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The Intersection of Military History and the History of Emotions: Reconsidering Fear and Honour in Ancien Régime Warfare

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ABSTRACT
This article reinterprets combat training and tactics in terms of the "execution" of the emotions, the shaping of actual military practice by the perceptions of fear and honour by different emotional communities. In the early modern European example emphasized here, the command community comprised of officers and commanders perceived itself largely driven by honour, but saw the emotional communities of the men in the ranks as most influenced by raw fear. The result was a tactical system based on supervision and control, minimizing soldier initiative. Only change in the compositions and perceptions of emotional communities allowed tactical revolution.

The genesis of this study was an invitation by Benjamin Deruelle to speak at his 2018 conference, 'Émotions en bataille.' While this author's past work has not explicitly addressed the history of emotions, this new approach is welcomed. Moreover, it seems to be a natural extension of the concern with war and culture that has so informed the study of military history over the past few decades. Therefore, the opportunity to utilise this new approach is welcomed as a contribution to what will be a growing area of academic discussion[1]. This essay will focus on the institutions and practices of land warfare during the *Ancien Régime*.

Within seventeenth and eighteenth-century military culture and practice, fear and honour provide the most fruitful subjects for an inquiry into the conception, perception, and experience of emotions. Fear is universally accepted as a cardinal emotion, but some may question if honour deserves to be classed as an emotion. It can be viewed as a collection and interaction of different emotions. Honour is a measure of excellence, success, or failure as judged by societal and cultural standards. It can be public reputation, and at its highest levels of power and accomplishment rises to 'glory', that accolade so pursued and cherished by the aristocracy. To be most effective in battle, honour must be internalised. This is both a private sense of self-worth and a recognition of, and reaction to, one's public reputation. At one end of the spectrum is pride or, at least, a strong sense of self-worth, and at the other end is guilt, shame, and humiliation. The existential need to obviate guilt, escape humiliation, and eliminate shame can be a powerful counter to fear.

This essay will centre on two emotional communities: the 'command community' of those in the military hierarchy who shape and direct a military force, and the small soldier-group of common soldiers at the bottom of the hierarchy, labelled the 'primary group' by military sociologists.[2] The command community, a social/military elite during the *Ancien Régime*, included the officer corps from the highest ranks to company grade officers and those rulers who took a very direct and active role in shaping and leading their armies, such as Frederick II The Great of Prussia. The primary group is a micro-community of less than a score of common soldiers bound by camaraderie and dependence.

The historiography of *Ancien Régime* military history has benefitted from a number of recent studies that address the emotions. Consider Yuval Harari's *The Ultimate Experience*; Erika Kuijpers and Cornelis van der Haven's collection, *Battlefield Emotions 1500-1800*; and Ilya Berkovich's *Motivation in War*.[3] Also, focusing solely on fear are

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[2]A full discussion of war and emotions would also have to talk about a broad range of *emotional communities* – that fundamental concept of the history of emotions given to us by Barbara Rosenwein. Carl von Clausewitz, extolled by many for his rationalism in discussing war, also privileges the role of passions within that largest of emotional communities, the 'people'. He goes on to state: 'The *passions* that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people.' Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret (trans. and ed.) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), p.89, p.138.

[3]Yuval Noah Harari, *The Ultimate Experience: Battlefield Revelations and the Making of Modern War Culture, 1450-2000* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Arnaud Guinier, *L'honneur du Soldat: Ethique martiale et discipline guerrière dans la France des Lumières* (Ceyzérieu: Champ Vallon, 2014), Erika Kuijpers and Cornelis van der Haven (ed.), *Battlefield Emotions 1500-1800: Practices, Experience, Imagination* (London: Palgrave

contributions by Jan Plamper and Benjamin Deruelle.[4] The existing historical work tends to rely heavily on memoirs, and that is certainly understandable and probably necessary. But this reliance on memoirs carries with it certain dangers. The history of emotions emphasises both the experience and expression of emotions – which usually means that we are relying on information as reported by those who either witnessed or purported to feel a particular emotion. But there is a problem: the real experience of emotion as felt by someone else is unknowable, and verification based on their own remarks and reminiscences is to a degree unreliable. There may well be a reason why the reporter might play down, warp, or exaggerate their emotions.

This concern with the unknowable/unreliable issue is exaggerated by the nature of military history. There is a hard-minded aspect to military history, more impressed with impacts on the real world than with nuanced debates in the intellectual world. In accord with this real-world emphasis, this essay proposes to approach the history of emotions not simply as experience and expression, but to introduce the ideas of seeing it as experience, expression, and *execution*. The latter implies the *doing* of something: for example, what fear makes a fearful person do; what happens when fear takes over. The medievalist Carol Symes has noted that a frequent critique of work by the noted historian Barbara Rosenwein is an over-reliance on descriptions of emotion or assumptions about its expression. Moreover, Carol Symes suggested that my concept of execution should also include not only what individuals do when affected by emotions but also what practices and institutions are actually constructed or changed to deal with emotions. In military contexts, fear in particular must be taken seriously because it has dangerous effects which, in turn, require an institutional framework to mitigate or manage fear.

Let us first discuss fear and honour in the context of 'execution' as it defined above.[5] This is a something of an experiment; the bits and pieces will probably not be that new

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Macmillan: 2016); Ilya Berkovich, *Motivation in War: The Experience of Common Soldiers in Old-Régime Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[4]Jan Plamper, 'Fear: Soldiers and Emotion in Early Twentieth-Century Russian Military Psychology,' *Slavic Review* Vol. 68, Iss. 2 (Summer, 2009), pp. 259-283; Benjamin Deruelle, 'Contrôler l'incontrôlable: Perception et contrôle du sentiment de la peur au combat chez les hommes de guerre du XVIe siècle,' in Laurent Vissiere and Marion Trévisi (ed.), *Le feu et la folie: L'irrationel et la guerre (fin du Moyen Âge-1920)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2016), pp. 113-131; Benjamin Deruelle, '"Toutefois, la crainte est radoulcye par ce remede": Perception et gestion de la peur dans les armées du roi de France au XVIe siècle', in Jean Baechler and Michèle Battesti (ed.), *Guerre et Santé* (Paris: Hermann, 2018), pp. 141-159.

[5]Without announcing it as such, Jan Plamper has looked at execution in his important article, 'Fear: Soldiers and Emotion in Early Twentieth-Century Russian Psychology.'

to some readers, but the way they are assembled might be. Consider what is said below more as a suggestion than as a proof.

Individual Execution of Fear

One tenet of the history of emotions is that emotions are experienced and expressed differently in different eras by different cultures. This gets into a discussion of emotions in general as visceral or learned, but for the purpose of this article, we solely focus on the elements of the debate as it confronts fear. It is undeniable that fear caused by the threat of physical death or injury is more visceral and instinctual than learned. But in addition, we are taught to fear a range of things beyond the physical. Fear is therefore both physical, or visceral, and culturally constructed. In contrast, honour as self-perception in terms of learned emotions such as pride, self-satisfaction, guilt or shame, is constructed and serves as a counter to physical fear by threatening cultural harm or annihilation. And this cultural threat can, and does, loom larger than the physical one. Combatants die for honour.

There are several ways in which individuals execute fear in battle. Most obviously, it can make a soldier hide from combat, cringing from the fight when possible. S. L. A. Marshall, in his important but now controversial study conducted during World War II, declared that only 25 percent of U.S. Army troops engaged in combat actually fired their weapons.[6] His findings have been challenged, but they were perceived at the time as reliable enough to revise training and organisation after the war. Fear can also lead combatants to desert or surrender; in fact, surrender is sometimes seen as desertion *to* the enemy, since both desertion and surrender are efforts by soldiers to remove themselves from the fight. Panic can drive a soldier to flee in the midst of combat. And the flight of a single soldier can precipitate a rout by other soldiers who view it. Acting on fear can be contagious.

There is also what seems like a paradoxical execution of fear, what the sociologist of violence, Randall Collins terms 'forward panic', aggressive action, often frenzied, as an execution of fear-induced panic.[7] He explains the fact that troops assaulting enemy trenches in World War I often shot down or bayonetted men attempting to surrender as an effect of the forward panic that drove many of the attackers. Writing of the same phenomenon, but without calling it 'forward panic', John Moran, in his classic study,

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[6]S.L.A. Marshal, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command (*Washington, DC: *Infantry Journal*, 1947).
[7]Randall Collins, *Violence: A Micro-sociological Theory (*Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp.83-134.

The Anatomy of Courage, observed that '[S]ometimes the shadow of fear drove men in just the opposite direction, into sheer recklessness.'[8]

Lord Moran, basing his conclusions on experience in both the world wars, offered another insight into that firewall against fear: courage. Moran described courage as finite, like a bank account from which the soldier or airman might draw. When that individual had exhausted his account, he best be removed from combat. Moran learned much from the experience of RAF fighter pilots who flew against the Germans. Pilots too long in the air followed one of two paths: 'too much dash or too little.'[9] That is, they became foolishly aggressive or hung back from the fight. In either case, they became a danger to themselves or their comrades. All this should be taken as a warning for students of warfare and emotions in any era not to read bold action necessarily as courage; what seems like temerity could be timidity in disguise. Moreover, while fear is inexhaustible, courage is not.

These studies are centred on the twentieth century, but if fear of physical death and injury is largely visceral and instinctual, rather than learned, it is clearly applicable across epochs. Past and present examples make it absolutely clear that military organisation must confront and master the management of fear to be effective in battle. In the early modern era, 'the battle culture of forbearance' was based upon drill, training, punishment, and close supervision to create armies capable of linear tactics requiring counter-instinctual behaviour by the men in the ranks.[10]

Perceptions of Soldier-Fear and Soldier-Honour by the Command Community

Early modern European command communities cherished their own conceptions of honour, and believed common soldiers lacked such codes. Thus, the military must control its troops by fear of physical punishment. We have evidence of this in declarations of this perception from the top of the hierarchy.

Frederick the Great disparaged rank and file soldiers: 'An army is composed for the most part of idle and inactive men, and unless the general has a constant eye upon them, and obliges them to do their duty, this artificial machine … will very soon fall to

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[8]Lord Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage* (London: Constable, 1947), chap. 3, loc 750, Kindle.

[9]Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage*, chap. 3, loc 783, Kindle.

[10]On the concept of 'battle culture of forbearance', see John A. Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle: The French Army, 1610-1715* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chap. 15 and John A. Lynn, 'The Battle Culture of Forbearance,' in Wayne E. Lee, *Warfare and Culture in World History* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), Chap. 5.

pieces.'[11] He conceded, 'Our Régiments are composed of half our own people and half foreigners who enlist for money' – hardly men to be trusted.[12] Thus, Frederick suggested esprit de corps as motivation to serve as an alternative to honour:

> Everything that one can make of the soldiers consists in giving them an esprit de corps, or, in other words, in teaching them to place their Régiment higher than all of the troops in the world. Since officers must necessarily lead them into the greatest dangers, the soldiers (since they cannot be influenced by ambition) should fear their officers more than all the dangers to which they are exposed. Otherwise nobody will be in a position to lead them to the attack against three hundred cannon that are thundering against them. Good will can never induce the common soldier to stand up to such dangers: he will only do so through fear.[13]

The primary applicable leverage remains fear. Others in authority shared Frederick's declared low opinion of common soldiers. Claude Louis, Comte de Saint-Germain, French Minister of War, 1775-1777, similarly condemned the European common soldier: 'In the present state of things, armies can only be composed of the slime (*bourbe*) of the nation and of all that is useless to society.' Consequently, he argued, 'We must turn to military discipline as the means of purifying this corrupt mass, of shaping it and making it useful.'[14] For 'discipline', read obedience ingrained and maintained by punishment and the fear of punishment. A very explicit distinction between honour and fear as motivation appears in the Saxon-Polish Field Service Rules of 1752: 'Honour is reserved for the officer... Nothing therefore must incite the officer but honour, which carries its own recompense; but the soldier is driven and restrained and educated to discipline by reward and fear.'[15]

Given the repetition of such comments, we can conclude one of four things: firstly, European officers in general did not believe their common soldiers capable of honour; secondly, officers said things they thought their colleagues would want to hear; thirdly, the officer class defined honour in such a way as to exclude lower-class civilians; or

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[11]Frederick II, *Military Instructions from the late King of Prussia to his Generals*, trans. Lt. Col. Foster, 5th ed. (Sherborne: J. Cruttwell, 1818), p.5.

[12]Frederick II, *Military Instructions,* p.1.

[13]Frederick II in *Frederick the Great on the Art of War,* ed. and trans. Jay Luvaas (New York: Free Press, 1966), p. 78.

[14]See this and other relevant quotes in John A. Lynn, *Bayonets of the Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Armies of Revolutionary France* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1984), pp. 63-64 and Lynn, 'The Battle Culture of Forbearance', pp. 96-97.

[15]The Saxon-Polish Field Service Rules of 1752 in Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism, Civilian and Military* (New York: Free Press, 1959), pp. 72-73.

fourthly, officers felt themselves duty bound to deny soldiers honour because the recognition of martial honour among the lower classes would negate the elite's claim to privilege and preferment. These are interesting alternatives, but, ultimately, we are confronted with a real-world question: What did the command community execute in order to control their troops' fear and lack of honour?

Compliance Systems: Coercive, Remunerative, and Normative

To develop this argument further, it is necessary to identify compliance systems that militaries have historically employed to secure obedience. The words of Frederick just quoted represent only one of three alternatives.

In *Bayonets of the Republic*, this author drew from compliance theory to describe three paths to obedience: coercive, remunerative, and normative compliance.[16] These categories have proved illuminating and useful. Moreover, in surveying the literature about motivation and emotions, notably in Ilya Berkovich's *Motivation in War*, this terminology has been employed by others. Put briefly, participating in a military campaign is uncomfortable, sometimes miserable, and dangerous to the point of being deadly. Why should anyone agree to take up arms and go to battle? Unless unwilling soldiers are literally dragged along in chains, there must be some form of self-interest that leads them to comply with military commands. A military organisation must synchronise the troops' self-interest with its own interest and goals.

Coercive compliance employs punishments, or more precisely the fear of punishment, to bring troops into line. The certainty and severity of such coercion must be perceived as greater than the risk entailed in complying with orders. Frederick's soldiers were to be more afraid of their officers than of the enemy. Remunerative compliance, termed utilitarian compliance by some, uses the desire of something of value, usually seen as material reward, as an incentive to win the soldiers' obedience. For example, remunerative compliance could draw a sixteenth-century mercenary into service by the promise of pay, the expectation of 'normal' booty on campaign, and the hope of securing a windfall of considerable value and returning home rich. Lastly, normative compliance appeals to internalised symbolic and psychological rewards for acting in what the soldiers regard as the right and proper way. It relies upon a sense of honour that promises self-satisfaction and pride or threatens guilt and shame. As can be seen, each form of compliance is linked with emotions. This brings

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[16]See Steven D. Westbrook, 'The Potential for Military Disintegration', in Sam C. Sarkesian (ed.), *Combat Effectiveness: Cohesion, Stress, and The Voluntary Military* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980), pp. 244-78.

to mind the declaration of William Reddy, a pioneer in the history of particular emotions: 'Emotional control is the real site of the exercise of power.'[17]

Before leaving this identification of compliance systems, it is important to make clear that these three forms of compelling or fostering obedience are *not* mutually exclusive. Those mercenary bands of the sixteenth century could also be coerced by physical punishments for disciplinary infractions and be motivated in battle by camaraderie and honour between the common soldiers themselves.

Execution of Practices to Counter Fear in Early Modern Armies: Drill and Weapons Training
The fact remains that early modern armies executed methods consistent with a coercive compliance system to counter fear among the troops. The announced perceptions of soldiers' lack of honour and the need to use fear for motivation were executed in an institutional manner – in drill, training, supervision, and punishment.

Historically, an emphasis on drill is not limited to armies relying on coercive compliance. But in early modern armies it had both tactical and psychological relevance. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, close order drill was a necessary tactical skill, essential for manoeuvre, defensive fortitude, and offensive force. This drill had to be meticulously carried out by the rank and file under the close command and supervision of officers. Thus, drill was an education in the fact that some people gave orders and others obeyed them, that there was an official hierarchy of power within the military, certified by the state. And errors in drill would habituate soldiers to censure and punishment.

Drill also aided in controlling fear by focusing the soldier on a familiar repetitive task of 'keeping together in time', as the great historian William McNeill termed it.[18] It required doing things as a group, making the soldier aware that he was not alone, but surrounded and supported by others. McNeill argued that marching drill, even in the very different times of World War II, led to 'muscular bonding' between those marching together. We will soon have more to say about bonding.[19]

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[17] William M. Reddy, 'Against Constructionism: The Historical Ethnography of Emotions', *Current Anthropology*, 38, 3 (July 1997) p. 335.

[18] William Hardy McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[19] As Cornelis van der Haven points out in his discussion of Machiavelli's *Dell'arte della Guerra* (1520), 'Obedient soldiers are not only better at staying together; they also tend to feel stronger during battle.' Cornelis Van der Haven, 'Drill and Allocution as Emotional Practices in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Poetry, Plays and Military Treatises', in Kuijpers and Van der Haven (eds.), *Battlefield Emotions 1500-1800*,

Military training beyond group drill, then as now, could supply another bulwark for those facing fear by teaching the soldier to focus on an immediate task, rather than the risk of death or maiming. Combat veterans frequently report, 'When all hell broke loose, and you were really scared, you just did what you were trained to do.' Concentrating on the basic actions of a specific job gives individuals an activity that occupies, and distracts, them from fear. Lord Moran observed: 'In the presence of danger man often finds salvation in action. To dull emotion, he must do something; to remain immobile, to stagnate in mind or body, is to surrender without terms.'[20]

This emphasis on task makes weapons training as outlined in Jacob de Gheyn's, renowned 1608 treatise *Exercise of Arms* (*Wapenhandelinghe van Roers, Musquetten ende Spiessen*, important in a sense not usually stressed. De Gheyn's work was not a drill regulation in the normal sense of showing the formations and deployments of entire military units, usually on the battalion level. The de Gheyn manual consisted of a series of engraved images showing individual soldiers going through a great number of movements necessary to handle, load, and fire weapons – forty-two plates for the arquebus, forty-three for the musket, and thirty-two for the pike.[21] In his historical study of emotions, van der Haven notices the calm faces of the individuals portrayed:

The soldier's silent receptivity as expressed by the faces of de Gheyn's soldiers, certainly refers to his presupposed willingness to be docile and subordinated to the will of his commander; but at the same time this docility implies the mental capacity to remain quiet and in a state of deep concentration, even in the turmoil of battle.[22]

But there is another way to interpret this; the manual is so detailed about every movement of hand, head, and body that it required a great deal of attention and repetition for soldiers to get it right. One might consider this as drill, but even more so as weapons training. It could be argued that manuals instructed individuals in complicated repetitive tasks that demanded concentration – where fear had no place.

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chap. 2, loc 589, Kindle. I would also argue that drill and the regalia of military dress and ritual are related to my concept of a perfected form of warfare in *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture*. One that celebrates warfare in an idealised form, that in this case, no longer exists but retains its romantic vision. It was a ritual in which common soldiers as a group performed obedience.

[20]Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage*, Chap. 4, loc. 832-833, Kindle.

[21]Jacques de Ghenn, *Maniement d'armes d'arquebuses, mouquetez, et piques* (Amsterdam: Henry Laurens, 1608).

[22]Van der Haven, 'Drill and Allocution as Emotional Practices', chap. 2, loc. 699-710, Kindle.

So, when danger escalated and fear with it, the soldier could respond by 'doing what he was trained to do.' The soldier's individual action diverted him from his emotions.

Execution of Practices to Counter Fear in Early Modern Armies: Leadership and Supervision

Another foundation of military success was and is leadership. From a technical point of view, such leadership requires technical knowledge and tactical, operational, and strategic judgement appropriate to the rank of the commander. Leaders who excel also understand their troops, or, at least, they comprehend the pushes and pulls that will bring out the best performance from the troops under their command.

However, there seems to be a tendency in those who discuss warfare in terms of the history of emotions to stress the inspirational character of military commanders, particularly on their emotive language. But there is reason for some scepticism that the harangues and allocutions of major commanders deeply moved their troops. A commander trying to address his troops orally is limited by the range of his or her voice, and outdoors, that is not very great, even if the audience and circumstances made no competing noises. Perhaps what mattered most when a commander addressed a large number of troops was not his words, but his presence and performance: presence in that the leader was there, among his troops who in all probability respected his authority, skill, and ability to win; and performance, literally in the commander's display of the demeanour and gestures of dedication, confidence, and bravery. In the more jargonistic use of the word, the commander's performance of courage buttressed his troops' courage and obliged them to match the commander's seemingly stout heart. Grand orations may have been like silent films, affecting the audience by sight rather than sound. One might want to see allocutions as an emotional exchange, but this can be challenged. Such addresses were one-way, from an individual of high status to those below, and meant as enactment rather than exchange. Of course, when commanders circulated among their troops' encampments, as Frederick and Napoleon were known to do, they could exert a far more personal touch.

In any case, company and field grade officers leading their men under fire had to perform courage. In the age of linear warfare, they had to lead from the front where they set a standard for their men. This lent their men some confidence, and encouraged the common soldier by a fearlessness he was supposed to emulate.[23] This would vary on the compliance system and on the circumstances. Being exemplary would also win the officer the respect of his men, buttressing his right to demand obedience.

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[23]*Zêlos*, a desire to emulate, was one of the emotions noted by Aristotle.

Performance of courage by officers appealed to the 'better nature' of soldiers. But in battle, this presence and performance was also an element of the close supervision of troops thought incapable of honour – of men who would run if not restrained, men who in a sense had to be driven forward rather than advancing on their own initiative. The battle culture of forbearance required soldiers on the attack to advance, in good order, over open ground, under heavy fire, but without permission to fire back. That is, they must expose themselves to enemy fire while not seeking cover or defending themselves – quite a lot to ask of the men in the ranks. But a command community that believed, or had to act as if it believed, that their men were uncompelled by honour, must not rely upon their soldiers' innate bravery, but upon close supervision and the long-ingrained fear of punishment.

Honour and the Execution of Honour Among Military Elites

Within emotional communities, it is important to take into consideration the different perceptions of honour. As stated above, honour is a complex of emotions that measure and reflect self-esteem, from pride to shame. And most importantly, concern for one's honour is a powerful counter to fear. To the extent that martial values are important to a society, or to the elites of society, the recognition, control, and expression of emotions most associated with warfare need to be seen on the macro level first – in this case, the command community. Within the Western European *Ancien Régime* military elite, the values and emotions associated with honour were embedded from an early age through observation and interchange, praise of some examples and condemnation of others. Pride in a brave action or outrage at an undeserved insult would become second nature.

Cultural differences can be surprisingly strong, even among military elites of similar status and employing similar technology at about the same time. There is no sharper contrast within the realm of late medieval and early modern military honour than that between the status of surrender among the western European aristocracy and that held by the samurai of Japan. Europe developed a tradition of honourable surrender in battle, in which a noble 'knight' or officer could yield to a foe, promise the payment of ransom, even be freed on his word, his *parole*, to collect that sum, and pay it without losing status or honour. It is common knowledge that attitudes towards surrender, death, and suicide were radically different in medieval and early modern Japan. Samurai adhered to a code that held life as ephemeral, disposable, and surrender as damningly dishonourable. The manual of bushido, *Hagakure*, quotes the judgement of a famous fourteenth-century samurai who expressed the apparently universal opinion that

surrender was always 'an unforgivable course of action for a samurai', under *any* circumstance.[24]

This stark juxtaposition can be explained by vast cultural differences. In contrast, Holger Aflerbach demonstrates that during the nineteenth century, while European armies continued and expanded the tradition of honourable surrender, European navies followed a very strict code that rejected surrender as dishonourable. Naval captains would see their ships sunk and their crews perish rather than striking their flags in surrender. It amounted to forcing suicide upon the sailors. In 1914, British Vice Admiral Sir Frederick Doveton Sturdee observed, 'in former times ships surrendered; now they prefer to go down.'[25] These examples serve as a warning that one must be ready to differentiate emotional communities, in this case command communities, *between* and even *within* given cultures.

Honour and Motivation Among Soldier Groups

The intersections between the history of warfare and the history of emotions should be apparent, from the clash of great passions that precipitate armed conflicts, to memories that are propagated and continue long after the last shots are fired. However, this author's work has been most consumed by the essential role played by emotions in the motivations felt and followed by men, and women, on campaign and in battle.

Compliance systems, as discussed above, are each linked to particular emotions within military emotional communities. Armies based primarily on fear or material desire differ from communities based primarily on normative compliance, with its emphasis on pride and shame. Coercive and remunerative systems are basically hierarchical, with punishments and incentives administered from the top down; normative systems assume strong influences originating at the bottom, among the troops, themselves. In studying the emotional history of warfare on the level of the soldier group, it is helpful to break down motivations into a trilogy of initial, sustaining, and combat motivation.

We should address that trilogy now. In the 1980s, this author began a study of military motivation mainly through what was then termed 'military effectiveness'. This work focused on differences between *Ancien Régime* forces and those who took the field in

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[24]Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure: The Secret Wisdom of the Samurai*, trans. Alexander Bennett (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2014) book 1, loc. 1,813, Kindle. The *Hagakure* was written in the Tokugawa period, ca. 1716.

[25]Doveton Sturdee, quoted in Holger Aflerbach, 'Going Down with Flying Colours? Naval Surrender from Elizabethan to Our Own Times', in Hew Strachan and Holger Aflerbach (ed.), *How Fighting Ends: A History of Surrender* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 200.

the name of the French Revolution. Military effectiveness literature centred on the role of the primary group as a sociological phenomenon, on bonding and camaraderie between men during actual combat. The primary group is the small soldier group defined by face-to-face relationships between soldiers who live and fight together and know each other well. In modern times such groups are characteristically based on tactical organisation, the squad or the platoon. It can also centre on an administrative unit, and in the early modern and revolutionary French army this was the mess group, or *ordinaire*. It is too complicated to get into it here, but the *ordinaire* could be composed of men from the same platoon or not depending on circumstances. The bonding between soldiers of a primary group, called primary group cohesion, was and is deemed essential for effectiveness in the field.

The formal discussion of soldier small group bonding under fire dates back to Charles Ardant du Picq in 1880, but its greatest impetus came out of U.S. Army studies of World War II troops. This includes *The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath*[26] and S. L. A. Marshall's *Men Against Fire*, and the extension of this work by a coterie of military sociologists.[27] While these professional and scholarly studies deal with times well beyond the early modern era, they so inform our understanding that they must be included here.

Work on military effectiveness studies not only centred on the structure of the primary group, it also focused in sharply on that group during actual combat, when the bullets were flying, and death was intimately present at the front. As a group under extreme stress, the primary group in combat seemed necessary and natural, and by implication universal. Those studying it talked little of culture and change.

To understand the problem with the nearly exclusive attention to actual combat in these studies, we need to distinguish what Kay Anderson and Susan Smith term 'emotionally heightened spaces'.[28] During wartime, a distant 'home front' obviously differs from the immediate battlefield. However, even when discussing a 'war zone', where troops are active and operations pursued, we need to differentiate between different sites and situations within it. In this essay, combatants engaged in actual fighting are labelled as on 'the front lines', but those 'behind the lines' are not engulfed

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[26]Samuel A. Stouffer, *et al.*, *The American Soldier: Combat and its Aftermath* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949).

[27]This coterie included Morris Janowitz, Edward Shils, Sam Sarkesian, and Charles Moskos.

[28]Kay Anderson and Susan J. Smith, 'Editorial: Emotional Geographies', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* Vol. 26, Iss. 1 (2001), p. 8. See as well Benno Gammerl, 'Emotional Styles – Concepts and Challenges,' *Rethinking History* 16 (2012), pp. 161-175.

by actual combat, at least temporarily. The terms 'the front lines' and 'behind the lines' denote 'spaces', but they more fundamentally apply to conditions, exposed to fire or relatively safe from immediate danger. Troops' experience and the expression of emotions can differ fundamentally between being at the front or behind it.

Despite all the emphasis on the front lines in military sociology, how much did it encompass the life of the primary group? There is an adage about war that it consists of months of boredom punctuated by moments of sheer terror. But military effectiveness literature seemed to be obsessed with the moments of sheer terror and skipped over the less dramatic months of boredom. Scholars reached firm conclusions that American troops in twentieth-century wars were not driven by great causes but, above all, by the bonds of camaraderie, dependence, and responsibility between men in the ranks. But in studying motivations among soldiers of the French Revolution, we needed to know more about the periods of 'boredom', the quieter times in a soldier's life when soldiers had the time to express beliefs, values, and emotions – when they might well talk of causes as well as experience camaraderie.

The point was to differentiate between the characters of soldier-motivations that suited different emotional spaces and circumstances. The result was distinguishing between initial, sustaining, and combat motivation. One ought to begin with a consideration of why men volunteered to enter the military, or at least complied with conscription when that was instituted. This is initial motivation. Personal and financial strain, along with state *malice* coercion, largely explain it before 1789, but an investment in the new society of revolutionary France became a significant part of initial motivation after war broke out in 1792. Contemporary literature about radicalisation and de-radicalisation in terrorism, which has much to offer historians of all periods with its insights on initial motivation, would further inform this inquiry.[29] One point made is that the social environment and social networks, of a potential terrorist are extremely influential in turning him or her to violence. It is no great jump to imagine that the social networks of potential soldiers were also very important in the decisions of those men to march off to war in early modern Europe. Thus, in discussing initial motivation, it would be important, if it were possible, to know more

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[29]See John A. Lynn, *Another Kind of War: The Nature and History of Terrorism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019). See in particular John G. Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2014); Mark Sagemen, particularly *The Leaderless Jihad: Terrorist Networks in the Twenty-first Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2008), and Daniel Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization: Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism* (London: Routledge, 2017). See as well, Tore Bjørgo and John G. Horgan, *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (London: Routledge, 2009).

about the micro-communities of family, friends, and neighbours around potential recruits.

Once the micro-communities of those soldiers and sailors within military and naval organisations have been examined, it will be important to explore our understanding of sustaining and combat motivation. Berkovich has employed my trilogy, but at times he makes them seem as if they are sequential, in other words, the soldier begins in an environment of initial motivation, then moves into one of sustaining motivation, and then deals with combat motivation. Initial motivation is, indeed, initial. However, sustaining motivation is defined not by sequence but by situation; it is the motivational and emotional factors that affect soldiers when they are not directly engaged in combat, when they are behind the lines, which is most of the time. Here soldiers have time to ponder and question.

Sustaining motivation had to have been the critical site and circumstance for emotional exchange between common soldiers, and emotional exchange had to be fundamental to primary group cohesion. Moreover, the barriers of class and rank that separated soldiers from their officers would increase the importance of emotional exchange between men in the ranks. These are hypotheses worth exploring as elements of military and emotional history.

Combat motivation is the state of mind and motives existing under the extraordinary circumstance of actual fighting, and usually accounts for a small percentage of a soldier's time, even when war is raging. Thus, generalisations made about motivation in the primary group as a social group or as an emotional community under fire need to be modified by taking into account that same emotional community in less highly charged times. And, that troops in the war zone move back and forth between sustaining and combat motivation.

Granted, the importance of soldier primary groups is strongest and most obvious under fire, when fear peaks, emotions intensify, and the individual depends on, and supports, his immediate comrades. To explain what motivated soldiers to fight bravely, S. L. A. Marshall gave an iconic answer: 'the same things which induce him to face life bravely – friendship, loyalty to responsibility, and knowledge that he is a repository of the faith and confidence of others.'[30] Despite some of the controversy that surrounds Marshall's work today, that answer still stands. In sociological terms, M.B. Smith wrote that the primary group 'set and enforced group standards of behaviour, and it supported and sustained the individual in stresses he would otherwise not have been

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[30]S. L. A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1947, Kindle edition: Uncommon Valor Press, 2016), chap. 11, loc. 2143-2146, Kindle.

able to withstand.'[31] In the group, men shared their feelings and fears, and they explicitly and implicitly cared for one another. They also voiced their disdain for some conduct and their praise for other actions.

Soldiers commonly speak of their comrades as family, as brothers. 'We band of brothers' is not simply a Shakespearean phrase. But in reality, the soldier groups of early modern armies before about 1650 were not simply composed of 'brothers', because many, many women campaigned with the men.[32] The presence of women in camp, as partners or wives, without or with children, would probably have made for a very different dynamic of the soldier group on campaign before 1650 than it became after that date. It is worth exploring.

As an emotional community, the primary group is characterised by a range of emotions that would typify those of a family, not just an army. Primary group cohesion is about emotional support as well physical dependence, particularly emotional exchange made behind the lines. When the group faces the dangers of combat, the feelings of affection and responsibility can be so great that soldiers who might have the opportunity of escaping the fighting by assignment to light duties behind the lines or being confined in hospital, may beg to return to their units, even deserting their sick beds, to rejoin their comrades on the front lines. Much of the memoir discussion of this comes from the twentieth century, but Berkovich gives examples of this in *Ancien Régime* forces.[33] Among other examples, he utilises contemporary stories reported by two British sergeants fighting against the French in Quebec during the Seven Years' War, James Thompson and John Johnson, who told of men abandoning medical care to return to the front and march with their fellows to battle. Such men who 'deserted to the front' were drawn by concern for their comrades and by fear of being considered 'skulkers'.

Such behaviour brings us to the notion of normative compliance and honour among *Ancien Régime* troops, a key subject of Berkovich's book. Berkovich holds that in my work, I question or deny the existence of honour among private soldiers before the French Revolution, when a system of normative compliance materialises in the French

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[31]M. B. Smith in Samuel A. Stouffer, *et al.*, *The American Soldier: Combat and its Aftermath* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949), pp. 34-35.

[32]John A. Lynn II, *Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[33]Berkovich, *Motivation in War*, pp. 218-220. James Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe's Army: James Thompson, Gentleman Volunteer, 1733–1830*, Earl John Chapman and Ian Macpherson McCulloch (ed.) (Montreal: R. Brass Studio, 2010); and John Johnson, 'Memoirs of the Siege of Quebec and the Total Reduction of Canada', in Arthur Doughty and G.W. Parmelee (ed.), *The Siege of Quebec and the Battle of Plains of Abraham*, 6 vols. (Quebec: Dessault & Proulx, 1901), Vol. 5, pp. 75-166.

military forces. However, I have no trouble with crediting common soldiers with their own version of honour; I simply contend that the command community recognised fear as dominant and depended on coercive compliance to keep men to their tasks.[34] It is also important that European armies experimented with 'light' infantry before the French Revolution. Light infantry were trained to fight in ways more individualistic than the linear formations of 'heavy' infantry. Light infantry could exploit topography for cover and concealment, pick their own targets and rate of fire, for example. They were meant to perform without constant supervision and direction. Thus, in a sense, light infantry implied less coercion and more normative compliance. Still, for armies as a whole, the predominant form of practice and institutions was still coercive before the Revolution.

The institutional execution of organisation and practices demonstrates an institutionalisation of reliance on normative compliance with the French Revolution. After the Second World War the United States Army took its studies of combat effectiveness and primary group cohesion seriously enough to reorganise infantry units to emphasise the soldier group. The Army based this new system on the fire team of four men operating with other fire teams. We can say this was executing fear, and motivation, by institutional change. There is similar evidence of changing execution in the army of the French Revolution. Writing about Prussian military reform in the wake of the debacle of defeat by Napoleon, 1806-1807, the noted military historian Peter Paret commented that the most novel element of the French revolutionary army was the capacity to employ any infantry battalion as light infantry.[35] By this he meant, while there were limited numbers of specialised light infantry before the Revolution, the command community of the new revolutionary army felt confident in deploying all its men in ways that depended on the initiative and responsibility of the common soldier – the predominance of normative compliance.

So, reliance on new 'light' tactics was not simply a tactical innovation; it institutionally recognised the honour of common soldiers. Before the Revolution, the officer was regarded as admirable and the common soldier as dangerous, 'merely as vile instruments for the oppression of the people', a veteran remarked. But at the height of the Revolution the officer was regarded as suspect, because of his ambition, while the soldier was elevated as a paragon of patriotic sacrifice: 'It is an honour to be

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[34]Allow me to quote myself in self-defense: 'There is … very good reason to question the aristocratic prejudice that there was no honor among common soldiers. In fact, there is every reason to believe that common soldiers adhered to their own codes of honor.' Lynn, 'The Battle Culture of Forbearance, 1660-1789', p. 105.

[35]Paret referenced in Lynn, *Bayonets of the Republic*, p. 265. See Peter Paret, *Yorck and the Era of Prussian Reform* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 72-73.

considered a soldier, when this title is that of defender of the Constitution of this country.'[36]

We can describe this tactical and civic change in several ways, but this essay proposes considering it as an execution of the realisation that soldier-honour, a complex of emotions, could be relied upon to counter fear without commanders wielding a heavy hand of coercion.

This paper has been an experiment of sorts: to deal with military obedience and effectiveness as an execution of emotions, or at least of the perception of emotions. Perhaps all that has been accomplished here is to recast in emotional terms what we already know about the very hard world of military history – just an intellectual tour de force. But it is more fundamental than that. It is argued here that military practices and institutions have an emotional base. In the past, this author has explained things, such as the battle culture of forbearance, in social and cultural terms, but perhaps the most important element within social and cultural difference is the gulf between emotional communities and the ability of the command community to use its power to shape military practices and institutions in accord with its emotional perceptions of common soldiers.

In conclusion, if emotions are fundamental to military practice and performance, military historians could benefit from insights generated by the history of emotions. And perhaps historians of emotions might gain from looking at the evolution of military institutions and practices as a theatre for the execution of emotions, one from which they could both draw useful approaches.

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[36]See contemporary contrasting descriptions quoted in Lynn, *Bayonets of the Republic*, p. 64.