The Officer Corps

As with any amateur military unit, a corps of Yeomanry Cavalry required a dedicated body of officers to have any chance of achieving efficiency. Unlike other amateur units, however, the Yeomanry also placed unique demands on that leadership—in part shaped by the conditions of service, but also by self-imposed, unofficial expectations. Chief among those expectations was a willingness to be generous with personal wealth, something that proves difficult to separate from all aspects of Yeomanry officership throughout the force's existence. From encouraging and enlisting tenants, to investing private capital and lending land, the officers of the Yeomanry played a large part in ensuring its survival through the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Corps could and would continue well below strength if other ranks could not readily be found; indeed, as will be shown in later chapters, this was arguably the natural state of many regiments in the late nineteenth century. In contrast, it was near impossible to operate effectively with a shortage of officers, and more than one corps was allowed to dissipate after its leaders abandoned it. The role of this chapter will be to address the fundamentally important position of officers to the peacetime Yeomanry by questioning what these men brought to the force and what membership offered in return.

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G. Hay, *The Yeomanry Cavalry and Military Identities in Rural Britain, 1815–1914*, War, Culture and Society, 1750–1850,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-65539-0_2

The chapter *"The Yeomanry and the state"* has shown that the nineteenth-century peak of the Yeomanry Cavalry's manpower was in excess of 30,000 men, but just 1662 of this number were found among its officer corps.[1] At the force's all time low in 1895 these figures came closer to 10,000 and 602, respectively, equating to a greater than 60% decline in officers. The myriad reasons behind the overall decline included the reduced threat from overseas invasion and internal insurrection, government retrenchment, agricultural depression, and wider social pressures. Beyond such broad strains on society, though, there are more specific questions to be asked regarding the officer corps and its marginal resilience in comparison to the rank and file. Answering such questions demands some understanding of those that constructed and maintained regiments. Populist work on the Yeomanry has routinely sought to reinforce the connection between landlords and tenants and, in particular, the importance of dominant families within the counties.[2] The limited academic work on the subject has gone further to shown the wider implications of membership as the nineteenth century progressed. Important questions have been raised regarding social climbing and the establishment of families in the counties, but there is more to be said regarding the connection between the institution and wider society, as well as the reflection of membership on the individual.[3] As it was unquestionably expensive, and as the force's purpose was increasingly open to question after the middle of the nineteenth century, it is also unclear what enticed so many significant names to its ranks. Furthermore, although work has begun to hint at the connection between the Yeomanry's officer corps and established wealth, most analysis has glossed over the presence of the *nouveau riche* as well as later urban manifestations of the movement.

As has already been demonstrated, the raising of amateur military units went far beyond a veil of defence in case of French invasion. Revolutionary Europe still presented a significant threat in the form of

[1] Excluding adjutants, surgeons etc. *BPP:* 189, 1821: Yeomanry Cavalry Return, 1820.

[2] Mileham, P.J.R. *The Yeomanry Regiments—A Pictorial History* (Spellmount, Tunbridge Wells, 1985).

[3] Beckett, I.F.W. *The Amateur Military Tradition, 1558–1945* (MUP, 1991), pp. 189–190; and Gilks, A.D. 'A History of Britain's Volunteer Cavalry, 1776–1908.' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham. 2005), pp. 137–143.

Table 1 Number of officers, 1820–1855

Year	*Number returned*
1820	1662
1833	1176
1837	1135
1840	835
1845	896
1849	689
1855	958

BPP: 189, 1821; *BPP*: 67, 1834; *BPP*: 448, 1837–38; *BPP*: 300, 1842; *BPP*: 494, 1847; *BPP*: 121, 1850; and *BPP*: 370, 1854–55

domestic discontent inspired by observation and imitation, a threat that was held to be real into the 1850s. Most concerned were those who dominated the traditional power structures of the country, but they found an ally in the middle classes—or to put it differently, those with hard won property and livelihoods. As the Duke of Richmond pointed out when the force was raised, the problem with a volunteer force is finding people of 'rank and character to undertake to lead them, who from their influence over those who engage as privates could supply the want of military law, and maintain respect and the necessary degree of subordination.'[4] By this definition a commission in the Yeomanry demanded pre-existing authority, which, in relation to the composition of the other ranks, represented a very select group of candidates. Just how accurate this theorising was will be explored later, but quantifying officer strength through the century provides us with a crude understanding of how forthcoming those candidates were. Just as Blackstock found for the Irish Yeomanry, there are limited sources for the British force in the early nineteenth century. Furthermore, tracking effective officer figures against establishment—which is to say the desired number—is practically impossible before 1875 as the official returns did not record the information. In fact, although Yeomanry numbers were captured throughout the century, it was rare for officer figures to be disaggregated at all. Despite the limited evidence these figures still offer interesting trends.

The story shown in Table 1, although patchy, does plot the reductions of the force in the late 1820s and 1830s, and despite a surge mid-century, it effectively documents a decline. However, even with the greater

[4]WSRO, PHA/53. Letter: Duke of Richmond to Earl of Egremont, 17 June 1794.

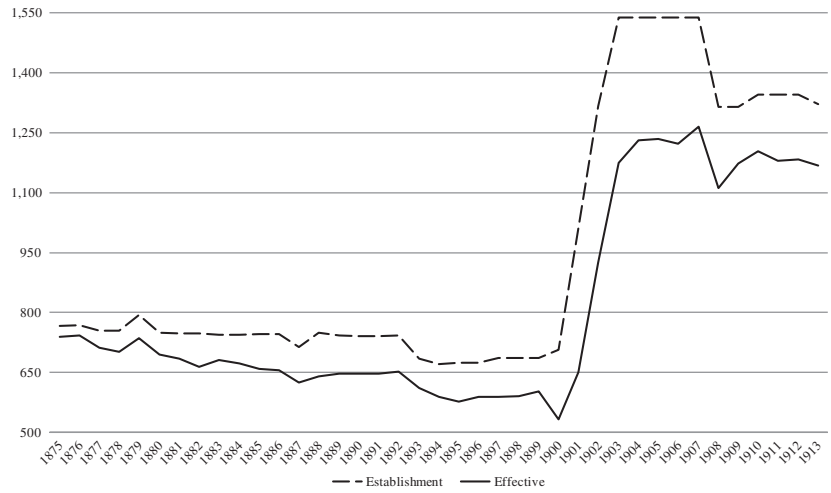


Chart 1 Number of serving officers, 1875–1913

detail offered after 1875, crude figures still hide anomalies. In the return of that year, despite a number of regiments collectively wanting 27 officers, the cumulative supernumeraries of other regiments meant that the Yeomanry as a whole was 16 officers over the desired maximum.[5] Ignoring this, Chart 1 shows establishment figures against the total number of effective officers serving through the date range. In the 38 years that are comparable with target strength, the Yeomanry Cavalry never achieved its establishment and, although the rise and fall mirrored the establishment, it remained unobtainable. Although it proves nothing profound on its own, it is clear from these results that the Yeomanry struggled, at least from 1875, to find a full complement of officers. Ignoring the years of rapid expansion under St. John Brodrick's reforms in 1901 and the change of conditions under Richard Haldane in 1907, the steady and persistent fall through the 1870s and 1880s is clear. Although circumstances were looking considerably better by 1893, with only 30 men required to meet the total establishment, the force itself had shrunk

[5] Oversubscribed regiments provided an extra 59 officers to the total. *BPP*: C. 1429, 1876: Yeomanry Cavalry Return, 1875.

considerably. One inspecting officer had noted in the 1880s that the efficiency of a regiment depended on the quality of its officers, but in reality efficiency starts with adequate numbers. Looking at the Yeomanry overall, its failure to meet its establishment can only have made this task harder.[6]

Although we can track certain aspects of the careers of Yeomanry officers through the *Army Lists*, this tells us little about the individuals. Limited academic work on the subject has shown an officer corps dominated by the landed elite who deliberately excluded sections of society.[7] There are, however, some issues with this analysis, which also fails to engage with the nuances within the movement. The keeping of horses has been stated as one exclusive condition governing membership, though in a voluntary *cavalry* force designed to be reactive, the targeting of pre-existing horse owners should be obvious. What is more, before the repeal of the horse tax in 1874, the exemption provided by membership would have made ownership more affordable for those who required animals for work. If anything, it could be argued such a condition promised to broaden participation. Uniform and related expenses certainly made an enormous dent in personal funds with many examples spiralling into hundreds of pounds, but, as will be shown, the example of one Leicestershire officer spending nearly £700 on his appointments seems to be an exception.[8] What is clear, however, it that it is impossible to separate *officership* in the Yeomanry from significant financial burden, regardless of the date.

Although clearly not standardised or ever a constant, the cost of membership could be high enough for some to realise they could not maintain their position in the force. Before the peace with France, for example, one captain of the East Kent Yeomanry resigned his commission on account of 'very considerable personal expense and

[6] *BPP*: C. 7244, 1893–1894; and TNA, WO 32/7237. Memo from Inspector of Auxiliary Cavalry, Colonel C.W. Thesiger, c. 23 February 1882.

[7] Gilks, 'A History of Britain's Volunteer Cavalry', p. 92.

[8] John Trollope, 1st Baron Kesteven, spent this sum on three uniforms before joining the Leicestershire Yeomanry Cavalry in the 1870s. Gilks, 'A History of Britain's Volunteer Cavalry', p. 94.

inconvenience.'[9] Five years earlier, his uniform and horse appointments would have cost him a grand total of £86 2s 6d, a far from insignificant sum. In response he was told that his only expense should be his clothes, arms, horse furniture, and a dinner once a year—the latter being avoidable if he could not manage it.[10] While this provides an air of reality to the example provided above, the sums expended—especially the initial costs on taking a position—would have remained substantial to most households. Whether these costs were imposed deliberately and why will be discussed later, but the concluding statements made by the commandant in the Kent case read: 'captains of troops…should be of a station in life not to regard a little expense'; whatever an officer's motivations or personal beliefs, membership to a corps of Yeomanry was recognised and accepted as being costly from the very beginning.[11]

The importance attached to private capital did not change through the nineteenth century. Officers were not only there to command men, but also to set an example, bankroll troops and provide a respectable face for the regiment in county society. The latter two factors were unquestionably connected, and the treatment of men not fulfilling these duties was in some cases ruthless. In the late 1860s, for example, Lieutenant Griffith of the Queen's Own Royal Staffordshire Yeomanry was cashiered after being declared bankrupt with the collapse of his brewery. A regimental board of inquiry decided that his 'present position [was] no longer one which an officer in the Q.O. Royal Yeo[manry] ought to occupy.' The adjutant subsequently ordered him to tender his resignation and justified his actions to the Inspector-General of the Reserve Forces by stating, 'it is not customary for officers to remain in [Yeomanry] regiments…after they have made any sort of arrangement with their creditors.'[12]

Although Griffith's case seems rare, it is clear that regimental expenditure played a part in his downfall. Frequent examples of this expenditure

[9] CKS, EKY/Z1. Letter: Captain Paynter to Captain R. Cobb, 14 June 1806.

[10] CKS, EKY/Z1. Letter: Captain R. Cobb to Captain Paynter, 16 June 1806.

[11] Ibid.

[12] SRO, D1300/2/1. Letter: Captain P.C.G. Webster (Adjutant) to Lieutenant Griffith. 24 September 1869; 15 October 1869; 11 November 1869; and Letter: Captain P.C.G. Webster (Adjutant) to Major-General J. Lindsay. 17 March 1870.

can be found in the 1892 Brownlow Committee. When asked the costs in excess of allowances to a captain of a troop, the average answer given was nearly £60 a year in maintenance, but with the potential to be over £100. On top of this, an individual might be expected to pay close to £150 for his uniform and contribute anywhere between £5 and £50 to the regimental fund, and occasionally a separate amount for band expenses. These specified contributions do not, however, seem to have been the final word in the matter. For example, before being promoted to Major in 1840, Walter Long of the Wiltshire Yeomanry voluntarily provided an annual dinner for his troop of over 60 men; given that his path to promotion took almost exactly 20 years, the cumulative sum expended must have been substantial. In a less organised sense, other regiments, such as the Sherwood Rangers, shunned a regimental fund and expected officers to settle costs on a case-by-case basis. Such an arrangement added unpredictability to financial demands.[13]

Considering these spending arrangements, the Earl of Cork and Orrery told the Brownlow Committee he did not think it possible a regiment could survive on the present allowances without a private fund.[14] In the case of his own regiment, the Earl had taken over one such fund that, although depleted, still bore the brunt of regimental expenditure after 27 years. Such a substantial sum of invested capital does seem unusual, though it was not uncommon for colonels to provide regiments with an annual allowance. Indeed, Lord Plymouth of the Worcestershire Yeomanry paid out over £6000 to help raise and equip his regiment in 1831 and provided £1000 per annum to defray the usual expenses; Colonel Robert Clive, his successor, agreed to continue this arrangement.[15] Thus, it can be concluded that outgoing expenditure was always in excess of the pay and allowances, and this was not a situation connected to late-century retrenchment. The earlier Lawrenson committee of 1861 revealed many similar complaints. This body had intended to reduce allowances further but was warned that doing so would shift the burden further on to the individual when many officers already felt they

[13] *BPP*: C. 6675, 1892: Brownlow Committee on the Condition of the Yeomanry, pp. 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 34 and 36.

[14] The Earl was Colonel of the North Somerset Yeomanry. Ibid., p. 36.

[15] 'Q.L.' *The Yeomanry Cavalry of Worcestershire, 1794–1913* (Simpson, Devizes, 1914), p. 50.

were propping up the institution. As Major Tomlinson of the Queen's Own Royal Staffordshire Yeomanry noted:

> We do not know what the pay is. It never comes into our hands, it goes into a general fund for the mess and for other expenses…I do not think that any serve with reference to the pay.[16]

The pooling of pay outlined by Tomlinson was, again, not unique, with a number of other regiments following a similar course to help contribute to mess bills.[17] What this confirms is that personal remuneration was rarely even considered and officers were well aware that any further reduction from the centre meant more money from their own pocket.

It has been said that these financial arrangements deliberately favoured a traditional elite, a concept that formed the basis of a derisive caricature in nineteenth-century literature, theatre and print. The simple figures do suggest officership to have been beyond the reach of the average middle-class man, but then even the unavoidable expenses of service could do that. Perhaps what this does show is the disparities in wealth between occupational groups, but such realities were a product of wider nineteenth-century British society. Furthermore, as will be demonstrated, the officer corps of the Yeomanry increasingly welcomed new sources of wealth. Though in any number of cases, individual spending was encouraged and was at times shocking, Haldane's changes in 1908 did provide some promise of relief. Under paragraphs 404 or 405 of the Territorial Force Regulations, a new or transferring officer could claim a grant of up to £20 to adjust or buy a new uniform. It was under this scheme that Cuthbert Headlam—a product of the minor gentry and later a barrister—obtained a commission in the Bedfordshire Yeomanry, proving to some extent that a relatively modest income could suffice. It is worth noting, however, that he was still billed for £90 when equipping himself for his first camp.[18] These arrangements were not entirely constructed by the force or by governments as a deliberate policy of exclusion, but were as much the result of official parsimony. Rightly or wrongly, the failure

[16] *BPP*: 2817, 1861: Lawrenson Committee on the Present Organization and Establishment of the Yeomanry Force, p. 13.

[17] The Worcestershire Yeomanry and Yorkshire Hussars for example. Ibid., p. 14.

[18] Beach, J. (Ed) *The Military Papers of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Cuthbert Headlam, 1910–1942* (The History Press, Stroud, 2012), p. 25.

to inject funds throughout the nineteenth century meant that officership remained the preserve of the elite. Though there was a modest attempt at change in the following century, central spending could not go far enough to broaden participation further, something not helped by the well developed culture of extravagance within the force—particularly those regiments with longer histories.

For the most part, the influential and politically powerful members of provincial society were nearly always its wealthiest, and this generally equated to the aristocracy and squirearchy. Claiming membership to these social groups was not a condition for Yeomanry officership, but the dominance of land and wealth in the officer corps was to a great extent the measure of the force's existence. Due to the money and influence that was brought to regiments, one observer stated, 'the English country-gentleman is *par excellence* the leader of such a body.'[19] Although generous spending was encouraged and individual wealth welcomed, it must not be overlooked that true control over appointments lay in the hands of senior officers and—before being relieved of all powers bar suggesting first commissions in the 1870s—the lords lieutenant.[20] Indeed, in one early case in Fifeshire, two acting subalterns reverted back to the ranks after the lord lieutenant expressed doubt over their having the required level of local influence.[21] While the requirements of service could prove self-limiting, it is also clear that powerful cultural forces were at work in the maintenance of the status quo of the officer corps.

Appointments and promotions can demonstrate how the system could be manipulated by these forces. In the branches of the professional service the rate of promotion is of some significance to the career soldier; indeed, it was one of the reasons the Indian Army proved attractive to many.[22] The auxiliary forces, however, present a different picture. Here higher rank not only brought benefits but also expensive new responsibilities. In an analysis of the system from the 1870s through to 1899 we find that promotion from 2nd lieutenant took on average two years

[19] TNA, WO32/7237. Meeting regarding Yeomanry organisation, 30 December 1881.

[20] Examples of conversations between commanding officers and Lords Lieutenant: ORO, L/M VII/ii/1. Lord Lieutenant correspondence: Yeomanry Commissions.

[21] NAS, GD1/555/1. Letter book No. 3. Letter: James Stuart to Lieutenant-Colonel Thompson, 28 July 1810.

[22] Heathcote, T.A. 'The Army of British India' in Chandler, D. & Beckett, I.F.W. (eds.) *The Oxford History of the British Army* (OUP, 1996), p. 363.

and seven months, but ranged from one year in West Kent through to five years in Lanarkshire. The promotion from lieutenant to captain averaged seven years and two months, ranging from as many as 19 years in Buckinghamshire, to as few as two in the same regiment. Promotion from captain to major—typically the longest wait—took on average 14 years, though in the West Kent Yeomanry it took as many as 25 for one candidate and as few as five for another. The final promotion from major to lieutenant-colonel took on average 11 years and three months, but as many as 24 in Lanarkshire or as few as five in West Kent. What these results show is that, under normal circumstances, a successful officer joining at the very bottom would expect to spend more than 35 years in a corps before reaching the top.[23]

After 1900 there is a very clear shift. Although promotion from subaltern to lieutenant was nearly a year longer, for those already on the list the story was quite different. To make the rank of captain, a lieutenant could expect to have served not much more than half as long as his late nineteenth-century counterpart. On more than one occasion this was just a year and only extended as far as 13 years. A captain could also expect promotion to major more than two and a half times faster than those in the system between 1870 and 1900. Again, the variation was restricted, running from a year to a peak of 13 years. With the expansion of regiments there was even room for movement at the top, with majors reaching promotion more than four years sooner than they might have done in the earlier century. In direct comparison to the late nineteenth century, an officer starting at the bottom of the Yeomanry could reach the top more than 15 years sooner in the Edwardian period.[24]

The most obvious reason for this acceleration is, of course, St. John Brodrick's huge expansion of the home Yeomanry in reaction to the Boer War. In West Kent and the Lower Ward of Lanarkshire regiments, almost all the officers serving below the rank of major stepped up a rank. As a result, men who were eight years junior to their peers shared in

[23]Calculated from the *Army List* between 1870 and 1900. Sample: 337 officers from eight regiments (1st Devon, West Kent, Wiltshire, Pembrokeshire, Lower Ward of Lanarkshire, Northumberland, Hampshire, and Buckinghamshire).

[24]Calculated from the *Army List* between 1900 and 1914. Sample: 370 officers from the same eight regiments.

these promotions.[25] By promoting the experienced, regiments expanded in what might be considered the most sensible way possible, using their already serving officers as a cadre. Also predictable, however, is the rate at which this flourish of activity declined. Promotions after 1903 reverted to the sedentary pace of the nineteenth century, there being only a little more than a third of the number per year as was experienced between 1900 and 1902.[26]

Significantly, these promotions in the early twentieth century do not appear to have been the product of an evolved system of meritocracy or, to provide a measure for merit, war experience and proficiency certificates. In the Royal 1st Devon Yeomanry, Alfred Dyke Acland was promoted from major to lieutenant-colonel in 1910 despite four of his fellow majors having seen service in South Africa and three of them holding proficiency certificates. Having been gazetted major at the same time as Viscount Hambleden, it seems his later promotion was based on his time in service and his willingness to take on the extra expense and responsibility. Hambleden would assume this position in December 1914, again ahead of the same majors, again presumably due to similar factors. Although the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry promoted four war-experienced captains with proficiency certificates between 1908 and 1911, their new lieutenant-colonel lacked similar attributes. This is not to say that all regiments failed to train or select candidates on this basis; indeed, the Hampshire Carabiniers' two lieutenant-colonels appointed in 1907 and 1912 both had seen active service and carried certificates. Similarly, three of the four majors in the Pembroke Yeomanry and Northumberland Hussars had served in South Africa, although none possessed certificates; something every one of the Northumberland Hussars' captains did. Thus, there was no established framework in the system that promoted and supported proficiency. Instead what is seen is a favouring of precedence—both social and regimental—and the willingness to take on further financial and time burdens outweighing what might be considered measures of professionalism.

[25] H.L.C. Brassey (West Kent Yeomanry) went from Captain in 1899 to Major in 1901. His fellow Captain, J.F. Edmeades, waited from 1876.

[26] The sample showed 34 promotions a year between 1900 and 1902 compared to 12 a year between 1903 and 1914.

There are a number of other peculiarities hidden by this analysis. It was, for example, extremely common for an officer to enter at the rank of captain and serve the full extent of his career in that position; this might be 20 years or more. Others might not stay with the regiment for very long, with the highest turnover predictably in the lowest commissioned rank. This same system, however, also produced more suspicious anomalies, chief among which was the jumping of ranks. In an unusual number of cases junior officers skipped middling ranks to command regiments. In the Hampshire Carabiniers in 1895, senior resignations led to the promotion of Captain Herman LeRoy-Lewis to major and Captain William Woods to lieutenant-colonel. In other cases, it appears that powerful and long-standing prejudices were the most significant force in appointments and promotions. Although Colonel the Earl of Clarendon declined commissions in the Hertfordshire Yeomanry if he did not know the candidate personally, others were content to commission men directly to the rank of captain or above. Elsewhere, the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos was canvassed by his predecessor to command the 2nd Bucks Yeomanry Cavalry based on his 'rank and station' and ability to keep the regiment together.[27] Local conditions and interests were allowed to determine which attributes were most important, and this was something later backed up by official doctrine.[28] This careful control of intake, however, was long established. In the 1820s, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John Kennaway of the East Devon Legion cautiously controlled the vacancies in his regiment, maintaining a number of qualifying prerequisites. When space opened up on the death of one captain, the two candidates put forward were assessed on their 'qualifications in land and property' and the respectability they would bring to the corps.[29] This powerful patronage was also exercised in other ways. In the Warwickshire Yeomanry in the late 1840s, Lord Aylesford informed the Earl of Warwick that he would be resigning his lieutenant-colonelcy, but went on to recommend his replacement; on this occasion

[27] Letter: Thomas Bernard to Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, 2 April 1862 in Beckett, I.F.W. (ed.), *The Safe Duke: Selected County Correspondence of Richard, Third Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, 1861–69* (Bucks Record Society, 2016), p. 90.

[28] Brownlow Committee, 1892, pp. 19 and 89; and *Army Regulations Vol. X—Regulations for the Yeomanry Cavalry* (HMSO, 1885), pp. 10–11.

[29] DRO, 961 M-0/O/4/3. Letter: Sir John Kennaway to John Bere, 04/06/1823; and Sir John Kennaway to John Bere, 27 March 1824.

Cornet Lord Guernsey. Among the most junior officers in the corps, he was raised to a majority at 24 years of age.[30] Again in Warwickshire, though nearly 20 years later, a retiring troop captain informed his colonel of his own desired successor, stating that Cornet Lord Craven was one of the largest landowners in the county and should have his own troop; this he duly received in the same year.[31] The continuity shown in Warwickshire provides a snapshot of regimental politics and the conflicting pressures that governed promotion.

Other commanding officers resisted ex-cavalry officers in the belief they wished to do no more than rub shoulders with the great and the good. Not commanding the respect of the local population, it was argued they were not suitable for the Yeomanry despite their professional experience.[32] Notwithstanding this apparent and somewhat unfair prejudice, it should also be noted that it was not particularly widespread: more than 23% of officers in 1876 were ex-regular army officers of some kind, a figure that remained at 14% in 1914.[33] In light of the apparent need for a private income in cavalry regiments, it seems unlikely that these men were simple social climbers.[34] Nonetheless, the prejudice was present and practiced. While diligent service and ability—promised or proven—were cues for promotion and appointment, so too were local influence, the ability to exercise deference in recruiting and a readiness to accept further financial burdens.

While junior appointments were not always easy to fill, stagnation was an issue further up the chain of command. To solve this problem, in 1859, the Earl of Lonsdale was told to increase the size of his Westmoreland and Cumberland Yeomanry so that he might appoint field officers.[35] In other cases, however, it is clear that rank was of less consequence than membership in its own right. In Devon, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John Kennaway made this point a number of times in

[30]WRO, CR1886/Box616/17. Letter (copy): Lord Aylesford to Earl Warwick, 13 January 1848; and *London Gazette*, 31 March 1848.

[31]WRO, CR1886/Box635. 'Yeomanry Letters', un-catalogued. Letter: G.C. Leigh to Earl Warwick, 5 February 1867; and *Army List*, 1867.

[32]Stanley Committee, 1875, p. 90.

[33]187 men out of 799 in 1876, and 172 men out of 1228 in 1914. Extracted from *Army List* for 1876 and 1914.

[34]Spiers, E.M. *The Late Victorian Army, 1868–1902* (MUP, 1992), p. 104.

[35]NAS, GD164/1373/5. Letter: Rosolyn to Earl Lonsdale, 7 May 1859.

correspondence, in one case stating that, although he only had a cornetcy available, '[within] a reg[iment] of this kind rank…is of so little that I trust this will not prevent your joining in now.'[36] In another case regarding a half-pay officer for the post of adjutant, he proclaimed that the only rank he could offer was a lieutenancy and that, 'in a corps of this kind, half-pay officers of much superior rank to his have taken inferior commissions and been glad of them.'[37] In Fifeshire, too, it was mentioned by one candidate early in the nineteenth century that he 'consider[ed] it no less honourable to fill the lowest than the highest place in a regiment of Yeomanry.'[38] The apparent insignificance of rank and the rarity of field positions was a by-product of this stagnation, itself largely caused by careful management. This, however, is not to say that officers did not compete for the rarer positions when they became available or that it was unknown for them to resign if they were unsuccessful; indeed, this took place in Ayrshire in the late 1840s.[39] This was undeniably why some influential young men were willing to join the Yeomanry at the bottom and why some who thought they deserved more became embittered by their failure in leadership challenges.[40] Others—such as Albany Hawke Charlesworth, a colliery owner and MP—left the Yeomanry to try their luck elsewhere. Having been gazetted a 2nd lieutenant in the 2nd West Yorkshire Yeomanry in 1875, he left with the same rank two years later to join the West Riding of Yorkshire Rifle Volunteers. Here he secured an instant promotion to a majority and, by 1891, was promoted again to lieutenant-colonel.[41] Though it is impossible to conclusively say why his rise to the top of the Rifle Volunteers took less than half the time he might have expected in the Yeomanry, the

[36] DRO, 961 M-0/O/4/3. Letter: Sir John Kennaway to J. Hunt, 8 June 1825.

[37] DRO, 961 M-0/O/4/3. Letter: Sir John Kennaway to Mark Kennaway, 4 October 1821.

[38] NAS, GD1/555/1. Letter book No. 3. Letter: James Stuart to Lieutenant-Colonel Thompson, 28 July 1810.

[39] NAS, GD149/387. Letters concerning commissions in Ayrshire Yeomanry, 6 December 1846–20 December 1848.

[40] Sir Henry Hoare, Bt. is one example. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, 10 June 1869. Vol. 196, Para. 1576.

[41] *London Gazette*, 6 April 1877; *Army List*, 1877; *York Herald*, 20 November 1891; and *The Times*, 30 June 1886.

suggestion is that his social credentials meant more to the former than the latter—or, at the very least, they did not present a barrier.

Partly because of this elitism, finding a full complement of officers was a constant irritation in many regiments. In an attempt to muster new candidates when the Fife Yeomanry was reforming in the 1830s, the Earl of Leven sent out a large number of dinner invitations to discuss commissions. In reply, he received a stack of letters declining the positions, most notably due to the lack of 'fortunes and influence.' Most, however, did not feel so strongly about declining the dinner invitation.[42] Similar approaches made to individuals in Buckinghamshire in the 1870s received comparable replies.[43] In other instances, lords lieutenant applied more pressure, in some cases suggesting it was an individual's duty to serve and this was certainly the case in Perthshire in the 1820s.[44] Nonetheless, even with such influential requests, it is clear that not all relented.[45]

Apart from the problem of restricting the number of candidates, the search for the wealthy and influential also brought other drawbacks. The propensity for regiments to foster family connections meant that some exhibited a marked tendency to maintain legacies. As a result, troop commands and higher ranks were often kept in family hands. Though there were distinct advantages to this arrangement—tenants would undoubtedly feel obliged to follow a captain's successor if he was related—the process restricted participation. In a poignant example in the 1820s, the lieutenant-colonel of the East Devon Legion offered a major a troop with the promise that his nephew would succeed him on his resignation.[46] The lieutenant-colonel himself, John Kennaway, was the son of the honorary colonel of the same name, and Mark and William Kennaway served as a lieutenant and

[42]NAS, GD26/9/144. Letters concerning Fife Yeomanry, 6 June 1831–1837 June 1831.

[43]Letter: William Wroughton to Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, 2 April 1862 in Beckett, I.F.W. (ed.), *The Safe Duke*, p. 123.

[44]NAS, GD508/9/39/2. Letter: Duke of Atholl to Colonel George Patterson, 20 April 1820.

[45]NAS, GD16/52/43. Letter: William Maule to Earl of Airlie, 28 March 1831.

[46]DRO, 3898Z/1. Letter John Kennaway to John Bere, 4 June 1823.

cornet, respectively.[47] Other family connections in Devon between the 1820s and 1860s included three members of the Buller family (later to produce General Sir Redvers Buller) and Lord Courtenay and his son, while the Earl of Chester's Yeomanry could boast three members of the Egerton family in 1837, and in the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars, three members of the Churchill family were serving.[48] In fact, the latter regiment and North Shropshire Yeomanry could perhaps be described as family institutions; the first due to the Churchills' involvement between 1818 and the First World War, and the second because it remained in the hands of three generations of the Hawkstone family, the last serving a total of 61 years.[49] The economic future of many regiments was often inseparable from the hereditary nature of command. In what would often be a trade-off, the Yeomanry frequently chose to secure its future financially—and thus its very existence—before it looked to experience and efficiency in leadership.

Though money was typically a deciding factor in commissions, status also played an important role. Of the 828 officers recorded in 1850, the Yeomanry could boast the patronage of five lords lieutenants, 111 deputy-lieutenants, 255 Justices of the Peace, 65 Members of Parliament, and 93 officers with some form of previous military experience. The significance of all five categories is not to be understated, but the proportion of county administrators and MPs provides a particularly telling story. The connection between the administration of law and order and the means of maintaining it are shown to be intimately bound. The Royal Midlothian Yeomanry was able to muster 87% of its officers from the ranks of the county's magistrates, while the Queen's Own West Kent Yeomanry achieved 67%, and the Worcestershire Yeomanry 60%. Although this was not the case in every regiment, nearly 31% of the entire officer corps from cornet to colonel was a magistrate at that date. Furthermore, 14% held even more

[47] DHC, D/DOY/A/7/4. List of the Officers of the Yeomanry Cavalry of Great Britain, 1837.

[48] DHC, D/DOY/A/7/4. List of the Officers of the Yeomanry Cavalry of Great Britain, 1837; and Sleigh, A. *The Royal Militia and Yeomanry Cavalry Army List, April 1850.* (Reprinted by Naval and Military Press).

[49] Ibid., and Wingfield, Col. *Historical Record of the Shropshire Yeomanry Cavalry—From its Formation in 1795, up to the Year 1887* (Adnitt & Naunton, Shrewsbury, 1888), pp. 12–13.

authority as lord or deputy lieutenant. This is almost certainly the root of nineteenth-century criticism that the force represented a fully formed party of order; something clearly not without justification given its connection to the provincial establishment, control of law and order, and significant powers of patronage.[50]

Beyond administrative titles, Yeomanry officers also brought influence and status from social sources, with the aristocracy making up between 11% and 20% of the officer corps of 14 regiments in the late 1860s.[51] On the whole, these connections were not unusual. In its earliest manifestation in 1795, 15% of the Yeomanry's officer corps held titles in the aristocracy and baronetcy. During the late 1830s just over 9% of the officer corps was found among the same group and, in 1850, nearly 12%. That this number does not include the children of titled men (at least those without courtesy titles) suggests the possibility of a larger association.[52] Nonetheless, considering these figures, it has been argued that the squirearchy was the backbone of the Yeomanry's officer corps, while the aristocracy failed to fully patronise the force to achieve 'any permanent benefit.'[53] However, the squirearchy amounted to approximately 12,000 men as opposed to the 1500 members of the peerage and baronetage.[54] Landed society contained more men on the bottom rung than it did at its apex and, as might also be expected, this percentage was reflected within the ranks of the Yeomanry cavalry. Between 1862 and 1867 more than 90% of the Berkshire Yeomanry's officer corps were squires, while Oxfordshire returned 65% and Warwickshire 50%. Yet what this shows is the continuation of the connection between the land and certain regiments.[55] It is understandable that there was not uniform support from the moneyed and landed classes given the established nature of the militia and other county institutions and responsibilities. Perhaps most significantly, with senior ranks at a premium, even high society was too large to be reflected in the officer corps in its entirety.

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[50] Sleigh, *The Royal Militia and Yeomanry Cavalry Army List, 1850.*

[51] Gilks, 'A History of Britain's Volunteer Cavalry, 1776–1908', p. 101.

[52] DHC, D/DOY/A/7/4. List of the Officers of the Yeomanry Cavalry of Great Britain, 1837; Sleigh, *The Royal Militia and Yeomanry Cavalry Army List, 1850;* and *List of the Officers of the…Corps and Troops of Gentlemen and Yeomanry* (War Office, 15 May 1795).

[53] Gilks, 'A History of Britain's Volunteer Cavalry, 1776–1908', p. 105.

[54] Ibid., p. 109.

[55] Ibid., p. 110.

The idea that the aristocracy kept its distance ought to gain further weight from the 1870s with the collapse of land values, but the reality is far from being so simple. At the turn of the century, the force could still boast the patronage of 69 members of the aristocracy and 29 baronets: 15% of the total. While the officer corps shrank overall, influential patronage appears to have changed very little. What is more, these were figures that would hardly change between this date and 1914, where they stood at 71 and 25%, respectively. Although the near doubling of the officer corps between 1900 and 1914 saw relative aristocratic participation fall to 8%, the continuity of the simple figures speaks of continued support. Though it may not have been a unanimous commitment, it seems that the extent of their benefaction altered very little over this century. Given the lack of field officers in the institution, it should not be surprising that lesser landholders made up the bulk of the force's officers.[56]

The continuity in the participation of titled society did not counteract the difficulties some regiments faced in maintaining their officer corps at various points during the nineteenth century. This might be the outcome of a particular event—the change of regulations in 1870, for example—but it also seems that some officers were ground down by the public and parliamentary derision that became increasingly fierce from the 1850s. As a result of these sustained attacks, some high-profile patrons were driven to resign, such as the Earl of Dudley in Worcestershire in 1870.[57] Nonetheless, as has already been shown in the chapter "*The Yeomanry and the state*", in many cases the champions of the institution were in fact members of the same legislature who were more than capable of fighting their corner. Though incessant bickering in parliament and the opinions of the satirical press might have been enough for some men to turn away from the Yeomanry, there were more trying matters outside of the capital.

On a local level, problems could be more complicated. Notwithstanding their ability to keep significant family names among their rank, the East Kent Yeomanry was one example left struggling to meet its officer establishment in the mid-nineteenth century. Prior to the 1837 reductions the Lydd troop suffered from declining numbers and unreliable leadership.

[56] Calculated from the *Army List*.

[57] Though he actually remained as an honorary colonel. 'Q.L.' *The Yeomanry Cavalry of Worcestershire*, p. 75.

After a period of uncertainty their captain resigned, ending the troop's existence.[58] The wider regimental leadership question came to a head in December 1844 when the regiment published an open letter *To the Gentlemen of East Kent* in which the troop commanders expressed the crisis in officer numbers.[59] As a result of the 1837 reductions the regiment had been slashed to two troops, but it remained difficult for them to function, 'owing to the unwillingness from some cause or other of county gentlemen to come forward to fill the vacant commissions.'[60] Despite this plea, in 1850 they were still below establishment.[61]

Once more, these events were not only restricted to a single county or the middle of the century. As has already been shown, in the 1820s and 1830s there were times when senior officers and lords lieutenant were forced to approach candidates, but this can also be seen in the earliest manifestations of the force. For example, rather than select from a waiting list of enthusiastic men, Earl Morton was forced to canvass for officers for his Dalmahoy troop.[62] Later, too, this problem had not subsided. The lieutenant-colonel of the Hertfordshire regiment complained to the Brownlow Committee in 1892 that there were simply not enough 'eligible young men in the county.'[63] Similarly, in an earlier 1882 meeting, the colonel of the Ayrshire Yeomanry complained about his difficulty in finding suitable officers.[64] It is clear, then, that in many cases, 'eligible' men of Yeomanry convention were in short supply. There were methods to get around this: short of officers before going into camp in 1884, the South Nottinghamshire Hussars drafted Colonel C.G. Edwards and Lieutenant J.F. Laycock of the 2nd West Yorkshire Yeomanry to temporarily fill the gaps.[65] This, however, was obviously a flawed solution.

The most direct attempt to solve the endemic officer shortage and challenge the stagnation of the nineteenth century came with Haldane's

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[58] CKS, EKY/Z1. Letter: Captain Denne to Major Deedes, 16 July 1836.

[59] CKS, EKY/Z1. Poster: *'To the Gentlemen of East Kent'.*

[60] Ibid.

[61] Sleigh, *The Royal Militia and Yeomanry Cavalry Army List, 1850.*

[62] NAS, GD150/2366/37. Letter (draft): Earl Morton to Thomas Gloag, 23 September 1801.

[63] Brownlow Committee, 1892, p. 19.

[64] TNA, WO 32/7237, p. 10; *BPP*: C. 3499, 1883; and *BPP*: C. 6860, 1893–1894.

[65] Fellows, G. *History of the South Notts. Yeomanry Cavalry, 1794–1894*, (Forman, Nottingham, 1895), p. 84.

Table 2 Yeomanry officers commissioned through the OTCs, 1908–1914

Institution	*Number returned*	*Percentage*
Junior division		
Eton	31	21
Harrow	8	5
Other (22 with 3 or less)	36	25
Total	75	51
Senior division		
Oxford	36	25
Cambridge	18	12
Inns of Court	13	9
UC Reading	1	<1
R. Ag. College	1	<1
Total	69	48
Unknown OTC	2	1
Total	146	100

Extracted from *London Gazette*.

reforms in 1908. As well as an apparent desire to raise men from the ranks by providing limited grants, the introduction of the Officer Training Corps promised to tap schools and universities for potential candidates. Before all of this was implemented, however, Haldane continued to warn in parliament that it would always be 'impossible to make the profession of officer lucrative.'[66] In this he would be proven correct; as Headlam's case demonstrated, pay and allowances continued to fall short of costs.[67] This gap evidently interfered with Haldane's first objective, with only ten men commissioned from the ranks between 1908 and 1914. Although it is worth noting that a significant number of other ranks did gain commissions outside of the Yeomanry, only one man was commissioned within the old 'county' regiments. Of those remaining, half were from King Edward's Horse, while the others came from and went to London Yeomanry regiments. Though these examples are limited, they tell a story in their own right: other ranks of the London Yeomanry regiments were able to achieve promotion and transfer to a neighbouring regiment as junior officers, most likely due to the different

[66] *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, 3 June 1907. Vol. 175, Para. 295.

[67] Beach, J. *The Military Papers of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Cuthbert Headlam*, p. 25.

social structures in place and the presence of relative wealth in the ranks. Outside of the capital this simply did not happen, and those who sought promotion looked to other arms.[68]

As with raising men from the ranks, the Officer Training Corps was similarly labelled a failure.[69] Ignoring this judgement based on the entire Territorial Force, it can be shown that between 1908 and 1914, the Yeomanry gained 146 officers through the scheme. As Table 2 shows, the junior division made up a little over half of the Yeomanry's OTC candidates, more than 41% coming from Eton alone. Harrow came in a low second place, followed by 22 other schools and colleges that produced three or fewer commissions each. In the senior contingent the story was to some extent similar. Oxford University OTC supplied more than half of the senior division's commissions, and a quarter of all the OTC entrants in the force. This was followed by not insignificant contributions from Cambridge University and the Inns of Court OTCs. That these three institutions should dominate in the senior division should not be surprising as they all had cavalry components in their establishments. All the same, even without a comprehensive digest of the class and background of participants from both divisions, it can be assumed that such sources were fitting with the requirements of Yeomanry officership. Not only did it cost a subscription to join the Oxford cavalry contingent, but social class and financial backing had already played a significant role in the education and occupation of all these candidates.[70] With an officer corps of on average just over 1100 men between 1908 and 1914, OTC candidates effectively made up 13% of the total. Despite the fact that this average figure equated to an impressive doubling of its officer strength, it would seem that the OTCs did not make a significant contribution to this Edwardian expansion. Those that made up the remainder clearly did not solely come from a previously uninterested stock of landed gentry. Instead, what can be seen is a significant rise in the number of wealthy men from industry and business.

[68] Extracted from *London Gazette*.

[69] Spiers, E.M. 'The Regular Army' in Beckett, I.F.W. and Simpson, K. (eds.) *Nation in Arms* (MUP, 1985), p. 42.

[70] *Oxford University Handbook* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1912), p. 232.

Sitting outside the typical image of Yeomanry officership, this group had actually begun to buy their way into the patronage circle linked to the Yeomanry long before the turn of the century. In fact, the Queen's Own Royal Staffordshire Yeomanry contained urban troops supported by modern capital from the early nineteenth century. Always one of the largest regiments, it boasted three master-potters, a Liverpool businessman and the brewers Worthington and Bass before the 1820s.[71] Writing on the subject later, the latter believed he was only accepted in this clique because he was generous with his money and kept a good pack of hounds.[72] Later examples were found among the Northumberland Hussars. William Watson-Armstrong—later Baron Armstrong and great-nephew of the notable industrialist—was initially commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in 1889; the same year that he adopted the Armstrong name by royal license. He was made a captain in 1896 and later inherited the estates of his great-uncle in 1900. He was subsequently promoted to a majority in 1902, a year before he was ennobled. Armstrong's growing influence in the county was wielded through his business interests at the Armstrong, Whitworth & Co. Engineering Works and North Eastern Railway Company, but his national influence was also directly reflected by his position in the Yeomanry.[73] Similarly, in 1913, another Tyne manufacturing magnate and future Lieutenant-Colonel, Philip Eustace Smith, was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. As a director of Smiths' Dock Company and British Ropes Ltd., Smith's interests were also wholly business related.[74] In Yorkshire in the 1870s, the three nineteenth-century regiments contained two 'iron masters' (Arthur C. Armitage and Herbert H. Taylor), two machinery manufacturers (Sir Andrew Fairbairn and Andrew Lawson) and a mill industrialist (Jonas Foster).[75] The latent anti-Semitism of nineteenth-century Britain meant Jews were often excluded from county society, though as F.H. Cripps noted (and proved), from the middle of the century they accessed

[71] Hales, M.R. 'Civilian Soldiers in Staffordshire, 1793–1823.' (Ph.D. thesis, Sheffield Hallam University. 1995), p. 204.

[72] Ibid., p. 206.

[73] *The Times*, 28 December 1900 and 17 October 1941; and *The North-Eastern Daily Gazette*, 27 December 1900.

[74] *The Times*, 18 March 1936.

[75] Baines, T. *Yorkshire Past and Present, Vol. II.* (William Mackenzie, London, 1870), pp. 194–195; and *Army List*, 1876.

Buckinghamshire's influential groups by serving in the Yeomanry.[76] Here the eventual prevalence of Jewish financiers in the regiment gave rise to its sobriquet the 'Flying Foreskins,' while the son of the eminently wealthy newspaper magnate Sir Edward Levy-Lawson became Lieutenant-Colonel and a number of generations of the Rothschild family also served.[77]

Buying into county society in this way was not a new concept. At any time in British history men of new money have looked to land when in search of status and secure investment.[78] Though there has been considerable debate regarding the success and extent of this movement in the nineteenth century—not least because of the uncertain value of landed assets after 1870—it is clear that there was some change in the structure of landed society.[79] For example, it has been shown that an increasing number of new peers in the 1880s obtained their titles after buying into the gentry and completing a probationary period in its ranks.[80] Furthermore, although some have debated acreages and the proportion of wealth held in land, it is generally agreed that a position in the country was ideal for those, 'who sought political standing, prestige, amenity, or an investment opportunity from their property.'[81] For those with less to spend, 'mini-estates' in areas without resident estate owners could still provide the locally influential position of squire.[82]

Though the numbers are relatively small, this evidence of a growing presence of industrial and business money in the peerage is particularly

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[76] Cripps, F.H. *Life's a Gamble* (Odhams Press, London, 1957), p. 64.

[77] Beckett *The Amateur Military Tradition,* p. 189; and Endelman, T.M. *The Jews of Britain, 1656–2000* (UCP, 2002), pp. 155–156.

[78] Rubinstein, W.D. 'New Men of Wealth and the Purchase of Land in Nineteenth-Century Britain' *Past & Present,* No. 92, 1981, p. 91.

[79] For an overview of this historiography see: Nicholas, T. 'Businessmen and Land Ownership in the Late Nineteenth Century Revisited' *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 53, No. 4, 2000, pp. 777–782.

[80] Pumphrey, R.E. 'The Introduction of Industrialists into the British Peerage: A Study in Adaptation of a Social Institution.' *American Historical Review,* Vol. LXV, No. 1, 1959, p. 8.

[81] Nicholas, 'Businessmen and Land ownership', p. 782.

[82] Habakkuk, H.J. *Marriage, Debt, and the Estates System: English Landownership 1650–1950* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1994), pp. 403 and 613.

interesting.[83] Alongside their new titles, a portion of parvenu peers also sought access to another established British social institution: the Yeomanry. Earl Egerton, Viscount Ridley, Baron Knaresborough and Baron Ashcombe, as well as sons of both Baron Hindlip and Baron Joicey, all obtained Yeomanry commissions before or after being ennobled or rising in the ranks of nobility between 1886 and 1905.[84] It is difficult to decipher what forces were at play for those who failed to obtain positions or chose not to, though with evidence of notable men sending sons for commissions, it is possible that they considered themselves too old or the junior ranks unsuitable for someone who was already among the established elite. Nonetheless, the Yeomanry was undeniably part of the ennobling process, helping to secure the approval of local society in a similar fashion to regular military duties in the late-Victorian period. Viewed as fulfilling obligations to public service, military careers have been shown to have influenced the local standing of individuals and notable families.[85] It is clear that Yeomanry service could share many of the benefits of regular service.

Given the evident crossover with county administration among Yeomanry officers, the position also opened doors to positions of local power. Lord Guernsey, for example, cemented his position in society by obtaining a deputy lieutenancy shortly after his promotion to major.[86] For others the two were one and the same, as in Oxfordshire in the early 1850s when Baron Saye and Sele wrote to the lord lieutenant to secure a deputy lieutenancy and commission for his son when he left Oxford University.[87] What is interesting in all these cases is that the ownership of land was not only telling of an individual's wealth but also provided access to social and political positions such as magistrate, high sheriff, lord lieutenant and membership in parliament.[88] Given its prevalence and evident significance, it would seem that Yeomanry officership also deserves a place in this list.

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[83] Pumphrey, R.E. 'The Introduction of Industrialists into the British Peerage', p. 9.

[84] *The Times*, 18 March 1909; and *The Army List*.

[85] Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army*, pp. 94–96 and 163.

[86] Dated 3 September 1852. *London Gazette*, 28 September 1852.

[87] ORO, L/M VII/ii/1. Letter: Baron Saye and Sele to Duke of Marlborough, 29 May 1852.

[88] Clark, G. 'Land Hunger: Land as a Commodity and as a Status Good, England, 1500–1910'. *Explorations in Economic History*, No. 35, 1998, p. 61.

As has already been suggested, there were increasing numbers of the *nouveau riche* serving in the Yeomanry through the nineteenth century. Due to the difficulty in sourcing biographical information for junior ranks, however, they are not always easily identifiable. Beyond the examples already given, one of the most dramatic comparisons between 'new' and 'old' money in the second half of the nineteenth century can be found in the Lanarkshire regiments in Scotland: one centred on the city of Glasgow, the other on the county of Lanarkshire. Serving with the city regiment were Andrew Coats, Sir Robert King Stewart and Herbert Robin Cayzer; the first was the son of a thread manufacturer, the second had interests in banking and business, and the third was the son of a self-made shipping magnate and MP.[89] By way of comparison, the county regiment contained Sir Edward Johnson-Ferguson, Bt., Sir S.M. Lockhart, Bt., Lord Dunglass, Baron Lamington and Earl Home as Honorary Colonel.[90] It is interesting to note that in 1852 the then Lord Dunglass (later Earl Home) switched his allegiance between the two regiments just three years after the city corps had been formed. Although it is possible that the county corps did not have space within its ranks when Dunglass joined in Glasgow, he moved when the opportunity arose; presumably for the step up in precedence (the Lanarkshire regiment had existed for some 29 years before its city counterpart) and the promise of patronage from a more traditional elite.

Outside of Lanarkshire such dramatic comparisons are rare as these changes typically came at the turn of the century. The expansion of the Yeomanry nationally in response to the South African War gave birth to four London regiments, among other urban units, that would remain on the strength permanently. These alone exhibit the most substantial change in the order and social arrangement of the force, but it should not be assumed that the doubling of officer strength through the turn of the century did not affect the institution as a whole. Although they may not have been gentlemen in the landed tradition, many officers of these new regiments were ex-regulars. In 1914 there were 57 ex-professional soldiers in the Yeomanry, 42 of whom had come from cavalry regiments. Furthermore, the London regiments alone could claim 18 and, given the lack of modern volunteering in Ireland outside of the militia, the North and South Irish Horse relied on 20 former regulars

[89] *The Times*, 18 February 1930; 22 December 1930; and 18 March 1958.

[90] *The Times*, 29 December 1953; and *The Army List* 1896–1906.

for leadership.[91] Those who could not boast regular experience could often continue to substitute personal wealth. Significant figures in the Westminster Dragoons before the First World War included Oswald Magniac, a banker; Percy Illingworth, a politician of manufacturing stock; and Philip Henderson, a distinguished engineer. Similarly, the City of London Rough Riders had the ex-regular and African entrepreneur Charles Hyde Villiers, as well as the businessman Thomas Polson among their rank. The Sharpshooters could claim W.B. Incledon-Webber, a barrister of Gray's Inn; and Reginald Tuck, a managing director of the fine art publisher Raphael Tuck.[92] Outside of London the expansion had also made it difficult to rely solely on the stereotyped sources for leadership. The Oxfordshire Hussars counted among their officers in 1914 a cloth manufacturer, two MPs, a stockbroker, a solicitor, a barrister, a civil servant, a banker and an Oxford don. Similarly, the Northumberland Hussars, apart from the already mentioned Tyne shipping magnates, had the services of a chairman of Coutts and Co. and the National Provincial Bank, and the director of Yorkshire Amalgamated Collieries and chairman of the Wearmouth Coal Company.[93]

Though there was not necessarily continuity in the unofficial property requirements of the nineteenth century, the nexus of wealth and status in the Yeomanry persisted. While the nature of that wealth had changed in some circumstances, its straightforward importance had not. Status was something that the institution could impart through association and the established presence of the aristocracy and other social heavyweights made membership a doorway to provincial and high society. Though they were far from making up the majority, it is clear that men of business recognised the opportunities presented by Yeomanry officership and embraced established nineteenth century in-roads to expand their foothold in the force. This is all the more obvious in the new urban regiments born of the Edwardian age. Without question this was genuine change, but it still failed to correct a key concern of the Brownlow Committee of 1892, that many men who would make valuable officers could not afford it.[94]

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[91] Extracted from *Army List*, August 1914.

[92] *The Times*, 4 January 1915; 10 November 1938; 25 March 1939; 13 April 1939; 23 August 1946; 24 May 1947; and 13 May 1954.

[93] Keith-Falconer, A. *The Oxfordshire Hussars in the Great War* (John Murray, London, 1922), p. 25; *The Times*, 2 October 1951; and 19 September 1952.

[94] Brownlow Committee, 1892, p. 41.

Beyond self-interest, motivations to serve undoubtedly varied a great deal, though what seems central—particularly after the 1850s—is the importance of pomp and pageantry. Among the most notable of Yeomanry responsibilities was providing escorts. This could be for prisoners, magistrates or sensitive cargoes, but—as the chapter *"British society, poplar perception and public support"* will demonstrate—most impressive was the responsibility for looking after dignitaries. Significantly, this was not a rarity and escorting the reigning monarch or other worthy was cherished by regiments and often resulted in 'royal' prefixes to their titles. As a matter of course, these duties also guaranteed significant audiences which, in turn, guaranteed public exposure. This public exposure served a number of purposes, but more than anything it provided an opportunity to cement an individual's position in county society. Uniforms visually aided this process and, apart from being expensive, were also extravagant and kept style with regular patterns. More importantly still, unlike the Rifle Volunteers, they appear to have been worn without prejudice at civic occasions and even in parliament into the 1920s.[95] For much the same purpose, entertainments and luxuries were rarely in short supply at camp. In 1862 Lieutenant-Colonel James Wentworth Buller of the Royal 1st Devon Yeomanry wrote in a letter home that he hoped 'there is no want of attendance at Downes [House], [given] that all the servants are here.'[96] Furthermore, beyond the official responsibilities, it is clear that the institution also served as a wider social hub. In 1821 Lord Grantham of the Yorkshire Hussars created some excitement in Doncaster when he provided a ladies ball at the Mansion House to run alongside his regiment's annual camp.[97] At the other end of the century in January 1891, the Staffordshire Yeomanry's annual ball entertained the mayor, councillors, barristers and the leading families of the district, showing Yeomanry entertainments did not only

[95] *Parliamentary Debates, Lords*, 21 January 1886. Vol. 302, Para. 45; *The Times*, 4 February 1859, 7 February 1911 and 11 February 1920; and Beckett, I.F.W. *Riflemen Form: A Study of the Rifle Volunteer Movement 1859–1908* (Pen & Sword, 2007), p. 96.

[96] DRO, 2065 M/C1/19. Letter: Lieutenant-Colonel J.W. Buller to 'G', 16 May 1862.

[97] *John Bull*, 28 May 1821.

prevail around the summer camp.[98] In other regiments the social calendar was even busier, with the East Kent Mounted Rifles involved with ten such balls and dances between November 1902 and March 1903.[99] It is clear that the Yeomanry fostered a distinct social environment that, when at its strongest, was a powerful force in steering the social calendar of the locally wealthy and powerful. Always seeking the approval and patronage of high society if they could not provide the weight themselves, on many levels there was crossover between other established conventions and institutions.[100]

Once again highlighting the extravagance of these events is personal cost. Despite occasional attempts to assure the Houses of Parliament that economy and restraint was always exercised by regiments, the 1912 officers mess account book of the West Kent Yeomanry suggests a different story. Over the fourteen days of training, Captain A.R.H. Rycroft spent some £11 14s 9d on alcohol and cigars, with Major Sir Samuel Scott coming a close second at £8 6s 5d.[101] Although Lord Dudley had once insisted that no champagne would be served in his mess as a commitment to frugality, it seems a combination of whiskey, beer and brandy could still produce a sizeable invoice.[102] Similarly, the two Oxfordshire Hussars officers, Winston Churchill and F.E. Smith, are said to have lost between them £1000 playing the card game *chemin de fer* during an annual camp; despite Churchill's reputation for living beyond his means, such extravagances highlight the high stakes that officership could impose.[103] There was clearly pressure to conform and display wealth, but it should be viewed as a social institution formed from clubbable individuals of similar backgrounds. While London provided endless venues tailored to political leanings and pastimes, the Yeomanry could provide similar surroundings in the provinces.

[98] *The Dart,* 30 January 1891.

[99] CCA, CC-W/13/3. Diary: F.S. Maxted, 1902–1920.

[100] The Warwickshire Yeomanry asked the Earl of Warwick to 'patronise' their ball in the 1890s. WRO, CR1886/Box835/113. Letter: Lewis Goold to Earl Warwick. 21 November 1890.

[101] CKS, U269/O299/8. West Kent Yeomanry Officers Mess Accounts, Arundel, West Sussex. 1911 and 1912.

[102] Ibid., and 'Q.L.' *The Yeomanry Cavalry of Worcestershire,* p. 70.

[103] D'Este, C. *Warlord: A Life of Winston Churchill at War, 1874–1945* (Harper Collins, New York, 2008), p. 55.

Immersed in a masculine military culture that encouraged spending and daring in equal measure, many Yeomanry officers also saw themselves as the embodiment of the archetypal gentleman sportsman. Again, as the chapter "British society, poplar perception and public support" will demonstrate, throughout the nineteenth century sporting journals such as *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle, The Racing Times, Horse and Hound,* and *The Sporting Gazette* regularly reported on Yeomanry races, point-to-points and hunt meetings. This, combined with the conspicuous uniforms, added up to a local and national presence where an individual's exploits in the field in scarlet or regimentals were disseminated through influential circles in the capital and provinces. Described as 'one of the sturdiest props of the landed interest,' it is hardly surprising that hunting was inextricably linked with the Yeomanry from its very beginnings, and it has even been suggested that French principles aimed at abolishing hunting rights and the Game Laws once motivated men to join the force.[104] By the 1860s hunting and Yeomanry service were often united, something perfectly demonstrated by the Royal West Kent Yeomanry's pack of drag hounds and the structure of the reformed Essex Yeomanry in 1902.[105] In reverse, countless hunts spoke about their Yeomanry contingents and the crossover between the two institutions, especially during wartime.[106] Hunting in Victorian and Edwardian Britain has been seen as a method of confirming the country gentleman's proximity to nature and as a unifying force within a local population. Furthermore, it has also been demonstrated that eligible gentlemen of business and other backgrounds saw hunting as a purchasable aspect of 'rural Englishness.' Not as socially or

[104] Holderness, B.A. 'The Victorian Farmer' in Mingay, G.F. (ed.) *The Victorian Countryside Vol. II* (Routledge, London, 1981), p. 21; and Gee, A *The British Volunteer Movement, 1794–1814* (OUP, 2003), pp. 160–161.

[105] Re-raised in 1902, 'A' Squadron (Colchester—Essex and Suffolk Hunt); 'B' (Braintree—East Essex Hunt); 'C' (Epping—Essex Hunt); and 'D' (Southend–Essex Union Hunt). Robertson, A.F.F.H. 'The army in Colchester and its influence on the social, economic, and political development of the town, 1854–1914.' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Essex, 1991), p. 261; and Itzkowitz, D. *Peculiar Privilege: a Social History of English Foxhunting, 1753–1885* (Harvester, 1977), p. 105; and *The Standard*, 20 January 1892.

[106] *Bell''s Life in London and Sporting Chronicle,* 18 November 1860 and 3 October 1863; Yerburgh, H. Beauchamp. *Leaves from a Hunting Diary in Essex- Vol. I* (Vinton, London, 1900), pp. 272 and 287–290; Packenham, T. *The Boer War* (Abacus, London, 1979), p. 436; and Sassoon, S. *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* (Faber & Faber, London, 1929), pp. 105–106, 179, 215 and 232.

geographically elite as game shooting, the sport obviously tied seamlessly with Yeomanry interests and many naturally crossed the blurred boundary in search of the same rewards.[107]

To some the hunt was the grand nucleus of society, but the same might be said of the Yeomanry—if, indeed, the two must be viewed independently at all.[108] Hunting and Yeomanry functions kept the powerful in the counties, but also allowed the aspirational the opportunity of an introduction. The corporate identity formed through uniform and regulation was shared through collective experience and instantly offered participants a level of acceptance. With examples of officers from less traditional financial backgrounds increasing and with purely urban corps coming into fruition at the turn of the century, it seems membership still held social influence and offered access to otherwise closed social networks.

By carefully vetting its officers in various ways, the Yeomanry limited its pool of recruits. To some extent this practice affected the suitability and efficiency of these officers, which became a significant issue during the two wars of the early twentieth century. This, however, is not to say that their abilities had not been questioned earlier. Given the difficulties in securing men it should not be surprising that, on occasion, those that were found did not always devote themselves to their duty. In 1875 the Inspecting Officer for the 2nd Cavalry District complained about inefficiency in troop leadership. Given the importance of an officer's influence, it was imperative that they should be present to prepare for the annual camp or for more pressing and serious circumstances. The uncomfortable reality outlined was that a great number of subalterns were not resident, either living outside the county or, in some cases, outside the country.[109] Many of these men were influential outside of the force, which could prove to be somewhat double-edged. How effectively Walter Long was able to balance a ministerial post, the duties of an MP and the lieutenant-colonelcy of the Royal Wiltshire

[107] Howkins, A. *Reshaping Rural England—A Social History, 1850–1926* (Harper Collins, London, 1991), p. 242; and Mingay, G.E. *The gentry: the rise and fall of a ruling class* (Longman, London, 1976), p. 181.

[108] Surtees, R.S. *Mr. Facey Romford's Hounds* (Bradbury, London, 1865), p. 81.

[109] For example, one officer was said to reside in Ireland, yet belonged to an English regiment. Stanley Committee, 1875, p. 90.

Yeomanry is unclear.[110] Winston Churchill's time must have been equally strained, serving as a Major and a squadron commander in the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars between 1905 and 1914, while also serving as Home Secretary and then First Lord of the Admiralty. Though his correspondence shows frequent communication and a fondness for annual camp, he nonetheless sacrificed his pay in 1908 when parliamentary duties stopped him from attending. With camps typically held at Blenheim, his wife also had doubts about the balance of military and social activities that he indulged in.[111] Other gentlemen, typically spending much of the spring and summer in London for the season, were also unavailable, as were a good number who were in town for the parliamentary sessions in both houses.[112]

The result of these split loyalties was the transfer of responsibility to adjutants and permanent staff. Without the regular presence of an officer it was often reported that attendance at troop drills was reduced.[113] Though this was identified as a significant issue in the 1870s, it is clear that little changed after 1900. The reliance on wealthy officers often produced a clash of priorities, while for those with little extra to spend, moving to a more convenient locality was often equally problematic. As late as 1910 Cuthbert Headlam not only found the financial commitment trying, but also noted:

> If the Yeomanry are to be of any good, the officers must be men who can afford to give plenty of time to their duties…One ought to live near the…headquarters of the Troop and drill continually with one's men get to know them…of course this is out of the question for me, for even if I had the time, I could not afford to be trotting down to Huntingdon continually.[114]

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[110] Long held the colonelcy between 1898 and 1906. He was MP for Bristol South between 1900 and 1906 as well as President of the Board of Local Government between 1900 and 1905 and Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1905.

[111] See *Army List*; CAC, CHAR 1/83/9. Letter: Lord Wyfold to Winston Churchill, 5 November 1908; and Jenkins, R. *Churchill* (Pan Macmillan, London, 2002) p. 203.

[112] Stanley Committee, 1875, p. 93.

[113] Ibid., p. 90.

[114] Beach, *The Military Papers of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Cuthbert Headlam*, p. 22.

When the motivations behind service shifted as the nineteenth century progressed, it should not be surprising that some officers were not driven by local interests. Once more, however, this issue was not a product of a ramshackle institution left to its own devices while the world around it changed. On the contrary, it had been part of Yeomanry service since its inception. In an 1817 treatise written by Major J.C. Smith, it was stated that Yeomanry officers tended to be both too old and too distant from their troops to play any real part in assisting them should they be called out. As a solution, he suggested that no officer should reside more than ten miles from his troop headquarters.[115] It would seem not much had changed in more than 90 years. As might be expected with a national force, there were, of course, exceptions. In Devon, efforts were made to refuse commissions under circumstances such as these, something Colonel Sir John Kennaway did in 1821 because one candidate's main residence was in Guernsey.[116] In 1866 Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Bagot of the Queen's Own Royal Staffordshire Yeomanry demanded the resignation of one of his officers for his absence from the county and subsequent neglect of his troop. Also bluntly ordered to settle his mess bill, the officer in question was told that his 'remaining in the reg[iment] prevent[ed] the appointment of an efficient officer.' Just six years later Bagot adopted the same course with another officer who was moving from the county, not allowing him to remain on the strength of the regiment.[117] In the West Yorkshire Yeomanry, Sir Henry Edwards gazetted out one officer from his regiment when he excused himself from permanent duty for similar reasons over three consecutive years in the 1870s.[118] Despite these exceptions, the search for the right criteria could and did lead to less-than-ideal appointments.

With conditions conducive to incompetency as they were, it is astonishing that prior to 1875 there was no mandatory formal training for the force's leadership. Despite a push to see this introduced in the 1870s,

[115] TNA, HO 44/47. *Observations for the Improvement of the Yeomanry Cavalry, Together with the Remarks That Have Given Rise to Them.*

[116] DRO, 961 M-0/O/4/3. Letter: Colonel Sir John Kennaway to Browne, 8 October 1821.

[117] SRO, D1300/2/1. Letter: P.C.G.W. (Adjutant). to Lieutenant Spry, 13 January 1866; and Letter: Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Bagot to SSW, 24 June 1872.

[118] Stanley Committee, 1875, p. 190.

only 23% of serving officers had proficiency certificates in 1914.[119] Major-General Lord Chesham had spoken of the poor quality of Yeomanry officers in South Africa to the 1904 Elgin Commission, stating that they did not have the time, experience or materials to become efficient.[120] Following a similar line of argument, Major-General J.P. Brabazon went a step further, telling the committee he would have had only regular officers on the Veldt had it been feasible.[121] Further examples of this lack of faith in the leadership can be found in the new mounted brigades in 1908, only five of which were under the command of yeomen, only two of whom had no regular experience. Without a defined role, more financial aid or the demand for professional efficiency, very little could have changed before the First World War. Lumped with a largely ambiguous role between 1902 and 1914, Yeomanry officers were not much more prepared for war than they had been in 1899. They were not wholly responsible but nor did they seize the initiative—as many would in the 1920s—by showing determination to modernise and professionalise.

One final, yet particularly neglected, aspect of the Yeomanry officer corps is the position of the adjutancy. Training and administrative tasks within a corps were controlled by permanent staff NCOs working under an adjutant, a man with at least four years regular military experience as an officer or senior NCO. Without a vast collection of memoirs concerning ex-adjutants it is difficult to single out the attractions of the position. Nonetheless, with two prominent names taken into the force—Sir John French and Adrian Carton de Wiart—there is some need to identify what the role encompassed and how it was sold.

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[119] From 1874 the School of Auxiliary Cavalry at Aldershot catered for Yeomanry officers and permanent staff to learn the rudiments of their drill and duties in an examined four week course. Although it was closed in 1897 (Army Order 196), it reopened in 1901 as the School for Imperial Yeomanry, the duties later taken over from 1910 by the cavalry depots. Stanley Committee, 1875, p. 218; Harris Committee, 1901, p. 10; *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, 8 March 1910. Vol. 14, Para. 1412; and *Army List* 1914.

[120] *BPP*: C. 1790, 1904: Elgin Commission, Minutes of Evidence, Vol. I, pp. 290–291.

[121] Ibid., p. 295.

One of Field Marshal Sir John French's biographers has described his time with the Northumberland Hussars between 1881 and 1884 as unhappy. Lumbered with the 'odious task' of administering the regiment's personnel, it is said that he found the atmosphere largely monotonous. Worse still, it was his adjutancy that kept him from his regiment when it went campaigning in Egypt in 1882.[122] Other historians and the Northumberland Hussars, however, have suggested he looked upon the time more fondly. Not only did the service provide greater stability and security than his previous posting to Ireland, he is said to have fitted in well among the sportsmen of the regiment, forming lasting friendships in the county and enjoying a full social life; it is even suggested that his later regard for the Territorials owed much to his Yeomanry adjutancy.[123] Though the regimental reflections may have been coloured by the lofty heights of his later career, it also suggests French's feelings towards his duties were not quite so cold. As the regiment's historian remembered, 'old members of the corps…recall the keenness and enthusiasm with which this officer discharged his duties,' and there was certainly no resistance on his part to their early service on the Western Front.[124] Whatever he or others might have thought about avoiding the dangers of campaigning, it did not adversely affected French's promotional prospects, as he achieved the rank of major in 1883 while still serving as a Yeomanry adjutant.

Lieutenant-General Adrian Carton de Wiart had had his first taste of war with the Yeomanry in South Africa after leaving Oxford University to join Paget's Horse.[125] In 1908 Carton de Wiart—by now a professional soldier with the 4th Dragoon Guards—met Colonel Robert P. Sandeman of the Gloucestershire Hussars who offered him the adjutancy in his regiment, something he took up in 1910. Given that the two met on a hunting trip in Germany, it is clear they had interests in common and there was promise that such interests would be indulged in the future. Though he was undeniably a fighting man, Carton de Wiart was also a very keen sportsman and

[122] Cassar, George H. *The Tragedy of Sir John French* (Associated University Presses, London, 1985), pp. 21–22 and 24.

[123] Holmes, R. *The Little Field Marshal—A Life of Sir John French*, (Cape, London, 1981), p. 29.

[124] Pease, H. *The History of the Northumberland (Hussars) Yeomanry, 1819–1919* (Constable, London, 1924), p. 19.

[125] Carton De Wiart, Sir A. *Happy Odyssey* (Pen & Sword, 2007), p. 17.

rider, and his view on an adjutancy was undeniably positive. While he was reluctant to commit himself to service in England, he knew the life of a Yeomanry adjutant was 'an enviable lot and renownedly pleasant both militarily and socially.'[126] Gloucestershire being hunting country also helped encourage him. The work undertaken during training appears to have been vigorous and his comments on the regiment complimentary, but it is clear that the main attraction of the position was social. Camp evenings were described as 'hilarious and rowdy' and he fully indulged in the hunting season. However, perhaps the most telling attraction for Carton de Wiart was the lack of input required in general regimental affairs. When there was no sport to be had he noted, 'I conducted my adjutancy from the Continent by a correspondence course. I had all the papers sent out to me to sign and return, and occasionally and regretfully resorted to the expense of a wire.' Though he would attribute this to the efficiency of the regiment, the less than strenuous nature of the task was universal to the arm.[127]

Although these examples outline the careers of two successful professional soldiers, it is unclear whether the experience opened doors for them. It also remains unclear what had originally attracted French to the Yeomanry, but his promotional path within and outside the adjutancy was rapid and continued to be so afterwards. For Carton de Wiart, sport was clearly a prominent attraction. Whatever the motivation, the position itself appears to have been coveted. It was noted by the inspecting officer of auxiliary cavalry for the First Cavalry District in 1875 that 'there are already numerous officers, too many, who wish to obtain [adjutant] appointments now, and who are not fit for them.'[128] Similarly, in 1907 the East Riding Yeomanry's adjutancy was hotly contested, the eventual winner having turned down two other corps in hope of gaining the appointment.[129] Included in Cardwell's 1871 reforms was a clause that said Yeomanry adjutants would in future come directly from cavalry regiments in the form of full or half-pay officers who would be restricted to a five-year term.[130] Prior to this, however, the appointment could

[126] Ibid., p. 43.

[127] Carton De Wiart, *Happy Odyssey*, p. 43; and Stanley Committee, 1875, p. 71.

[128] Carton De Wiart, *Happy Odyssey*, pp. 43–44; *BPP*: C. 1352, 1875: Stanley Committee on Certain Questions that have Arisen with Respect to the Yeomanry Cavalry, 1875, p. 34.

[129] LMA, ACC 1360/781/1-39. Stracey-Clitherow Papers.

[130] *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* 13 June 1878. Vol. 240, Para. 1447–1448.

be lifelong, often associated with an individual's retirement be they an officer or senior NCO.[131] The regulation allowing for senior NCOs of the line to retire to an adjutancy in the Yeomanry was clearly an attractive prospect when pensions were not overly generous. As a result, these appointments could make men reliant on the regiment as a home. In the Hampshire Carabiniers, one nineteenth-century adjutant died in his post at the age of 71. Similarly, the Staffordshire Yeomanry had only five adjutants between 1798 and 1870, two dying in the appointment and another serving for 36 years.[132] Elsewhere the situation was less stagnant—the South Nottinghamshire Hussars had ten adjutants between 1827 and 1894—but the post, once obtained, could be very stable and not overly taxing.[133]

Just how taxing was largely dictated by the season, although on balance it does not seem to have been demanding. For this reason it is hard to ignore its attraction to those in the latter stages of their career. Despite Cardwell's changes, for the latter half of the nineteenth century administering the Yeomanry remained a part-time role and, in the eyes of many reporting to the Stanley Committee, it still left large chunks of an individual's calendar empty.[134] Although there were complaints that the pay was insufficient—being lower than adjutants of Volunteers—the appointment also seems to have been a different path for career officers. With private funds already essential to regular cavalry officers, rates of pay were of little consequence.[135] As a result, cavalry officers had a natural affinity with the stereotypical lieutenant-colonel of Yeomanry, and an adjutancy could provide a comfortable appointment between regimental positions. In 1875 Lieutenant-Colonel Viscount Malden of the Hertfordshire Yeomanry strongly believed that the majority of applicants to his corps, of which there were apparently many, were from men

[131] A sergeant-major of the regulars, embodied militia, fencibles or East India Company could take an adjutancy so long as they had at least four years service. DHC, D/DOY/A/7/4. Regulations and Allowances, 1833.

[132] Freeman, B. *Historical Records of the Hampshire Carabiniers Yeomanry* (MS. Hampshire Regiment Museum, Winchester), p. 44; and Webster, *The Records of the Queen's Own Royal Regiment of Staffordshire Yeomanry* (Longmans, London, 1870), pp. 13, 99, 166, 172 and 180.

[133] Fellows, *History of the South Notts. Yeomanry Cavalry,* p. 153.

[134] Stanley Committee, 1875, pp. 114 and 180.

[135] Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army,* p. 104.

between appointments who did not wish to serve abroad or who wanted a more settled life in England.[136] It has been shown that officers would transfer if they wanted to avoid their regiment's rotation in India and it would seem the Yeomanry provided an alternative.[137] While it did not offer the variety or promotion of foreign service, it did allow an officer to pursue other interests in comfortable surroundings.

Observations like this led to claims that 'independent' officers of the line often took on an adjutancy for the sake of amusement. The uncanny relationship between the hunts and the Yeomanry clearly played a role and, for a man in the latter stages of his career, it also offered an opportunity to rub shoulders with high society, paving the way for a comfortable retirement. It was deemed essential that potential adjutants were on good 'social terms' with their new commanding officers and that their 'private capacity' should be known to them. As a result, in most cases appointments were made by direct application to colonels rather than through a central list of men wanting positions. As such, it was not unusual for commanding officers and potential adjutants to already be well acquainted.[138] Despite regulations clearly stating that commanding officers should apply for a new adjutant through the GOC District, as late as 1908 lieutenant-colonels were pushing appointments of their own choosing.[139]

In 1883 *Punch* entered its thoughts on this issue, seeing the adjutancy as a step on a privileged path to senior rank. Imagining the parallel lives of 'Robin Slowgo' and 'Edward Scattercash,' the narrative follows the latter's appointment in a crack regiment of Rifles thanks to his father's 'gold-bags,' while poor Slowgo is lumped with the Royal Marines in spite of his hard work and academic achievement. As Slowgo makes modest headway, Scattercash is quickly promoted on transfer to the cavalry and is seconded to the Yeomanry. Here, 'the chief duties of [his] appointment has consisted in dining with the Colonel (the Swell of the County) half-a-dozen times a year, and turning out for six days

[136] Stanley Committee, 1875, p. 103.

[137] Heathcote, 'The Army of British India', pp. 362–363.

[138] Stanley Committee, 1875, pp. 61, 67, 69, 71 and 186.

[139] *Army Regulations Vol. X — Regulations for the Yeomanry Cavalry*, p. 20; and NAS, GD497/7/4/2-15. Letters: (April 1907–December 1908) regarding Captain M. Sprot's adjutancy in the Lothians and Border Horse.

in the Autumn to perform the usual training.' The story continues with Scattercash achieving the lofty heights of the profession while his counterpart struggles through to finish in command of a regiment and in relative poverty. To the satirical press the position was idle and geared more towards leisure than hard work.[140]

Criticism also came from within, however. In 1878 one cavalry officer complained about Cardwell's reforms because 'he strongly objected to having an officer getting from £200 to £350…who had, perhaps, never served one day abroad.' In the same debate another complained that it was 'undue favouritism. This meant that appointments were conferred upon officers who had social or political status and who wanted to avoid foreign service alongside their brother officers.' The Secretary of State for War's response that their pay was reduced in comparison to those overseas and that it would be unfair to restrict their promotional prospects as well seems to have missed the fact that this fostered a bias towards the wealthy—something cavalry regiments were arguably also guilty of.[141] Further comments the following year seemed to compound this argument when it was stated that, 'there was a great deal of patronage connected with these appointments to adjutancies of Yeomanry; a great deal of county influence was requisite to obtain them.'[142] It was not impossible for less wealthy men to obtain an adjutancy, and there is evidence that two men turned down a position in the Westmoreland and Cumberland Yeomanry on the basis of the poor pay and allowances.[143] Similarly, the 2nd West Yorkshire Yeomanry had two adjutants who had risen from the ranks of a regular regiment. Supported by officer subscription, it was believed such individuals had proven themselves unafraid of hard work, while their reliance on the regiment made them better subordinates.[144] Nonetheless, as Lord Elcho succinctly put it, 'the appointment of an adjutant was almost as important as the selection of a man's wife.'[145] As a result, when such a position opened in high society, it is

[140] *Punch*, 24 March 1883.

[141] *Parliamentary Debates, Commons* 13 June 1878. Vol. 240, Para. 1447–1448.

[142] *Parliamentary Debates, Commons* 16 June 1879. Vol. 246, Para. 2001.

[143] Two officers, one on full the other on half pay, declined the appointment. *The Times*, 12 July 1872; and *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* 11 July 1872. Vol. 212, Para. 949–950.

[144] Stanley Committee, 1875, pp. 184, 186 and 187.

[145] *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* 15 June 1871. Vol. 207, Para. 78.

clear that appointments favoured those who were capable of holding their own in this milieu.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Yeomanry Cavalry presented a split personality: on the one hand a force with pretensions to a military role, and on the other a social organisation positively entwined with polite society. The social composition of its officer corps was often dictated by this latter influence, but this did not make the force uniform at any point in its existence. Although the presence of wealth and the concept of respectability remained important, the background of an officer was never guaranteed to be that of aristocrat or squire. Certain corps contained businessmen early in the nineteenth century, something partly driven by their land purchases and their desire to establish themselves in county society, but also as a case of necessity on the part of Yeomanry regiments. Of all the characteristics required of officers, expendable income was the most significant, and in most counties that meant the admission of the *nouveau riche*. This group was largely confined to the junior ranks of the institution, only making further inroads with the acceptance of society—more often than not with a peerage to prove it. Nonetheless, this participation did increase through the Edwardian period, largely as a result of the expansion of the force and most obviously in the city regiments formed in and recruited from London. Again, however, this growth was more an act of necessity than a fundamental change in the institution, an assertion supported by the fact that the number of county elites in the whole force was practically the same in 1914 as it had been in 1850. Although there was a need to expand the officer corps in the new century, this did not coincide with the desertion of those who had traditionally provided its leadership. Because of this, the Yeomanry remained something of a bastion for aristocratic values and a bulwark for their declining control in local society.

The motives behind service predictably varied a great deal, but throughout the Yeomanry's history, upper-class patriotism was tinged with an element of self-interest alongside duty to public service. Officership provided further authority and the opportunity to associate with the Victorian militaristic values of the 'Christian Soldier,' while conforming to civilian understandings of respectability. Alternatively, for the materially wealthy yet socially poor, the Yeomanry provided a ladder for social climbing and a vehicle to raise their position by achieving recognition among those who carefully managed their own society. This fading nineteenth-century system of patronage and power was still very much

alive in the twentieth-century Yeomanry. Grandeur did not necessarily come with rank, but a combination of uniform and social acceptance was enough for men to be recognised and noted. While it must not be assumed that Yeomanry officers undervalued their importance to home defence—particularly during civil unrest, invasion scares and under the gathering clouds of war—it must also be noted that service came with social benefits. Genuinely benevolent or through self-interest, membership provided fine opportunities to fulfil a desire to serve, but did so in a club atmosphere and setting quite different from the other volunteers.

Though there was change through the nineteenth century, there was also continuity. Regardless of date, wealth remained significant whatever corps is in question. Though spending habits were reined-in, equipment and running costs made service an exceedingly costly venture. What might be described as the Yeomanry 'spirit' also endured, something fostered and encouraged through country sports and the events of polite society. This environment seems to have provided a welcome respite for some less active regular soldiers, with the adjutancy appearing mostly a position of leisure. Although men from various walks of life made a name for themselves in the Yeomanry, the established elite never left the movement. Remaining stable in number, their contribution set the tone of many regiments and produced conflicting influences upon them: socially powerful and wealthy though regiments remained, few managed to seize the initiative when it came to finding a role between the Boer War and First World War. Given the ambiguity of their pre-war training and the government's refusal to take positive action with their structure and role, this is to some extent excusable; it does, nonetheless, enforce the vision of the institution as a social enclave where the Yeomanry continued to operate as the 'country gentlemen's rather costly plaything.'[146]

[146] *Punch*, 14 July 1877.



http://www.springer.com/978-3-319-65538-3

The Yeomanry Cavalry and Military Identities in Rural Britain, 1815–1914

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2017, XXIII, 284 p. 3 illus., Hardcover
ISBN: 978-3-319-65538-3