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REFORM AND WELLINGTON'S POST WATERLOO ARMY, 1815-1854

BY RICHARD L. BLANCO*

ALTHOUGH the British Army of Victorian England has been studied in terms of typical military interest in weapons, strategy and tactics, it has not been considered as an institution composed of human beings who benefited by the reform movement in the Nineteenth Century. The lowly status of the enlisted man remained unchanged for four decades after Waterloo due to the military's haughty disdain of basic reform measures which were necessary for a reformed Army. The Army, one of the most conservative British institutions, smugly resisted changes after 1815 until public criticism of Army fiascos during the Crimean War (1854-56) forced it to initiate improvements that were characteristic of the Age of Reform.

Due to the Crown's prerogative and control over the Army, the Parliament's passion for economy, the public's apathy toward military affairs, and Wellington's domination over the selection and training of men, the Army after 1815 was permitted to corode. It required the crisis of the Crimean War to create the necessary impetus for Army reforms. Led by Florence Nightingale, the heroic nurse of the Scutari Hospitals and Sidney Herbert, a prominent War Minister with reforming sympathies, reformers could only attract attention to the urgent need for improvements in the Army by stressing one critical issue—the sanitary condition of the Army. By convincing the Government and the public that the excessive cost of troop mortality and sickness was a preventable drain on the Exchequer, the reformers plucked a sympathetic chord in Vic-

torian society, and were thus able to unlock the doors of Army conservatism. With the fundamental premise of these reformers accepted—that the health of the Army was a responsibility of the government—then reforms occurred not only in the sanitary administration of the Army, but in related areas of discipline, education and in the standard of living. The response to the cry of Army reforms, therefore, however veiled by humanitarianism, was basically a matter of pounds and shillings.

For centuries, military affairs had been a virtual monopoly of the British aristocracy, and their deeds of martial valour were chronicled in lusty sagas of blood and glory. Leadership and courage were held to be traits of the nobility. Accustomed to the rigors of outdoor activity, trained to command the respect of their retainers, and provided with a superior education of schooling and breeding, British officers often performed incredible feats of bravery and daring.

Seldom, however, did the officers worry over the sometimes needless sacrifice of men. If troops died due to an arrogant neglect of food, equipment, and medical supplies, there was little official concern.¹ The troops were taught to obey, not to question why. The officer class, the stronghold of the aristocracy in the Nineteenth Century, was indifferent to the needs of the enlisted men, and ruled them in accordance with an imbecilic military code.

¹"In times past," wrote Florence Nightingale, "war has been conducted in more or less forgetfulness, sometimes in total oblivion of the fact that the soldier is a mortal man, subject to all the ills following on wet and cold, want of shelter, bad food, exercise, fatigue, bad water, imtemperate habits, and foul air." *Army Sanitary Administration and Its Reform under the Late Lord Herbert* (London, 1862) p. 3.

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The sight of multi-colored uniforms, the flutter of silken flags, the roll of drums, the glitter of sabres and bayonets—these were the intoxicating elements that gave to war the character of a game.² If, during a campaign, the ranks were decimated by starvation and pestilence, or crippled by the blunders of incompetent officers, the British soldier could be depended upon to display his typical pluck and fortitude to save the prestige of the Army.

Regardless of the fact that prerogatives of the Crown in matters of law, finance and government had eroded under the persistent pressure of representative institutions and under the requirements of a mercantile age, control of the Army and hence over the enlisted men, remained practically a royal bailiwick.³ Although the Crown had been forced to accept Parliament's financial control and disciplinary code (the Mutiny Act) since the Glorious Revolution of 1688, it still maintained supremacy over the command and organization of the Army during the Napoleonic Wars.⁴ But this division of power between Crown and Parliament led to another problem—the exact relationship between the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of State for War who both

shared responsibility for Army administration. Unfortunately, their respective powers and spheres of influence were never defined clearly, with the result that Army organization became thoroughly confused and inefficient.⁵

While the evolution of a specific War Ministry responsible to Parliament for the entire Army took over two centuries to develop, the Crown in 1798, created its own instrument of control—the Horse Guards. During the reign of George III, the King's son, the Duke of York, was appointed Commander-in-Chief. He created a permanent headquarters staff at Whitehall—the Horse Guards—and gradually assumed a monopoly over commissions and promotions in the Army.⁶ During the Napoleonic Wars therefore, Parliamentary authority over the Army actually declined while the Duke of York and his generals acquired more power. Hence, the Horse Guards, distinct from the War Office, became the sovereign's institution of control.

Representing the pillar of royal authority, aristocratic in tone and disdainful of Parliamentary interference, the Horse Guards became a well-entrenched bureaucracy of wealth and influence.⁷ Regarding any attempt to reform the Army as an affront to

²See Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Reason Why* (New York, 1955) pp. 1-2.

³The Army, according to Colburn's, a military magazine, was "almost the last attribute or regal power which remains to the English Crown, and its preservation is as necessary to public liberty as the monarchy itself." *Colburn's Army and Navy Review*, No. 396 (1861), 428. "The Queen is the fountain of all appointments in the Army," wrote Baron Panmure, "The list being submitted to her by the Commander-in-Chief." Sir George Douglas and Sir George Dalhousie Ramsey, eds. *The Panmure Papers* (London, 1908), I, 271.

⁴See Charles M. Glode, *Military Forces of the Crown* (London, 1869), I, 21, and Lieutenant-Colonel John S. Omond, *Parliament and the Army, 1642-1904* (Cambridge, 1933), p. 26. See also T. O. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Ser., CXL, 1035. As all subsequent references to these debates are to the 3rd Ser., the citations will simply refer to *Hansard*, volume number and page.

⁵See *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, XXVI (1958), 165-169, (hereafter cited as *Army Historical Research*.) See also Owen Wheeler, *The War Office, Past and Present* (London, 1914), pp. 61-62, and General Sir Robert Biddulph, *Lord Cardwell at the War Office* (London, 1904), pp. 2-4.

⁶See Ormond, *op. cit.*, p. 66; Alexander W. Kinglake, *The Invasion of the Crimea* (New York, 1881), IV, 38; and Colonel Willoughby Verner, *The Military Life of His Royal Highness, George, Duke of Cambridge* (London, 1905), p. 102, "The King constituted and appointed every one in the service down to Ensigns, Officers in the Army who opposed the Ministers were summarily dismissed from the Army. Commissions were assigned to boys at school, and even to children in arms to ensure them seniority." J. H. Stocqueler, *A Personal History of the Horse Guards* (London, 1873), p. 25.

⁷See *Household Words*, XII (1855-56), 552-556; *Examiner*, February 5, 1859, pp. 82-85.

the Crown, the Horse Guards successfully checked consolidation of the widely scattered units and agencies of the Army. Granted special privileges for their special function of protecting the sovereign, the Guards lorded it over the rest of the Army. The *Times* called Whitehall "that imperium in imperio" . . . which resembled the "Praetorium Guards . . . an army governing itself nominally with rules derived from the Crown, but really derived to resist political influence, to crush personal merit and to maintain the privileges of rank and wealth."⁸ Thus, the Horse Guards, the Army's own "rotten borough," blocked any attempts to reform.⁹

But the Horse Guards needed something more than royal prestige or Parliamentary indifference over military matters to withstand, after 1815, the influence of the reform movement that would alter Britain's political structure, her economic system, and her colonial empire. The Army was deliberately ignored by the mainstream of the reform movement and purposely left under the control of the Crown because it was considered to be a useless institution.

The mid-Nineteenth Century passion for economy and efficiency in law, commerce, and manufacturing had overlooked the Army, and in the long decades of peace after 1815, marred only by annoying colonial wars, the Army became an inefficient police force rather than a modern military machine.¹⁰ The Victorians believed that increased trade with the rest of the world would terminate national rivalries and would usher in a new era of perpetual peace. Thus, the Army was permitted to deteriorate in all of its parts.¹¹

Such a policy, Sir John Walsh, a disillusioned Member of Parliament, admitted, was based upon "the assumption that war would never exist in the world, but could be superseded by the enlightenment and prosperity of the age."¹²

Occasionally, a more realistic approach was required to demonstrate to recalcitrant neighbors the latent power of Great Britain. A mere hint of force, necessary to implement a particular diplomatic policy, was provided by the sight of the trim and proud Royal Navy cruising in the oceans which it dominated. The favorite service of Parliament, obviously, was the Navy, not the Army.¹³ With powerful fleets controlling the seas, and a Channel to protect the British Isles from any invasion, there was little need for an Army. But, in case one was needed, the country still had Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, an officer who exemplified the virtues of the aristocratic elite, and a man to whom Britain and Europe would listen with awe.

For decades after Waterloo, Wellington occupied such a unique position as trusted adviser to the Crown and as sacred oracle to the Army, that few dared to dispute his opinions.¹⁴ The weapons, uniforms, training, discipline, and treatment of the enlisted man remained basically unchanged until the Crimean War, because Wellington and his worshipful corps of subordinates were positive that any attempt to tamper with the

¹¹The amount of money spent on the Army remained relatively unchanged from 1820 to 1853. See *Estimates and Size of Forces, Sessional Papers*, (House of Commons), XVII, Sess. II (1859), 15-39. Hereinafter cited as S.P.

¹²*Hansard*, CXXX, 1268. See also Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1850-70* (New Haven, 1957).

¹³Sidney Herbert wrote that "it is easier to get £1,000 in the House of Commons for the Navy, than it is to get £100 for the Army." *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, I (1858), 301.

¹⁴See Richard Aldington, *The Duke, A Life of Wellington* (New York, 1945), pp. 5-11.

⁸*Times*, February 1, 1855, p. 6.

⁹See Verner, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-105, and H. C. F. Bell, *Lord Palmerston* (London, 1936), I, 26-45.

¹⁰For commentaries on the condition of the Army before 1854 see the *Westminster Review* LXIII (1855), 195-208, and the *Edinburgh Review*, C (1854), 554-562.

military machine that had defeated the French would be disastrous.

"From earliest childhood," wrote Field Marshal Viscount Wolsley, "we had been so accustomed to hear him referred to as the greatest of living men that my generation had grown up to regard him as an immortal, as a living institution."¹⁵ Cecil Woodham-Smith makes this penetrating remark on the status of the Duke: "His enormous prestige, his vast experience, the power of his astounding mind, the reverence amounting to worship accorded to him as saviour of Europe, combined to place him in a position that has been occupied by no other being before or since."¹⁶ As a result, the British soldier carried an antiquated musket, wore a tight, uncomfortable stock and was burdened by a torturous knapsack and helmet. After all, had not the Army, so armed and dressed, triumphed in 1815? The military fetish of pomp and glitter, of pipeclay and blacking, of banners and bugles remained unchanged as long as Wellington lived.¹⁷

The Wellington image captured the imagination of the British military mind far more than thoughts of progress. The *Times*, in 1856, mocked General Staff officers who, having failed to consider the changing conditions of war, were still fighting with the Duke in the Peninsular Campaign. Merely to quote him on your side, it commented, "is a moral victory, in a speech, lecture, sermon . . . in any argument with your friend, at any public meeting for any purpose whatever."¹⁸

Even a minor suggestion to improve the miserable uniform of the enlisted man was

resented as an insult to the Duke. Since Wellington's opposition to change in dress was proverbial, the Horse Guards maintained a stupid but dedicated adherence to his policies "as a graceful compliment." Thus, explained the *Illustrated London News*, "the whole Army is put to torture in courtesy of a departed warrior."¹⁹ Not until his death in the autumn of 1852, almost on the eve of the Crimean War, was it possible to effectuate military changes. "While the Duke of Wellington lived," commented the *Manchester Guardian*, "no one ventured to question either the civilian or military administration in opposition to his great authority."²⁰

The Wellington view of the Army naturally colored the treatment of the enlisted man. The Duke's oft-quoted description of the troops as "the scum of the earth" aptly summarized the British impression of the guardians of their empire. Wellington regarded the Army as "the national and filthy receptacle. . . ." for the misfits of society who could only be held in check by punishment and repression.²¹

This distrust of the troops by their own commanders simply mirrored the class view of a society governed by owners of land and industry who regarded the restless laboring masses with suspicion. Reforms would be granted, but only on a gradual and evolutionary basis. Baron Panmure, who served as Secretary at War (1845-52), and as Secretary for War (1855-58), exemplified this caution. In the Army, he wrote, "there are many, so selfish and brutish, whose appetite is their God that every thing is offered up to gratify its sensual longings."²²

In the hierarchy of British society, the

¹⁵Field Marshal Viscount Wolsley, *The Story of a Soldier's Life* (New York, 1903), I, 23.

¹⁶Woodham-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

¹⁷In 1851 the Duke of Cambridge, the future Commander-in-Chief, wrote that in the entire office of the Adjutant General there was only one book on the subject of military drill, and that this had been published in 1788. Cited in Verner, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹⁸*Times*, October 4, 1958, p. 6.

¹⁹*Illustrated London News*, June 10, 1854, p. 556.

²⁰*Manchester Guardian*, February 15, 1854, p. 4.

²¹Field Marshal Viscount Wolsley in Thomas Humphrey Ward, ed., *The Reign of Victoria* (London, 1921), I, 161.

²²Cited in Panmure, *op. cit.*, II, 28.

soldier had few civil liberties, and was treated as an inferior being who had forfeited his privileges as a free man when he donned a uniform. With a stingy Parliament, with no war clouds to mar the vision of peace, with an Army administration wracked by "red tape" and inertia, there was little attention expended on reforms for the enlisted man. Regarded as a necessary evil to be hidden from a disdainful public, the soldier was considered as a public servant to be utilized as seldom and as inexpensively as possible.²³

Generally forced into the Army by starvation and unemployment, the soldier represented the lowest segment of the population. Hounded from dawn to dusk, reminded repeatedly of his inferior status, fed and housed like a pauper, he had a pitiful existence. In fact, the term soldier became synonymous with degradation and humiliation. "Not content with depreciating the military service in public," commented the *Manchester Guardian*, "we lower it in a social point of view, taught from infancy to regard it with constitutional horror . . . , we learn to look upon the soldier as a passive tool of despotism."²⁴

The inconsistency between the ideal of the soldier as a fighting, devil-may-care character of fiction and the actual public practice of shunning him was profound. "The soldier with us," noted *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, "as an abstract idea is a hero . . . but as a social fact . . . is a pariah."²⁵ By taking the Queen's shilling (the acceptance by the recruit of his bounty money from the recruiter for enlisting), the soldier had

lost his right of citizenship and his claim to individualism.²⁶ In a world of change, the enlisted man remained a victim of the Army's rigid stratification.

The despicable treatment of the troops was improved slightly in the 1840's. Flogging was restricted, food and fuel rations were increased, enlistments were limited to ten years, canteens were regulated, and a Good Conduct badge added slightly to a soldier's pay. In addition, troops stationed in the West Indies were supplied with fresh meat, and men returning from the tropics were acclimatized to temperature changes by being located temporarily in Canada or the Mediterranean.²⁷

And yet, although improvements in the treatment of the enlisted man were made, they were granted grudgingly, for the soldier still had to pay 3s for his Good Conduct Badge and even lost its minute financial benefits if he were promoted. His clothing allowance consisted only of a coat, trousers, and boots, and the cost of every other item of dress was deducted from his meager pay.²⁸ If he were hospitalized, he lost 10d. daily from his wage in order to compensate the Exchequer for the medical expenses. The tight-fisted Parliament, in its fetish over economy, simply refused to consider measures to improve the condition of the troops. "The meanness and improvidence of the Commons were incredible," writes Fortescue, when the measures were concerned with military expenditures.²⁹

While the enlisted men came from the ranks of the rabble, the officers came from

²³The soldiers received two meals daily. The total daily rations consisted of $\frac{3}{4}$ pound of fresh meat, or one pound of salted meat, and one pound of biscuit. Until 1827, when individual beds were issued, the men slept four to a "crib." "Canteens" were operated by unregulated private contractors at no cost to the State, but at the expense of the troops.

²⁴*Manchester Guardian*, November 30, 1855, p. 2.

²⁵*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, LXXXV (1859), 271.

²⁶See the *Westminster Review*, LXIII (1855), 193.

²⁷See Lord Stanmore, *Sidney Herbert, A Memoir* (London, 1921), I, 74-75; Stockqueler, *op. cit.*, p. 238; Panmure, *op. cit.*, 128-129; *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* LXV (1867), 291.

²⁸Report of the Committee (Army) on Army Ration Stoppages, S.P. (House of Commons), XLI (1867), 727.

²⁹*Sir John W. Fortescue, A History of the British Army* (London, 1930), XIII, 18.

the upper strata of society. Traditionally, the great families of Britain had provided their sons for the services. Linked by birth to the conservatism of the landed gentry, the professions, and the church, the officers naturally reflected their class interests in maintaining social stability. As Halevy noted, the direction of British political and military institutions after Waterloo were "in perfect harmony," for the Army was the training ground for gentlemen expected to assume their hereditary civic and administrative functions. There was little possibility of a Praetorian Guard, because the Napoleonic Wars produced "a new type of anti-militarism, not constitutional, but economic." Landowners, even when serving as military officers, were "more attracted to their class than to their profession."³⁰ The British Army provided those aristocrats with the temporary environment of camp life, "which was simply the continuation of life on a country estate. War was like any other outdoor sport, only rougher and more dangerous."³¹

The officer corps, therefore, represented the elite of society who found in the Army a temporary haven in which to continue their aristocratic pursuits. Young gentlemen, while waiting to assume their natural positions in society by inheritance and marriage, seldom considered the Army as a permanent career. This lack of professionalism was partially the result of their academic training at the Public Schools and Universities where a gentleman was educated for social and public duty. Supposedly, after such schooling, he possessed the necessary degree of classical training that enabled him to be sensitive, perceptive, and adaptable.³²

Respected by the lower classes for his birth, and tolerated by the aristocracy for possessing all the qualities that were con-

sidered virtues in a natural leader, the British officer occupied an enviable social position. Merely by wearing the sword and braid of his rank, he symbolically reiterated the proud claim of his lineage to command. Accepted as a champion, the officer had little need to demonstrate his capacity as a military specialist—his superiority by birthright was accepted as fiat, his personality admired, his negligence expected, and his sins forgiven.³³

The aristocratic atmosphere of the officers' club, where the daily conversational topics were gaming, racing, and wenching, conditioned the officer to be even more intolerant of professional interest in the Army. Here, then, was another inconsistency—the British Army officer had one of the most dangerous occupations, yet he needed no knowledge or skill to practice it. "The officers are young men of the best English families," lamented the *Westminster Review*, the organ of the philosophical Radicals, "who have left behind them at Eton and Harrow a name for plucky and gentlemanly feeling. . . They do what they are told; lead their men bravely into action; and never think."³⁴

The inbred distrust of the laboring masses by the gentry was inevitably duplicated in the relationship between the officers and men. Reenacting the feudalistic framework of conduct between the lord and the serf, the officer's attitude toward his retainers was basically paternalistic, not cruel. If one's servants were controlled effectively, wonders could be performed by the constant conditioning of discipline. After all, had not the great Wellington said that an officer had to be in turn "officer, gaoler, judge, and jury"?

Thus, the officers' view of the enlisted man

³⁰Elie Halevy, *A History of the English People* (London, 1949), I, 84-85.

³¹*Ibid.*, 82.

³²See *Times*, May 1, 1868, p. 9

³³See *Household Words*, XII (1855-56), 326, and *Manchester Guardian*, November 27, 1855, p. 2.

³⁴*Westminster Review*, LXIII (1855), 196.

³⁵Cited by Lord Elcho in *Hansard*, CXXXVI, 2136.

was a blend of wary suspicion, mild interest, and strict control. Their sentiments about the troops were similar to the feelings that they entertained for their horses and dogs. The enlisted man was regarded by his officers as a mechanical device, capable of valiant service under the stern guidance of his master, but "without this fatherly supervision, the machine would cease to work without gleam of intelligence."³⁶

Officers were attracted to an Army career by the unique device known as the Purchase System. The practice of purchasing a commission in the Army began about 1663. The unofficial explanation for their buying of rank in the Army was that only gentlemen with wealth and property and thus a permanent stake in the nation were fit to command.³⁷ Purchase also acted as a guarantee of good behavior, for dismissal from the Army meant not only loss of the commission, but also the loss of the purchase price. Obviously, therefore, the Army drew its officers from a class that had everything to lose from reform.³⁸

A young gentleman, however, indifferently schooled, could buy a commission from a retiring officer or from an officer on half-pay, and begin his glorious climb to fame, not by merit and study, but simply by possessing the necessary cash to buy up successively higher grades of commissions.³⁹ In this manner, about three-fourths of Army commissions were granted. The system, though it produced officers loyal to the crown, obviously excluded the rising middle class.

At various times, the government at-

tempted to minimize the evils of the Purchase System, but it was not until 1871 that the noted Army reformer, Sir Edward Cardwell, was able to secure its abolition.⁴⁰ Too often, deserving officers with seniority, who were deeply interested in military science, were "passed over" repeatedly because of their inability to buy a higher rank. Criticism of this unfair custom became so common that the War Office tried to regulate the purchase price, and required a specific "time in grade" before permitting rapid advancements. But for decades a "black market" in commissions flourished.⁴¹ The officers treasured their commissions "like title deeds to property" as they could leave their regiments at will, and be financially free of the government. The Treasury also looked with favor "on a custom which enabled a system of retiring pensions to be organized without . . . costing the nation a single penny."⁴²

The Purchase System not only protected the state from military adventurers and from needless pension expenses, but according to Wellington, it brought into the service, "men of fortune and education, men who have connections with the interests and fortunes of the country. It is this circumstance which exempts the British Army from being a mer-

⁴⁰For a discussion of the purchase system see Arvel B. Erickson, *Edward T. Cardwell: Peelite* (Philadelphia, 1959).

⁴¹The first recorded purchase occurred when Charles II paid £500 for his son's colonelcy in the Foot Guards. Although the practice of purchase was prohibited by William III, it was re-established in 1701. George I tried unsuccessfully to regulate the purchase price. By 1783, the price of a Lieutenant-Colonel's commission in the Foot Guards was fixed at £9,000, and remained at that level until 1860. The classic example of purchase was that of the Earl of Cardigan, the Balaklava blunderer, whose climb to fame began in 1824 as a Coronet. By 1830, with the aid of over £28,000, he became a Lieutenant-Colonel. See *Army Historical Research*, XII (1933-34), 222-225. Of some 2,200 commissions granted from 1830 to 1847, 446 were from the ranks, 476 were from military colleges, and 1,269 were bestowed on "Gentlemen." See *Hansard*, CXXXVII, 101.

⁴²Halevy, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

³⁶Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

³⁷See Woodham-Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-24; Halevy, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

³⁸See *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, XXII (1866), 722.

³⁹Only about 39 Army officers from 1815-1856 reached a rank above that of captain without the benefit of purchase. *Examiner*, January 23, 1858, pp. 49-50. The Artillery and Engineers were both non-purchase corps.

cenary army."⁴³ Such an attitude was echoed even after the debacle of the famous Charge of the Light Brigade during the Crimean War. "I believe, as a general rule," commented Sidney Herbert, who emerged as the champion of the enlisted man, "that our soldiers more willingly obey men whom they look up to as gentlemen than men who have risen from themselves."⁴⁴

Eventually, the taxpayer would pay a frightful toll in blood and treasure for the absurdities of this system. Not only did energetic members of the middle class avoid Army careers, but officers with professional zeal and skill were unable to compete with those with money and influence. Thus, the Army became a great game, for the richer and more tender officers could avoid overseas duty by "selling out" of their departing regiments and purchasing commissions in other units. There was no practical training for war; an officer's duties were confined to drill and inspections, to a knowledge of regimental histories, to a perusal of promotions in the Army Lists and to little else. As a result, the brave heretic who dared to display a hint of interest in military science was regarded as a betrayer of his class.

But the Army paid a fearful price for maintaining the Purchase System and for heeding the advice of Wellington. The Duke recommended for staff duty only those officers with aristocratic connections. "It is the officer exclusively," he claimed, "the man of education, manners, honesty, and other qualities required by education which English gentlemen receive . . ."⁴⁵ that gave the Army its character. The mantle of Wellington's glory fell on the shoulders of his admirers, men like Lord Hardinge, the Earl of Lucan, and the Earl of Cardigan, who would prepare for war on the shores of the Black Sea

as if they were with Wellington in the shadow of the Pyrenees.

The organization of the Army also remained unchanged since Waterloo. In 1853, the Regular Army had approximately 102,000 men stationed at home, in India, and in the colonies.⁴⁶ Of this total about 26,000 troops were stationed in India⁴⁷ (exclusive of East India Company and native soldiers), and about 40,000 were located in the colonial outposts.⁴⁸ Divided into battalions of 1,000 men, the Army consisted of Infantry (Guards, Line, and Light), Cavalry (Heavy and Light), Artillery, and Engineers (Miners and Sappers).⁴⁹ Due to successive economy drives, the Army had been forced to divest itself of supposedly superfluous units; hence, the Commissary, Medical, Ambulance, Artisans Corps, and the Military Train existed only on paper.⁵⁰

Not only had the basic organization of the Army been weakened by the elimination of essential supporting units but its administration had also stagnated. Authority and responsibility for the disconnected segments of the Army were divided among a dozen or so major officials, and a host of minor functionaries whose duties and activities were never defined adequately.

A unification of this bewildering mass of officialdom into one responsible and coherent body had been suggested by a special committee in 1837 which recommended that the entire machine be centralized under one supreme Minister.⁵¹ But the opposition of the Duke of Wellington to the proposed

⁴⁶Great Britain, *Statutes of the Realm*, 16 and 17 Vic. I, c.XX (1853).

⁴⁷An Abstract Return of the Total Land Forces in India, S.P. (House of Commons) XL (1854-55), 175.

⁴⁸Return of the Number of Troops Employed in the Colonies, S.P. (House of Commons) XLI (1854), 190.

⁴⁹*Bentley's Miscellany*, XL (1856), 405-409, gives a summary of units and stations of the Army during the first year of the Crimean War.

⁵⁰See Theodore Martin, *Life of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort* (London: 1875-80), III, 185-87.

⁵¹See *Hansard*, CXXXI, 231-32, and Wolseley, *op. cit.*, I, 169.

⁴³Cited in Stockqueler, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁴⁴*Hansard*, CXL, 1845.

⁴⁵Cited in *Times*, June 21, 1855, p. 8, and *Hansard*, CXL, 1791-1799.

transfer of power to Parliament stifled the reform suggestion. Baron Panmure, who desired one official responsible to Parliament for every unit of the Army, explained in 1850 that he would hesitate "to do anything to disturb the setting sun of that gallant gentlemen, and I think the House of Commons would not press charges likely to denude . . . the Duke of any dignity."⁵²

The liberal *Edinburgh Review* noted that the antipathy to reform left the Army administration so divided that each department possessed "a figment of official power, but acted independently of the other. . . . It is physically impossible for so many departments to give the necessary impulse at the same time to each separate part of a machine so complicated."⁵³

Little thought was devoted to the proper organization and utilization of the Army during an emergency. The Army still moved its troops with formations that were decades old, only a small portion of the Army ever learned the rudiments of maneuvers, and no method had been devised to combine the widely dispersed forces of the Army into one efficient machine. "There can be no

question," writes Fortescue, "that in spite of its campaigns in every quarter of the globe since 1815, the Army knew little of its business except for the parade ground."⁵⁴ Drill was conducted still in the tradition of the Duke of York. Except for one troop depot in Dublin, in 1854, there was no Army post in the United Kingdom where a brigade could be mobilized effectively. "The English general of the day seemed to think," says Ward, "that all military excellence consisted in moving a few hundred soldiers about in a small barrack-yard without crowding or confusion."⁵⁵

In 1854, the Army, the victim of decades of economy measures and public apathy, was approaching its first major trial since 1815 with customs, weapons, equipment, and administration unchanged in forty years. With responsibility hopelessly split, and with generals who dreamed of sharing the glory of Wellington, the Horse Guards failed to prepare for war. The Army, wrote Wolseley, "had forgotten nothing and learned nothing since Waterloo."⁵⁶

⁵⁴Fortescue, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁵⁵Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 169. In 1855 there was still not one useful book available on the duties of a staff officer. See *Hansard*, CXXXIII, 107-108.

⁵⁶Wolseley, *op. cit.*, II, 230.

⁵²Panmure, *op. cit.*, I, 30.

⁵³*Edinburgh Review*, C (1854), 536.

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