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ABSTRACT
The papers in this volume are a selection of those delivered at a conference at the National Army Museum in London in July 2022, held to mark the centenary of the disbandment of the 'southern' Irish regiments on the creation of the Irish Free State. This introduction summarizes each paper, situating them in analysis of past historiography on the Irish soldier in the British Army. It argues that while the First World War still looms large in that historiography, researchers are now more often moving beyond it, while also analyzing matters such as class, gender and global contexts.

On 5 July 2022, a conference was hosted by the National Army Museum (NAM) in London on 'The Irish Soldier in the British Army, c. 1680-1922'. It was organised by the NAM and the editors of this special issue of the BJMH, marking the centenary of the disbandment of the 'southern' Irish regiments of the British army on the creation of the Irish Free State. The NAM is an important repository of material relating to those regiments, holding, for example, their enlistment records for 1920-22, and a wealth of other papers of individuals who served in those regiments.[1] Notable examples include Henry Jourdain of the Connaught Rangers and Noël Drury of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.[2] The conference emerged from conversations between the NAM and the editors over the need for a UK institution to mark the centenary of the disbandment, and to discuss the significance of these regiments – and the Irish soldier

[1]www.nam.ac.uk/soldiers-records/persons. Accessed 13 June 2023.
[2]Jourdain, https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1963-12-307-50 Accessed 13 June 2023; https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1976-07-69-1. Accessed 13 June 2023.

more widely – from the integration of Irish army units into a wider 'British' army in the 1680s until 1922.

The terminal date of this issue is therefore easily explained, linked to the disbandment of the five Southern Irish infantry regiments (the Royal Irish Regiment, Connaught Rangers, Leinster Regiment, Royal Munster Fusiliers and Royal Dublin Fusiliers) in 1922. The opening date of c. 1680 and, indeed, the terms 'Irish soldier' and 'British army' require some further explanation, along with a review of the existing historiography on this topic as a whole and a brief outline of the articles included in this special issue. While writing on the Irish soldier in the British army has greatly expanded in the past twenty to thirty years, much of it has been focused on the First World War with such work flourishing during Ireland's 'Decade of Centenaries'. Works covering a longer chronology are still relatively rare, and part of the aim of the conference was to bring together a group of scholars working on Britain's Irish soldiers across centuries to explore broad themes outside those we often focus on through our concerns with relatively limited chronologies.[3]

In defining exactly what is meant by the 'Irish soldier' in the 'British army' it must be understood that there was, of course, no entity that could be properly termed the 'British Army' until 1707 when Scotland was united with England and Wales. However, regiments recruited in England, Ireland and Scotland served together in the forces raised by the Duke of Buckingham at Cadiz, Ile d'Rhé and La Rochelle in 1625-28 and Irish regiments had served as part of the Royalist armies during the Civil Wars of the 1640s.[4] The restoration of Charles II in 1661 saw the establishment of regular military forces in separate English (incorporating Welsh), Irish and Scottish armies. In Ireland these forces were originally formed as independent infantry companies or cavalry troops and were dispersed throughout the country on garrison duty. Only in April 1684 was a full regiment, the 18th Regiment of Foot, formed in Ireland under Arthur, Earl of Granard, and in July 1685 this regiment was in action on English soil at the Battle of Sedgemoor. This regiment earned its first battle honour, 'Namur' in 1695,

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[3]Notable exceptions are: Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (eds), *A Military History of Ireland,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Desmond & Jean Bowen, *Heroic Option: The Irish in the British Army,* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2005); William Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army, 1854-1992,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016); and Peter Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army, 1792-1922: Suborned or Subordinate?', *Journal of Social History*, 17, 1 (1983), pp. 31-64.

[4]Ian Beckett, *The British Army: A new short history,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), p.6, R. B. Manning, *An Apprenticeship in Arms: The Origins of the British Army 1585-1702,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 231-60 and Laurence Spring, *The First British Army, 1624-28: The Army of the Duke of Buckingham,* (Solihull: Helion, 2016).

when it was renamed the Royal Regiment of Foot of Ireland, demonstrating the changing role of the Irish soldier from a garrison guard to a member of a foreign expeditionary force.[5]

The Irish establishment existed from 1699 until the Act of Union between Britain and Ireland in 1801 though, for most of its existence this was a mechanism by which regiments raised in Great Britain were stationed in Ireland and paid for by the Irish taxpayer. Indeed, Patrick Walsh has noted the importance of the Irish establishment in the creation of the British fiscal-military state. The 1699 legislation meant that the Irish parliament would pay for the maintenance of 12,000 soldiers, augmentation in the late 1760s raised this figure to 15,325. Initially, this meant that the Irish establishment was considerably larger than the number of soldiers in Great Britain where parliamentary concerns about the political risks of a large peace-time army meant that a force of only 7,000 soldiers was maintained in England. However, with the growth of the army in the eighteenth century and the development of overseas commitments, the Irish establishment declined in its relative importance. Nevertheless, through the eighteenth century the Irish establishment was important both in providing a large and reliable constabulary force and in providing an 'imperial reserve' of regiments available for overseas service in the event of war.[6]

Recruitment of Irish soldiers into the British army was shaped by religion in much of the eighteenth century and, indeed, for much of this period the Irish soldier was, at

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[5]John Childs, *The Army of Charles II*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), pp. 203-9 and G. Le M. Gretton, *The Campaigns and History of the Royal Irish Regiment from 1684 to 1902,* (London: William Blackwood, 1911), pp. 1-24.

[6]Thomas Bartlett, 'The Augmentation of the Army in Ireland 1767-1769', *English Historical Review*, 96, 380 (1981), pp. 540-559; Andrew Dorman, ' "Fit for immediate service": Reassessing the Irish Military Establishment of the Eighteenth Century through the 1770 Townshend Augmentation', *British Journal of Military History*, 7, 2 (2021), pp. 42-63; K. P. Ferguson, 'The Army in Ireland from the Restoration to the Act of Union', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1981), pp. 60-68; C. I. McGrath, 'Waging War: The Irish Military Establishment and the British Empire, 1688-1763' in William Mulligan and Brendan Simms (eds.), *The Primacy of Foreign Policy in British History, 1660-2000: How Strategic Concerns Shaped Modern Britain,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 102-118; C. I. McGrath, *Ireland and Empire, 1692-1770;* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), pp. 107-166; J. L. Pimlott, 'The Administration of the British Army, 1783-1793', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leicester, 1975), pp. 56-75; and Patrick Walsh, 'Enforcing the Fiscal State: The Army, the Revenue and the Irish Experience of the Fiscal-Military State, 1690-1769' in Aaron Graham and Patrick Walsh (eds), *The British Fiscal-Military States, 1660- c. 1783,* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 113-130.

least officially, excluded from the British army. The Penal Laws had a definite effect on army recruitment and the considerable body of work on them suggests that a rather confusing collection of different pieces of legislation, passed at different times and with different motivations, was being applied inconsistently in decisions not to enlist Irish Catholics.[7] The Disarming Act of 1695 made it illegal for Catholics to possess weapons and this could be read as forbidding their recruitment to the British Army, out of concerns over their possible Jacobite sympathies. For much of the eighteenth century, Irish Protestants were also not actively recruited partly as it was impossible to differentiate Protestant from Catholic recruits in many areas, and partly as there were concerns that enlisting Protestant Irishmen for overseas service would weaken the indigenous Protestant 'garrison' in Ireland. Such concerns were set aside in time of war when the army's manpower demands became critical, notably in 1716-17, 1745-47 and 1757-63. The legal prohibition against Catholics serving in the ranks was removed by the Relief Acts of 1778, and the Catholic Relief Act of 1793 allowed Irish Catholics to take up commissions in the British army and militia. However, in peacetime, it is clear that a number of regimental officers tried to resolve their recruiting difficulties by enlisting Irishmen. Indeed, it seems that a number of Irish recruits were shipped to Scotland, dressed in bonnets and enlisted there as, supposedly, Scottish recruits before being brought back to provide manpower for regiments in Ireland. Flagrant abuses of this sort were found in the Earl of Orkney's Regiment in 1728 when eight officers were dismissed for conniving in this recruiting scandal.[8] Despite such sanctions, it is clear that relatively large numbers of Irishmen were enlisted during the era of the penal laws. At the Battle of Culloden in April 1746 a sample of 3,213 soldiers carried out by Jonathan Oates showed 7% (246) to be Irish,

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[7]Thomas Bartlett, '"a weapon of war yet untried": Irish Catholics and the Armed Forces of the Crown, 1760-1830' in T. G. Fraser and Keith Jeffery (eds), *Men, Women and War: Historical Studies XVIII,* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1993), pp. 66-85; Louis Cullen, 'Catholics under the Penal Laws', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an dá chultúr*, 1 (1986), pp. 23-36; V. J. L. Fontana, 'Some aspects of Roman Catholic service in the Land Forces of the British Crown, c. 1750 to c. 1820', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Portsmouth, 2002); and C. I. McGrath 'Securing the Protestant Interest: The Origins and Purpose of the Penal Laws of 1695', *Irish Historical Studies*, 30, 117 (1996), pp. 25-46.

[8]Dorman, 'The Experience of Soldiering in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century', pp. 90-143; Ferguson, 'The Army in Ireland ', pp. 71-72; A. J. Guy, 'The Irish military establishment, 1660-1776' in Bartlett and Jeffery (eds), *A Military History of Ireland*, pp. 211-230 at pp. 217-219; and A. J. Guy, *Economy and Discipline: Officership and administration in the British army 1714-63,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 124.

while Stephen Brumwell's work on the British army in North America in 1757 shows it to be 27.5% Irish with 3,856 Irishmen serving.[9]

The Penal Laws reinforced the Wild Geese tradition of Irish Catholics serving in continental European armies, particularly the French and Spanish armies, each of which had an Irish Brigade. However, the numbers involved can be exaggerated. Louis Cullen believed that after the initial outflow of 20,000 soldiers who left Ireland in 1691, following the Treaty of Limerick, for service in the French army, only 1,000 to 1,500 recruits per year can have followed them, with recruitment falling off almost entirely in the 1750s. Catholic Irish gentry, forbidden until 1793 from taking commissions in the British army, saw service in the French, Spanish and Austrian armies throughout most of the Eighteenth Century in relatively large numbers. The attempt to re-establish the Wild Geese tradition within the British army, after the fall of the French Monarchy, in Pitt's Irish Brigade was not successful. Partly this was due to the fact that the Irish Brigade in French service was reliant on mercenaries from Germany and the Netherlands for the bulk of its manpower by 1789, though the officer corps remained largely Irish (albeit often second or third generation Irish). The attempt to recruit for the Irish Brigade in Ireland at the same time as recruiting was being carried out for new line regiments and the Irish militia, also guaranteed a poor response. Finally, the decision to post the Irish Brigade to the West Indies and Nova Scotia, with the high mortality rates caused by disease and poor climate in these garrisons, meant that the scheme collapsed.[10]

An Irish Protestant volunteering tradition was incorporated into the British army during the Williamite Wars and forces raised in Enniskillen were formed as the 5th and 6th Dragoons and 27th Regiment of Foot.[11] However, the larger and largely Protestant

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[9]Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp. 73-74; and 319 and Jonathan Oates, 'The Rank and File of the British Army at Culloden' in Andrew Bamford (ed.), *Life in the Red Coat: The British Soldier 1721-1815,* (Warwick: Helion, 2020) pp. 31-53 at p. 35.

[10]Cullen, 'Catholics under the Penal Laws', pp. 28-29; Ciarán McDonnell, 'A "Fair Chance"? The Catholic Irish Brigade in the British Service, 1793-1798', *War in History*, 23, 2 (2016), pp. 150-168; Sam Scott, 'The French Revolution and the Irish regiments in France' in Hugh Gough and David Dickson (eds.), *Ireland and the French Revolution,* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1990), pp. 14-27; and P. J. C. Elliot-Wright, 'The Officers of the Irish Brigade and the British Army 1789-98', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 1997).

[11]E. S. Jackson, *The Inniskilling Dragoons: The records of an old heavy cavalry regiment,* (London: Arthur L. Humphreys, 1909), pp. 1-11; Regimental Historical Records Committee, *The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers: Being the history of the regiment from December*

volunteer force raised in the late 1770s remained independent from the British army. Originally formed as a Home Defence force this quickly became politicised advocating legislative independence of the Irish Parliament from London control. By mid-1782 government ministers and military leaders in Dublin wanted to form six fencible regiments from the Volunteers. These regiments would have been part of the British army but utilised for home service only and, it was hoped, they would attract the most effective officers from the Volunteers, with the lure of a King's commission, creating a depoliticised force. The end of the American War of Independence and reductions in the size of the army put paid to this scheme. Memories of this heavily politicised force shaped views about the place of the citizen-soldier in Irish society and meant that neither the Rifle Volunteer movement, formed in Great Britain in 1859 or the Territorial Force formed in 1908 were extended to Ireland.[12] Similarly, the Yeomanry forces raised in Ireland in 1796 and disbanded in 1834 were never properly incorporated as part of the British army. They were also highly politicised, closely linked to the Orange Order and, indeed, were disbanded out of Whig concerns that they were more likely to exacerbate sectarian riots than quell them.[13] The Ulster Volunteer Force was raised in 1913 in opposition to the Third Home Rule Bill and, at its height was about 100,000 strong. This formed the basis of the 36 (Ulster) Division, formed in September, though it should be noted that a minority of Ulster Volunteers, possibly 32,000, enlisted in the British army during the First World War and UVF recruitment was relatively poor in rural areas.[14]

The place of the Irish soldier in the British Empire remains an under-researched one and there is no equivalent to Edward Spiers's monograph concerning the Scottish

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1688 to July 1914, (London: Constable, 1928), pp. 1-4; and W. T. Willcox, *The Historical Records of the Fifth (Royal Irish) Lancers from their foundation as Wynne's Dragoons (in 1689) to the present day,* (London: Doubleday, 1908), pp. 1-8.

[12]Neal Garnham, *The militia in Eighteenth-Century Ireland: In defence of the Protestant interest,* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), pp. 123-142; Padhraig Higgins, *A Nation of Politicians: Gender, Patriotism, and Political Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century Ireland,* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), pp. 128-177; and P. D. H. Smyth, 'The Volunteer movement in Ulster: background and development, 1745-85', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University Belfast, 1974).

Allan Blackstock, *An Ascendancy Army: The Irish Yeomanry, 1796-1834,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998).

[14]Timothy Bowman, *Carson's Army: The Ulster Volunteer Force, 1910-22,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 163-89; and Timothy Bowman, William Butler and Michael Wheatley, *The Disparity of Sacrifice: Irish recruitment to the British Armed Forces, 1914-1918,* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), pp. 90-107.

soldier in the Empire.[15] This is somewhat surprising as the Leinster Regiment, Royal Munster Fusiliers and Royal Dublin Fusiliers could all claim to be legacy regiments formed from the European Regiments of the East India Company following the mutiny / rebellion of 1857-59 and 'white mutiny' of 1859-61.[16] It should be noted though that Irish soldiers, despite Kipling's best efforts, never quite entered the public consciousness in a way that Scottish Highlanders did; even if many Irishmen served in Scottish regiments. This was possibly as, while Scottish Highland Brigades were deployed in many of the 'small wars' of the Victorian period, Irish soldiers appeared indistinguishable from other types of British soldier. The kilt also proved irresistible to many famous war artists. Certainly, the Irish were not considered a 'martial race' in the way that Scottish Highlanders or Gurkhas were.[17] Newspaper coverage of the role of the Irish soldier in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was more expansive than might be assumed with local and provincial nationalist as well as unionist newspapers giving considerable coverage to the 'small wars' of Empire and reproducing a number of soldiers' letters.[18]

While the Irish proportion of the British army fell throughout the nineteenth century from a high point of 42.2% in 1830 to 13.2% in 1899 this was still an over-representation. It was not until 1911 that the Irish proportion of the British army roughly equated with the Irish proportion of the UK population.[19] This, of course, was

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[15]E. M. Spiers, *The Scottish Soldier and the Empire, 1854-1902,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006). For a brief overview of the Irish experience see, Keith Jeffery, 'The Irish military tradition and the British Empire' in Keith Jeffery (ed.), *'An Irish Empire'? Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

[16]Stephen McCance, *The History of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, Volume 1: from 1652 to 1860,* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1927); A. E. Mainwaring, *Crown and Company: The Records of the Second Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers,* (London: Arthur L. Humphreys, 1911); Peter Stanley, *White Mutiny: British Military Culture in India, 1825-75,* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); F. E. Whitton, *The History of the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians): Part 1 The Old Army,* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1924); H. C. Wylly, *Neill's "Blue Caps",* volumes 1 and 2, (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1923 and 1925).

[17]Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The military, race and masculinity in British imperial culture, 1857-1914,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

[18]Michael de Nie, 'The Irish Press and Imperial Soldiering, 1882-85' in T. G. McMahon, Michael de Nie and Paul Townend (eds.), *Ireland in an Imperial World: Citizenship, Opportunism, and Subversion,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 133-54

[19]H. J. Hanham, 'Religion and Nationality in the Mid-Victorian Army' in M. R. D. Foot (ed.), *War and Society: Historical essays in honour and memory of J R Western 1928-1971,* (London: Paul Elek, 1973), pp. 176-178.

at a time when the Fenian and Home Rule movements were questioning the place of Ireland within the British Empire.[20]

Perhaps surprisingly, there is still considerable interest in the controversial figure of John Nicholson who, as an officer in the East India Company Army was killed in September 1857 leading the attack on Delhi and inspired the cult of Nikal Seyn. In an era when statues have been tottering, if not always falling, it is notable that Lisburn and Castlereagh Council decided that the centenary of the unveiling of Nicholson's statue in Lisburn Market Square was an occasion to allow for the repositioning of the statue, its cleaning and raising on a yet higher plinth. Nicholson's case suggests that the East India Company Army provided officer commissions to those from Irish middle class backgrounds, in contrast to the British Army proper, which still relied on those from Anglo-Irish gentry backgrounds.[21] Important articles by Joel Mokyr and Cormac Ó Gráda on the rank and file of the European Regiments of the East India Company are largely focused on issues of height, health and nutrition but they do also have important points to make about the relatively large numbers of Catholic recruits in the late eighteenth century and the social class of recruits, many, particularly in the early nineteenth century being skilled workers whose skills had been made redundant by advancing industrialisation.[22]

The experience of the Irish soldier in India under the Raj is the focus of some important work, with Alexander Bubb considering, directly, the position of the

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[20]Eva Ó Cathaoir, *Soldiers of liberty: A study of Fenianism 1858-1908,* (Dublin, 2018), pp. 118-38; A. J. Semple, 'The Fenian infiltration of the British army', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 52, 211 (1974), pp. 133-60; and Terence Denman, 'The Red Livery of Shame': The Campaign against Army Recruitment in Ireland, 1899-1914', *Irish Historical Studies*, 29, 114 (1994), pp. 208-33.

[21]Stuart Flinders, *Cult of a Dark Hero: Nicholson of Delhi,* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018); P. K. Nayar, 'Afghanistan, the Indian "Mutiny", and the Bicultural stereotype of John Nicholson' in D. S. Roberts and J. J. Wright (eds.), *Ireland's Imperial Connections, 1775-1947,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 191-212; D. P. McCracken, *Nicholson: How an angry Irishman became the hero of Delhi,* (Stroud: History Press, 2018); Michael Silvestri, *Ireland and India: Nationalism, Empire and Memory,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 76-138; and https://www.lisburnmuseum.com/events/the-nicholson-statue-1922-2022/. Accessed 20 June 2023.

[22]Joel Mokyr and Cormac Ó Gráda, 'The Height of Irishmen and Englishmen in the 1770s: Some Evidence from the East India Company Records', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an dá chultúr*, 4 (1989), pp. 83-92; and 'Height and Health in the United Kingdom 1815-1860: Evidence from the East India Company Army', *Explorations in Economic History*, 33 (1996), pp. 141-168.

colonised coloniser and the regimental cultures witnessed on colonial service. Mario Draper's important recent work on the Connaught Rangers mutiny of 1920 suggests that the mutineers were protesting more about material grievances due to service in India, and poor officer-man relations, than about the political situation in Ireland.[23]

In an effort to develop this existing historiography, fifteen papers were presented at the conference, of which nine are published here. The articles range from the beginning and end of our period. The NAM's Research Curator, Justin Saddington, writes on the journal of Major General Robert Stearne, held at the National Library of Ireland. Stearne served with the Royal Regiment of Ireland from 1678 to 1717, and Saddington reflects on controversies about the diary's authenticity, which also showing its value in illuminating various, perhaps unexpected, aspects of warfare such as subterranean mines. At the end of the section of articles, in his piece on the 1922 disbandment, Timothy Bowman is one of the contributors who reflects on the close connection between the politics of Ireland and service in the British army. He explains how the decision to disband the southern regiments attracted little public concern, not least because those serving with them were offered transfer to other regiments. In contrast, those regiments linked to Northern Ireland attracted significant political support for their continuation.

Questions of who served and why are considered by Nicholas Perry and William Butler. Perry examines the role of the Irish landed class as a source of officers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, considering comparisons which have been made to the Prussian Junker class. He finds that in the nineteenth century, across Irish and Prussian landed estates, most career officers were from families he describes as having 'adequate to comfortable' levels of prosperity. His work is part of a growing pattern for placing what were once thought to be specifically Irish concerns into a more global and comparative framework.[24] The 'Irishness' of the Anglo-Irish officer corps is also worthy of further consideration. The Duke of Wellington's denial of his Irish heritage, 'just because a man is born in a stable, it doesn't make him a horse' is well-known, though apocryphal, while Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson seemed to rejoice in playing the part of the 'stage Irishman' at times. Field Marshal Sir George White, famous for

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[23]Alexander Bubb, 'The Life of the Irish Soldier in India: Representations and Self-Representations, 1857-1922', *Modern Asian Studies*, 46, 4 (2012), pp. 769-813; and Mario Draper, 'Mutiny under the Sun: The Connaught Rangers, India, 1920', *War in History*, 27, 2 (2020), pp. 202-223.

[24]See, for example, Patrick Mannion and Fearghal McGarry (eds), *The Irish Revolution: A Global History,* (New York: New York University Press, 2022); Loughlin Sweeney, *Irish Military Elites, Nation and Empire, 1870-1925,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); and a special issue (45, 168 (2021) of the journal *Irish Historical Studies* on 'Decolonising Irish history?'.

the defence of Ladysmith during the South African War (1899-1902), does not even rate an entry in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, despite having been born in Portstewart, Co. Londonderry and buried in Broughshane, Co. Antrim.[25]

William Butler then points to a tradition which has not been so well articulated in the popular mind - an Irish Catholic Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army - through his examination of the Irish Militia in 1793 to 1908. During this time, Catholic Irish soldiers maintained a strong sense of Irish identity, while also contributing to perceptions in Britain that they made 'good' soldiers but were also 'prone to rebellion'. Tellingly, the decision was made not to call out militiamen for training in Ireland between 1865 and 1870, due to fears of Fenian infiltration, nor in 1879-1882 during the Land War. Nevertheless, Irish militia units performed well in action during the 1798 Rebellion and in the South African War (1899-1902).

James Deery's Research Note and David Murphy's article are located within the first half of the nineteenth century. The expansion of the British Army at the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars saw the creation of many new regiments, with much recruiting for rank. The regiments which were to be the basis of the Royal Irish Rifles (83rd and 86th), Royal Irish Fusiliers (87th and 89th) and Connaught Rangers (88th) were all raised in this period.[26] This was in sharp contrast to the American War of Independence when only one new Irish regiment, the Loyal Irish Emigrants was raised and that in North America; then Irish recruits were largely formed into independent companies which were then drafted into regiments formed in Great Britain. Deery points to Irish service far beyond Irish regiments during the Napoleonic Wars, examining service by Irish officers across all units of the regular army, arguing that such service was critical. Existing work stresses that the 1790s saw the first mass mobilisation of Irish manpower, following the Catholic Relief Act of 1793 and considers how the British army accommodated this large Irish Catholic presence.[27]

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[25]Keith Jeffery, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A political soldier,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); and S. M. Miller, *George White and the Victorian Army in India and Africa: Serving the Empire,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).
[26]D. A. Chart, 'The Irish Levies during the Great French War', *English Historical Review*, 32, 128 (1917), pp. 497-516; Marcus Cunliffe, *The Royal Irish Fusiliers, 1793-1968,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 1-5; H. F. N. Jourdain and Edward Fraser, *History of the Connaught Rangers,* (London: Royal United Services Institution, 1924), vol. I, pp. 1-3; and G. B. Laurie, *The History of the Royal Irish Rifles,* (London: Gale & Polden, 1914), pp. 1-8.
[27]J. E. Cookson, *The British armed nation 1793-1815,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 153-181; and Catriona Kennedy, '"True Britons and Real Irish": Irish Catholics in the British Army during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars' in Catriona Kennedy

David Murphy explores strong Irish involvement in the Crimean War, discussing how public interest in the war encouraged volunteering among civilians as doctors, nurses and engineers. Such connections between Ireland and its soldiers are discussed in different ways in three further pieces in this special issue. Catherine Wynne, writing on the stories told by and about Irish soldiers, shows them to be socially and political mobile, as seen in the label 'London Irish'. Her rich source material ranges from the famous 'Listed for the Connaught Rangers' painting by Lady Elizabeth Butler to the poetry of Francis Ledwidge. Fionnuala Walsh focuses on those left at home – soldiers' wives – during the First World War. Initially lauded for their husbands' service these women were a powerful symbol of anger in response to the Easter Rising, and their fortunes changed over 1917-18 not least during the parliamentary by-elections which saw support for Sinn Féin grow. As a group, they came to be seen as irresponsible in their use of separation allowances, and have been a central part of the 'myth and memory' of the First World war which Niamh Gallagher addresses. She shows how both have been just as important as history in how Irish people have been understood over the past century, for example in debates over recruitment, and on polarities of Unionism and Nationalism. Gallagher also argues for linking analyses of the First World War and the Irish Revolution more closely.

Taken together, the pieces in this special issue point to a thriving field of research on the Irish soldier in the British Army. While the amount of work published on the First World War suggests that there is still a focus on that conflict, researchers are now more often moving beyond it, and they are innovating more in the matters they analyse. Questions considered here on gender, class and Ireland's place in global histories, and connections between soldiers and their home environments, are likely to be central to future work on the subject.

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and Matthew McCormack (eds) *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of arms,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 37-56.