



Recruiting Citizens for Soldiers in Seventeenth-Century English Ballads*

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Abstract

This article revisits the “heroic and glamorous language” of recruitment and retention in seventeenth century England through an exploration of the market, medium and message of many hundreds of “military” ballads that were disseminated from London across the country, especially in times of war. These show that military volunteerism among the lower sorts was less surprising and more sophisticated than historians have previously imagined, which suggests the need to reconsider the question of military professionalism among ordinary rank and file soldiers. Furthermore, the common use of the love song as a vehicle for military messages, reveals how regular soldiering became a new vocation for the “lower sorts” in this transitional period for army development. This new “profession” not only marked a direct break from the older system of “estates” which put fighters at the top and workers at the bottom of society, it was negotiating its place within the social structures of household formation in early modern England.

Keywords

Military recruitment, soldiers, sailors, broadside ballads, popular music, military music, marriage, household, professional armies, volunteers, rank and file, military love songs, women, marching, military camps, drummers, pipers, trumpeters

Introduction

The Loyal Subject[’s] Resolution

In Defence of his King will fight
For to maintain his countries right

* This article is dedicated to my father, John H. McShane, ARCM, Regimental Bandmaster (1930-2004). My thanks to Phil Withington, Bernard Capp, Tim Reinke-Williams, and the anonymous readers of *JEMH* for their helpful comments and suggestions. Place of publication is London unless otherwise cited.

Inviting all his Fellow Peeres
To List themselves for Volunteeres.¹

Little is known about why the rank and file volunteered for military service in seventeenth-century England.² While historians attribute the motivations of “gentlemen volunteers” to “religious fervour, honour, glory, military adventure and experience,” it is generally agreed that “humble folk were more often recruited under compulsion” and that “bread and pay,” if not plunder, were the primary motivations for the ordinary rank-and-file soldiers who did volunteer.³ As John Childs writes, “no-one was interested in recording facts about so humble a being; he was never included in portraits or engravings so we have no clear idea of how he looked in uniform, and his exact identity and background can only be guessed.”⁴ That large numbers of ordinary soldiers and sailors, both pressed and volunteers, consistently deserted or mutinied over lack of sustenance, shelter or pay, or for reasons of personal trauma, is used to substantiate this orthodoxy (although this could equally apply to “gentlemen volunteers” and officers).⁵ Recent work provides a much richer context for examining the experience of the “common” soldier and sailor.⁶ Yet, the possibility that uneducated young

¹ T[homas] J[ordan], *The Loyal Subject[’s] Resolution* (1665). Ballads are dated and cited in accordance with my *Political Broadside Ballads of Seventeenth Century England, a Critical Bibliography* (forthcoming, 2011), hereafter McShane, *PBB*. This corrects, updates, and extends the current information in English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC), catalogues of holding libraries and online sources such as Early English Books Online (EEBO), Bodleian Ballads, and English Broadside Ballad Archive (EBBA).

² Roger B. Manning, *An Apprenticeship in Arms: The Origins of the British Army 1585-1702* (Oxford, 2006), 416, 66.

³ Manning, *Apprenticeship*, 62, 416, 7. See also John Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe 1648-1789* (Manchester, 1982), 45, 61-2; Barbara Donagan, *War in England, 1642-1649* (Oxford, 2008), 317; John A. Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV 1667-1714* (New York, 1999), 49, 51; Idem, *Women, Armies and Warfare in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2008), 37. Cf. David J. B. Trim, “Huguenot Soldiering c.1560-1685: The Origins of a Tradition,” in *War, religion and service: Huguenot soldiering, 1685-1713*, eds. Matthew Glozier and David Onnekink (Aldershot, 2007), who points out that Huguenot volunteers often served in the ranks, but were usually from elite families.

⁴ John Childs, *The Army of Charles II* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1976), 25.

⁵ Manning, *Apprenticeship*, 60; Donagan, *War*, 268-78.

⁶ Donagan, *War*, especially ch. 13; David J. B. Trim, “Fighting Jacob’s Wars: the Employment of English and Welsh mercenaries in the European Wars of Religion in France and the Netherlands 1562-1610,” (Ph.D. diss., Kings College London, 2003). See also Charles H. Carlton, *Going to the Wars: Experience of the British Civil Wars, 1638-1651* (New York,

men may have volunteered for armed service for reasons beyond basic need or desperation remain unexplored.⁷ Historiographically, the position of the ordinary rank and file soldier has not progressed much further than the 1644 report which listed ordinary military casualties (other than those of officers and colors) after the horses.⁸

Although the seventeenth century is seen as a period of transition between a medieval “aggregate contract arm” and the modern “state commissioned army” little changed in terms of how volunteers were persuaded to enlist.⁹ Childs characterizes the typical personnel of the recruiting party as a captain, sergeant, corporal, drummer, and two privates. Displaying a flag and making speeches “couched in properly heroic and glamorous language,” they called men to the drum-head, and offered them a “bounty,” which varied according to the reluctance of recruits: 5s in 1660; £1 in 1672; £2 in 1703. By 1708 the offer was £4 per man for just three years’ service.¹⁰ Music, drink and tale-telling also played a significant role. As one officer pointed out, only some personalities were suited to the recruiting party: “This vexing trade of recruiting depresses my mind . . . I cannot ramble, and rore, and drink, and tell stories, and wheedle and insinuate, if my life were lying at the stake.”¹¹ For some, it was not the garrulous rhetoric of the recruiting party that persuaded, but the music that they made. The sound of the beating drum was frequently augmented by other instruments: a bagpipe, a fife (or flute), an “hautbois” (oboe), or even a trumpet. As Francis Markham commented: “neither, for mine own part have I heard more sweet and solemn music than that which the drum and flute hath afforded,” while Samuel Butler described the effect:

1992); B. S. Capp, *Cromwell's Navy: the Fleet and the English Revolution, 1648-1660* (Oxford, 1989); Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: the Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago, 2006), especially ch. 6.

⁷ Donagan, *War*, 291, 278-80, drew upon “elite” sources for her discussions of military education; idem, “Halcyon days and the literature of war: England’s military education before 1642,” *Past & Present [P&P]* 147 (1995) 65-100.

⁸ Sergeant-Major Beere, *An Exact Relation of the Defeat Given to a Party of the Enemies Horse Neer Cambden* (1644), 1, 3.

⁹ See John A. Lynn, “The Evolution of Army Style in the Modern West, 800-2000,” *International History Review* 18.3 (1996): 505-45; on European recruitment systems see Sir James Turner, *Pallas Armata, Military Essayes of the Ancient Grecian, Roman, and Modern Art of War . . .* (1683), 163-7.

¹⁰ Childs, *Army of Charles II*, 23; Godfrey Davies, “Recruiting in the Reign of Queen Anne,” *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research [JSAHR]* 28 (1950): 153, 159.

¹¹ Quoted in Davies, “Recruiting,” 155.

... of Trumpet and of Drum,
 That makes the Warriour's stomach come,
 Whose noise whets Valour sharp, like beer
 By thunder turn'd to vinegar,
 (For if a Trumpet sound, or Drum beat,
 Who has not a month's mind to combat?)¹²

This article revisits the “heroic and glamorous language” of seventeenth-century recruitment and retention through an exploration of the market, medium, and message of many hundreds of “military” ballads that were disseminated from London across the country, especially in times of war. About two to three hundred “military” titles, published between 1639 and 1695, are now extant (a single edition of each title produced at least five hundred sheets) but many more are lost.¹³ The vast majority of survivals date from 1660 onwards; very few remain before 1639.¹⁴ These songs urged young men to replace family, civic, or communal ties with an untrammelled loyalty to crown, nation, or cause, transforming them from ordinary subjects to citizen-soldiers.

The broadside ballad was an ideal vehicle for such appeals. The cheapest and most popular literary genre of the early modern period, they were printed on one side of a single sheet costing one penny or less. The most accessible were printed in “black-letter” or gothic type (Fig. 1) and illustrated with woodcuts. Even the poor and illiterate could enjoy them since they were often displayed in public spaces, alehouses, taverns, and homes, and, when sung, could be heard by paying and non-paying bystanders alike.¹⁵ Simply written in lively rhyme, they appealed to the values, interests and attitudes of the young, but also disseminated and inculcated a military identity and ethos, predicated upon classical texts and models, among the “rank-and-file” and across society at large. By fully exploiting these popular literary products, military volunteerism among the lower sorts appears less surprising and more sophisticated than historians have

¹² Francis Markham, *Five Decades of Epistles of Warre* (1622), 59; Samuel Butler, *Hudibras, the First Part* (1664), 39.

¹³ The Stationers Company Registers contain many “military” titles no longer extant. After 1695, printers were permitted to operate anywhere in the country, making critical assessment and location of ballads much more difficult.

¹⁴ E.g. *Saint Georges Commendation to All Souldiers* (c.1612); *Gallants, to Bohemia* (c.1620s).

¹⁵ See Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* (Cambridge, 1996), especially ch. 5.

previously imagined. They also suggest that current debates about the military professionalism of the officer corps need also to consider “vocational, occupational identities and structures” among ordinary rank and file soldiers.¹⁶

I

Our knowledge of rank and file recruitment is inevitably restricted by the nature and limitations of the surviving sources. While military treatises remain largely silent on the matter, official documentation for impressments is much richer than that for volunteering, obliging historians to concentrate on the negative aspects of the process. Such an emphasis is compelling in view of a desperation that could drive one man to cut his own throat or another to cut off his own toe to avoid service.¹⁷ Men seized by recruiting parties were herded together and imprisoned before being marched off for minimal basic training and almost certain injury or death—some who tried to escape were killed in the attempt.¹⁸ In the civil war, the time-lapse between recruitment and action could be just three days.¹⁹ As Stephen Stearn comments, “it is a wonder that men selected and packed off to war in this way . . . should ever have stood their ground at first musket fire.”²⁰

Contemporary complaints about the inadequacy of conscripts resound in records that were geared towards noting the failures in the system. The distaste that parish officials, magistrates, and officers felt towards the “vulgar sorts” with whom they were forced to deal in matters military

¹⁶ David J.B. Trim, ed., *The Chivalric Ethos and the Development of Military Professionalism*, History of Warfare, 11 (Leiden, 2003), “Introduction,” especially 6-10; see also Roger B. Manning, *Swordsmen: the Martial Ethos in the Three Kingdoms* (Oxford, 2003) and idem, *Apprenticeship*, especially ch. 17.

¹⁷ *Journals of the House of Commons* (1803 reprint) 1692-93, Vol. 11.108; Manning, *Apprenticeship*, 418; Victor L. Slater, “The Lord Lieutenancy on the Eve of the Civil Wars: The Impressment of George Plowright,” *Historical Journal* 29.2 (1986), 291.

¹⁸ Manning, *Apprenticeship*, 189, 417; “Proceedings of the Old Bailey Online,” t16880831-5: death of John Snape.

¹⁹ Donagan, *War*, 263.

²⁰ Stephen J. Stearns, “Conscription and English Society in the 1620s,” *Journal of British Studies* 11.2 (1972), 23.

The Loyal Subject Resolution,

*Who in Defence of his King will Fight
For to Maintain his Countries Right ;
Inviting all his fellow peeres
To List themselves for Volunteeres.*

To the Tune of, *Turn Love.*



BRave English boys come follow me,
And I will lead the Van,
My heart is bent courageously
To venture stoutly on:
I hate the thoughts of Cowardize,
Or such a dierly thing,
He to the Wars go Volunteer
In service for the King.

The Netherlanders make their boast
In a very sumptuous manner,
To ride upon our English Coast
And rob us of our Honour:
But of stout hearted London Lads,
As brave as bull hounds,
He to the Wars &c.

A gallant fleet is setting out,
To save our Kingdoms of War,
Accompanied with Soldiers stout,
Bold hearts and bold of fear,
Prepared and accented
In habit for the Sea:
He to the Wars go Volunteer
And serve his Majesty.

The Duke of York ride Admiral,
His Highness we're attend
With his noble heart: d General
Will prove our Countries friend;
But when we come upon the Seas
When worthy we will sing,
And boldly venture in the Wars
And service for the King.

Fig. 1. "The Loyal Subject [sic] Resolution, Who in Defence of his King will Fight For to Maintain his Countries Right; Inviting all his fellow peeres To List themselves for Volunteeres," by "T. J." (Thomas Jordan), to the tune of "Turn Love." (Richard Burton, T. Mabb,



T heir States are grown so quarrelsome,
 They now reclaim their Prince,
 But their unadvised Governments
 All Nations will Convince,
 From those confused multitudes
 Of Sects, doth Rebels Spring,
 Which in our land did mischief plot,
 Against our gracious King.

When Rebellion there was hatcht
 Against their Masters Throne
 An Army was forthwith dispatcht
 To make the Town their own:
 But we'll subdue the Trojans true
 If they our Force will try,
 And boldly Fight for Englands Right
 To serve his Majesty.

When Cromwells Rose they d'd oppose,
 The English perced their life:
 But when the Surpers fall at odds
 The Devil mu't end the strife:
 But now we have encouragement
 To shew our Loyalty:
 Wee'll to the Wars go Volunteres
 And serve his Majesty.

What though we be but Gentles,
 We have our Masters grant,
 Then shall the terror of the Seas
 Our Courage never want:

As Fortune favours many a man
 We may advanced be
 When in the Wars like Volunteres
 We serve his Majesty.

They all comp'ain that Guins gone
 And their men Reute there:
 They Cattles taken and undone,
 Which makes them d'n and swate,
 But the truth is, they would have taken
 Our Forts by Treachery,
 Wherefore let us go Volunteres
 And serve his Majesty.

The dangers of that Countrey,
 With English Forces soyns,
 And march's against their Enemies
 To purchase Gold in Mines,
 To take and ransack Garrisons,
 Rich Plunder would there be:
 He to the Wars go Voluntere
 And serve his Majesty.

Wm. Lawton does upon us call,
 And doth for War prepare
 Against the Hollanders Forces all
 That plate and dominere,
 Heele give the On-set, One to Throe,
 And make their Ears to Ring,
 He to the Wars go Voluntere
 And Venture for the King.

With Allowance.

London, Printed by T. Mabb, for Richard Burton at the Horseshoe in Smithfield.

permeates the documentary record.²¹ Even when soldiers were outstandingly valiant and brave, their behavior was regarded incredulously by their leaders.²² This image is sharply contradicted by other reports of English hardiness in war: English and Scottish armies were renowned for courage and resilience in Europe, and were invariably placed in the vanguard of any attack. Nor does the institutionalized view of reluctance to fight explain the increasingly large armies that were recruited, retained, and deployed over the century.²³

Finding the voices of common soldiers is problematic and the sources never unmediated. Depositional material reveals recruits claiming they have been wrongly pressed, or old and injured servicemen, or their dependants, describing their brave service to the state in making a case for a pension.²⁴ Few autobiographies exist before the eighteenth century.²⁵ Most literary sources were written and consumed by those who had little or nothing to do with the lowest ranks of military life. In contrast, military broadside ballads were written for and about ordinary soldiers and sailors and were certainly enjoyed and sung by them. They played a direct role in recruitment, retention, and morale-building and offer some access to the inspirations and aspirations of ordinary military men (and women). They are not without interpretative difficulties, of course. They are never recorded as playing any part in the recruiting process although, in 1706, former recruiting sergeant George Farquhar, produced a cynical and song-filled

²¹ See Stearns, "Conscription," 7-9, 14-16; Ian Roy, "Royalist Reputations the Cavalier Ideal and the Reality," in *Royalists and Royalism during the English Civil Wars*, eds. Jason Mc Elligott and David L. Smith (Cambridge, 2007), 103; Donagan, *War*, ch. 13, especially 218; Manning, *Apprenticeship*, 7-8.

²² See Donagan, *War*, 258.

²³ Donagan, *War*, 251, 279; Manning, *Apprenticeship*, 42-3, 55, 92 and 65-6 for his calculations of numbers of volunteers. See also Joyce L. Malcolm, "A king in search of soldiers: Charles I in 1642," *Historical Journal* 21 (1978): 251-73 and Malcolm Wanklyn and P. Young, "A king in search of soldiers: Charles I in 1642: A rejoinder," *Historical Journal* 24 (1981): 147-54.

²⁴ See David J. Appleby, "Unnecessary persons? Maimed Soldiers and War Widows in Essex 1642-1662," *Essex Archaeology and History* 32 (2001): 209-21; Mark Stoye, "Memories of the Maimed: the Testimony of Charles I's Former Soldiers, 1660-1730," *History* 88 (2003): 204-26.

²⁵ See James Batson's memoir, cited in Manning, *Apprenticeship*, 45 and Pádraig Lenchan and Geraldine Sheridan, "A Swiss Soldier in Ireland, 1689-90," *Irish Studies Review* 3.4 (2005): 483-90; Daniel J. Ennis, *Enter the Press Gang. Naval Impressments in Eighteenth Century British Literature* (Newark and Delaware, 2002); Fumerton, *Unsettled*, 70.

theatrical account.²⁶ They were an intrinsically commercial product by the seventeenth century, but the sheets that survive do so mainly thanks to collections made by politically active, educated and wealthy contemporaries—a provenance that may well skew our impressions of which ballad genres were popular.²⁷

Were military ballads simply commissioned for use by recruiting parties: written either by hack writers or recruiting officers themselves, sent directly to the printers and distributed for free? Printed materials were certainly commissioned for use in local contexts at times of recruitment. Local governmental officials were asked to disseminate so-called “encouragements” or “bills,” though exactly what form they took remains shadowy.²⁸ Wordy and densely printed royal proclamations were hardly calculated to raise enthusiasm. During the civil wars, regimental lists were published, sometimes illustrated with woodcut portraits of the main leaders.²⁹ Newspaper advertisements only appear from 1703 and recruiting posters from the 1760s, reflecting the logistical activities of an increasingly professionalized and centralized military establishment.³⁰ Some ballads may have been commissioned by military officers, though not, as far as we can tell, as part of any official strategy.³¹ In 1689, *A New Song, As it is Sung Upon the Walls of London-Derry* was “made by an Honest Protestant

²⁶ *The Recruiting Officer* (1706), especially 18-19; see also Thomas Jordan, *London's Resurrection* (1671), 10-11.

²⁷ See McShane, *PBB*, “Introduction.”

²⁸ Letter from Edmund Assheton to Major John Byrom, Lancashire RO: Kenyon of Peel papers DDKE/acc.7840, 21 May 1667, refers to the posting of “bills.”

²⁹ E.g. *A List of the Colonels [and] Severall Counties Out of Which They Are to Raise Their Men* (1640).

³⁰ Davies, “Recruiting,” 146. “H. N. E.” reprinted recruiting materials in the early issues of *JSAHR* I, (1922) In 1800, an advertisement offered posters and “loyal papers” for sale at “2d [each], or 12s the 100, or 1/6d per dozen” and concluded: “Noblemen, Magistrates and Gentlemen would do well, by ordering a few dozen of the above tracts... and cause them to be set up in their respective villages... that the inhabitants may be convinced of the cruelty of the common usurper” [i.e. Napoleon].

³¹ For “black” and “white-letter” markets for political ballads and “commissioned” and “retail” broadsides, see McShane, “Typography Matters: The Branding of Ballads and the Gelding of Curates in Stuart England,” in *Book Trade Connections from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, eds. John Hinks and Catherine Armstrong (New Castle, Delaware, 2008), 19-44; and idem, “Ballads and Broadsides from the Beginnings of Print to 1660” in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture, vol. 1: Britain and Ireland to 1660*, ed. Joad Raymond (Oxford, 2011).

1347 A New SONG, As it is Sung upon the WALLS of
LONDON-DERRY,
 By the Courageous *English* Souldiers, who Day and Night are
 Defending our Lives and Liberties.
 Made by an *Honest* Protestant Commander, and is now Printed for the Encouragement of our Protestants
 here, and especially **SOLDIERS!**
 To an Excellent New Tune, called, *The New Scotch March.*
 Licensed according to Order.

I.
 Let each Man here Courageously stand
 With Musket Charg'd, and Sword in his hand
 There is an Expres: that brings good News,
 The minds of *French-men* to amuse:
 Now let us Fight, brave Boys, and Dye,
 To save our King and Progeny;
We will fight all, bleed all, dye all,
ere we will lose our Liberty.

II.
 Let no Man fear, we will never part,
 But Courage each brave Loyal heart;
 Here will we stand, and be ready Arm'd,
 When chearful Trumpets us Alarm.
 They who brave *Englishmens* Courage would know
 Shall find it feverely when we go;
For we'll fight all, bleed all, dye all,
ere we will lose our Liberty.

III.
 We'll Fight and fear God, and Honour the King,
 And obey his Will in every thing:
 There's nothing so hard but we will observe,
 From *English* Laws we'll never swerve:
 Though scalding Lead was pour'd on our heads,
 And Bullets like hail-stones on us should play,
Yet we'd fight all, bleed all, dye all,
ere Bloody Papiſts should get the day.

IV.
 Though *Papiſts* Rejoyce, and fain wou'd see
 The Fall of *England's* Liberty,
 Yet we that have God and the King of our side,
 The cause of all this will decide:
 For we will Fight, and Bleed, and Dye,
 To shew our Truth and Loyalty:
We will fight all, bleed all, dye all,
ere we will lose our Liberty.

V.
 But Hark! our Men comes Shouting again,
 For killing the *Irish* and their Train:
 Their Guns do Fire, and Trumpets Sound,
 And Drums do beat that shake the Ground:
 Huzza, brave Boys, we come, said they,
 And since we have had this Happy Day,
We will fight all, bleed all, dye all,
ere Bloody Papiſts shall get the day.

VI.
 We've beat back our Foes and gotten Ground,
 We make them quake when ere we Sound;
 So great is the Justice of our Cause,
 O're those that Rebel against our Laws:
 They may think that Rebellion is sweet,
 And may a while maintain the Field,
But we will fight all, bleed all, dye all,
till we do make the Rebels yield.

VII.
 In *England* they have done the same,
 The *Papiſts* there are come to shame;
 And here with us they look'd like Lambs;
 With their Cheats and Popish Shamms:
 But now they think by force of Arms,
 To fright us with their loud Allarms;
But we'll fight all, bleed all, dye all,
*till we free *England* from all their Harms.*

VIII.
 Come let our brave General lead the way,
 We'll follow him by Night and Day;
 Until we have our Countries Release,
 We will never sleep in Peace:
 We'll Fight our selves, and ne'r expect
 To be Reliev'd by Strangers help;
But let's fight all, bleed all, dye all,
away, make haste, the Trumpets call.

FINIS.
 Printed and Sold by *J. Millet*, next door to the *Flower-de-Luce*,
 in *Little-Brittain.* 1689.

Fig. 2. "A New SONG, As it is Sung upon the WALLS of LONDON-DERRY, By the Courageous English Souldiers [sic], who Day and Night are Defending our Lives and Liberties. Made by an Honest Protestant Commander, and is now Printed for the Encouragement of our Protestants here, and especially SOLDIERS," author unknown, to the tune of "The New Scotch March." (J. Millet, c. July/August, 1689 [content]). By permission of The Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge.

Commander, and... printed for the Encouragement of our Protestants here... especially SOLDIERS [sic]" (Fig. 2). Yet, "black-letter" ballads show few signs of being "officially" commissioned. Though frequently demonstrating political bias, this differed between ballads.³² Balladeers invariably used public pronouncements for inspiration, and appropriated their formal language in preambles, as in: *Englands Valour and Hollands Terrour: being an encouragement... to serve his majesty in his wars against the Dutch* (1665). Furthermore, ballads dealt with many aspects of military life other than recruiting, indicating a flourishing interest in the subject which publishers were happy to supply.

Many ballads purported to report the speech of a soldier, sailor, or volunteer directly, or claimed authority from similarly authentic voices. Some asserted a generic authorial name—invariably "Tom."³³ Anonymous military "authorities" were also cited as authors, such as: "J. P.," who "serv'd at Worcester fight [and] for his Loyalty was put to flight" (1660); "an English gentleman volunteer, that was at the garrison during the siege" (1683); "a Private Centinel, who was an eye witness" (1690), or "a Souldier in the Camp" (1685).³⁴ Tradesmen too were named either as authors or reported voices in military ballads, for example, the fictional "Tom the Cobler" and real cobbler, Richard Rigby.³⁵ Ballad publishers were open to work by writers from any background, as Adam Fox has shown, but it had to be saleable to a socially broad customer base, so they were reworked by more experienced writers.³⁶ *The Seaman's Compass*, said in the preamble to be "composed and pend... by a Maid that to Gravesend did pass," was "signed" in the colophon with the initials of the well-known balladeer, Laurence Price.³⁷ Several known ballad-hacks wrote songs aimed at boosting recruitment drives during the British conflicts of the century. In 1640, Martin Parker encouraged enlistment as Charles I prepared to march once more against

³² Cf. McShane, *PBB*, Nos: 8-17, 19, 24, 28, 30: especially 11, 12, 14.

³³ E.g. *Toms Returne from Scotland &c* (registered, 1639); *Gallant Newes from the Seas... by a Sea-man... Tom Smith* (1649); *West-Country Tom Tormented* (1688).

³⁴ J. P., *Loyal Subjects Hearty Wishes* (1660); *The Bloody Siege of Vienna*. (1683); *A Brief Touch of the Irish Wars* (1690); *Real Reality* (1685).

³⁵ *Old England's New Save=all... Honest Tom the Cobler's Resolution* (1692). For Richard Rigby, see below.

³⁶ Adam Fox, "Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England," *P&P* 145 (1994): 47-83; and McShane, "Typography," on "branding" ballads.

³⁷ McShane, *PBB*, No: 246; see also No: 411.

the “circumventing Machiavillians, and faythles” Scots.³⁸ Robert White persuaded London apprentices to join the Earl of Essex and fight the cavaliers in 1643.³⁹ And, in 1689, Richard Rigby urged his fellow tradesmen to battle popery (and James II) with the “Protestant Prince” William of Orange.⁴⁰ These “hacks” were all personally inspired by political as much as economic interests.⁴¹ Parker was brought before Archbishop Laud for his “loyal” recruiting ballads.⁴² Robert White published numerous pro-parliamentarian tracts.⁴³ Rigby, a Protestant, Irish, immigrant, shoemaker/cobbler, with a sideline in trade-related ballad writing, wrote pro-Protestant, pro-William and, most importantly, pro-shoemaker ballads.⁴⁴ Though the voices of soldiers and sailors may often have been ventriloquized by more experienced writers, ballads did more than merely reiterate standard literary stereotypes for a civilian audience.⁴⁵ Ballad writers were tradesmen, who undoubtedly came into contact with many serving in the forces, and drew upon authentic military experiences for their feisty drinking songs, stirring tales of battle, and touching or tragic airs of love and loss. The publication of “complaint” ballads, expressing the specific frustrations of disbanded and serving soldiers and sailors, suggest that military men found the ballad a sympathetic form, through which they could publicize their concerns.⁴⁶

³⁸ M[artin] P[arker], *A True Subjects Wish* (1640); M[artin] P[arker], *Newes from Newcastle* (1640).

³⁹ Robert White, *The Prentices Resolution* (1643).

⁴⁰ McShane, “*Ne Sutor Ultra Crepidam*: Political Cobblers and Broadside Ballads in Late Seventeenth-century England,” in *Ballads and Broadsides, 1500-1800*, eds. Patricia Fumerton and Anita Guerrini (Aldershot, 2010).

⁴¹ See Brean S. Hammond, *Professional Imaginative Writing in England, 1670-1740: Hackney for Bread* (Oxford, 1997).

⁴² Hyder E. Rollins, “Martin Parker, Ballad-Monger,” *Modern Philology* 14.9 (1919); McShane, “Martin Parker,” in *Encyclopedia of English Renaissance Literature*, eds. Garrett Sullivan and Alan Stewart (Oxford, 2011).

⁴³ E.g., *A Moderate Intelligence, Impartially Communicating Martial Affairs...* (1649) and *Britaines Remembrancer...* (1644).

⁴⁴ See McShane, “*Ne Sutor Ultra Crepidam*.”

⁴⁵ Cf. Lewis Winstock, *Songs and Music of the Redcoats: A History of the War music of the British Army 1642-1902* (1970), i-vii, who rejected ballads “about wars, battles, commanders etc” because they are “masquerading as songs of war... [which] guarantees only that a song was a favourite with civilians at home,” [my italics].

⁴⁶ E.g. *The Sea-Martyrs; Or, The Seamen’s Sad Lamentation for their Faithful Service, Bad Pay, and Cruel Usage* (1691); see also McShane, *PBB*, Nos: 371, 381, 385-6.

II

Military music and the ballad form had a natural affinity. Whenever the state went to war, ballads increased in number and soldiers, sailors, warlike kings, and generals became mainstays of ballad fare. In words and images, and to the strains of military tunes, hundreds of songs alternately celebrated and deplored the glory and tragedy of war, alongside the drinking, gambling, womanizing, and raffish dress that were integral to military culture. In this way, martial mores resounded across early modern England.

The drum and trumpet were of crucial importance in both military and civil contexts.⁴⁷ “Drums” (the term referred to player and instrument) were indispensable as tools of communication and discipline, despite their relatively high costs, especially as the decoration of instruments and uniforms grew more elaborate.⁴⁸ Military treatises exhorted all soldiers to learn the different rhythms of marches and instructions, while complicated schemes explaining military drill were published in pamphlet and broadside forms.⁴⁹ At least two drums were needed for every hundred men in a company, one to sound the orders, and another to attend the colors.⁵⁰ Drum-majors were appointed to oversee the maintenance of the drummers’ skills and equipment.⁵¹ “Drums” acted as heralds in communications between opposing forces and consequently it was considered desirable that they should have facility with other languages, be of good character and, ideally, that both instrument and man should look good.⁵² The desire to present a

⁴⁷ See Henry George Farmer, *The Rise and Development of Military Music* (1912) and his series of *JSAHR* articles, printed between 1947 and 1964, reissued by G. Derbridge as “A History of the the Drums and Fifes 1650-1700,” *JSAHR* (1966); C. A. Malcolm, *The Piper in Peace and War* (1927); Major T. J. Edwards, “The Evolution of Regimental Bands I. Enlisting the Instrument,” *Chambers Journal* XIV (1945); Winstock, *Songs and Music*; G. R. Lawn, *Music in State Clothing: the Story of the Kettledrummers, Trumpeters and Band of the Life Guards* (1995); Peter Downey, “On Sounding the Trumpet and Beating the Drum in 17th-century England,” in *Early Music* 24.2 (1996), 263-77.

⁴⁸ See Edmund Fraser “Cavalry Drum Banners,” *JSAHR* 1.6 (1922) 236; G. Derbridge, “The Dress of the Drummers of the Three Regiments of Footguards. Charles II (1650-1685),” *JSAHR* 42(1964): 208-12; “Notes on John Scot’s, ‘The Remembrance,’” *JSAHR* 1.1(1922): 94 and *JSAHR* 25(1947): 80; Winstock, *Songs and Music*, 41-3.

⁴⁹ For example: *The Compleat Soldier*... (1681); *The Grounds of Military Discipline* (1642).

⁵⁰ Turner, *Pallas Armata*, 16-19, 22.

⁵¹ Henry Hexham, *The First Part of the Principles of the Art Military* (1642), Sigs. A1r-v.; Derbridge, “Dress of the Drummers,” 211.

⁵² *Military Art of Training* (1623), 35; Hexham, *ibid.*; Markham, *Five Decades*, 59-60. See also Edwards, “Evolution,” 534.

good-looking drum, combined with the possibilities of promotion in the post, helps to illuminate the ballad tale of a renowned drummer, who was tragically prevented from becoming a drum-major by an untimely pregnancy—her own.⁵³

Like drums, trumpets were essential for signaling, heralding, and royal and civic ceremonial. Traditionally reserved for the cavalry, and routinely used at sea, they were heard by all ranks in battle. The warlike sounds of both these instruments, along with other noises of war—the cannon's roar and rattle, bullets (and occasionally groans)—were always present in ballad verses, but while woodcuts often depicted military drums and flutes, the trumpet only appeared in connection with royal ceremonial. Balladeers rarely mentioned the cavalry, who needed little encouragement to recruit, while romantic mounted figures in woodcuts represented individual commanders or Kings, not troopers.⁵⁴

Drums and trumpets are easily found in army lists and accounts; the employment of other instruments depended upon the personal preferences of officers.⁵⁵ While Markham described them as “instruments of pleasure, not of necessitie,” another treatise recommended the deployment of “2 drums and one phife to excite chearfulness and alacrity in the souldier,” and in 1641 the Earl of Lothian told his father, “we are well provided with pypers. I have one for every company in my regiment, and I think they are as good as drummers.”⁵⁶ In 1761, a Colonel commended the fife as the best instrument for speeding up a marching army.⁵⁷ Fifes slowly replaced the bagpipe over the course of the century.⁵⁸ Increasingly disparaged as a “low” instrument in leading English circles, in Scotland, the bagpipe was thought to be an essential fillip for the Highland fighters.⁵⁹ One writer

⁵³ L[Laurence] P[rice], *The Famous Woman-Drummer* (1657).

⁵⁴ Cf. *The Reading Skirmish* (1688). A 1764 poster for Dragoons stated: “no tramps or vagabonds, seafaring men, Militia men . . . nor apprentices, nor . . . any man be entertained that is not known something of,” *JSHR* 1.4 (1922): 132. “Proceedings of the Old Bailey” reveal “lower sorts,” ex-cavalrymen fallen on hard times, suggesting that men of any class could join up if they could provide themselves with a horse and uniform.

⁵⁵ Farmer, *Rise of Military Music*, 27-9, 53; idem, “The Scots March,” *JSAHR* 5 (1947): 80: “many . . . historic marches [were] dropped to make room for some quite ephemeral tunes that had tickled the Colonel's fancy.” See also, C. A. Malcolm, *The Piper in Peace and War* (1927), 19, 26.

⁵⁶ Markham, *Five Decades*, 57; *Military Art of Training* (1623), 34-5; Malcolm, *Piper*, 14.

⁵⁷ Campbell Dalrymple, *A Military Essay* (1761), 53.

⁵⁸ Farmer, *Rise of Military Music*, 27-9.

⁵⁹ Malcolm, *Piper*, 26-7, 31-2.

recalled, “in our late unhappy Wars, both in Ireland and Scotland, how much the Northern Pipe was used...much surpassing the Flute for its shrillness, in pacing out the Measures of War with delight to the soldiers;... [as] some judicious Commanders affirm... the Pipes did much transport the Valour of the Soldiers.”⁶⁰ Oliver Cromwell banned its use in Ireland, seeing it as an instrument of Catholic resistance: a policy that was repeated in Scotland after the Jacobite '45, when a Judge described it as a “weapon of war.”⁶¹

Cromwell's ban did not (as has been suggested) leave roundhead armies devoid of music.⁶² The “New Model” used drums, trumpets, fifes, and probably bagpipes, while ballads set to military tunes increased in number during the 1640s and 50s.⁶³ Verse sheets encouraged soldiers to sing hymns in battle—which they did, to great effect—but secular printed ballads were also sung.⁶⁴ The use of “vulgar” pipes and the playing of common jigs by parliamentary armies, was satirized by cavalier writers, while “round-head” balladeers attacked the cavalier leaders Princes Rupert and Maurice in 1645, with a song set to the tune “Nobody shall plunder but I.”⁶⁵ Furthermore, old soldiers were heard singing rebel songs to the tune of the “Essex March” in 1664.⁶⁶ After the Restoration, French kettle-drums and hautbois (oboes) were adopted for cavalry, Grenadiers and Guards regiments.⁶⁷ In 1685, *The New Royal March* described the impact of these instruments, in James II's increasingly militarized London:

Sound the Hoboys [oboes]...
 Sweetly let their notes agree
 To charm and tell aloud their harmony
 Hoboys and the Martial Drum
 Every day about Whitehall
 do sweetly ring...
 [proclaiming] in Warlike musick
 Great James his fame.

⁶⁰ *The Compleat Soldier*, 42.

⁶¹ Malcolm, *Piper*, 26-7, 31-2, 208.

⁶² Donagan, *War*, 115.

⁶³ Winstock, *Songs and Music*, 10-16; Malcolm, *Piper*, 27, 54.

⁶⁴ Winstock, *ibid.*; Donagan, *War*, 118, 121. Parliamentary songs included William Sta[r]ucke, *A Spirituall Song of Comfort Or Incouragement To The Souldiers...*(1644). See also McShane, *PBB*, Nos: 103, 108, 111, 116, 121, 123, 130, 132-3, 146.

⁶⁵ McShane, *PBB*, No: 130.

⁶⁶ Somerset Records Office, Q. S. R. (1664): 105/35.

⁶⁷ Lawn, *Music*, 1-6.

With no school of military music, companies relied on civilian musicians to enlist—a 1708 advertisement called for a “person that plays on the bag-pipes willing to engage on board a British man of war.”⁶⁸ In theory, musicians were “rather [men] of peace then of the sword” but could nevertheless be unwilling to serve long-term or for the pay of an ordinary soldier.⁶⁹ Numerous misunderstandings took place where musicians, including fiddlers and pipers, were engaged for recruitment purposes, only to find that they were regarded as having been themselves enlisted, which they energetically disputed in the courts.⁷⁰ Regardless of the extra skills required, musicians were paid no more than ordinary private soldiers. In 1684, for example the Grenadiers listed pay for “Private men, Hautbois and Drums” at 2s 6d.⁷¹ Captains who believed in the beneficial effects of music, may have paid out more for musicians than these records suggest. Farmer claimed that their true cost was systematically hidden through the use of “non-effectives” (fictitious names in company lists).⁷² In desperate straits, unskilled men could simply be handed a drum and told to play, in order to maintain discipline on the field.

The appearance in town and village streets of young, good looking, uniformed musicians, capable of playing hundreds of stirring songs, many of their own composition or adaptation, must have had an exhilarating effect on young men and women in early modern communities. Professionally performed music was expensive and rare—good musicians could draw disturbingly large crowds—while the addition of many new tunes to the traditional repertoire must have been very exciting. The stated intention of military music was that the army would be “esteemed, honoured and commended of the lookers on, who shall take wonderful delight to behold them.”⁷³ In May 1660, one young maid-servant was so desperate to watch a military parade at Richmond in Yorkshire that she took her mistress’s

⁶⁸ Farmer, *Rise and Development*, 52; Malcolm, *Piper*, 237.

⁶⁹ Markham, *Five Decades*, 59. In 1544, musicians refuse more than a month’s service and demand “four men’s wages;” trumpeters were given broken swords as sign of peace, but Kettledrummers were exhorted to perish in a fight rather than allow drums to be taken, see Farmer, *Rise and Development*, 27-9, 40, and 43, respectively.

⁷⁰ Farmer, *Rise and Development*, 36-7; Malcolm, *Piper*, 28, 74; “Notes,” *JSAHR* 3.14 (1924): 205.

⁷¹ See “Notes,” *JSAHR* 1.1 (1922): 25. *CSPD* reveals many similar examples of pay rates.

⁷² Farmer, *Rise and Development*, 47.

⁷³ William Garrard, *The Art of Warre* (1591), cited in Farmer, “Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Military Marches,” *JSAHR* 28 (1950): 49.

young daughter along (her young charge was so frightened she fell into fits).⁷⁴ A century later, the effects of military music were also marked by one soldier, who commented “there were ladies who stopt, and stood still as I past, but I soon found it was usual when the Musick played.”⁷⁵ Ballads, too, reflected the growing interest in military spectacles from the end of the seventeenth century: especially the annual camps or “campaigns” at Putney, Hounslow, and Blackheath.⁷⁶ Songs joked that these events were disastrously attractive not only to young, unmarried women, as in *The Westminster Madams Lamentation for the breaking up of the Campaign at Hounslow-Heath* (1686), but equally to older married men, such as the *London Cuckold* (1686), whose wife “was well back’d by a Coltish-Spark, in the time of her Husbands Absence at the Campaign on Hounslow-Heath.”

A reciprocal relationship clearly existed between military musicians, who had an important function in composing or arranging marching tunes, and balladeers, who wrote words to them. For example, “Hark the Thundering Cannons Roar,” a popular ballad tune, is attributed to Purcell’s nephew Christopher Fishburn, who served in Flanders in 1678.⁷⁷ From the time of the “Bishops Wars” [1638-40], and especially during the interregnum, when the New Model Army held sway, ballad tunes reflected recent developments in military music and organization. Old Elizabethan and Jacobean tunes, such as “Lets to the wars again” and “Lord Willoughby,” were re-used in the mid- and even late-century, but many more new military tunes began to appear that were applied to all kinds of ballad subjects, including “political” and drinking ballads.⁷⁸ Popular tunes included “Hark Hark the thundering Cannons roar”; “Sound a Charge,” and “Now, now the fight is over.”⁷⁹ Marches were also common: the “Highlanders March” and the “Tangier March” were set to song.⁸⁰ Some tune-titles

⁷⁴ *The Autobiography of Alice Thornton*, ed. C. Jackson (Surtees Soc. 62, 1873), 128-9. My thanks to Bernard Capp for this reference.

⁷⁵ “Life and Memoirs of Ephraim Tristram Banks (1756),” *JSAHR* 3.11 (1924): 189.

⁷⁶ E.g. *The Valiant Souldiers Gallantry* (1686); *News From The Camp, On Black Heath* (1673); *The Royal General, Or, The Camp at Putney Heath* (1684); *A Song Upon the Randizvous on Hounsley-Heath* (1685).

⁷⁷ Ian Spink, “Purcell: Odes Propaganda and Panegyrick,” in *Purcell Studies*, ed. Curtis A. Price (Cambridge, 1995), 162. See also Claude Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and its Music* (New Brunswick, 1966), 287-9.

⁷⁸ McShane, *PBB*, Nos: 12, 44, 57; Simpson, 467-71.

⁷⁹ McShane, *PBB*, Nos: 294, 277; Simpson, 287-89; 757-8; 672-3; 523-5.

⁸⁰ Simpson, 309, 696.

referenced popular commanders, companies, or events, for example “Colonel Downes his men,” “Digby’s farewell,” and “King William’s March.”⁸¹ In the 1660s ballads named several tunes after General Monck’s exploits including, “the tune of General Moncks right march that was sounded before him from Scotland to London” and “General Monk sail’d through the gun-fleet.”⁸² Others, such as “The Taking of Mardike” and “The Glory of London-Derry,” commemorated military actions.⁸³ After 1685, the “Grenadiers Loyal march,” created in 1678 for what John Evelyn called these “new sort of soldiers,” became popular with both balladeers and army, and was still in use in 1777.⁸⁴ English provincial identities were also highlighted, as in “The Devonshire boys delight.”⁸⁵

Ballads were naturally redolent of the xenophobic attitudes for which the English were renowned.⁸⁶ A perennially popular tune was “A Fig for France,” which title, during the Dutch wars, was lengthened to “and Holland too.” (A “fig” was a rude hand-gesture).⁸⁷ Musical mockery could work both ways, however. In 1667, as the Dutch sailed away up the Medway in the Royal Charles, a trumpet loudly sounded the tune “Joan’s Placket is torn”: its sexual overtones being only too obvious for the populace who heard it.⁸⁸ A ballad celebrating a later Dutch defeat alluded to this musical event in turn.⁸⁹ Some commentators have seen the tendency for companies to adopt different tunes as an impediment to effective drill and discipline on the field, causing confusion, or worse, humiliation. Several stories are told of regiments successfully “stealing a march” by imitating each other musically.⁹⁰ Yet, music was an important vehicle for fostering identity within a company or regiment, combined with other markers of identity, such as colors and uniform.⁹¹ *The King and Kingdoms Joyful Day of Triumph* (1660), described how, when the Army met the King on his return to

⁸¹ *Mars and Vulcan in opposition* (1650s); Simpson, 181-7; 412-13.

⁸² McShane, *PBB*, Nos: 283, 423, 317: Simpson, 309.

⁸³ Simpson, 485-6; 459.

⁸⁴ Farmer, “Military Marches,” 51; Winstock, *Songs and Music*, 28-9; “Note,” *JSAHR* 1.6 (1922): 231.

⁸⁵ Simpson, 459-60.

⁸⁶ See McShane, “A Resounding Silence? Huguenots and Broadside Ballads in 17th Century England,” *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 28.5 (2007).

⁸⁷ Simpson, 409.

⁸⁸ Pepys, *Diary*, June 22 1667, VIII, 283.

⁸⁹ *More News from the Fleet* (1665).

⁹⁰ Farmer, “Military Marches,” *JSAHR* 28 (1950): 49.

⁹¹ Trim, *Chivalric Ethos*, 7.

London: "Each regiment from other [was]/ Known by their several notes." Musical competition between the services emerged in *The Courageous Seamen's Loyal Health* (1685), which declaimed "Shall the Grenadier-Boys Proclaim/Their Loyalty... And we who belong to the Ocean's Main/ now forget our Loyalty?... Let the Granadeers guard at home/ While we on the Marvel main do rome."⁹²

Ballad verse and military music were inextricably related, and both were integral to military and civilian life. For a regiment of soldiers—especially poorly trained ones—martial tunes were important to cohesion, atmosphere and orderliness in battle.⁹³ Off the battlefield, the music of pipe, fife, oboe, and popular ballad song was just as important in promoting military identity, forging bonds, and creating the emotional upsurge required for battle: giving soldiers "fresh spirits."⁹⁴ Indeed, such comfort was expected from music, that military men were said to have spent their last breath singing.⁹⁵ The playing, singing and dancing of sailors on board ships were renowned, while the satirical, anti-Irish, anti-Catholic song "Lilliburlero" provides a classic example of the impact a ballad could have on the military.⁹⁶ Set to an already well-known marching tune, Daniel Defoe claimed the song was so popular with the soldiers, that it "sang James II out of three kingdoms."⁹⁷ Almost immediately, tens of new songs were set to the same tune, showing how broadside ballads also popularized military music more generally, translating the excitement of military spectacular

⁹² This was an answer to *The New Royal March* (1685).

⁹³ See "Diary of Sir James Halkell, Tangier, 1680," *JSAHR* 1.1 (1922): 15, 17, for the effective use of drums and colors.

⁹⁴ I am grateful to the late John McShane, ARCM, Regimental Bandmaster Rtd., for his helpful comments on this. Quoting Ephraim Tristram Banks (1756): "The Guard... form'd, and the Music, which I march'd very near gave me fresh spirits," *JSAHR* 3.11 (1924): 189.

⁹⁵ "La Loubiere... died in a raging fever, indeed the very night he died he was singing in his sleep... having listened to us singing at the fireside earlier," Lenchan and Sheridan, "Swiss Soldier," 485; "a poor man finding himself dying, bravely in his last moments sung the song of 'Britons strike home' and expired with the words in his mouth," C. H. Firth, *Naval Songs and Ballads* (1913), lix.

⁹⁶ For sailor's music and entertainments, see Firth, *Naval Songs*, lv-lix.

⁹⁷ Daniel Defoe, "The Ballad Masters Plea," *Applebee's Journal* (13 October 1722); see also, Gilbert Burnet, *History of His Own Time* (abgd. Thomas Stackhouse, 1979), 284. The march was originally printed in Robert Carr, *The Delightful Companion* (1686), Farmer, "Military Marches," *JSAHR* 28 (1950): 52 and Winstock, *Songs and Music*, 22-7.

into everyday entertainment, and providing a cultural bridge across the divide between civilians and soldiers.⁹⁸

III

While ballads promoted the essential cultural difference that set the military man apart from civil society they also played an important role in producing and maintaining the resolution that turned ordinary, mainly urban, subjects, into citizen-soldiers. Acting as supplementary agents for the recruitment of volunteers, they disseminated a military ethos across society that was classical in form and professional in outlook. Furthermore, the common use of the love song as a vehicle for military messages reveals something of how “regular” soldiering had become a new vocation for the lower sorts in this transitional period for army development. Indeed, it caused some concern among military commentators such as Sir James Turner who commented, “the ancient distinction and difference between the Cavalry and Infantry, as to their birth and breeding is wholly taken away, mens qualities and extractions, being little or rather just nothing either regarded or enquired after; the most of the Horsemen, as well as the Foot, being composed of the very scum of the Commons.”⁹⁹ This new “profession” not only marked a direct break from the older system of “estates” which put fighters at the top and workers at the bottom of society: modeled on the values and assumptions of urban freedom; it was negotiating a place within the social structures of household formation in early modern England.

Ballad authors and publishers approached the topic of recruiting and retention in a multiplicity of ways, reflecting the fact that they had several different markets in view, ranging across age, gender, wealth, education, and experience.¹⁰⁰ These included experienced servicemen (especially sailors); potential raw recruits (especially soldiers); and men on active service, for whom morale and retention were always an issue. On the outbreak of a war, songs recounting historic, even fictional, engagements were invariably issued as encouragements for seamen and soldiers, who were notori-

⁹⁸ Simpson, 449-55.

⁹⁹ Turner, *Pallas Armata*, 165-66.

¹⁰⁰ For generic analysis of ballads see Natascha Würzbach, *The Rise of the English Street Ballad, 1550-1650*, trans. Gayna Walls (Cambridge, 1990).

ously “romantique” (as Samuel Pepys put it).¹⁰¹ They were highly desirable products, often illustrated with woodcuts of spectacular battle-scenes or ships in full sail (Fig. 3).¹⁰² A prime example, written by Laurence Price, but described by him as “a noble song which to the seamen doth belong” tells of a battle between the *Angel Gabriel* of Bristol and three Spanish ships, in which English losses were few: “only three men slain:/ and five men hurt,” but the gains enormous: “two hundred pounds in coyn and plate.”¹⁰³ Repeatedly issued at key recruiting moments under various titles—in 1640 as *Brave Bristowes Renowne an Incouragement to all English Soldiers*, and as *The Honour of Bristol* in 1665 and 1675—the song claimed to be so stirring that “all mens heart[s] doth fill/ and makes them cry to sea/ with the Angel Gabriel.”¹⁰⁴

Direct calls for recruits in ballads were voiced by generic volunteers or servicemen. In *The Loyal Subjects Resolution* (1665), a volunteer called for “Brave English Boys [to] come follow me,” because “Brave Lawson does upon us call.” During the Nine Years War (1688-97), *The Boatswain’s Call* (1689) articulated the urging of the recruiting officer, challenging those who resist the call and disparaging their “excuses”:

But yet methinks I hear /Some Cowards crying,
The Press they dread and fear,/As much as dying: . . .
Some declare they’d fight, /but a dear Mother . . .
. . . counts him her delight, /above all other . . .
Another has a Wife, /He’s loathe to leave her . . .
Yet there’s not any/ Right valiant Noble Soul
Heeds a Relation/ He’l fight against controul
For this his Nation.

Naval engagements could be particularly horrific (a characteristic that ballad writers both relished and exploited). Encouraging new recruitment or persuading men back to their ships after terrible defeats or huge losses was particularly hard. Balladeers, embedded within the communities they were writing for and selling to, did not hide the facts, but were philosophical. *Englands Tryumph, and Hollands Downfall* included references

¹⁰¹ C. S. Knighton, “A Century On: Pepys and the Elizabethan Navy,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004):141.

¹⁰² E.g. the fantastic woodcut on *The Protestant Courage* (1689), see fig. 3.

¹⁰³ Laurence Price, *Fortvnes Lottery* (1657), 9. Price remains a shadowy figure but see Palmer, Roy, “Price, Laurence (fl. 1628-1675),” *ODNB*.

¹⁰⁴ McShane, *PBB*: Nos: 60, 414.



The Protestant Courage;

A brief account of some hundreds of Valliant Sea-men, who daily comes in to serve Their Majesties, against the Forces of the French King.
 The Tune is, *Lilli borlero.*
Licetisil according to Order.

Whom you may see the *Whore* *prentice*,
 if you should go to *Germany* how
 that we said never come under his *Bole*,
 he must not think to *Cope* with us now;
 For his *Whore* *prentice* *Bole*,
 never that to *Great* *Britain* *advance*,
 Our *Valiant* *Bole* *prentice*, will keep us all *freedom*
 and pull down the *pride* and *power* of *France*.
 Why he not bite his *Whore* *prentice* of *later*,
 out of their *native* *Country* *brave*?
 Those that were rich did leave their *State*,
 naked and poor they came to us here:
 Should that *Great* *gain* *this* *Kingdom*,
 the very same would be our *bad* *chance*,
 His *State* we will *live*, or make them *retire*,
 and pull down the *Strength* and *power* of *France*.
 Therefore have *Seamen* *indignity* *on*,
 for to *persecute* *this* *Nation* *from* *Spain*,
 Rather than never *conquer* *this* *Sea*,
 they do *retire* to *fight* one and all,
 from the *best* *Sea-port* at *Weymouth*,
 they need no *prentice*, for by *Heavens* *blowing*,
 they'll pull down the *pride* and *power* of *France*.
 Norfolk *hath* *Zeas* shall not be *forgot*,
 Seamen they are that never will *blinch*;
 With *Canons* *bat*, and *thundering* *bat*,
 then to *retire* to *oppose* the *French*:
 For those came from *Spain* to *London*,
 who in the *War* will *beseth* their *chance*,
 About *King* *Rich* and *Rich*, for *William* and *Mary*,
 they'll help for to *check* the *power* of *France*.
 But how that *ancient* *City* *faint*,
 still will stand up our *Kings* to *retire*,
 Seem's from *Spain* most *ballantly* *came*,
 now our *hundred* and *thirty* or *more*:
 Valiant *for* *men*, *sons* of *thunder*,
 who in the *War* will *beseth* their *chance*,
 for the *prentice* of their *native* *Nation*,
 they'll fight against all the *power* of *France*.
 For sea port all other the *Land*,
 for in *conceit* in *only* *joy* and *delight*,
 being *rich* to *work* *change* to *land*,
 fit to *maintain* the *prentice* *right*:
 Save their *Zeas* they *tray* *center*,
 England's *Sea* will to *advance*,
 For *brave* *brave* *men*, and *brave* *men* *attire* *light*,
 who fight against all the *power* of *France*.
 Printed for J. *Beaton* in *Chitcheur* *Street*.

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The last Engagement with the French Fleet,
 has so much true English Bravery,
 that they resolve to make them retire
 For the loss of our Cannon and the loss of
 our Ships among their numbers,
 Our Zeas they will center, and Zeas they will center,
 to pull down the pride and power of France.

Fig. 3. "The Protestant Courage; OR, A brief account of some hundreds of Valliant [sic] Sea-men, who daily comes in to serve Their Majesties, against the Forces of the French King," author unknown, to the tune of "Lilli borlero." (Jonah Deacon, 1689 [content]). By permission of The Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge.

to the burning of the *Henry* in June 1666, with the loss of at least one hundred men.¹⁰⁵ One couplet laments, “More valiant Men kill’d in three dayes,/ Then three and twenty years can raise,” but added the caveat, “we can’t avoid such brunts as these/ to guard the sovereign of the seas.” Comfort came by enumerating the Dutch losses: “Fourteen of theirs were took and Fir’d... Four of their greatest ships were sunck,” and the (mistaken) hope that:

... ‘tis thought they are,
Unfit to raise another war;
‘Tis much presum’d, ‘cause they did fail,
When they had made out all their Sayle.¹⁰⁶

Holland turn’d to Tinder (1666), offered assurance to experienced sailors, who knew what disaster could come from an inexperienced and unwilling crew, claiming that, during the July battle “the prest men (wel mingl’d with stout voluntiers)/ Did drink away dolour and fight away fears.”¹⁰⁷ In the same way, ballads recounting campaigns in Ireland between 1689 and 1692, gave upbeat accounts of great acts of soldierly heroism and promises of relief forces being sent out, which new recruits were invited to join.¹⁰⁸

Balladeers acknowledged that impressment inflicted innumerable injustices and misery upon unwilling men and their families. One ballad on the 1674 peace expressed relief that:

Poor men shall no more be afraid of the Press,
Nor forc’d to leave children and wife in distress,
they need not hereafter in holes for to lurk,
But boldly and freely may follow their work...
[and] seamen and soldiers their limbs shall not lose.¹⁰⁹

Ballads even offered a voice for men who preferred the peaceful life, declaring “a fig for the honour that brings broken bones.”¹¹⁰ Even if the intent of

¹⁰⁵ Reported in Pepys, *Diary*, VII, 154-5.

¹⁰⁶ Referring to sightings of the Dutch Fleet: Pepys, *Diary*, VII, 182, 205.

¹⁰⁷ On recruitment, pay and the need for experienced sailors, see: Pepys *Diary*, VII, 187, 189-90.

¹⁰⁸ E.g. *Undaunted London-Derry* (1689); *The Glory of London-Derry* (1680); *[T]yrconnels Courage Confounded* (1689).

¹⁰⁹ *Great B[r]ittains Joy and Good News for the Netherlands* (1674).

¹¹⁰ *The Farmers Son of Devonshire* (c.1689). See also *The Boon Companions* (c.1692):

such songs was ironic, the sentiments sparked a scathing challenge in *The Soldiers Glory, Or the honour of a Military Life* (1689).

Ballad recruits were always ideal types: physically fit, morally honorable, fearless, loyal, determined, informed, capable, and, above all, willing, like Jockey, to be “cutting and slashing of foes.”¹¹¹ The voices and actions of volunteers were particularly prized: in 1665, *More News from the Fleet* counted them as a separate group, “900 seamen, and soldiers and 120 voluntiers.” *The Christians New Victory* declaimed, “See how our English volunteers Charge, as men that know no fears; Where e’re they come the battle clears.”¹¹² Experienced soldiers and sailors spoke proudly of their wounds and their willingness to fight again.¹¹³ As one 1666 ballad pointed out, “though the officers [bore] the bell/ the private seamen r[a]ng the Dutch knell.”¹¹⁴ *The Courageous Soldiers of the West* (1689) described recruits from more than twenty towns as “lusty,” “tall and compleat,” “stout . . . brisk and airy.” Volunteers were “Warlike sons of Thunder,” “valiant and bold,” and, most importantly, they were “young m[e]n/ of judgement and reason.”¹¹⁵

Expected to recruit across the “sorts” of people, *Honours Call* (1693) addressed young men “who boast of your blood/ And your titles to families great.” Those who could afford to exempt themselves from military service, by paying for fully equipped recruits to go in their stead, were also exhorted to fulfill their duty: Parker’s *True Subject’s wish* (1640) pleaded “You, who have mony doe not grudge it,/ But in your King and Countries right,/ Freely disburse/ both person and purse,” while *The English Seamans Resolution* (1666) declaimed: “pay your money with speed, for that we do need/ or else come to the seas to Dye.” A different note was struck in *The Undaunted Seaman* (1689): offering to “part with Gold and Silver too,/ Another person to Employ,/ That may be better spared than you” a young lover fails to deter her sweetheart, who responds, “M[e] thinks the Work

“Let them go to war that takes pleasure therein/ We do think it more safe to sleep in a whole skin.”

¹¹¹ J. P., *Jockey’s Farewel to Jenny* (c.1665).

¹¹² c. 1686-1688.

¹¹³ *Boatswains Call*, op. cit.

¹¹⁴ *The Second Part of the New Ballad of the Late and Terrible Fight on St James’s Day* (1666).

¹¹⁵ See Rigby, *Glory of the Gentlecrafft*, op. cit.; L[aurence] P[rice] *The True Lover’s Holidiaies* (c.1657).

cannot be done,/ Except I do in person go” and further declares “Here I leave both Gold and Treasure/ To maintain my dear on shore.”¹¹⁶

Many recruitment ballads addressed the large cohort of experienced seamen and soldiers, but many more were geared towards raw recruits, especially apprentices or young tradesmen operating in the glutted clothing trades. Though printed in London, ballads were intended for wide distribution. Some called specifically upon “London Lads,” “Devonshire Boys,” and “Cornish lads” or, more generally, to “brave gallants,” “English Youth” or “English boys.” Robert White’s and Richard Rigby’s ballads addressed Glovers, Butchers, Dyers, Feltmakers, weavers, and “all true-hearted Shoemakers,” drawing upon trade rivalries and mythical heroes—such as Crispin and Crispianus—or historic exploits, as spurs to enthusiasm. Narcissus Luttrell observed just these trades joining up in 1689: “the drumms beat up mightily in and about London for volunteers for the Irish army, and they come in pretty well: a great number of weavers, shoemakers, and butchers have lately listed themselves.”¹¹⁷

Ballad texts promoted the same classical and mythical models of gods and heroes, ancient and present glories and dangerous adventure that were to be found in the books and treatises read by their officers.¹¹⁸ Ballad woodcuts paraded troops of armed men in uniform: leather clad pikemen and musketeers with their weapons held at the ready; carousing cavaliers wearing swords and feathered hats; or Knights dressed in “glittering armour so brisk and rare” (both a reality and an imaginary ideal) courting beautiful women. Woodcuts showed sieges, explosions and pitched battles in full swing, with dead bodies littering the field or sea, or topped military ballads with old and new images of mounted captains or royal personages: such as William III, trampling the Pope under his horse’s feet.

The content and ubiquity of military ballads questions the contemporary assumption that “the soldier we shall scarce ever find devoted to anything of Religion besides the pretence and noyse of it, in their talke, only to set a glove upon their quarrell.” It must also query more modern judgment that “Mass armies display popular prejudices and beliefs” but that “professional armies are more objective and tend to be governed by their

¹¹⁶ See also McShane, *PBB*, No: 212.

¹¹⁷ Narcissus Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs* 5 vols. (Oxford, 1857), 1.515.

¹¹⁸ Traditional figures such as “Bevis” or “Guy of Warwick” were rarely cited as exemplary models in ballads after 1640: Cf. Donagan, *War*, ch. 3, and 218-23.

own internal discipline and ideals”—that codes of behavior, “could only apply to the officer corps” and had “little or no significance” for the rank and file.¹¹⁹ Military ballads certainly drew upon popular prejudices, inciting xenophobic violence and extremes of male sociability, encouraging the soldier’s liberation from the normal social controls of civilian life—especially in regard to drink and sex. Yet, like military pamphlets and sermons, they also tried to inculcate a vision of the ideal soldier. Civil war ballads contrasted how “Some men for their conscients their lives goes to hazard,” and others “only fought for the Luker of Gold.”¹²⁰ Later ballad recruits declared that no amount of gold would make any difference to their principled resolution to fight.¹²¹ Religious fervor was a primary motivation, especially in wars against the Catholic French and Irish. Determined ballad recruits declared “Can I hear great Ireland/ On the brink of ruin stand / Protestants for succour call/ And yet be not concern’d at all?”¹²² Equally important were diplomatic and economic considerations. The reasons for the war, the condition and experience of the enemy, and previous successes (or occasionally failures) against them were included regularly in songs. *The Royal Victory* (1665) pointed out, “to mock at mens misery is not my aime,” but listed the Dutch ships taken and burnt in battle and claimed these events as revenge for the massacre at Amboyna. *Holland turned to Tinder* summed up the ideal soldier’s philosophy:

It is far better in a good cause to dye,
Than with a bad conscience to live great and high:
And in acts of honour there’s no better thing,
Then to dye a true Martyr for God and the King.

Ballads advertised and promoted the rough romance and glamour of military life, equally attractive to young and old, men and women: providing numerous models of soldierly manhood—adventurous, hard-bitten, swashbuckling, or emotionally sensitive and crossed in love—and guaranteeing sexual adventure. Putting on a fine sartorial display was another great inducement. Excited volunteers frequently comment on how they will look: “When I am drest in armour so bright/ O it will be such a seemly sight/ I’ll look very big upon all I meet”: an irresistible mixture when

¹¹⁹ *The Moderator* (1642), 7, quoted in Donagan, *War*, 259. Childs, *Armies*, 3.

¹²⁰ See McShane, *PBB*, No: 130 and also 132-3.

¹²¹ E.g. *The Protestans Seamans Resolution* (1689).

¹²² [*The*] *Protestant Souldier and His Love* (1689). See also McShane, *PBB*, under 1689.

combined with the promise of eternal fame and glory—in ballads if nowhere else.¹²³

Most important of all to the recruiting balladeer, as to the soldier in the field or the sailor on board ship, were “professed resolutions.”¹²⁴ An assurance of right being on their side had a crucial role to play in the process of persuading citizens to risk their lives as soldiers, while the word “resolution” was ubiquitous in military ballad preambles. In 1640, Parker’s *True Subjects wish* declared “let all loyal subjects judge it/ if we have not cause to fight”. In 1642 Robert White’s *Prentices Resolution* recruited because, “The cavaliers it seems are Bent . . . to ruinate our parliament [. . .] O we will march courageously/ against the Gospels enemy.” *The English Seamans Resolution* (1666) “Incourag[ed] his Friends to Daunt his foes” by “Plainly demonstrating the Justness of his cause.” *Real Reality* (1685) explained that, “honour is the thing designed,/ and the glory of our cause/ to repell those that combined/ to subvert the Kingdom’s laws.” While, in *The Glory of the Gentlecraft* (1689), Richard Rigby argued: “Because they know this it is in a good Cause,/ To fight for Religion, our Lives and our Laws;/ They need not be Prest who are willing to go,/ To fight for their King, and prove Rome’s overthrow.”

Rank and file recruits were “young men of judgement and reason,” informed of and inspired by the worthiness of the national cause, and driven by a clear conception of soldierly honor, responsibility, and patriotic, political, or religious loyalty. When the state sought to recruit soldiers to fight in wars where the allies were considered unacceptable, or the cause unjust, balladeers fell silent as their audience turned away. This was most clear when the French and English were allies in the third Dutch war. Just one white-letter song remains that expressed support for the cause, written by Samuel Speed, chaplain to the Admiral of the fleet, George Monk, Duke of Albermarle.¹²⁵ While this silence did not prevent men from signing up for battle at the outset of the hostilities in 1672, it was very soon clear that there was less popular support for this war against the Dutch than on the previous two occasions.¹²⁶

¹²³ E.g. *Jockey’s farewell to Jenny*, op. cit.

¹²⁴ Donagan, *War*, 266: notes soldier demands for equipment, supplies and “professed resolutions.”

¹²⁵ Samuel Speed, *A Broadside for the Dutch* . . . (1672).

¹²⁶ See Steven C. Pincus, “From Butterboxes to Wooden Shoes: the Shift in Popular Sentiment from Anti-Dutch to Anti-French in the 1670s,” *Historical Journal* 38 (1995): 343-4.

Whatever form they took, recruiting songs offered similar “encouragements” and drew upon the same military culture that inspired Manning’s “gentleman volunteer” to “religious fervour, honour, glory, military adventure and experience.”¹²⁷ In words and images, ballads provided the cultural materials from which a young man could construct a persona imbued with a martial ethos, and a sense of professionalism.

IV

By far the most common vehicle for the military recruitment ballad was the love song, a remarkable and perhaps counter-intuitive aspect of the genre, since they invariably took the form of conversation between a courting or betrothed couple.¹²⁸ Many songs dwelt upon the despair of separation and bereavement, illustrated with woodcuts of broken-hearted young women and men in romantic distress. But the majority were characterized by quandaries relating to the formation of secure marriages and households—reflecting the difficulties soldiers faced in establishing a social role as patriarchs and partners. Military ballad dialogues include discussions of maintenance, the gifting of rings, “making conditions,” promises, and confirmations of betrothal. Some ballad recruits express the hope and expectation of “pay and promotion,” or prize money from their adventures abroad, which will make marriage possible on return. One attractive aspect of military service, as some ballads pointed out, was that it could bring freedom from indentures, potentially allowing young men to marry much earlier than their old trade would allow.¹²⁹ In *The Loyal Soldier of Flanders* (c.1690), apprentice Thomas had “four years and a half to serve,” but enlists so that he can marry earlier.¹³⁰

Military love songs worked as recruitment songs because, explicitly or implicitly, they drew upon the classical controversy between the gods of war and love. Mars and Bellona would sound the call for soldiers but Venus—represented by their wives and sweethearts—would try to persuade men to stay at home. This omnipresent story-line served to empha-

¹²⁷ Manning, see n. 3 above.

¹²⁸ Cf. Fumerton, *Unsettled*, ch. 8.

¹²⁹ John A. Shedd, “The State Versus the Trades Guilds: Parliament’s Soldier-Apprentices in the English Civil War Period, 1642-1655,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 65 (2004): 105-16.

¹³⁰ See also White, *Prentices Resolution*; J[ordan], *The Loyal Subject’s resolution*, op. cit.

size the martial virtues of the recruit, who explains to his sweetheart the imperative call of honor and the rightness of his cause: to stay behind “will be a shame . . . and to my name a foul disgrace.”¹³¹ The female voice in these songs expresses the dread of what might happen—“Thou’lt either be drowning or burning / in Crimson waves of Gore”—but the sturdy volunteer counters by declaring his courage, resolution, and assurance that (depending on the contingent circumstances of the ballad) no Cavalier, Roundhead, Dutch, Spanish, Irish, or French soldier will “vapour his life away.”¹³²

The final inducement for any man thinking of backing out came when his young love would offer to disguise herself and enlist with him. This was usually rejected on the grounds that women are too delicate for war, though in *The Faithful Lovers Farewell* (1665) when “Betty” offers to enlist, a well-educated “John” disagrees because: “I can tell by my reading/ When Cleopatra put to sea, /Mark Anthony lost the day.” This said, numerous songs told of heroic women who enlisted and fought with renown, offering either tales of real women, or fictional reproaches to young men who were afraid to enlist.¹³³ More unusually, in *The Seaman’s Loyal Love* (1692), a woman reconciles herself with the thought that the national need was greater than her own. On the other hand, in *A New Way of Hunting* (1656), Venus wins her battle. Fidelia successfully persuades her lover to “Stay here and try/ A victory/ With me thy friendly foe.”¹³⁴

Official orders suggest this tropic imagination reflected social practice: a 1643 recruitment proclamation included a clause against women joining up and from 1650 there were consistent attempts to control the numbers of wives and camp-followers.¹³⁵ At the same time, the “friendly foe” of the women at home was a major problem for governments to contend with. Their distress was graphically described by Samuel Pepys, who recounted watching the touching farewells of a “recruit of 200 soldiers” who had “gotten most of them drunk [. . .] But Lord, to see how the poor fellows kissed their wives and sweethearts in that simple manner at their going off, and shouted and let off their guns, was strange sport.”¹³⁶

¹³¹ *The Gallant Seaman’s Resolution*, McShane, *PBB*, No: 212.

¹³² See McShane, *PBB*, Nos: 212, 455; *The Soldier His Salutation* (c. 1650s).

¹³³ See Diane Dugaw, *Warrior Women & Popular Balladry, 1650-1850* (Cambridge, 1989).

¹³⁴ See also *A Dainty New Ditty of a Saylor and his Love . . .* (1656).

¹³⁵ Cited in Roy “Royalist Reputations,” 107. See Lynn, *Women, Armies and Warfare*, 78-89.

¹³⁶ Pepys, *Diary*, VII, 189-90, 140-1.

Songs of seduction and laments by young women, abandoned by unfaithful and disreputable soldiers filled numerous ballad sheets—warning young women, and perhaps inspiring young men with the excitement of illicit adventure.¹³⁷ Yet other songs insisted that military men were faithful lovers, declaring they “ought not to be slighted” and reinforcing a reputation for stability and eligibility for marriage.¹³⁸ Another pair of ballads told how a young pregnant girl finds her soldier lover at the camp, and he willingly marries her.¹³⁹ Complaints against young women who failed to wait for their soldier lovers to return, causing untold distress, were also numerous. (This is poor young Thomas’s fate in *The Loyal Soldier of Flanders*). Moreover, ballads seem to point to real resolutions to this problem, which may not comply with David Trim’s concept of the professional “supplanting the community with the regiment,” but rather demonstrates the negotiation of existing social structures and the construction of a new community model around and within the regiment that included wives and children.¹⁴⁰ As Jennine Hurl-Eamon points out, “many men in the army defied rules which forbade marriage to all but a minority of soldiers [...] numerous soldiers used their identities as husbands and fathers to establish character and gain credibility in the courts” and “the distinctive circumstances of military employment [...] engendered survival strategies based upon mutual affection and cooperation.”¹⁴¹ While ballad couples usually hoped to marry on the soldier’s return, and women were expressly discouraged from enlisting as men, many recruitment songs concluded with the young couple marrying immediately and embarking together on the military enterprise. As *The Wily witty neat and pretty Damsel* (1650s) declared:

A Soldiers wife
Lives a merry life.
And tis a type of honour,
In every place,

¹³⁷ E.g. *The Nightingales Song; Or The Souldiers Rare Musick* (1675).

¹³⁸ *The Valiant Soldiers Courtship* (c. 1690).

¹³⁹ *The London Lasses Folly...* (1685); *The Answer to the London Lasses Folly...* (1685).

¹⁴⁰ Trim, *Chivalric Ethos*, 7.

¹⁴¹ Jennine Hurl-Eamon, “Insights into Plebeian marriage: Soldiers, Sailors and their Wives in the Old Bailey Proceedings,” *London Journal* 30.1 (2005): 22-38.

to have the grace,
Of mistriss put upon ye¹⁴²

To be effective, an armed force must stand outside civil society, sustaining itself from within with its own moral codes, laws and ethos—an essential aspect of developing professionalism that Trim refers to as “corporateness.”¹⁴³ Yet, at the same time, especially in the early modern world, the soldier’s trade had to appeal to civil society in terms of credit and reputation if it was to offer a feasible prospect for the formation of households. It is generally acknowledged that there was intense political and social hostility towards the standing army at local and national level from the 1650s onwards.¹⁴⁴ In addition, many attacks were made on the ordinary soldier’s reputation: as Ned Ward quipped,

to a cobblers and a butcher’s knife
Or a pewteres knot commend me,
But from a soliders lazy life
Good heaven pray defend me.

Daniel Defoe described how for young men “the lazy idle loytering life of a gentleman soldier [was preferred to] the labourious task of a tradesman, if he can get as much money by it.”¹⁴⁵ But soldiers were far from being the first trade with a public relations problem; butchers and cobblers were also vilified in the satirical press as being dangerous and dishonest, or stupid, rebellious, and drunken. On the other hand, no other trade could draw upon the intensely romantic image of the soldier. A large number of military love songs served to create and defend the reputation and desirability of soldiers, placing them firmly within the sphere of the marriageable and marrying kind.¹⁴⁶ By the same token, soldiering was presented as a traditional urban craft or trade.

¹⁴² See also P[rice], *True Lovers Holidaes; The Loyal Soldiers Courtship* (1690s).

¹⁴³ Trim, *Chivalric Ethos*, 7.

¹⁴⁴ Phil Withington, “Citizens, Soldiers and Urban Culture in Restoration England,” *English Historical Review* 123:502 (2008): 587-610; Manning, *Apprenticeship*, 428-9; Childs, *Armies*, 175-86.

¹⁴⁵ Cited in Davies, “Recruiting,” 146-7.

¹⁴⁶ E.g. *The Love-Sick Lady* (1680s).

As John Childs points out, a “career” in the armed forces was far from being the worst fate a young man could suffer.¹⁴⁷ Volunteers, in army or navy, enjoyed more favorable terms of pay and employment than impressed men and although, in theory, rank and file enlistment was for life, experience suggested that men could expect to be disbanded at the end of major campaigns, until offered the chance to re-enlist. Indeed the length of service for rank and file was curtailed at the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession to augment recruitment.¹⁴⁸ Even if a man was pressed into the forces, it did not necessarily mean his prospects for promotion were blasted.¹⁴⁹

In 1663, a Presbyterian friend remarked to Samuel Pepys how the disbanded soldiers of the former New Model Army had gone quietly back to their trades, “this captain turned a shoemaker; the lieutenant, a baker; this a brewer; that a haberdasher; this common soldier, a porter; and every man in his apron and frock,” while the “gentlemen soldiers” or swordsmen of the cavalier party, had found it much more difficult to adjust to civilian life, “go[ing] with their belts and swords, swearing and cursing, and stealing; running into people’s houses, by force oftentimes, to carry away something.”¹⁵⁰ One, often reprinted, song expressed the bitter sense of betrayal of the disbanded and disregarded soldier: determined to eschew the shame of “low” trades like begging, he turns instead to the more soldier-like and dangerous life of the highwayman.¹⁵¹ To some extent this reflected the social reality of criminals with military backgrounds and also a stereotypical fear of old soldiers disrupting the norms of civil society. Yet, from 1654, and again after 1660, if they had avoided debilitating injury or disease, ordinary private soldiers could gain privileges to trade regardless of guild restrictions, while their service for the crown gave them a much enhanced sense of social status; apprentices promoted to the officer corps took the name “mister.”¹⁵² Unlike other trades, pensions and hospitals (however inadequate) were provided for wounded and old soldiers.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ Childs, *Army of Charles II*, 21.

¹⁴⁸ Godfrey Davies, “The Reduction of the Army after the Peace of Ryswick 1697,” *JSAHR* 28 (1950): 15-28; idem, “Recruiting,” 159.

¹⁴⁹ Ennis, *Enter the Press*, 22-4.

¹⁵⁰ Pepys, *Diary*, IV, 373-4.

¹⁵¹ See Beere, *An Exact Relation*, 4; *The Low Country Soldier* (1690); Richard Climsall, *The Ioviall Broome man...* (later edn. 1640s).

¹⁵² See Shedd, “State,” 115, n. 29.

¹⁵³ Ian Gentles, “The New Model Officer Corps in 1647: a Collective Portrait,” *Social*

Though, even in ballads, young tradesmen enlisted at times of economic downturn, this should be understood as a reasoned change in profession, not just as a measure of desperation.¹⁵⁴ Soldiering became a vocational option for “young men of sense,” and not just in times of hardship. The level of commitment required for an apprenticeship and the life of a soldier might not seem so very different to a young man, especially since, despite official disapproval, it made him free to marry and offered enhanced possibilities of social and monetary advancement. Nor, conversely, was it only the lower sorts who joined up for money: Turner, describing how “Princes and States . . . invite by Trumpet and Drum all to take employment, whom either the desire of honour, riches, booty, pay or wages may encourage to undergo their service,” showed that money was at the heart of recruitment for officers and gentlemen too.¹⁵⁵

Military ballads played a key part in turning individual men into companies, regiments and armies on the field. They suggest that the ordinary rank and file expected career progression; identified with a military culture and cause; and sought employment in the army as a rational and alternative choice of trade. The cultural models that balladeers drew upon to create the persona of the military man—ancient military heroes, concepts of honor, narratives of Mars and Venus—came largely from the same “elite” classical sources that inspired and informed their officers. Hardly, one might think, the natural stuff of popular culture, but classicism played a fundamental part in all balladry as a rhetorical form that deliberately sought to engage the affections, the passions and the will of the hearer. Persuasion was their business: as Anthony Fletcher of Saltoun commented “if a man had the making of all the ballads, he need not care who made the laws in the country.”¹⁵⁶

History 22.2 (1997), 127-44; Childs, *Army of Charles II*, 9-10, 21-2; Fumerton, *Unsettled*, 87-8.

¹⁵⁴ E.g. *Old England's New Save-all* . . . (1692); *The Shop-keeper's Complaint* . . . (1689).

¹⁵⁵ Turner, *Pallas Armata*, 165.

¹⁵⁶ Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, *An Account of a Conversation concerning the Right Regulation of Governments for the Common Good of Mankind* . . . (1703), in *Political Works*, pt.7 (1732).

