers for himself and his men.[188] That this decision was reversed is more likely to mean that the British state recognized the value of maintaining a unique Highland identity in the army. To acknowledge the important of regimental and

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[185] Trevor-Roper, *Invention of Scotland,* p. 220-236.
[186] McCulloch *Highlander in the French-Indian War*, 19.
[187] McCulloch *Sons of the Mountain*, 2.
[188] Peebles, *John Peebles American War,* 161, 308.

ethnic bonds, however, is not to say that the wearing of the kilt was a primary source of motivation for many of the soldiers who joined the army. Coercion alone was probably more salient.[189]

Romanticism and the kilt were an excellent combination. Scotland came to be represented in its totality by the Highlands; the Highlands came to be represented by the Jacobites; and the Jacobites came to be represented by the kilt. All of this had a military orientation as the garment itself was once considered a weapon of war. Duncan Forbes had opposed the proscription of the kilt immediately following Culloden on the basis that he believed it to be a more suitable garment for the Highlands and therefore important to the daily work of men on the estates. Still, his descriptions of its supposedly unique military advantages reflect the concept of Highlanders as natural warriors. "The Garb is certainly very loose, & fits Men inured to it, to go through great fatigues, to make very quick Marches, to bear out against the Inclemency of the Weather, to wade through Rivers…which Men dressed in the Low Country Garb could not possibly endure."[190]

Romantics took this argument even farther. Citing Forbes, Stewart of Garth also mentions the memoirs of a seventeenth century cavalier, who claimed that cavalry would be accompanied by kilted Highlanders, capable due to their dress of keeping up with the horses even at a full gallop: "'these parties [of horse] had always some foot with them, and yet if the horses galloped or pushed on ever so forward, the foot were as forward as they, which was an extraordinary advantage. These were those they call Highlanders; they…kept very good order too, and kept pace with the horses, let them go

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[189] Clyde, *Rebel to Hero,* 152.
[190] *Culloden Papers*, 289.

at what rate they would.'" Garth continued that "this almost incredible swiftness with

which these people moved, in consequence of their light dress, and unshackled limbs,

formed the military advantage of the garb," in addition to those mentioned by Forbes.

Although the King's visit in 1822 permanently enshrined the cult of tartanry, it did

not create it. The Highland Society was founded in London in 1778 ostensibly to

preserve what it saw as Highland culture. The main platform of the Society was the

repeal of the Disarming Acts, which it accomplished a mere four years later. The

formation of the London Highland Society and others like it was to aimed at maintaining

Highland culture specifically to maintain the martial qualities of the Scots.[191] As the

association between tartan and Scottish military culture deepened, the absorption of

Lowland military identity by the Gaels was complete. Jacobitism had been rendered

harmless along the way. The Hanoverian Prince of Wales even appeared at a ball

dressed in tartan in 1789, the same year that his cousin, Charles Edward Stuart, died a

broken alcoholic in Rome.[192]

Later in the century Macaulay noted the bizarre conflation of Highland and

Lowland identity furthered by the popularity of the kilt. His account also maintains the

image of Highlanders as savages by comparing them to American Indians.[193] "Soon the

vulgar imagination was so completely occupied by plaids, targets, and claymores, that,

by most Englishmen, Scotchman and Highlander were regarded as synonymous

words," he wrote. "Few people seemed to be aware that, at no remote period, a

Macdonald or a Macgregor in his tartan was to a citizen of Edinburgh or Glasgow what

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[191] Clyde, *Rebel to Hero,* 132.
[192] Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 234.
[193] A comparison that was noted by Highlanders at the time and is now the topic of several books, as the bibliography will make plain.

an Indian hunter in his war paint is to an inhabitant of Philadelphia…They might as well have represented Washington brandishing a tomahawk, and girt with a string of scalps." Commenting on the King's 1822 visit, he memorably wrote that the King "thought that he could not give a more striking proof of his respect for the usages which had prevailed in Scotland before the Union, than by disguising himself in what, before the Union, was considered by nine Scotchmen out of ten as the dress of a thief."[194] The military conflation of Highland and Lowland military identity was finalized in 1881 when the War Office ordered Lowland units to be clad in tartan trews and Highland-style doublets.[195] By the early decades of the nineteenth century the tartan had come to symbolize military fidelity. "The tartan," writes Pittock, "was now an icon of a faithful and unifying, not a treacherous and divisive, resort to arms…The tartan of civil threat became the tartan of imperial triumph."[196] This is a remarkable contrast to Edward Burt's opinion that the garment itself was designed for sedition.[197]

Uniforms were a critical part of Britain's military spectacle, and the dearth of scholarly attention that they have received is out of all proportion to their coverage in popular works.[198] During the nineteenth century, as paintings, panoramas, and eventually photographs circulated the image of British soldiers around the Empire, military dress was one way of reinforcing martial values, authority, and unit cohesion.[199] Regimental identity had much to do with appearance, and not only for Scottish units. Like colorful birds in a Darwinian struggle for survival, units practiced competitive

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[194] Macaulay, *History of England,* 247.
[195] Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 240-241.
[196] Pittock, *Myth of the Jacobite Clans,* 113.
[197] See Chapter Two.
[198] Scott Myerly, *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 8.
[199] Ibid., 10-13.

display. The 1st Life Guards regulation saber length was thirty-eight and one-quarter inches, for example, because that of the 2nd Life Guards and the Royal Horse Guards was thirty eight. Uniforms also preserved history, nowhere more than in Scottish units, whose supposedly archaic form of dress was supposed to be a link to the past valor of their warrior race.[200] This history was sometimes in conflict with that of other units. Over a hundred years after the last Jacobite Rebellion, the Somerset Light Infantry still wore their sashes over the opposite shoulder from the rest of the army, a tribute to Culloden where all of their officers were incapacitated and NCO's led the unit.[201] Field Marshall Garnet Wolseley said that the "intense feeling of regimental rivalry" was "the lifeblood of our old, historic army, and makes it what it is in action."[202] The rivalry, or at least difference, between units was sometimes displayed along ethnic lines with visible traditions, quite deliberate performances of identity. English officers posted to the Black Watch, for example, were made to swallow a Scottish thistle and wash it down with whisky.[203]

There was still some opposition to the kilt outside of the army, however, where the old representations of Highland savagery persisted. A group of Lowland Christians petitioned Parliament in the 1850s to abolish the kilt as it was "conducive to the…promotion of vice and immorality."[204] This opinion was perhaps not too far off the mark if the words of a drunken Highland officer were true. "Join a Highland regiment, me boy. The kilt is an unrivaled garment for fornication and diarrhea."[205]

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[200] Womack, *Improvement and Romance,* 45.
[201] Byron Farwell, *Mr. Kipling's Army* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981) p. 32.
[202] Ibid., 38.
[203] Ibid., 65.
[204] Myerly, *British Military Spectacle,* 131.
[205] John Masters, *Bugles and a Tiger: A Volume of Autobiography* (New York: Viking Press, 1956), 53.

The construction of Scottish identity did not occur in a vacuum. In many ways, the romantic identity of Scotland was a negative reflection of the changing cultures of Great Britain as a whole—particularly the identities of the English and the Lowland Scots. As English culture became increasingly oriented around commercial activity, English arts and literature exhibited growing unease with what was seen as a feminized culture. The military virtues of Scotland were identified as bold, powerful, and masculine in contrast to the soft, spoiled femininity of England. The English had an incentive then to admire Highland masculinity as part of the British Empire in the form of Highland regiments, while still seeking to maintain distance from it as an internal "Other."[206] Denis Winter argues that the male-oriented family traditions of Scotland, with their emphasis on personal toughness and past military glory, had a direct effect on soldiers at least until the First World War.[207] Highlanders were nearly always depicted as physically large and masculine.[208]

This is not to say, as some feminist historians might, that gender allows a monocausal explanation for military culture (or anything else), but one must remember the values of the age. Social Darwinism, praise of masculine virtues, and the embrace of empire were common and accepted themes in the nineteenth century. Maureen Martin argues that the depiction of Scottish Highlanders as embodiments of these traits continued until the early twentieth century.[209] Even divorced from the issue of gender, Scotland was sometimes portrayed as an ascetic, simple contrast to an increasingly decadent and rich England. Womack notes that Scottish villages were often portrayed

[206] Maureen Martin. *The Mighty Scot: Nation, Gender, and the Nineteenth-Century Mystique of Scottish Masculinity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 2-10.
[207] Denis Winter, *Death's Men: Soldiers of the Great War* (London: Penguin Books, 1978), 209.
[208] Pittock, *Myth of the Jacobite Clans,* 115.
[209] Martin, *Mighty Scot,* 2, 163.

as being organized for defense, and therefore didn't need walls or fortifications.[210]

Scotland was thus a kind of Celtic Sparta, tough, conservative, and backward, embodying all the traits that a rich English Athens needed but could not cultivate at home.

The very landscape of Scotland took on a new meaning. The mountains and heather-covered hills of the Highlands were once considered to be a wasteland by most Britons. The Highlands were "a black howling wilderness," described "almost with horror."[211] The suggestion was even made that prisoners be transported to the Orkneys rather than the American colonies because the islands were "unfit for the habitation of men," and were where England's "wicked sons…ought to be."[212] Now romantic Highlandism imbued every element of the landscape and culture with new meaning, evoking heroism instead of degeneracy. The Highlands were "colonized by the empire of signs," and seeing the new symbols of Scotland objectively would be no more feasible than trying to "see…a swastika as an abstract design," in the words of Peter Womack.[213] In the nineteenth century, Macaulay made a similar observation. The "old Gaelic institutions," he wrote, "have never been exhibited in the simple light of truth. Up to the middle of the last century, they were seen through one false medium; they have since been seen through another." The opportunity for "a perfectly fair picture" was now gone. "The original has long disappeared; no authentic effigy exists; and all that is

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[210] Womack, *Improvement and Romance,* 42-43.
[211] Youngson, "Introduction," 13.
[212] Richards, *The Clearances,* 8.
[213] Womack, *Improvement and Romance,* 1.

possible is to produce an imperfect likeness by the help of two portraits, one of which is a coarse caricature and the other a masterpiece of flattery."[214]

The romantic view of Scotland did not replace the view of the Whig improvers who saw it as a realm in need of civilization and commerce, however, but shared a symbiotic relationship with it. The teleological Whig model of linear, progressive history seems at first to be in conflict with the romantic fetishization of "primitive" Highlanders as virtuous noble savages. Some nineteenth century Whigs clung to the older vision of Highlanders as mere barbarians. Henry Thomas Buckle, whose work would continue to earn great respect into the twentieth century, could still write in 1857 that the "ferocious Highlanders, who lived entirely by plunder, were constantly at hand," and anything that bore "even the semblance of wealth" was "an irresistible excitement to their cupidity. They could not know that a man had property, without longing to steal it; and, next to stealing, their greatest pleasure was to destroy."[215] Certainly the Highland landlords were unmoved by the likes of Sir Walter Scott. "As a group," Robert Clyde writes, "the Improvers remained largely impervious to the effects of the 'cultural rehabilitation' of the Gaels."[216] *Waverley* certainly did not stop the Clearances.

The romantic depiction of Highlanders as people bound up in their own violent and primitive history validated the Victorian project because it marginalized them as atavistic survivals from a primitive age, necessary for the defense of the modern British polity, but still apart from it as a civilization. Jacobitism could survive because it was transformed from ideology to affect. Jacobitism became a style of loyalty, the

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[214] Macaulay, *History of England,* 247.

[215] Henry Thomas Buckles, On Scotland and the Scotch Intellect (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 36. Editor H.J. Hanham notes in his introduction that he omitted most of Buckles' opinions of the Highlanders as too prejudiced, meaning that this passage must be one of the milder expressions. See p. xxxviii.

[216] Clyde, *Rebel to Hero,* 45.

unswerving defense of the monarch, rather than a political philosophy or dynastic devotion that sought to defend a *particular* monarch or noble house.[217] For its part, Whig progressivism reinforced the romantic view by delineating the Highlanders in opposition to itself. By "defining them as archaic," Womack writes, "Improvement inadvertently accorded the Highlands the special, numinous value of relics."[218] There would be nothing romantic about the Highlanders if they were assimilated already to the rest of Great Britain. The cult of Highlandism also worked out another contradiction, that between Unionism and Scottish nationalism. It allowed a sense of national identity within the broader structure of the Union, especially by allowing a separate sense of military identity.[219] The romantic conflation of Scottish nationalism with the "lost cause" of Jacobitism is particularly noteworthy in this regard, as it contained Scotland's national aspirations safely in the bygone past.

It turned out that both the romantic and the progressive viewpoints were out of touch with reality. Scottish Highlanders continued to enlist, but they did so in much smaller numbers after 1815, and the traditional recruiting methods were dead by 1820, spelling the end of the first massive wave of Highland recruitment.[220] Depopulation through emigration and casualties were mostly to blame. As Highlandism was celebrating the virtue and bravery of the traditional Gaelic way of life, the "tragic paradox" was that "fashionable Highlandism and the tartan craze…coincided with the irreversible decline of indigenous Highland culture, when thousands of impoverished

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[217] Womack, *Improvement and Romance,* 52-60.
[218] Ibid., 26.
[219] Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 244.
[220] Henderson, *Highland Soldier,* 33.

clansmen were ejected from their homes to make way for large-scale sheep farming."[221]

Demand for soldiers also declined in the years between Culloden and the outbreak of

the Crimean War, although Highlanders still served in various colonial conflicts around

the world.[222]

Bitterness about the economic condition the Highlands after Waterloo was

causing some soldiers to question their commitment to the Empire as early as 1815.[223]

By the time of the Crimean war, this discontentment had become outright hostility.

Members of the Highland gentry who tried to raise regiments on their estates were

confronted by tenants furious over evictions and relocation. Echoing MacCodrum's

Gaelic warning about the enervation of the British army that would result from replacing

people with sheep, tenants responded to their landlord's exhortations by telling them

that the Highlands simply no longer had the men to fill the ranks of the British army.

Calum Maclean recounted a reply given to the Duke of Sutherland by an elderly tenant

after the Duke had emerged from his posh home to give a patriotic speech about the

evils of the Russian Empire. The Sutherlands, it has already been noted, were behind

particularly notorious clearances over the course of several decades and had stated

plainly that military service was the only reason that human tenants were preferable to

ovine ones. Recorded in so much detail that one must be suspicious of its perfect

authenticity, this reply is still worth quoting as exemplary of Highland feeling:

> Should the Czar of Russia take possession of Dunrobin Castle…we could
> not expect worse treatment at his hands than we have experienced at the
> hands of your family for the last fifty years. Your parents, yourself, and
> your commissioners have desolated the glens and straths of Sutherland
> where you should find…thousands of men to meet you and respond

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[221] Magnusson, *Scotland,* 654.
[222] Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil,* 244.
[223] Magnusson, *Scotland,* 644.

cheerfully to your call, had your parents and yourself kept faith with them. How could your Grace expect to find men where there are not, and the few of them which are to be found among the rubbish or the ruins of the country, have more sense that to be decoyed by chaff into the field of slaughter; but one comfort you have; though you cannot find men to fight, you can supply those who will fight with plenty of mutton, beef, and venison.[224]

Landlords were forced to resort to the old methods of coercion as across the Highlands they had lost the trust of their tenants.[225]

By the end of the nineteenth century recruiting had collapsed. From the high point of the eighteenth century, when Scots had been strongly overrepresented in the British army and had composed perhaps a quarter of British forces in America, they fell to a mere 7.7% in 1879, below their proportion of the overall British population. This figure stayed roughly constant up until the outbreak of the First World War. The Black Watch and other Highland regiments began recruiting heavily in the Lowlands, especially in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Where in 1798 over half of the 42nd Foot was taken from the Highlands, by 1854 only five percent of its men were found north of the Great Glen.[226] Although recruiting was more difficult than it had ever been, the kilted regiments were by far the most successful.[227] This may be evidence that the military mythology of the Highlands that would call so many to the colors in the First World War was already at work in the mid-nineteenth century.

The high profile of the Highland units during the Crimean War masked the reality of dwindling Highland recruitment. The oft-misquoted phrase of William Howard

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[224] Calum Maclean, *The Highlands* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1959), 172-173.
[225] Henderson, *Highland Soldier,* 22.
[226] Richard Holmes, *Redcoat: The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), 56. The situation reflected by these figures may not be as extreme as they would suggest, however, as they do not account for the great numbers of Highlanders forced off of their land who ended up in Glasgow and Edinburgh and may have subsequently joined a Highland regiment.
[227] Henderson, *Highland Soldier*, p. 39.

Russell, who observed "that thin red streak tipped with steel," were inspired by the performance of the Sutherland Highlanders at Balaclava—the same Sutherland Highlanders whose recruiting drive had been met with such vituperation at home. This was the first "media war," the first to have a modern war correspondent at the front. As such, it made a powerful impact on the British imagination.[228] The Crimean War inspired Robert Gibb's iconic painting *The Thin Red Line.* This was also the first war to be photographed, and the famous image of three Highlanders of the 72nd Regiment of Foot that now seems to find its way into every book about Scottish soldiers was taken in 1856 as these men returned from the peninsula.[229] The war also inspired Alfred Lord Tennyson to write *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, a poem celebrating the heroic, yet doomed, charge of British cavalry against Russian guns during the Battle of Balaclava. This played into a cult of suicidal heroism that Stefanie Markovitz called a persistent "British" trait, with the poem undergoing a revival of popularity before and during the First World War.[230] As the history of romantic Jacobitism suggests, and as we shall see in the next chapter, this "British" trait was most pronounced in Scotland. The conception of noble sacrifice would reach its horrifying apogee in the gory mud of Flanders.

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[228] Stefanie Markovitz, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2-3.
[229] See, for example, the cover of Newark's *Highlander*, or Wood, *Scottish Soldier,* p. 63.
[230] Markovitz, *Crimean War,* 154-159.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST WORLD WAR: CULLODEN ON THE SOMME

As discussed in Chapter Three, Scottish enlistment rates had been stable at a disproportionately low percentage before the First World War. The decade before the war also saw Scotland's highest recorded level of emigration.[231] Despite this, the Black Watch was arguably still the best unit of the regular British army, having the highest percentage of first-class marksmen, the lowest percentage of second-class ones, and the lowest percentage of its manpower reported sick at any given time.[232] Disproportionately few Scots would have had direct military experience, the last major opportunity for such having occurred sixty years before.[233] The end of this military lethargy would come in August of 1914, and with it the end of the old Scottish Regiments. After over four years of vicious fighting, many of the best of Scotland's young men were dead.

All historians who examine the issue agree that Scottish enlistment was remarkably high. A table drawn from a Parliamentary Recruiting Committee report in Adrian Gregory's book *The Last Great War* shows that Lowland Scots volunteered at a rate well above the national average, and in fact higher than any other regional group (excepting Highlanders, who are not listed). Southern Scotland provided three times more recruits per capita than did the East of England, forty percent more than London,

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[231] Devine, *Scottish Nation,* 485.

[232] Edward Spiers, "The Regular Army in 1914," in *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War*, ed. Ian Beckett and Keith Simpson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 55.

[233] Although Scottish units did serve in the Boer War and in various colonial campaigns, their participation was not on the scale of the Crimean War, nor was the effect on Scottish military identity as pronounced.

and twenty percent more than the Midlands, which ranks second on the list.[234] Trevor

Royle, the most thorough historian of Scottish involvement in the war, claims that

recruiting did not equalize until conscription was introduced in 1916.[235] In 1914

Scotland provided 26.9% of British troops, a figure yet more remarkable given that

Scots made up only 10.6% of the British population.[236] This figure also excludes

Scottish emigrants who fought for in units from around the Empire, especially in

Australia, Canada, and South Africa. A Dundee journalist named William Linton

Andrews described the scene at a local recruiting office: "Men were pouring in…ready

to sign anything, and say anything. They gave false names, false addresses, false

ages. They suppressed their previous military service, or exaggerated it just as seemed

to promise them the best."[237]

The enlistment of Highlanders was similarly impressive. Men rushed to the

various established Highland regiments (the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, The

Black Watch, Seaforths, Cameronians, Highland Light Infantry, and Gordons). The

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders filled their wartime strength so quickly in 1914 that

adequate preparations had not been made for all the troops; the situation of the

Cameronians was similar.[238] Enthusiasm was so high, and the discriminating

watchfulness of recruiters so low, that one enthusiastic Gael was even sent home after

being deployed in France when it was found that he couldn't speak a word of English.[239]

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[234] Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 81.
[235] Trevor Royle, *In Flanders Fields: Scottish Poetry and Prose of the First World War* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company, 1990), 13.
[236] Trevor Royle, *The Flowers of the Forest: Scotland and the First World War* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 2006), 44-49.
[237] In Derek Young. *Scottish Voices from the Great War* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2006), 18.
[238] Ibid., 12.
[239] Henderson, *Highland Soldier,* 36.

Men turned up who tried to conceal missing limbs. Many lied about their glass eyes.[240]

Some of these recruits were so isolated from the rest of Great Britain that they

contracted measles in great numbers on their arrival south in England.[241] Scottish

recruiting was so vibrant that the Highlands and Lowlands together provided 35,000

soldiers on one single day in October 1914.[242] From these men would come Britain's

best units and twenty percent of Imperial casualties. Scotland most certainly did its bit.

Why?

The historiography of the British Army of the First World War is disturbingly

Anglocentric. The conflation of "British" and "English" was common at the time, in the

address by M.R. James to the Cambridge Tipperary Club, for example.[243] Field

Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, who probably did not often think of himself as Scottish when

not addressing soldiers of his nation, could still refer to "men of my race" when writing

about the London Scottish and was aware of the influence of Highland legend, even

though he used the words "England" and "Britain" interchangeably.[244] This practice is

particularly worrisome when continued by historians of the First World War, however,

because many of the questions that historians ask cannot be answered without

acknowledging that British soldiers from Scotland were steeped in a distinctive military

tradition, one carefully constructed over the centuries to make military enthusiasm and

suicidal bravery the norm.

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[240] Young, *Scottish Voices,* 8.
[241] J.G. Fuller. *Popular Culture and Troop Morale in the British and Dominion Armies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 163.
[242] Royle, *Flowers of the Forest*, 30-31.
[243] M.R , James. *Address at the Unveiling of the Roll of Honour of the Cambridge Tipperary Club, July 12, 1916* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918).
[244] Douglas Haig, "Introduction," in James Howard Lindsay, *The London Scottish in the Great War* (London: Regimental Headquarters, 1925), xv.

Strangely, many historians of the war are themselves Scottish, although only a very few focus on how Scottish culture may have influenced combatants. Adrian Gregory argues that Brits still seem to view the First World War through a personal lens, invoking memories of a dead grandfather or heroic great-uncle in a way that would seem bizarre after the Seven Years War, for example.[245] Niall Ferguson certainly takes such an approach, beginning his *Pity of War* with the story of his grandfather's service in a Highland regiment. He notes that the war was the "worst thing the people of my country have ever had to endure," but later makes clear that the people of "his country" are "Britons," not Scots.[246] Scottish academics of a certain generation tended to be self-conscious about their national identity, sounding more like natives of Knightsbridge or the West End than Jordanhill or Leith—let alone Portree. Hew Strachan, who has written specifically about Scottish military history, is likely to come off quite differently to a Scottish audience depending on whether the "ch" in his name is pronounced north or south of the Tweed. Despite the occasional articles here and there, Trevor Royle seems to be the only historian who focuses on uniquely Scottish experience of the war, and even he does not integrate an historical understanding of Scotland's romanticized past. Scottish soldiers, despite both enlisting and dying in disproportionate numbers, are almost never mentioned except in briefly or as units in operational histories. General histories of Scotland sometimes come close to neglecting the war altogether. Magnus Magnusson's huge *Scotland: the story of a Nation* mentions the war only once in passing. The movie *Braveheart* is mentioned four times.

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[245] Gregory, *Last Great War,* 1.
[246] Niall Ferguson. *The Pity of War: Explaining World War I* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1999), xix-xxiii.

The failure to examine the Scottish national element of the war is not due to any

lack of attention. Although it may be overshadowed by the Second World War in the

United States, the First World War is hardly neglected, especially in Britain. It has

become immensely popular to expose the "myths" of the First World War. John Mosier

has argued that the United States won the war for the Allies, who had lost every battle

to the Germans.[247] His work was reviewed favorably by Niall Ferguson, who has

attacked various "myths," including the belief that British intervention was necessary.

This trend is not limited to those outside the field of military history. Brian Bond has

criticized memory of the First World War, denying the charge that the British Army was

composed of "lions led by donkeys," and that trench life was a never-ending string of

horrors for Britain's soldiers.[248] The myth of a unitary, homogenous British army has so

far slipped under the radar. But that should end.

Before developing an explanation for the success of recruiting in Scotland based

on Scotland's romanticized military identity, it is necessary to discuss alternative

explanations for enlistment. First, there is the "adventure" hypothesis. Much has been

made of the general enthusiasm for war in 1914. James Joll and Gordon Martell, after

documenting the failures of pacifists and socialists, argue that even in comparatively

reserved Britain "the number of volunteers for the army was very large," and that "the

mood with which war was received was often one of excitement and relief."[249] The

authors do not distinguish between the various British regions other than to note that it

did not resolve differences between the Irish. Niall Ferguson, however, argues that the

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[247] John Mosier. *The Myth of the Great War: How the Germans Won the Battles and How the Americans Saved the Allies* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2001).
[248] Brian Bond. *The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[249] James Joll and Gordon Martell. *The Origins of the First World War* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 272-273.

hope for a short, adventurous war might have encouraged Scots to join. Patriotism

alone is not the explanation, but rather the "sporting" attitude that was encouraged by a

public school education. "What exactly did fighting in Belgium or Northern France have

to do with fighting for Britain (much less the Scottish Highlands)" he asks, discussing the

enlistment of a Gordon Highlander. "For many public school volunteers," he explains,

"the impact of their education was to diminish interest in the reasons for the war."

Instead, they saw Germans as "a species of fox or boar," and the war as sport.[250]

This explanation is inadequate for four reasons. First, although the Scottish elites did

assimilate to the culture of the English upper class, this does not explain why the rank-

and-file of the Glasgow slums and the Scottish Highlands enlisted. Ferguson himself

acknowledges this. Second, war fever mediated by public-school patriotism at best

explains British enlistment *in general*, not Scottish enlistment *in particular*. However

assimilated the Scottish ruling class had become to the sporting culture of the South,

they could not possibly be more culturally English than the very class which defined

what it meant to be "English." Third, the initial burst of wartime enthusiasm would not

explain why Scottish enlistment remained high through the entire war, even after the

Battle of Loos in 1915 in which thousands of Scottish soldiers were killed. Fourth, there

are reasons to doubt that the costs of war were unforeseen to common soldiers even in

1914. The first song of "Singsongs of the War" by the well-known writer Maurice Henry

Hewlett is one casting grim doubt on the notion of a short war. "For Two Voices"

contrasts youthful enthusiasm with the less romantic possibilities of combat:

> "O mother, mother, isn't it fun,
> The soldiers marching past in the sun!"
> "Child, child, what are you saying?

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[250] Ferguson, *Pity of War,* 202.

Come to Church. We should be praying.”

"Look, mother, at their bright spears!”
"The leaves are falling like women's tears.”
"You are not looking at what I see.”
"Nay, but I look at what must be.”

"Hark to the pipes! See the flags flying!”
"I hear the sound of a girl crying.”
"How many hundreds before they are done!”
"How many mothers wanting a son!”

"Here rides the general pacing slow!”
"Well he may, if he knows what I know.”
"O this war, what a glorious game!”
"Sin and shame, sin and shame.”[251]

Some Scots certainly shared this mood. Although the Black Watch was met with much fanfare at Edinburgh Castle, units leaving Glasgow around the same time reportedly did so amidst a much more somber mood. R.C. Money, with the 1st Battalion Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), wrote that his "send of[f] from Glasgow was singularly quiet…we just slipped quietly out of the gates of Maryhill barracks and very few of us ever saw them again.”[252]

Economic necessity is a better explanation for the large number of Scottish recruits. In contrast to the romantic image developed in the nineteenth century, economic considerations are the best explanation for the high rates of enlistment in the first major period of Scottish military involvement after Culloden. The conditions of the slums in Scotland's Central Belt, especially in Glasgow, were notoriously poor in the early twentieth century (as they still are). Henderson wrote that in earlier times "recruiting to the Army saved many from starvation and restored the credibility of the

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[251] Maurice Henry Hewlett. *Singsongs of the War* (London: The Poetry Bookshop, 1914) p. 3.
[252] In Young, *Scottish Voices,* 11.

Highland fighting man."[253] Similarly, Royle argues that "in every Scottish regiment there were large numbers of young men who had escaped grinding poverty by becoming soldiers." Peter Corstophine, who joined the Black Watch in Edinburgh, said simply that "what made me want tae join the army at that time wis merely the fact that there were no jobs goin' around, especially for the likes o' me."[254] The economic argument would explain why recruiting was particularly strong among the less affluent and also why it was so strong in Scotland—if, of course, it could be shown that Scotland's economy was performing badly.

The primary difficulty with this explanation is that the Scottish economy was *not* performing badly. Royle himself acknowledges that the Scottish economy was doing fairly well, and although he acknowledges that other factors influenced recruiting, it is strange that he would present economics as a particularly Scottish one.[255] Much of the heavy industry that would support the war was located in Lowland Scotland, and as some men joined the Army or Navy, jobs would become comparatively easier to come by for those who stayed behind. Adrian Gregory compares enlistment rates between Scottish coal miners and those in England and Wales, showing that even where economic opportunities were equal, Scots enlisted more frequently than did their equivalents in the south. As for the poverty of the Highlands, so many men frequently enlisted that labor *shortages* resulted and life became harder. Due to the aforementioned Clearances and emigration, Highland labor was not so plentiful that it should have created a large class of men who were fit to join the army, yet unemployed. The population of the Highlands was five times higher in the eighteenth century than it

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[253] Henderson, *Highland Soldier,* 5.
[254] Royle *Flowers of the Forest*, 44-45.
[255] Ibid., 17.

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was in the twentieth.[256] Enlistment rates of 15% were common, and it was reported that in some areas of the Western Highlands and Islands nearly every able-bodied man had taken the King's sovereign, leaving the farms unattended.[257] Further, the 1886 Crofters Act, "the Magna Carta of the Highlands," had helped the Highland economy somewhat, as did remittances from those who had left, and lower grain prices meant improved income for those raising animals in 1914.[258] No doubt some men were motivated by local economic conditions, but the economic hypothesis is clearly inadequate to explain the scale of Scottish enlistment. "One is forced," Gregory writes, "to consider a cultural explanation."[259]

The myth of the Highland warrior tradition exerted a profound influence on Scottish enlistment in the First World War. By this time the formal clan structure had been destroyed completely, and the reality of Highland military life documented in Chapter Two had been entirely eclipsed by the romantic narrative explained in Chapter Three. Government recruiters actively employed the warrior myth between 1914 and 1916, when conscription made it somewhat less important. Lord Kitchener appealed directly to Scots in a much-publicized letter when raising his New Armies: "I feel certain that Scotsmen have only to know that the country urgently needs their services to offer them with the same splendid patriotism as they have always shown in the past."[260] Kitchener also appealed directly to Cameron of Lochiel, the twenty-fifth Chief of the Camerons and descendant of that most beloved Jacobite leader, to raise the fifth and sixth battalions of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders. The response was

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[256] Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics,* 2.
[257] Gregory, *Last Great War,* 82.
[258] Devine, *Scottish Nation*, p. 439.
[259] Ibid., 83.
[260] In Royle, *Flowers of the Forest*, 30.

immediate and vigorous, as mentioned above. "Perhaps it was something more than the considerable prestige of the then Lochiel," writes John Gibson, that drew in so many men. "Somewhere in the background was Lochiel of the 'Forty Five.'"[261]

Allan and Carswell write that "appeals for recruits were couched in terms of tradition, clan, and cultural loyalty referring back to the mass recruitment of highlanders into the British army in the late eighteenth century."[262] Chivalry in general was a common appeal, but the weight of tradition was heavier in Scottish propaganda.[263] One Government recruiting poster read "What Burns said—1782 Holds Good in 1915," with an excerpt of a poem beneath it:

> O! why the deuce should I repine,
> And be an ill foreboder?
> I'm twenty three, and five feet nine,
> I'll go and be a sodger.

This bit of verse was followed by the exhortation to "TAKE HIS TIP."[264] Robert Burns, who was born after the defeat of the '45, has been interpreted by many as a Jacobite sympathizer, and certainly a Scottish nationalist. The verse in his original that follows the one on the poster explains that the writer has made this decision due to financial hardship:

> I gat some gear wi' meikle care,
> I held it weel thegither;
> But now it's gane and something mair
> I'll go and be a sodger.[265]

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[261] Gibson, *Lochiel of the '45,* 172.
[262] Allan and Carswell, *Thin Red Line,* 20.
[263] Michael Paris. *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 133.
[264] In Young, *Scottish Voices,* inset following p. 128.
[265] Robert Burns, "O Why the Deuce?" *The Collected Poems of Robert Burns* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1994), 474.

Its omission must certainly have been an honest mistake by the War Office.

The outbreak of war was "the high watermark of popular identification with an idea of Scotland's warlike past."[266] Popular authors and common soldiers associated the First World War with the military traditions of Scotland. Ian Hay's book *The First Hundred Thousand* was published in serial form during the early phases of the war and played a powerful role in recruiting.[267] Hay's war is largely an adventure, which may have appealed to a broad demographic, but it also has uniquely Scottish elements. The fictional battalion joined by the narrator is the Bruce and Wallace Highlanders, an obvious invocation of Scottish national pride and a thinly-veiled fictionalization of the Black Watch.[268] Domesticated, romantic Jacobitism reveals itself in an account by Thomas Williamson, a soldier leaving Scotland for France, who reported that crowds gathered and sang "Will ye no come back again?"[269] This song, widely familiar in Scotland, is a Jacobite song addressed to Bonnie Prince Charlie. William Donaldson says of this song, and others like it, that they were fakes, written by romantics decades after Culloden but presented as originals. Only a handful of Scottish poets and editors knew this, however, and in fact this was deliberate. "After all," he writes, "the Jacobite songs represented the very summit of the popular lyric in Scotland, supposedly the direct expression of an inspired peasantry under the pressure of great events. Upon this Scottish claims to cultural and ethnic superiority absolutely depended. If they were bogus the whole edifice came crashing to the ground. This could not be allowed to

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[266] Allan and Carswell, *Thin Red Line,* 19.
[267] Royle, *Flowers of the Forest*, 75.
[268] Ian Hay, *The First Hundred Thousand: being the Unofficial Chronicle of a Unit of "K(1)"* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1915), 6.
[269] In Young, *Scottish Voices,* 47.

happen."[270] R. Douglas Pinkerton, who served in the London Scottish, also recalls

hearing the song as he marched off to war. Oblivious to its origins, he describes it as

"an ancient Scottish dirge."[271]

Another Jacobite Burns poem adapted into song, is "Scots Wha' Hae." Before

being overtaken later in the century by "Scotland the Brave" and "Flower of Scotland,"

this was a national anthem of sorts for the Scottish people, referencing as it did the

defeat of England by Scottish heroes. The first two verses are

> Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
> Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
> Welcome to your gory bed,
> Or tae victorie.
>
> Now's the day, and now's the hour;
> See the front o' battle lour!
> See approach proud Edward's power—
> Chains and slavarie![272]

By the nineteenth century, however, the song had already been coopted by English

radicals, who sang it labor protests and other occasions, apparently interpreting its clear

Scottish message as one relevant for all of Britain.[273] Beyond this simple appropriation,

there was also a "Shirker's Version" written during the war. This song was sung to

mock those who didn't volunteer, and the first verse is particularly telling:

> We're Scots wha ne'er for Britain bled,
> Scots wha'm French has never led,
> An' care mair for oor cosy bed,
> Than ony victory.[274]

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[270] William Donaldson. *The Jacobite Song: Political Myth and National Identity* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988) p. 4. Murray Pittock disputes Donaldson's claim that collected Jacobite songs are generally inauthentic, but their use here out of context would be consistent with his general argument regardless. See Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 4.
[271] R. Douglas Pinkerton (*Ladies From Hell.* New York: The Century Co., 1918), 21.
[272] Burns, *Collected Poems,* 330.
[273] Davidson, *Origins of Scottish Nationhood,* 191-192.
[274] Young, *Scottish Voices,* 16.

Although the rather evocative "gory bed" line is now missing, the most interesting change is the move from "bleeding" with William Wallace to "bleeding" for Britain.

Less stunning in its nationalist implications, the story "Dockens Afore His Peers" similarly mocks shirkers, this time in the shape of stingy rural Scots who attempted to have their sons exempted from service.[275] Thomas Lyon also recalls hectoring civilians in his memoir published during the war. His unit, the Glasgow Highlanders, would challenge civilians with "What man's job have you taken?" or by singing a song that included the lines "Though we'll fight best without you,/ Still we think you ought to come."[276] Although this phenomenon was by no means restricted to Scotland, given the constructed imagery of the Scottish warrior culture, it must be taken as a particularly powerful indictment of one's bravery and an insult not only to British pride, but to one's identity as Scottish.

Allusions to the ancient Highland clan structure, or at least the romantic vision of it presented by Sir Walter Scott and David Stewart of Garth, were also evident. As trains carried soldiers through the Highlands, they could see burning crosses near village homes, supposedly an old method of calling the clansmen together for war. This was apparently also done at some public events.[277] Some units were raised and led by local lairds, harkening back to the era of successful recruiting before the Clearances. Second Lieutenant J.C. Cunningham, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, wrote that the battalion had "a company of MacLean's complete and 2 companies of Campbell's…the

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[275] Charles Murray. "Dockens Afore His Peers" in Royle, *Flanders Field,* 1990, 105-107.
[276] Thomas Lyon, *More Adventures in Kilt and Khaki: Sketches of the Glasgow Highlanders and others in France* (Kilmarnock: The Standard Press, 1917), 34.
[277] Young, *Scottish Voices,* 27.

roll call was called by the last 3 numbers of the man's number. We were all Campbell's. So it was no good calling Campbell, Campbell, Campbell and they used to be called 591, 724."[278] Continuity was perceived with the old system. Frederick Watson's book *The Story of the Highland Regiments* appeared in 1915 as the war was still raging. Although ostensibly a history, the book should be read as propaganda. "Never since those old days when the Clans first fought beneath the British flag," he wrote, "has the imperishable star of the Highland regiments…gleamed more steadily throughout the long night of War. In answer to the last and greatest summons of the Fiery Cross, the tramp of marching feet came sounding from the farthest outposts of Empire."[279] If this passage is not evidence enough for the persistence of the romantic military image, Watson makes it clear that he is not too focused on truth, "for fear that hard facts may obscure the romantic setting."[280]

An 1881 report described the attachment that men had to their regimental tartan as being a product of their clan affiliations.[281] In fact the regiments had never been a kind of surrogate clan structure in the eighteenth century because their members fully expected them to dissolve eventually—and in fact sometimes mutinied when they did not.[282] Highland warfare had always been a short-term affair, and long-term service in a regiment far from home had no precedent.

The maintenance of the kilt and pipes was another reference to the old clan warfare, what Trevor Royle frequently refers to as "tribal," noting the "barbaric allure" of

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[278] In Ibid., 12.
[279] Frederick Watson, The Story of the Highland Regiments (London: A&C Black Ltd, 1915), vii.
[280] Ibid., 18.
[281] Henderson, *Highland Soldier,* 40.
[282] Andrew Mackillop, "For King, Country, and Regiment?: Motive & Identity within Highland Soldiering, 1746-1815." *Fighting for Identity: Scottish Military Experience c. 1550-1900* ed. Steve Murdoch and Andrew Mackillop (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 193-194.

the uniforms founded on "dubious military tradition."[283] Joining a Highland Regiment

made a man part of a project much larger and older than himself. "The little leaven of

Highlanders to which Douglas Haig referred, coupled with 'a stubborn Celtic pride and a

curious sense of romance,' meant that 'the man who enlisted to a Highland Regiment at

Glasgow in 1920 felt himself no less Highland than his Inverness contemporary or

native Gaelic-speaking predecessor."[284] The official history of the London Scottish

explains that, despite the high rate of replacements, "it was as if the mere donning of

the grey kilt made at once a London Scot, imbued by instinct with old traditions."[285]

Some regiments were snobbish about their supposedly Highland identity. The

Black Watch was clearly at the top of the heap. Thomas Lyon reported that "the query

that dogs the [Glasgow Highlanders] wherever they go (because of the uniform they

wear) is 'Hi, are you the Black Watch?'"[286] The Highland Light Infantry, which had some

of the most impressive battle honors of the British army, was looked down upon by

some because it recruited heavily in Glasgow.[287] One man, on receiving his

commission, was to write out three units that he would like to serve in. He chose the

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, the Black Watch, and wrote "Anyone but the HLI" in

the third space, perhaps, he thought, because they did not wear the kilt. An official in

the War Office apparently had some sense of humor, as he was rapidly assigned to the

Highland Light Infantry.[288]

Highland military tradition also affected troops from other areas of the Empire,

not all of whom were of Scottish ancestry. Many nominally Highland units were in fact

[283] Royle, *Flowers of the Forest,* 40-43.
[284] Henderson, *Scottish Soldier,* 47.
[285] Lindsay, *The London Scottish,* 382.
[286] Lyon, *More Adventures,* 183.
[287] Farwell, *Mr. Kipling's Army,* 38.
[288] McCorry, *The Thistle at War,* 38.

manned, sometimes in large part, by Lowlanders and Englishmen. This, however, only

serves to highlight the power of the Scottish warrior myth. Some did not respect

Scottish military traditions. A soldier observing a Scottish military funeral in Ian Hay's

"…And Some Fell by the Wayside" refers to them derisively as "bandy-legged coal

shovellers."[289] The prestige of Scottish units, however, allowed prospective soldiers

from other parts of Great Britain to join the Army without disgracing their families, who at

least in England usually looked down on military service. The promotion of Highland

military identity not only encouraged Lowlanders to enlist in Highland units, but also

drove some of those who resisted the myth to defend their own, competing, military

legacy, which boosted recruiting in Lowland units.[290] Finally, joining a Scottish unit

tended to "Highlandize" the troops. English and Irish troops were often the first to

defend the honor of their adopted Highland units when challenged by outsiders.[291]

Regimental identities came to influence even non-Highland soldiers, transforming their

outlooks to match those of their comrades.[292] The Scottish regiments were the one

institution where "the English have been content to be thought of as 'Scottish.'"[293]

The warrior myth primarily influenced the other ranks. Several of the officer's

letters contained in the collection *War Letters of Fallen Englishmen* display the

malleability of Scottish identity for officers. The book, despite the dismaying

incompetence of its title, contains writings from many Scots. Enlisted men are almost

entirely absent from the collection. One second lieutenant of the Argyll and Sutherland

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[289] Ian Hay, "…And Some Fell by the Wayside," in Trevor Royle (ed.), *Scottish War Stories* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1999), 126.
[290] Gregory, *Last Great War,* 85.
[291] Royle, *Flowers of the Forest,* 51-52.
[292] Edward Spiers. "The Scottish Soldier at War." *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* ed. Hugh Cecil and Peter Liddle (London: Leo Cooper, 1996) p. 316.
[293] Allen and Carswell, *Thin Red Line,* 110.

Highlanders, educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford, turns to classical Greek legend to describe sacrifices on the battlefield, rather than calling on the names of Bruce and Wallace, or even the sundry Jacobite clansmen.[294] A Black Watch lieutenant, another public school boy who had studied medicine at Trinity College, Cambridge, seems to disavow the weight of Scottish history, writing that he is fighting for the future of "England," not its past.[295] Captain Ivar Campbell seems to embody the spirit of the eighteenth century officer transitioning into the more democratic conditions of the First World War. Educated at Eton and Oxford, he served in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. He admits to "hat[ing] the men" sometimes for their coarse and uncivilized manners, but still respects their endurance, and was happy to lead them.[296] These officers, all well-educated members of the Scottish elite, did not express themselves with Scottish language or ideas. All of them would have been familiar with Sir Walter Scott and the other Romantic writers about Scotland in their public school careers, however, which suggests that they were aware of the Highland mystique, but saw it as applicable to an entirely different class of people.[297] This is only a continuation of the cultural gulf that existed between the Highland gentry and their tenants since the seventeenth century or before.

The conflation of all Scots with these largely artificial Highland traditions combined with the identification of Highlanders with Jacobites created a situation where all Scots were tied to the Jacobite defeat. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, in his excellent book *The Culture of Defeat*, attempts to explain how societies react after losing a war.

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[294] Laurence Houseman (ed.). *War Letters of Fallen Englishmen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 111.
[295] Ibid*.,* 84.
[296] Ibid., 61.
[297] John Baynes. *Morale: A Study of Men and Courage* (Garden City Park, NY: Avery Publishing Group, 1988), 220-222.

Defeated societies develop a myth whereby their own soldiers were the best, most capable men, who were defeated only by the superior numbers or technology of their enemies—in other words, that it "wasn't a fair fight."[298] Defeated societies construct military myths that emphasize the superior moral qualities of their soldiers, a dynamic that sounds very much like the romantic valorization of Scotland's supposed warrior culture. Schivelbusch's framework may be useful in explaining why so many Scots not only fought, but fought so bravely in the First World War. Unfortunately, he treats Scotland only in passing. "Losers imitate winners almost by reflex," he writes. "With Scotland's decisive eighteenth-century defeat in its long war of independence against England, the Scottish intelligentsia had no qualms about embracing the modernity represented by England."[299]

There are a number of problems with this Schivelbusch's assessment of the Jacobite cause. To begin with, it was a dynastic struggle for the British crown, not a war of independence, as suggested by the fact that the majority of Highlanders, and the vast majority of Lowlanders, sided with the Hanoverian government. Second, the development of romanticism in the eighteenth century did not encourage Scots to "embrace the modernity represented by England." The Scottish landowning elites had long assimilated into the culture of their English peers, but the literary obsession with Jacobite valor and the trope of the noble Scottish warrior suggests the opposite. As argued in Chapter Three, romanticism was ultimately compatible with the Whig idea of progressive history, but the work of Sir Walter Scott and James Stewart of Garth was still an attempt to maintain a separate (atavistic) identity. Rather than import English

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[298] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery* (New York: Picador, 2004), 16-17.
[299] Ibid., 33.

values to Scotland, supposed Scottish military virtues were adapted to service of the (English-dominated) British Empire.

The Jacobite defeat had unique elements that distinguish it from those covered by Schivelbusch. The most significant of these is the much longer timeframe over which it developed. This can be explained by the changing identity of Scotland, as it was only in the nineteenth century that Highland military values came to represent all of Scotland. As all Scots became gradually associated with the romantic conception of a Highland Jacobitism, they essentially inherited a culture of defeat, or had one constructed for them even if they (like the Campbells or most Lowlanders) were descended from Hanoverians. The Clearances may be another explanation, as the "loss" of 1745-1746 blended into the destruction of Highland culture over the next hundred years. Finally, unlike most of the other cultures of defeat that Schivelbusch analyzes, the victor in this case ruled the territory of the loser. This situation was similar in the United States South, but there the American federal government did not actively cultivate the Southern culture of defeat, using it as a means to cement Southern military contributions.[300] Even without official encouragement, however, the South provided a disproportionate number of recruits for the American army, much like Scotland did for the British army, perhaps suggesting that a slightly modified framework is necessary to explain the integration of defeated cultures into those of the winner. The fact that these effects can last over long periods of time is suggested by the fact that the American South, a century and a half after its war with the North, still provides a disproportionate number of recruits, just as Scotland did a century and a half after the Jacobite

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[300] Schivelbusch argues that the Jacobite "lost cause" was in fact a formative influence on the Southern culture of defeat even before the Civil War broke out.

Rebellion.[301] This sense of having "something to prove" may have influenced both recruiting and the performance of soldiers in the trenches. Divining the motivations of private soldiers as an aggregate body is of course extremely difficult, but examining the history of Scottish military romanticism at least makes such an explanation likely. A man who is given the opportunity to volunteer for a dangerous patrol in No Man's Land may feel more pressure to accept if he thinks of himself as a representative of a brave military culture, a descendent not only of Bruce and Wallace, Bonnie Prince Charlie and Cameron of Lochiel, but of the Highland men who fought in the Crimea, at Waterloo, and at Ticonderoga. To test this theory we must examine the performance of Scottish troops in combat.

Scottish units took the highest casualties among British units in the First World War, and may have lost proportionately more men in combat than any other national group. Of the 557,000 who enlisted, 26.4% were killed, representing 10.9% of Scotland's men aged 15-49, and 3.1% of the overall population.[302] Only the Turks and Serbs had a higher percentage of casualties, and in both cases this was due to disease.[303] In Great Britain as a whole, about twelve percent of men who were mobilized died which made for 1.6% of total population. Added to this is the fact that many Dominion soldiers, especially from Australia, South Africa, and Canada, were also Scottish. Despite these losses, Scottish troops never mutinied—indeed, there was no large-scale expression of discontent by soldiers in the trenches, although indiscipline became widespread in other armies which suffered many fewer casualties, and French

[301] Tim Kane. "Who Bears the Burden? Demographic Characteristics of U.S. Military Recruits Before and After 9/11." Center for Data Analysis Report #05-08 (November 7, 2005). Available at http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2005/11/who-bears-the-burden-demographic-characteristics-of-us-military-recruits-before-and-after-9-11.
[302] Ferguson, *Pity of War,* 299.
[303] Devine, *Scottish Nation,* 304.

troops openly mutinied after Verdun. Amalgamating Scottish, English, Welsh, and Irish experiences together thus leaves one with a radically deficient understanding of the war, one that conceals the disproportionate burden borne by Scots.

Alexander Watson's book *Enduring the Great War* compares morale in the British and German armies in an attempt to explain why Britain sustained such high casualties and continued to fight.[304] Watson discusses the culture of the British Army while omitting Scottish traditions entirely. This is a significant oversight given that, with Scottish casualties removed, British losses were relatively low. Scottish troops not only maintained their morale but continued to fight effectively through the entire war. Denis Winter is more observant in *Death's Men.* He acknowledges that national character influences military conduct when he argues that Scottish troops required less inducement to kill the enemy. He argues that the nature of Edwardian society maintained morale by creating stasis and low expectations in the lower classes, but quotes Lord Moran's finding that "this immense toleration is just English—not Scottish."[305]

The more abstract an explanation for behavior is, the less likely it is to be applicable in any individual case. Widely-cited psychologist James Hillman's book *A Terrible Love of War* attempts to explain the simultaneous attraction and revulsion towards war experienced by soldiers and civilians by incorporating letters, memoirs, and second-hand accounts from many fronts in many ages.[306] The result, bolstered by

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[304] Alexander Watson. *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale, and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
[305] Winter, *Death's Men,* 234.
[306] James Hillman. *A Terrible Love of War* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2004).

hearty portions of Jungian depth psychology, Greek myth, and Foucauldian post-structuralism, is essentially useless for serious military history.

Although Watson's work similarly relies on psychological heuristics that transcend time and culture, he at least grounds his work well in both scientific orthodoxy and the context of the war. Temporal focus is important. In explaining the First World War, each generation incorporates "its own political preoccupations" and "changing views of human nature," as James Joll and Gordon Martell write. But to "understand the men of 1914 we have to understand the values of 1914; and it is by these values that their actions must be measured."[307] Nationalism was a powerful force in Europe overall, but in Scotland, the romantic cult of Highlandism was based almost entirely on military values.

Scots were still perceived as a warlike race by the English. Troops training in Bedford entertained themselves at the expense of the locals. "We reveled in our barbarian role and solemnly assured our hosts that the kilt was our normal civilian garb," wrote one private in the Gordon Highlanders, "we even had the effrontery to tell them that our wild hoochs represented the semi-articulate call of primitive ancestors, and were still used to communicating [sic] from one rocky Hielan' crag to another."[308] Military tradition was taken seriously, however. Highland newspapers such as the *Oban Times* appealed to the memory of clan loyalty and the martial tradition of Highlanders serving in foreign wars, arguing that patriotic sacrifice was "a noble heritage from a race of ancestors whose deeds of valour on continental fields find a prominent place in the

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[307] Joll and Martel, *Origins,* 306.
[308] Royle, *Flowers of the Forest,* 72.

pages of history."[309] The fact that English propaganda also invoked historical military triumphs only enhances this point: Scots could claim all of these same triumphs of nineteenth century Imperial Britain, whose ranks they filled, but also their own distinctive military history and culture.

The kilt was unsuited to the dangerous conditions of the Western Front due to the tendency of mustard gas to cling to sweaty areas of the body. Very few Scots wore the garment for any reason other than regimental pride, and some ambivalence had existed even prior to the war.[310] Despite this, it was retained because of its effect on morale. The garment set Highland regiments apart, reinforcing their elite status and encouraging men to fight for regimental honor. One captain who served with the 10th Camerionians said that Scots "were a race so ready to admire themselves that an outsider's opinion passes them unheeded."[311] The bagpipes had a similar effect. Once temporarily dispensed with, pipes were restored to the regiments because they were observed to create an unusual sense of discipline and morale as links to the national iconography of Scotland.[312]

A persistent element in the Scottish warrior myth was the idea of the "last stand," the noble, but doomed, sacrifice of soldiers' lives. Culloden is the obvious starting point for this, and much of the mythology of that battle, already discussed, dwelt heavily on futile death. The concept was an old one, and was particularly associated with the Black Watch, long Scotland's finest unit. Leah Leneman's study of Atholl noted the use of "noble wounds" and "glorious death" as recruiting concepts in Gaelic propaganda

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[309] Quoted in Ibid., 86.
[310] Spiers, "The Scottish Soldier at War," 317.
[311] Quoted in Ibid., 328.
[312] Ibid., 322.

during the Seven Years War.[313] The idea that Highlanders were cool under fire could

be traced back over a century. An American officer observing the Sutherlands in a

bloody and futile attack during the British assault on New Orleans in 1815 wrote that

"they were the most surprising instance of cool determined bravery and undaunted

courage I ever heard of, standing in the midst of a most destructive fire, firm and

immovable as a brick wall."[314] Scott's *Field of Waterloo* reinforced this image for the

Napoleonic Wars, where by "invoking Flodden in the midst of Waterloo [he] ensures that

the romantic view of historical conflict prevails: the death of the poet's fellow

countrymen is justified in the service of a higher patriotism towards Britain."[315] The

Charge of the Light Brigade sustained the idea for a new generation in the Crimea.

Frederick Watson's 1915 history of the Highland regiments is rife with romantic

notions of sacrifice. He describes the "deathless prestige" that units earn despite

"heavy losses."[316] He describes the destruction of the Cameronian Highlanders in the

First World War's early stages, writing that "nothing could be more forlorn, more Celtic

in tragedy," and in recounting the loss of an entire detachment of Scots Guards,

supposedly found surrounded by dozens of enemy corpses, he opines that the "history

of war can show no more noble ending."[317] Thomas Lyon's memoirs of his time with the

Glasgow Highlanders also appeared during the war, and express a similar sentiment.

The concluding words of his book are:

> As the traditions of a regiment become richer, so does its efficiency
> increase: the greater its death-roll, the more abundant the life that it

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[313] Leneman, *Living in Atholl,* 131.
[314] Quoted in Clyde, *Rebel to Hero,* 173.
[315] Philip Shaw, *Waterloo and the Romantic Imagination* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 55.
[316] Watson, *Story of the Highland Regiments,* 112.
[317] Ibid., 310-311.

possesses. For the dead still fight in the ranks: their spirit has entered into and made strong the souls of those who wield the rifles to-day.
The Glasgows nobly died.
Nobly the Glasgows carry on.[318]

Herbert McBride, an American soldier who fought with great distinction in a Canadian unit, watched the Gordons go over the top at the Somme, again into certain death, with pipers at the front. "Man! Man! if you have never seen it, you can never get the thrill…wild, heartrending airs that date back to the time of Bonnie Prince Charlie, they march into battle as though no such thing as bullets or shells existed." Though six generations removed from Scotland, McBride the hardened soldier admits to crying at the sound of the pipes. Unable to decide whether it truly constituted "music," the noise of the pipes seemed still to have the desired effect on him. "I do know that whenever I hear it I want to go out and kill somebody." He had "read of Bannockburn, Culloden, and many other bloody battles that figure largely in Scottish history," and imagined "the claymore in place of the modern bayonet; and, though I could hear nothing amid the continuous crash of shells, I fancied that they were shouting the old Gaelic battle cries."[319]

Seaforth Highlander Lieutenant Dugald MacEchern's *The Sword of the North*, a history written shortly after the war and supportive of the Highland effort despite its casualties, includes a Gaelic poem invoking the memory of Culloden directly.[320] The idea of the last stand at Culloden may also have had a tangible result at the very end of the Battle of the Somme. Three platoons of D Company, 16th Highland Light Infantry, were stranded in the "Frankfurt Trench" after an attack. The rest of the British force

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[318] Lyon, *More Adventures,* p. 214.
[319] Herbert McBride. *A Rifleman Went To War* (Plantersville, SC: Thomas G. Samworth Small-Arms and Technical Publishing Company, 1935), 193-195.
[320] Dugald MacEchern. *The Sword of the North* (Inverness: Robert Carruthers & Son, 1923), 634.

withdrew, leaving these men, half of whom were wounded, in possession of only four Lewis guns and limited ammunition. What they did have, however, was "fierce pride," and they lasted for seven days under enemy attack. When the Germans sent a party under the white flag to encourage surrender, the Scottish troops refused, despite having been without food or water for several days. When the Germans finally mounted a massive assault, they found only fifteen able-bodied men. Thirty were wounded, and the rest had died deaths worthy of the Culloden myth—valiant, unyielding, and ultimately pointless.[321]

Stories about "last stands" may have inspired other soldiers who heard them. Pinkerton claims to have joined the London Scottish after hearing of an heroic "last stand" by elements of that regiment at the Marne, complete with German perfidy and atrocities.[322] This is reminiscent of the last stand at Culloden, which was followed in both myth and reality by Cumberland's atrocities. Pinkerton's book itself helped to publicize the Highland warrior myth. It is apparently the first popular use of the term "Ladies from Hell," and its publication during the war was for the explicit purpose of motivating the American public to support its troops just beginning to arrive in Europe. Pinkerton, although in a kilted unit, clearly sees himself as apart from men like the Black Watch battalion that he describes calmly marching into certain death, heroic and doomed. Of the 800 who went over the top in his account of Loos, only 35 attempt a retreat. All are killed.[323] Lord Reith, then a mere lieutenant in a Territorial transport unit

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[321] Royle, *Flowers of the Forest,* 108-109.
[322] Pinkerton, *Ladies from Hell,* 6-7.
[323] Ibid*.,* 75-78.

who had originally wanted to join the London Scottish, also mentioned them after their

massacre. "They had already made their name glorious. What would we do?"[324]

Even those with a more critical appraisal of Scottish military tradition seemed to

resign themselves to the image of the doomed hero. Sorley MacLean (Somharirle

MacGill-Eain), the best twentieth-century Gaelic poet, who ends his poem "Going

Westwards," about the alienation and bitterness of military campaigning, with this verse:

> And be what was as it was,
> I am of the big men of Braes,
> of the heroic Raasay MacLeods,
> of the sharp-sword Mathesons of Lochalsh;
> and the men of my name—who were braver
> when their ruinous pride was kindled?[325]

MacLean's words, a product of his experience in the Second World War, fit well with the

sentiments expressed by his countrymen in the First. Bruce Marshall, a Scottish Great

War veteran, wrote the novel *Only Fade Away* about Scottish troops sent to fight in

France. A general encourages his men awaiting orders to ship out from Edinburgh with

lines from the heavily-used "Scots wha hae." Afterwards, two lieutenants discuss the

speech. "We're not just fighting a tribal war for Gordons and Argylls," one remarks. "It's

the only loyalty the average Jock can see…you've got to give the troops an ideal they

can understand," the other replies.[326]

The concept of sacrifice as part of the warrior image may partially explain high

casualties among Scottish units. It was often observed that Scots took great risks that

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[324] John Reith Lord Reith, *Wearing Spurs* (London: Hutchison & Co. Ltd, 1966), 56-57.
[325] Sorley MacLean. *From Wood to Ridge* [O Choille gu Bearradh] (Edinburgh: Carcanet, 1999), 205.
[326] Bruce Marshall. *Only Fade Away* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1954), 18-19.

others would have avoided, resulting in high casualties.[327] Scottish troops had been

exposed to two levels of propaganda: that which was targeted at all British troops, and a

special appeal based on the history of clan warfare and Scottish military tradition which

was aimed at them alone. This combined with religious propaganda about death in

battle as a sacred event to make Scottish soldiers unusually tolerant of casualties.[328]

The tenacity of Highland units was even noted by the French, with some telling

evidence of nineteenth century romanticism: "They charged like heroes of Walter

Scott," one observer wrote. "The [Highland] soldier is wonderful. He is a slave to

duty…these Scotsmen were prepared to give their lives to the last man."[329] One of the

rarely mentioned aspects of the Highland warrior myth is the complacency with which it

leads observers to accept Scottish unit's demise. In nearly all of the awestruck

accounts of Highland courage under fire, the deadly fate of the soldiers is taken for

granted, merely part of the heroic "last stand," usually with a mention of Culloden or

some equally gruesome episode of the Scottish past. Tragedy seems to pave the way

for the acceptance of death. In addition to the effects that romanticism may have had

on Scottish soldiers, it may therefore have also influenced their commanders. "The

main reason for the higher-than-average casualties among the Scottish soldiers,"

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[327] See for example Robert Graves. *Good-bye to All That* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1998), 182.
Grave's opinions on the Highlanders, particularly the Black Watch, must be taken with a grain of salt, as
he was an officer of the Royal Welch. This unit had a traditional rivalry with the Black Watch; see Farwell,
Mr. Kipling's Army, p. 38.
[328] James Lachlan MacLeod. "Greater Love Hath No Man Than This: Scotland's Conflicting Religious
Responses to Death in the Great War." *Scottish Historical Review 81,1: 211* (April 2002), 71-72.
[329] Watson, *Story of the Highland Regiments*, 302.

Devine writes, "was that they were regarded as excellent, aggressive shock troops who could be depended on to lead the line in the first hours of battle."[330]

This seems more true of non-Scottish observers that the troops themselves, however, as some were less willing to accept the idea that mass death was merely fate. George Matheson, commenting on First Ypres, called it "pure murder, not war."[331] Scottish troops seemed willing to undertake dangerous missions, but the romance of war clearly wore thin over time. The crucial difference between Scottish soldiers and others may simply have been that even after Scottish soldiers saw the war for what it was, they kept fighting it. Thomas Lyon records a long monologue given by a fellow soldier called the Schoolmaster. "There's a lot of piffle talked about the 'glory of war'…The phrase is not merely meaningless: it gives expression to a lie. For there's not a trace of glory in war *as* war…War is simply lunacy, organised and gigantic; it's the most pathetically futile thing known to the gods." At the end of a seven-page rant (again recorded in so much detail that one wonders whether Lyon's memory embellishes a bit), an officer comes in and asks for volunteers for a very dangerous assignment. The Schoolmaster is the first to come forward.[332]

Still, some Scots seemed to enjoy the war without shame. Besides Lord Reith, whose memoirs will be discussed later, there was Lieutenant Lionel Sotheby, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (later attached to the Black Watch), who wrote that "I have no intention of leaving the line. It amuses me intensely, as one becomes totally callous of the dead, and death that are [*sic*] around you…It comes unseen and makes you

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[330] Devine, *Scottish Nation*, p. 309. It is important to note that Devine does not analyze the continuation of the romantic soldier myth in the twentieth century, and is thus commenting generally on the reputation of Scottish soldiers in the First World War.
[331] Royle, *Flowers of the Forest,* 64.
[332] Lyon, *More Adventures,* 62-69.

oblivious of almost everything at times, save one intense desire to kill, kill, kill, the

Germans in front…I live in a perfect heaven fairly revelling [sic] in it and enjoying the

ramparts immensely."[333] This rather chipper young sociopath is closer to Ernst Jünger

than to the self-pitying public school boys of Paul Fussell's *Great War and Modern*

Memory.[334]

Sotheby's interest in killing Germans leads into another possible means by which

the Jacobite myth resulted in exceptional Scottish conduct during the First World War.

In his discussion of anti-German feeling among British soldiers, Denis Winter argues

that "some men needed less convincing than others…With the Scots likewise, there

was no close season…Cultural differences thus helped to determine the attitudes of

war."[335] The general of Bruce Marshall's novel, a fictionalized account of his own

experience in a Scottish Great War regiment, tells his men that "your job will be to kill as

many Huns as possible. Always remember that the only good German is a dead

German."[336] This is spoken in the same paragraph as the invocation of Robert the

Bruce and William Wallace. Edward Spiers, while acknowledging that comparative

assessment of anti-German feeling is difficult, writes that the "enmity of some Scots was

striking in its intensity."[337] Even when surrendering Germans appeared to be safe, this

animosity could quickly explode. A private who observed the Royal Scots reluctantly

taking German prisoners near Ypres reported that as soon as their officers had left, "the

Scots immediately shot the whole lot, and shouted 'Death and Hell to everyone of ye s--

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[333] Quoted in Young, *Scottish Voices,* 232-233.
[334] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).
[335] Winter, *Death's Men,* 209.
[336] Marshall, *Fade Away,* 19.
[337] Spiers "Scottish Soldier at War," 326.

-' and in five minutes the ground was ankle deep with German blood."[338] Niall Ferguson

collected data about prisoner killing, and although his accounts are mostly anecdotal,

support for the belief that Scottish units engaged in this practice more frequently than

others can be found in several studies of the Great War.[339]

Part of the romantic construction of Jacobitism had to do with enmity towards

Germans. It was customary for Jacobites to refer to George II as "the elector of

Hanover," presenting only themselves as truly "British." A romantic-era Jacobite song

"The Wee, Wee German Lairdie" mocks the English and Irish for accepting this "foreign

trash" and invites the King to the Highlands, where "our Scotch thistle will jag his

thumbs." Even the ancient Highland hatred for the English seems to be temporarily

eclipsed, as the implication that they accept Germans seems to be the ultimate insult:

"But the very dogs in England's court/They bark an' howl in German." Other Jacobite

songs included lines about "the cruel and bloody German race."[340] In contrast to Linda

Colley's argument about the formation of British national identity around opposition to a

French "Other," Carruthers and Rawes argue that Scots were incorporated during the

Victorian period to distinguish the "Teutonic" roots of Britain from Prussia, adding an

element that separated British culture from German culture.[341]

High casualties also compounded Scottish hatred of the Germans, especially

after the Battle of Loos. Loos "has always been seen as a Scottish affair, with battalions

from every Scottish regiment present." Trevor Royle calls Loos a "Scottish battlefield,"

noting that losses were so high in Dundee, for example, that a light still shines every 25

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[338] Quoted in Ferguson, *Pity of War,* 378.
[339] Ibid., 376-384, passim. Spiers, "Scottish Soldier," 326.
[340] Pittock *Jacobite Politics and Poetry*, 225.
[341] Carruthers and Rawes, "Introduction," *English Romanticism,* 2.

September to commemorate the first day of the battle which killed so many local men. Other battles also had a personal effect on Scottish troops which steeled their resolve to kill Germans. Because Highland regiments drew so heavily from the same villages, men often saw their close relatives or friends die. Norman Collins, 6th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders, was appointed burial officer after the Somme. "Some of the men were picking up their brothers and cousins and they of course were very upset, very very upset…In a Highland Regiment, there were many men from the same family, village, or town…It was a horrible thing to do, to have to bury your own brother."[342] One German machine gun could eliminate the men of a Hebridean village. The influence of revenge on men's willingness to fight is mentioned by nearly every historian of the war.

Scots certainly made an impression on the Germans. The Kaiser's troops reportedly saw the 51st (Highland) Division as "one of the crack infantry formations of the British Army."[343] One German medal struck in 1915 depicted the figure of Death as a Highland piper, perhaps in response to the Battle of Loos, just one example of propaganda that rated Scottish troops as the British Empire's best.[344] Lyon described German soldiers reacting in terror when the Scots turned up. Apparently the Germans believed that Highlanders would take no prisoners.[345] A war correspondent from the *Frankfurter Zeitung* described Highland units as "the best they [the British] have anywhere."[346] They even adopted some of the imagery of Scots as savages. One German propaganda poster depicted an enormous gorilla stamping on the cultural artifacts of Europe, holding a huge boulder in one hand and a helpless woman in the

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[342] In Young, *Scottish Voices*, 148.
[343] Royle, *Flowers of the Forest,* 107.
[344] Allen and Carswell, *Thin Red Line,* 41-42.
[345] Lyon, *More Adventures,* 128.
[346] Quoted in Young, *Scottish Voices,* 121.

other. On his head he wears the bonnet of the Black Watch. The arrow stuck in his body seems only to be angering him.[347]

Although German propaganda did display fear of the Scots, there is no evidence that German troops had nicknames for them—"Ladies from Hell" or "Devils in Skirts" are two that frequently appear in books about the war. Even Scottish historians retell this legend, but there is a conspicuous absence of evidence that the Germans used such terms during the War—although British domestic propaganda did. Conveniently located on a picture caption, and with no supporting evidence in the text, Niall Ferguson writes that "Highland regiments—'devils in skirts'—were especially disliked by the Germans, not least because of their reluctance to take prisoners."[348] Hew Strachan, another Scottish historian, repeats a similar statement, again in the caption of a photograph, adding that "the kilt was not the most sensible garment for trench war…But the Germans regarded Scottish regiments as particularly bloodthirsty enemies."[349] Nowhere in this otherwise comprehensive work does Strachan provide evidence for this claim or cite a source, and it is not present in his later comprehensive history of Scottish military identity.

By the end of the war, over one hundred thousand Scottish men were killed. Their pride was their ruin. The realities of war for Scottish troops were far from the adventure they had been promised. Though they marched through Edinburgh resplendent in their green and black Government tartan, though they felt proud in the lineage of William Wallace, though they looked the part of Sir Walter Scott's daring

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[347] In Sam Keen, *Faces of the Enemy: Reflections of the Hostile Imagination* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1986), 62.
[348] Ferguson, *Pity of War*, plate 21.
[349] Hew Strachan. *The First World War* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 194.

Highland lairds, Scottish troops, many of them teenagers, would die by the thousands far from home, blown to bits by artillery, tortured by gangrene, buried alive in shell holes or drowned in the mud. There was no "heroic death" as in the Culloden myth. War's romance wears thin when phosgene gas settles low and shrapnel fills the air. This is what is at stake when historical narratives are forged. In a very real sense, history can kill. The realities of warfare in the eighteenth century, when many Highlanders had been forced by poverty or threats into the army, were gradually obfuscated by beautiful but imagined romantic legend. By the time the First World War broke out, no one alive could remember the Jacobite army, Cumberland's scourging of the Highlands, or the height of the Clearances. Brought up on romantic myth, they would also be buried by it. The reality was more tragic than anything imagined by Sir Walter Scott.

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT WAR AND SCOTTISH MEMORY

Soldiers die in war. This does not mean, however, that it should never be fought.

The dominant view of the First World War today is of needless loss, of tragedy and

waste. Especially in Britain, the war is talked about in apocalyptic terms. The

Schoolmaster of Thomas Lyon's 1917 memoirs defined "the Ancients" as "all those who

lived out their lives in that far-off period in the world's history that began with the first

man and ended in August 1914."[350] Scotland's regiments were indeed devastated. The

extent of their sacrifice is often concealed by the tendency to generalize about the

"British" experience. Lyn MacDonald notes that on one day, 22 August 1917, the

Cameronians and Argyll and Seaforth Highlanders took such crippling losses that they

were temporarily removed from the line, yet this event does not even appear in the

official history of 3rd Ypres.[351] Modern historians continue this practice. Brian Bond's

The Unquiet Western Front deals with the memory of the First World War without the

words "Scotland" or "Highland" so much as appearing in the index.[352] There is no

mention, for example, of the Scottish National War Museum in Edinburgh Castle, the

"most elaborate, most artfully symbolic, most deliberately monumental of all the

memorial schemes realised in the United Kingdom in the aftermath of the conflict."[353]

These omissions become much more serious in regard to the human cost of the

war borne by Scotland. Due to the patterns of recruiting, the scale of enlistment, the

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[350] Lyon, *More Adventures,* 63.
[351] Lyn Macdonald. *They Called it Passchendaele: The Story of the Third Battle of Ypres and of the men who fought in it* (New York: Autheneum, 1989), 154.
[352] Bond, *Unquiet Western Front.*
[353] Allan and Carswell, *Thin Red Line,* 15.

massively disproportionate casualties, and the small starting population, the First World

War *was* nothing short of apocalyptic for Scotland, especially in the Highlands.[354] The

troops themselves were so worn down that even news of the Armistice was sometimes

not enough to rouse them. A man who ran into the barracks of a Scottish regiment

serving in the Middle East shouted that the war was over. The group of Scots inside

responded "I didn't know they had beer in the canteen," and "you're ten years too soon."

Even when they had verified the news, the men merely went back to finish the chess

and card games that the runner had disrupted.[355]

The war also ruined Scotland demographically, snuffing out entire villages and

completing the work that the Clearances had begun a century before.[356] Devine writes

that of the 225 relatives of Scottish peers who fought, forty-two died. This destroyed the

old order, and a fifth of Scotland's land changed hands between 1918 and 1921

because of death duties, high taxes, and the collapse of agriculture after the war.

Scotland's aristocracy perished "in blood and fire and the landed classes were

consumed."[357] It is in this context that one should read Bond's claim that the British

"lost generation" was a myth.[358] This is undoubtedly true, as long as one places the

northern border of Britain somewhere in the vicinity of Hadrian's Wall.

Despite Scotland's decimation, Bond's attack on the anti-war complexion of

British memory is too simplistic. While Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon, and the

similarly morose elite dominated the literary memory of the war, Scottish veterans were

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[354] Henderson, *Highland Soldier,* 45-46.
[355] Bernard Blaser. *Kilts Across the Jordan: Being the Experiences and Impressions with the Second Battalion "London Scottish" in Palestine* (London: H.F. & G. Witherby, 1926), 245-246.
[356] Iain Finlayson. *The Scots: a Portrain of the Scottish Soul at Home and Abroad* (New York: Atheneum, 1987), 52.
[357] Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 455.
[358] Bond, *Unquiet Western Front,* 24.

"deafening in their silence," despite having made up one sixth of the British Army and absorbing more casualties.[359] John Reith's *Wearing Spurs* is the most fascinating of Scottish war memorials, but it couldn't be published until 1966 because the author's friends persuaded him that public pacifism was so strong that it would ruin his career as Director General of the BBC. "The dominant sentiment today on war? Tragedy, ghastly tragedy of death and wounds and incapacity; of sorrow-stricken homes and inconsolable bereavements," he wrote. "Yes…But to one such as I more than anything else the appalling inefficiency of its conduct."[360] Reith wrote that "I had war in my bones," and when asked by one Chaplain Matheson of Galashiels if he would like a message delivered to his parents, Reith said to "tell them I'm thoroughly enjoying the war."[361] At other times he complained that shelling interrupted his haircut, or that he had to expose his six foot-six inch frame to sniper fire because he didn't wish to be thirty minutes late to lunch. This is a man who found incoming artillery exciting, and eventually hijacked a civilian transport and forced his way to the Battle of Loos so as not to miss the fighting. John Reith's book was so powerfully against the grain that it "might be subtitled the 'story of a war-lover.'"[362] Clearly the Scottish contribution in blood did not allow them to reassert equality with England. As once "England" was used in place of "Britain," now "Britain" is used in place of "England" to erase the unique history of the Scottish war.

Bitterness set in after the Armistice. The Highland Clearances returned to memory. The call for recruits was seen by some Highlanders as an implicit promise of

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[359] Gregory, *Last Great War,* 83.
[360] Reith, *Wearing Spurs,* 34.
[361] Ibid., 103.
[362] Gregory, *Last Great War*, 83.

better treatment once the war was over, meaning land and protection for the crofting

lifestyle. In this respect, the spirit of eighteenth-century soldiers really was alive in

Scotland's modern veterans. "Above all," write Cameron and Robertson, "the rhetoric of

recruiting brought about a revival in acts of protest…not seen in the Highlands since the

1880s."[363] Although Government promises of "Homes fit for Heroes" proved hollow

throughout the United Kingdom, this was particularly volatile in the Highlands. Scottish

poets and writers had seen the bloody reality of industrial war tear through the Romantic

fabric of heroic narratives and were increasingly furious about the high price paid by

their countrymen.[364] Roderick Mackay's poem "Song at the Start of the Great European

War" turned out to have been prescient indeed. After discussing the necessity of the

war to stop the "Crucifier," and expressing certainty of bloody Highland victory, he

wrote:

> Nuair a bhagras an nàmhaid,
>   Air a' Ghàidheal a dh'éighear—
> Bidh gach morair is iarla
>   Guidhe dian leibh gu éirigh,
> Bidh sibh measail aig diùcan
>   'S bheir an Crùn a chuid fhéin dhuibh;
> Ach nuair cheanglar an t-sìth leibh
>   Cha bhi cuimhn' air bhur feum dhaibh,
> Cha bhi cuimhn' air mar smàladh
>   Thar sàl do thìr chéin sibh,
> Mar chaidh fearann a dhiùltadh
>   'S mar a chum iad na féidh bhuaibh,
> Mar a chum iad an t-iasg bhuaibh
>   Agus ianlaith nan speuran.
> Chan àm cuimhneachadh dhuibh air,
>   Bhon tha 'n Rìghachd 'na h-éiginn!

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[363] Ewen Cameron and Iain Robertson, "Fighting and Bleeding for the Land: the Scottish Highlands and the Great War." *Scotland and the Great War* ed. Catriona Macdonald and E.W. McFarland (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 81-82. 88-89.

[364] Royle, *Flowers of the Forest,* 293-296.

When the enemy threaten,
    It's the Gael who is called—
Each earl and each lord
    Implores you to rise,
Dukes show you respect
    And the Crown gives you its share;
But when peace is secured by you
    They'll forget how you served them,
They'll forget you were banished
    Far over the sea,
And how land was refused
    And they forbade you the deer,
And forbade you the fish
    And the birds of the air.
It's no time to remind you of it,
    Since the Kingdom's in need![365]

The myth of the "warrior race" was no longer so universally accepted, and

Scotland's history sometimes became a source of bitterness rather than pride. Hugh

MacDiarmid, who became one of Scotland's most influential poets, served at Salonika

under the name of Christopher Murray Grieve. MacDiarmid would eventually report that

he and other Scots got along well only with the Irish and Welsh. "[W]e always had a

difference from the English…and I became more and more anti-English as time went

on."[366] In 1935 he wrote "Another Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries" echoing Burn's

theme of "bought and sold for English gold:"

It is a God-damned lie to say that these
Saved, or knew, anything worth any man's pride.
They were professional murderers and they took
Their blood money and impious risks and died.
In spite of all their kind some elements of worth
With difficulty persist here and there on earth.[367]

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[365] Roderick Mackay, "Song at the Start of the Great European War," in *An Tuil: Anthology of 20th Century Scottish Gaelic Verse*, ed. Ronald Black (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1999), 54-55.
[366] Ibid., 140.
[367] Hugh MacDiarmid, in *War and the Pity of War*, ed. Neil Philip (New York: Clarion Books, 1998) p. 85.

Despite this, the British Army continued to recruit in the Highlands using the same appeal to Scotland's military image. One 1919 poster shows a group of colorfully-dressed men apparently at a *céilidh*,[368] doing sword-dances and playing bagpipes. The text reads "Recruits Wanted for the Highland Regiments. This is the Life for a Scotsman."[369] Omitted are: mud, casualty clearing stations, phosgene gas, trench foot, and mass graves. Pipers would continue to stalk the hills near monuments to Sir Walter Scott, recruiting for the British army as the twentieth century wore on.[370] A passage called "A Scottish Soldier" in Irvine Welsh's popular novel *Trainspotting* has a one-legged heroin addict pretending to be a wounded Falklands veteran to beg for money, happily thinking "god bless the Royal Jocks" when he gets a twenty-pound note.[371] The passage could not be effective, however, if Scottish respect for military service had completely faded.

Home rule was another casualty of the war. A live issue in 1914, the Conservative election victories after the Armistice weakened Labour and dampened enthusiasm for home rule, which it feared would dilute its national political base.[372] The irony that Scots had fought ostensibly to protect the rights of "Brave Little Belgium," and were now faced with the denial of their own modest nationalist aspirations, was a source of much anger. War ended the lives of perhaps as many as 150,000 Scots, and in addition "the First World War ended the devolution option."[373] Although devolution had seemed immanent in 1914, it would take until 1999 for Scotland to have its own

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[368] A traditional Gaelic social gathering (pronounced "CAY-lee").
[369] Allen and Carswell, *Thin Red Line,* 32.
[370] Campbell, *Invisible Country,* 21.
[371] Irvine Welsh, *Trainspotting* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1996), 318-321.
[372] Ibid., 305.
[373] Harvie. *Scotland and Nationalism,* 25-27.

Parliament again, long after the vast majority of veterans had died.[374] In 1820 the

Glasgow Martyrs demanded "Scotland free or a desert." From 1914 to 1999, it seemed

like they had their answer.

Tartan and the kilt still survived as unshakeable symbols for the whole of

Scotland. Bonnie Prince Charlie's face adorns whisky bottles and shortbread tins

across the planet, and tartanry has been busy conquering the solar system. Apollo

astronaut Allan Bean, whether or not he was aware of the Sobieski Stewarts, planted a

piece of MacBean tartan on the moon.[375] Not too long ago a biographer of Charles

Edward Stuart could still feel it necessary to assert that he was "of sound Jacobite

stock."[376]

The romantic tartan cult has lost some of its grip in Scotland, however. James

Campbell writes that "romantics…were anathema to a Scot: praising haggis and tartan

is rather like telling a black American how much you enjoy…minstrel shows."[377] There

is a great deal of exaggeration in this statement, but it still demonstrates that although

Scottish tartanry may be a convenient myth for the tourist industry, it has not completely

colonized the minds of Scots themselves. The debate about whether tartan, the pipes,

and Bonnie Prince Charlie are really "authentic" has been raging for decades, with

many serious writers lamenting the fact that Scottish history is represented in romantic,

even kitschy, ways.[378] This all seems to miss the point. Whatever the origins of these

Scottish icons, and whatever their past associations—as military symbol, marketing

tactic, or kitsch—they are now part of contemporary Scottish culture. All societies

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[374] Christopher Harvie. *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics 1707 to the Present* (London: Routledge, 2004), 25-27.
[375] Hugh Cheape, *Tartan: The Highland Habit* (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 1991) p. 3.
[376] Fitzroy MacLean, *Bonnie Prince Charlie* (New York: Atheneum, 1989), xi.
[377] Campbell, *Invisible Country,* 5.
[378] Withers, "Historical Creation," 156.

romanticize their past. Scotland is no better or worse in this regard. As Womack wrote,

and Macaulay recognized one hundred and thirty years ago, there is no neutral,

"authentic" Scottish culture to return to.

When the Highlands were ravaged after Culloden and its people were scattered

across the world by the Clearances, whether in red coats or not, the romantic myth

allowed pride in the past. Like the other defeated societies that Schivelbusch describes,

they could cling to the idea that they were "the better men," that "it wasn't a fair fight."

Unlike those other societies, Scotland has cultivated a characteristic sense of

superiority simultaneously with a sense of self-hatred. Mark Renton is another

character in Irvine Welsh's widely-read novel of Scottish urban squalor. He comments

on who is to blame in "a country ay failures":

> It's nae good blamin it oan the English fir colonising us. Ah don't hate the
> English. They're just wankers. We are colonised by wankers. We can't
> even pick a decent, vibrant, healthy culture to be colonised by. No. We're
> ruled by effete arseholes. What does that make us? The lowest of the
> fuckin low, the scum of the earth. The most wretched, servile, miserable,
> pathetic trash that was ever shat intae creation. Ah don't hate the
> English…I hate the Scots.[379]

Self-blame still exists alongside resentment of the English, as it has at least since Burns

accused Scotland of being "bought and sold for English gold" in the Union of 1707.

Renton's sentiments in this piece of fiction are just a modern incarnation of those in a

Gaelic poem written around the time of the First World War:

> Cha nàimhdeas do Shassan
> A dhùisg mi gu ealaidh
> No tnù ri cuid beairteas,
>   A mòrachd 's a cliù,
> Ach bhith sealltainn air Alba
> 'S i sìor dhol an ceannas
> Gus an caill i mu dheireadh

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[379] Welsh, *Trainspotting,* 78.

A toil gu bhith saor

No malice for England
Has aroused me to song
Nor any greed for her wealth,
  Her grandeur and fame,
But just looking at Scotland
Bit by bit taken over
Till she loses at last
  Her desire to be free.[380]

But the Scots have internalized the memory of the war as they tend to internalize

all of their historical tragedies: with black humor. Highland humor of the First World War

period was considered to be characteristically grim, and often involved military

themes.[381] This is still somewhat the case. The Scottish military myth has not died, but

it is now the butt of sly jokes, aimed at a Scottish audience. "The pipe band was

invented by the British Army to march off Lowlanders dressed as Highlanders to fight for

Britain with Scottish pride," goes one so-called "joke."[382] Another makes light of

Scottish casualties and the "lost cause." A battalion goes over the top at the Somme

with their piper playing courageously behind them. A hundred men die, then two

hundred, three hundred, four hundred. Still the piper plays. Finally just two riflemen are

left charging the trenches. A German shell blows one to bits, covering the sole survivor

with blood and gore. He turns in rage to the piper who is still playing behind him, and

points at the German trench shouting "for God's *sake* man! Can ye no play something

they *like*?" With more of an anti-English bitterness, it is sometimes noted that Field

Marshal Sir Douglas Haig was the greatest Scottish military figure. He was greater than

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[380] Angus Morrison, "Scotland Free," excerpted in *Anthology of Twentieth Century Gaelic Verse*, 28-29.
[381] David Macrea. *National Humour, Scottish, English, Irish, Welsh, Cockney, American* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1915), 79-81.
[382] Andrew Burnside. *Wha's Like Us? On the Unrealities of Being Scottish* (Argyll: Argyll Publishing, 2007), 35.

Lord Murray, greater than Bruce, greater than Wallace. After all, no one else managed to kill as many Englishmen.

The romantic myth exacted a terrible price in Scottish blood. The war overshadowed all the tragedies of Scotland's past, and left the Highlands even emptier and the Lowlands disillusioned. But if the Scots had one national characteristic in common, they were survivors. They still are.

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