

The Kirk in Retreat: The Multi-Confessional British Army and Presbyterian Authority in Early Eighteenth-Century Scotland

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Following the 1688–90 Revolution, the Presbyterian Kirk sought to assert its authority over the British army in Scotland in matters of worship and discipline. However, the multi-confessional composition of the troops, as well as the legal ambiguities of military and ecclesiastical law, complicated these efforts. In particular, the use of Anglican liturgy for English soldiers in Scotland was in line with military laws but contradicted ecclesiastical law. The ensuing jurisdictional disputes both contributed to, and were exacerbated by, the Toleration Act (1712), which weakened the Kirk's control over the military population. Despite these setbacks, the Kirk adapted by working together with military authorities to provide worship for soldiers, particularly in Highland garrisons, albeit in a more collaborative and less authoritative role. Ultimately, the presence of a multi-confessional army in Scotland forced the Kirk to redraw a narrower boundary around its national church status within the bi-confessional British state.

In October 1709, Brigadier Joseph Wightman, stationed near Edinburgh, wrote to William Carstares, principal of Edinburgh University and a prominent member of the Church of Scotland, asking permission for his chaplain to conduct Church of England services for his mostly Anglican soldiery. This seemingly straightforward request came at a time when English liturgy was heatedly contested north of the border. The Revolution of 1688–90 had re-established Presbyterianism in Scotland and abolished episcopacy. Episcopalians, now forced into dissent, increasingly adopted the English Book of Common Prayer, a threatening stratagem in Presbyterian eyes, to secure

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English backing for Episcopal toleration.¹ Wary that Anglican worship might spark controversy at this juncture, Carstares referred Wightman's query to Queen Anne, who shared Carstares's caution and denied the right of Anglican chaplains to officiate in Edinburgh to avoid 'giv[ing] any inquiet to those of the established religion in Scotland'.²

Historians have long observed that religious provision for eighteenth-century soldiers was frequently disrupted. This was despite the prominence of religious and moral codes in military laws. In the Articles of War governing the later Stuart and Georgian armies, religious regulations were listed before all other military orders: Article One mandated regular attendance at divine services, with disobedient officers facing court martial and soldiers losing pay; subsequent articles prohibited blasphemy, profanity and drunkenness, specifying punishments for each offence.³ With these prescriptions and proscriptions in place, historians have mostly attributed the deficiencies of army religion to lax execution. Paul Kopperman, in particular, highlights 'a shared apathy' among officers and chaplains who were negligent of duty and more interested in pocketing pay, leading to a series of religious policy 'failures'.⁴ Michael Snape, although more alive to the ambiguity of the regulations, still accepts that the primary problem was 'chronic and widespread' dereliction, leaving soldiers in a spiritual void only partially filled by self-motivated lay preachers and sporadically-distributed religious literature.⁵

Yet the case of Wightman's Anglican troops in Scotland tells a different story. Contrary to the prevailing stereotype of disinterested or irresponsible officers, Wightman had actively sought to provide suitable worship for his men in accordance with the Articles of War, but was thwarted by another set of laws: the penal statutes safeguarding the

¹ Alasdair Raffe, 'Presbyterians and Episcopalians: The Formation of Confessional Cultures in Scotland, 1660–1715', *EHR* 125 (2010), 570–98, at 596.

² The Earl of Sunderland to William Carstares, 25 October 1709, in *State Papers and Letters Addressed to William Carstares*, ed. J. McCormick (Edinburgh, 1774), 776–7.

³ *Rules and Articles for the better government of her Majesties land-forces in the Low-Countries and parts beyond the seas* (London, 1702), 3–4.

⁴ Paul E. Kopperman, 'Religion and Religious Policy in the British Army, c.1700–1796', *JRH* 14 (1987), 390–405, at 402.

⁵ Michael Snape, *The Redcoat and Religion: The Forgotten History of the British Soldier from the Age of Marlborough to the Eve of the First World War* (London, 2005), 7–68, esp. 67.

established Kirk against dissenters. The spiritual provision for his regiment therefore fell victim to Scotland's religious politics. However, it did not take long before its religious condition improved. With pressure mounting for the toleration of Episcopalians, Anglican chaplains were allowed to 'set up the English Service' in Edinburgh in 1711, arousing Presbyterian suspicion that they were shielding soldiers from the Kirk's discipline.⁶ Concurrent news from Glasgow validated such fears, reporting that one of Wightman's soldiers was 'soe wickedly impudent as to lye with a whore upon the Bridge', yet managed to escape punishment.⁷ The Kirk's ecclesiastical authority over the troops in Scotland appeared to be failing, a development that both contributed to, and was accelerated by, the Toleration Act (1712), which granted freedom of worship to Episcopalians, Anglican army chaplains included. By overlooking these legal complexities, Kopperman and Snape have not considered that the 'failures' of army religion might have been institutional and systematic, rather than individual and circumstantial. While by no means negating the neglect or abuse of the system, this article focuses first on the system itself.

The opening two sections therefore disentangle the legal foundations of religious provision for the multi-confessional army in Scotland. On the one hand, the Articles of War placed the responsibility for ensuring regular worship and discipline on military authorities, making army religion a military, rather than ecclesiastical, matter. A closer reading of the various versions of the Articles, however, reveals an increasing confessional ambiguity from the mid-seventeenth to the eighteenth century, due largely to the volatility of religious politics. The Union of 1707, while reaffirming Presbyterian church government in Scotland, also formalized a British army of diverse confessions, contrary to the Kirk's (and indeed the Church of England's) ideal of uniformity.⁸ Amid ongoing Episcopalian-Presbyterian disputes, the Articles for the multi-confessional forces were thus non-denominational by necessity.

⁶ Edinburgh, NRS, CH2/121/8, Edinburgh Presbytery Minutes (1711–1713), 147, 154–7.

⁷ Robert Wodrow, *Analecta: or, Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences*, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1842–3), 1: 352–3.

⁸ On how a de facto British army predated and facilitated the Union, see John Childs, 'Marlborough's Wars and the Act of Union, 1702–14', in Edward M. Spiers, Jeremy A. Crang and Matthew J. Strickland, eds, *A Military History of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2012), 326–47.

Paradoxically, however, it was precisely this ambivalence that left room for conflicting interpretations and contentions along confessional lines.

Further complicating matters, successive royal proclamations also encouraged civilian involvement in the army's spiritual life. In England, Societies for the Reformation of Manners (SRMs) and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK, founded 1699) played key roles in distributing moralist tracts and manuals to soldiers.⁹ Meanwhile, the Kirk and the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK, founded 1709) had their own programmes of moralizing and disciplining soldiers. Yet the royal dictates for such civilian participation were similarly ambiguous, leading the Scottish and English religious initiatives to diverge with regard to the army.

Moreover, the innate ambiguity of the Articles of War and royal proclamations was compounded by a third legal framework: the penal laws. While Alasdair Raffe, Tristram Clarke and Ben Rogers have reconstructed the intellectual, political and legal contexts of the Episcopalian-Presbyterian controversies, the military dimension has been sidelined.¹⁰ Yet the army represented a key arena and incubator of religious change. Recent research has highlighted how church-state tensions within civil society penetrated the military sphere, influencing chaplaincy appointments and soldierly experience.¹¹ This article reverses this lens, arguing that the army, in turn, shaped wider ecclesiastical developments: for the Kirk, the troops' multi-confessionalism threatened to spill over into civilian communities and subvert its established status. The third section accordingly examines the Kirk's efforts to exert moral and spiritual control over Scotland's garrisoned population, demonstrating how such control was eroded by Episcopal toleration. The Kirk's retreat from army affairs post-1712, however, did not denote the end of its military influence

⁹ Brent S. Sirota, *The Christian Monitors: The Church of England and the Age of Benevolence, 1680–1730* (New Haven, CT, 2014), 126–9; Snape, *The Redcoat and Religion*, 25–7.

¹⁰ Alasdair Raffe, *The Culture of Controversy: Religious Arguments in Scotland, 1660–1714* (Woodbridge, 2012); Tristram Clarke, 'The Scottish Episcopalians, 1689–1720' (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1987); Ben Rogers, 'The House of Lords and Religious Toleration in Scotland: James Greenshields's Appeal, 1709–11', in Rosamond McKitterick, Charlotte Methuen and Andrew Spicer, eds, *The Church and the Law*, SCH 56 (Cambridge, 2020), 320–37.

¹¹ Xiang Wei, 'The Realities of Toleration: Army Chaplaincy, Religious Politics and Scottish Military Experience, c.1690–1763', *Scottish Church History* 52 (2023), 77–97.

entirely. On the premise that military laws took precedence over ecclesiastical law within the ranks, the decades that followed witnessed a new phase of Kirk-army cooperation in religious provision for soldiers. This article thus contributes to the scholarly revision of Linda Colley's thesis – that anti-Catholic war and shared Protestantism forged the British nation – by showing how intra-Protestant divisions persisted even within armed forces themselves.¹² It also shifts attention away from the dramatic episodes of military conflicts and Jacobite rebellions to the more mundane, local practices of garrisoning and preaching, through which ecclesiastical-military relations were contested, negotiated and accommodated.¹³ This process, as the final section shows, redefined the Kirk's authority within the bi-confessional British state.

I.

In May 1689, the Presbyterian volunteers in the newly formed Cameronian Regiment addressed its officers, listing the conditions for their service and insisting that the regiment must be allowed to 'perform the worship of God publicly' to promote piety and that 'the military laws' should prescribe 'severe sanctions' against vice and immorality.¹⁴ Ironically, these demands, though intended to set a higher religious standard than that of their Anglican and Episcopalian rivals, merely echoed the laws already in place under Charles II and James VII: attendance at 'frequent Divine Service and Sermon' was required of all officers and soldiers; blasphemy in a soldier was punishable by having 'his Tongue bored through with a red hote

¹² Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT, 1992). For challenges to Colley, see Tony Claydon and Ian McBride, eds, *Protestantism and National Identity, Britain and Ireland, c.1650–c.1850* (Cambridge, 1998); J. C. D. Clark, 'Protestantism, Nationalism and National Identity, 1660–1832', *HistJ* 43 (2000), 249–76.

¹³ For an early work that connects army chaplaincy only loosely to broader religious changes and focuses heavily on the Jacobite rebellions, see A. C. Dow, *Ministers to the Soldiers of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1962), 176–251. For recent studies on day-to-day military and religious practices in post-Union Scotland, see respectively Andrew Mackillop, 'Confrontation, Negotiation and Accommodation: Garrisoning the Burghs in Post-Union Scotland', *JEMH* 15 (2011), 159–83; Alistair Mutch, *Religion and National Identity: Governing Scottish Presbyterianism in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 2015).

¹⁴ [Michael Shields], *Faithful Contendings Displayed: Being an Historical Relation of the State and Actings of the Suffering Remnant of the Church of Scotland*, ed. John Howie (Glasgow, 1780), 399–400.

Iron'; and moral offences were subject to ecclesiastical discipline.¹⁵ These codes, inherited from Charles I's Royalist army during the War of the Three Kingdoms, reflected moral regulations found across seventeenth-century European armies, regardless of confession.¹⁶ However, the Cameronians' demand for an 'elder' in each company, alongside a chaplain, was a distinctive feature that set them apart from their contemporaries.¹⁷ This structure aimed to mirror a kirk session in Presbyterian polity, integrating ecclesiastical oversight directly into the military framework. The only precedent for such an arrangement was the mid-seventeenth-century Covenanting armies under the command of Alexander Leslie, later first earl of Leven.¹⁸ A veteran marshal under the Swedish 'Protestant soldier-king' Gustavus Adolphus, Leslie had returned to Scotland in 1638 to command the Covenanter army and compiled the *Articles of Militarie Discipline* (1639) as its regulations, combining the Swedish template of a Protestant army with the Presbyterian polity unique to Scotland. Every regiment was to have 'an ecclesiasticall Eldership' (essentially a kirk session) to enforce the exact same 'rules and order of Discipline used in the Kirke', effectively making the army a subsection of the Kirk, subject to the General Assembly's authority.¹⁹

Unsurprisingly, this Covenanting polity left no trace in the Restoration army. Charles II revived his father's Royalist Articles instead, supplanting the Kirk's authority with his royal supremacy.²⁰ James VII further removed any explicit mention of the established church from the 1686 Articles, making his army regulations confessionally

¹⁵ *Laws & Articles of War, for the government of His Majesties forces within the Kingdom of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1667), 3–4.

¹⁶ *Military Orders and Articles Established by His Majestie, for the Better Ordering and Government of His Maiesties Army* (York, 1642); *Military Orders and Articles Established by His Majesty, for the Better Ordering and Government of His Majesties Army* (Oxford, 1643). For the Parliamentary army, see *Lawes and ordinances of warre, established for the better conduct of the Army by His Excellency the Earle of Warwick* (London, 1642). For continental European examples, see Nikolas Maximilian Funke, 'Religion and the Military in the Holy Roman Empire c.1500–1650' (PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 2011), 40–9.

¹⁷ [Shields], *Faithful Contendings Displayed*, 399–400.

¹⁸ David Stevenson, 'Leslie, Alexander, first earl of Leven (c.1580–1661)', *ODNB*, online edn (2004), at: <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/16482>>, accessed 27 February 2025.

¹⁹ *Articles of militarie discipline* (Edinburgh, 1639), esp. 3–7.

²⁰ *Articles and Rules, for the better government of His Majesties forces in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1667), 3–5; *Articles and Rules for the better government of His Majesties forces in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1675).

ambiguous. This was perhaps to facilitate his Indulgences, introduced a year later, which allowed his Catholic co-religionists, notably the earl of Dumbarton and the duke of Gordon, to hold military office. James's Catholicizing policy in the army, however, alienated his Protestant officers and contributed to his downfall.²¹ With the accession of William and Mary, the Cameronian soldiers saw a providential opportunity to re-confessionalize the army, hoping for a return of a 1640s-style kirk-session-at-arms, with its Presbyterian polity and discipline restored through military legislation. However, they were soon disappointed. With ongoing campaigns in Ireland, the Highlands and Flanders demanding manpower, William made no effort to introduce radical reform into his newly acquired forces; rather, as John Childs puts it, he 'improvised under the anvil of war'. After purging James's armies of known Catholics and Jacobites, William largely kept the rest intact and carried on with existing regulations.²² This ad hoc arrangement was then formalized in August 1691, when William ordered his Scottish Privy Council (with Sir Thomas Livingston, commander-in-chief, present) simply to amend and reprint as his own Charles II's 1675 Articles of War, the version on which James's Articles had also been based.²³ Ironically, then, the Williamite troops, including the Cameronian Regiment, were effectively fighting for their new Protestant deliverer under the rules of the old 'popish' king.

By adopting the Restoration Articles of War almost wholesale, William also inherited the confessional ambiguity that had characterized James's army regulations. This was not simply legislative inertia but a necessary policy. On one level, it was to accommodate the multi-confessional English and Scottish establishments that William as the new king had taken over from James, as well as the eclectic Dutch army (which included Scottish Presbyterians, German Lutherans, Calvinist Huguenots, and even Roman Catholics) which he continued to

²¹ *Rules and Articles of War* (Edinburgh, 1686), 5–6. Margaret Griffin points out that Charles I's ambiguously worded 'Articles of War' had allowed de facto tolerance of Catholics: see Griffin, *Regulating Religion and Morality in the King's Armies 1639–1646* (Leiden, 2004), 215. For James's toleration policy, see Raffae, 'James VII's Multi-Confessional Experiment and the Scottish Revolution of 1688–1690', *History* 100 (2015), 354–73.

²² John Childs, *The British Army of William III* (Manchester, 1987), 8.

²³ *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, ed. P. Hume Brown, Henry Paton and E. Balfour Melville, 3rd series, 16 vols (Edinburgh, 1908–70), 16: 554–64.

command as the stadtholder.²⁴ These multinational and multi-confessional troops were then deployed across contrasting religious terrains: from England and Ireland where Anglicanism was established (in Ireland's case, at least in theory), to Scotland where Presbyterianism was re-established, and to the Low Countries where interconfessional coexistence and tolerance had been the norm since the late sixteenth century.²⁵ Such 'trans-national' mobility necessitated regulatory uniformity: the Articles for the Williamite troops in Scotland, Ireland and Flanders were not only similarly worded and denominationally non-specific, but largely resembled the Dutch laws governing the military; the latter were also reprinted by the Privy Council under William's instructions for his Dutch contingents in Scotland, including the Scots-Dutch Brigade fighting the Highland War (1689–91).²⁶ Although the death of William, the king-stadtholder, in 1702 ended the British army's direct link with Dutch command, the Union of 1707 perpetuated the confessional ambiguity in his army regulations across the bi-confessional British state. In 1717, the British House of Commons formally recognized the legal status of the Articles of War and merged the previously separate Articles for England, Scotland and 'Dominions beyond the Seas' into one set of rules, which remained the standard for the rest of the eighteenth century.²⁷

Paradoxically, the ambiguity of the military laws – designed to accommodate confessional tensions within the troops – proved problematic in Scotland, where the presence of an Anglican military force was seen as a potential threat to the still frailty re-established Kirk.

²⁴ W. C. Knuttel, *Balthasar Bekker: De Bestrijder van Het Bijgeloof* (The Hague, 1906), 122–5; John Miller, 'Catholic Officers in the Later Stuart Army', *EHR* 88 (1973), 35–53, at 53.

²⁵ For the Dutch religious toleration, see Jonathan I. Israel, 'William III and Toleration', in Ole Peter Grell, Jonathan I. Israel and Nicholas Tyacke, eds, *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England* (Oxford, 1991), 129–70.

²⁶ *Rules and Articles for the better government of Their Majesties land-forces within the Kingdom of Ireland ...* (Dublin, 1691); *Rules and Articles for the better government of Their Majesties land-forces in the Low-Countries and parts beyond the seas* (London, 1692); *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, ed. Peter Hume Brown, Henry Paton and E. Balfour Melville, 3rd series, 16 vols (Edinburgh, 1908–70), 16: 554 (31 August 1691). The Dutch laws, first issued in 1676, were later translated and published in Edinburgh as *Laus and ordinances, touching military discipline. Translated into English by I.D.* (Edinburgh, 1689).

²⁷ The unified version was published as *Rules and Articles for the better government of our horse and foot-guards and all other our land-forces in our Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, and Dominions beyond the Seas* (London, 1718).

Immediately following the Revolution, commotion had already arisen on account of the Presbyterian-Episcopalian controversy in Inverness. In June 1691, the Scottish Privy Council received reports that the English soldiers in Sir James Leslie's regiment were sheltering Alexander Burgess, an Episcopalian minister ousted at the Revolution. Burgess had taken over the vacant kirk in Inverness after the incumbent's death and conducted services there as the regiment's chaplain. However, the vacancy had already been filled by the General Assembly with a Presbyterian preacher. The Inverness kirk session accordingly demanded Burgess's removal from the regiment, arguing that he had violated the parliamentary law that re-established Presbyterianism and abolished Episcopacy. Instead of complying, however, the English soldiers insisted that their chaplain was subject not to ecclesiastical law, but only to military laws. As tensions escalated, the soldiers even guarded the church doors to deny the Presbyterian minister entry and threatened him with violence. The regiment's affront to the General Assembly's legal authority caused considerable consternation: in response to the kirk session's petition, the Privy Council demanded that the commander-in-chief, Sir Thomas Livingston (himself a privy councillor), discipline the disobedient soldiers.²⁸ Not all military presence was seen as a threat, however. The Kirk readily supported the army's religious needs when these advanced Presbyterianism in Scotland. Just a year earlier, the Inverness session had helped appoint Alexander Sutherland, a Presbyterian schoolmaster, as chaplain to Livingston's own regiment of dragoons.²⁹ Similarly, Daniel McKay, the Presbyterian chaplain to Sir John Hill's regiment at Fort William, was welcomed to preach at the Inverness kirk session meeting in August 1695.³⁰

Therefore, although the Articles of War in theory made it the commanding officers' authority to appoint chaplains and prescribe worship for their men, their confessional ambiguity caused confusion in practice, and the boundaries between the military and ecclesiastical legislations remained porous. Consequently, religious provision for soldiers in Scotland became a matter of Kirk-army cooperation – or, at times, contention – in the post-Revolutionary years. Wartime priorities dictated that it was not until 1697 that Commander-in-Chief

²⁸ *Register of the Privy Council*, 3rd series 16, 374.

²⁹ NRS, CH2/720/11, Inverness Kirk Session Minutes (1688–1711), 69.

³⁰ NRS, CH2/720/11, 132.

Livingston approached the General Assembly to play legislative catch-up and clarify the Kirk-army relationship. The result was an 'Act and Recommendation anent [concerning] Ministers to the army', regarding both Scottish troops abroad and troops in Scotland. With this act, the Assembly instructed kirk sessions to offer communion to soldiers quartered within their bounds and to 'inspect and notice them as they do other parishioners'; it also advised its commission to investigate 'all expedient ways' to 'settle ministers in regiments belonging to this kingdom' both at home and abroad.³¹ However, the general disbandment at the Peace of Ryswick (1697) soon took away the legislative momentum; neither the ecclesiastical nor the military authorities made further attempts to define their boundaries, and the legal status of Anglican chaplains in Scotland was left ambiguous.

Indeed, the confusion was such that even Joseph Wightman, at the rank of brigadier-general, was deeply unsure whether his chaplain had the right to conduct Anglican services in Edinburgh in 1709.³² Compounding this confusion, the Scottish Privy Council – which had drawn members from both the ecclesiastical and military establishments and acted as the intermediary between the two – had been abolished in 1708. Consequently, Wightman had to approach Carstares to help clarify the Kirk's position; and then, in the absence of a Privy Council, the two referred the matter to the secretaries of state in London for adjudication. Whitehall's response, as seen above, was a note of caution: it was 'her Majesty's intentions not to suffer any thing to be done that might give any disquiet to those of the established religion in Scotland'.³³ The case thus confirmed the Kirk's geographical jurisdiction as Scotland's national church, with authority over the troops – both Scottish and English – stationed within its territory.

As clear as this judgement was, not all officers agreed. In particular, some noted the stark contrast between the freedom of worship Anglican soldiers enjoyed abroad and the narrowly confessionalized Presbyterian requirements in Scotland. An anonymous letter from a self-proclaimed 'moderate man' in Wightman's regiment soon reached Carstares, pointedly complaining that 'Though our chaplain was here [in Edinburgh], yet he was not suffered to preach; which we were never

³¹ *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1843), 263.

³² Sunderland to Carstares, 25 October 1709, in *State Papers and Letters Addressed to William Carstares*, 776–7.

³³ *Ibid.*

denied in the most rigid Roman catholic countries'. Instead, he hoped that Presbyterians would set aside their 'violence and inveteracy' against the Church of England and embrace 'Christian moderation' in face of a common enemy.³⁴ It was perhaps no coincidence that this letter was forwarded to Carstares by John Chamberlayne, secretary to the SPCK, a society built on these very principles of Protestant unity and moderation. Chamberlayne even compared the Kirk's harsh treatment of English chaplains to the 'Inquisition' and implored Carstares, a man he thought to be of similar moderate principles, to lift these restrictions, so that 'all sincere protestants in both churches may keep the faith in unity of spirit'.³⁵ Chamberlayne's involvement revealed that religious provision in the army did not only concern the ecclesiastical and military authorities: the SPCK and its Scottish counterpart also had key roles to play.

II.

The SPCK emerged from a number of Societies for the Reformation of Manners (SRMs) that sprung up in the 1690s. Their moralist campaigns were aimed at those mobile and 'nonparochial' populations that often fell out of ecclesiastical oversight, including sailors and soldiers.³⁶ Unlike the army or the Kirk, which derived their authorities over soldiers' morality from military and ecclesiastical laws respectively, the SPCK's mandate came from royal dictates. Following the Williamite Revolution, moral reformation was seen as both a benefit of, and a justification for, England's providential deliverance in 1688. The ensuing eschatological battle against Louis XIV further infused the reforming movement with a military purpose: to eradicate national sins that could incur divine punishment, as propagated in William and Mary's *Proclamation against vitious, debauched and profane persons* (1692).³⁷ Even the Peace of Rijswijk (1697) occasioned a new proclamation against immorality, in gratitude for the divine protection in a

³⁴ 'Extract of a letter from an English officer at Edinburgh to his friend in London', in *State Papers and Letters Addressed to William Carstares*, 783–4.

³⁵ John Chamberlayne to Carstares, 14 February 1710, in *State Papers and Letters Addressed to William Carstares*, 781–3.

³⁶ Sirota, *The Christian Monitors*, 112.

³⁷ Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution* (Cambridge, 1996), 90–147; Craig Rose, *England in the 1690s: Revolution, Religion and War* (Oxford, 1999), 195–209.

‘Bloody and Expensive War’ and in preparation for a new one.³⁸ Most pertinently, William’s 1699 proclamation specifically targeted military personnel, demanding that all army officers ‘take Care to avoid all Prophaneness, Debauchery, and other Immoralities’ and set an example for their men.³⁹ These instructions gained new urgency at the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14) and were reissued by Queen Anne.⁴⁰

For army officers, the royal proclamations merely reiterated the Articles of War. For the SPCK, however, they were an invitation to help reform the army’s religious life by producing moralizing tracts for soldiers. The most successful of these was Josiah Woodward’s *The Soldier’s Monitor* (1701), which gained official approval and established the SPCK as a key provisioner of army religion. In 1705, 10,000 copies were commissioned by the Treasury for Marlborough’s troops in Flanders; 3,300 for those in Ireland; and 2,500 for Portugal.⁴¹ The tract’s focus on practical morality further won international acclaim. As early as 1704, *The Soldier’s Monitor* had already been translated into German and Russian, and came to be used in the Prussian, Swedish and Saxon armies, owing to its emphasis on practical devotion and applicability to all ‘Christian soldiers’.⁴²

Despite its widespread popularity elsewhere, *The Soldier’s Monitor* appears to have made few inroads into Scotland. Scottish units, the Cameronians included, received copies in 1705 under Marlborough, but only because they were formally part of the ‘English’ establishment.⁴³ SPCK records confirm its Anglo-centric focus, with the distribution of religious tracts concentrated on ‘English regiments’,

³⁸ *By the King, a proclamation for preventing and punishing immorality and prophaneness* (London, 1697).

³⁹ *By the King, a proclamation for preventing and punishing immorality and prophaneness* (London, 1699).

⁴⁰ *By the Queen, a proclamation, for the encouragement of piety and virtue, and for the preventing and punishing of vice, prophaneness, and immorality* (London, 1702).

⁴¹ Kew, TNA, SP 41/3/60; *Calendar of Treasury Books*, 20: 1705–1706, ed. William A. Shaw (London, 1952), *British History Online*, at: <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-treasury-books/vol20>>, accessed 3 August 2024, 90.

⁴² Josiah Woodward, *An Account of the Progress of the Reformation of Manners, in England, Scotland, and Ireland and other Parts of Europe and America* (London, 1706), 11–2; Snape, *Redcoat and Religion*, 26.

⁴³ Childs, ‘Marlborough’s Wars and the Act of Union, 1702–14’, in Spiers, Crang and Strickland, eds, *A Military History of Scotland*, 326–47, at 333.

overseen by Anglican chaplains.⁴⁴ Even after the Union of 1707 and the establishment of the SSPCK in 1709, SPCK efforts remained largely confined to English and Irish personnel.⁴⁵ Although the English Society admitted Scottish ministers, including Carstares, as corresponding members – allowing Chamberlayne, the Society secretary, to contact Carstares about the Anglican chaplains in Edinburgh in 1710 – such contact was purely personal.⁴⁶ Institutionally, the two societies did not coordinate on how best to moralize soldiers.

The reason for this lack of cooperation, as Chamberlayne diagnosed, was a ‘high-church’ spirit among both institutions that rejected ‘moderation’, ‘unity’ and inter-denominational collaboration.⁴⁷ Indeed, while the English SRMs did inspire similar reforming societies in Scotland in the 1700s, their counterparts north of the border took on a more narrowly Presbyterian character: Scottish reformers not only blamed Catholics for encouraging vice, but also condemned Episcopalians as equally culpable for opening ‘the Floodgates of all Impiety and Wickedness’.⁴⁸ Accordingly, the Scottish SRMs, though voluntary and lay in nature, explicitly excluded Episcopalians, admitting none who ‘do not Zealously Own the true Reformed protestant Religion, as it is now Established’, and even targeted Episcopalian meeting houses.⁴⁹ When the SSPCK emerged out of these lay SRMs and the General Assembly’s Committee for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (founded 1707), it also inherited their anti-Catholic and anti-Episcopalian agenda. Though created as an independent chartered corporation with majority lay membership, the SSPCK functioned mostly in alignment with the Kirk. Its educational

⁴⁴ Cambridge, CUL, MS SPCK/A1/2-4 Minutes (1706–1709), 30, 53. One of the chaplains singled out was John Davis, chaplain to Schomberg’s Regiment: *ibid.* 168.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 177: the SPCK discussed the motion of supplying books to the army in Flanders in May 1709; this is the point at which SPCK records begin to refer to English troops as ‘British’.

⁴⁶ CUL, MS SPCK/A1/2-4 Minutes, 121, 155 (10 March 1709); Sirota, *The Christian Monitors*, 140–1.

⁴⁷ Chamberlayne to Carstares, 14 February 1710, in *State Papers and Letters Addressed to William Carstares*, 783; Sirota, *The Christian Monitors*, 133.

⁴⁸ See, for example, *A Brief and True Account of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland occasioned by the Episcopalians since the Year 1660* (London, 1690), 1; [George Meldrum], *A Sermon preached in the High-Church of Edinburgh, upon Sunday, April 27 1690* (Edinburgh, 1690), 10–1.

⁴⁹ Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Library, La.III.339, Register of the Resolutions and Proceedings of a Society for Reformation of Manners, 17.

programme was uncompromisingly Presbyterian, targeting Episcopalians as well as Catholics for conversion.⁵⁰

The relationship between the SRMs in Scotland and England, and between the SPCK and the SSPCK, was thus marked by Anglican-Presbyterian tension and mutual distrust. Any sign of collaboration was inevitably opposed by the ‘high-flyers’ on each side as expressing undue sympathy for their respective dissenters. Even the SPCK’s attempt to help establish Protestant libraries in the Highlands in 1704 was hampered by Presbyterian suspicion. Although the scheme was accepted by the General Assembly, only Presbyterian books such as the Westminster Confession were approved.⁵¹ Realizing that Anglican titles might not be welcome, in 1713 the SPCK passed a standing order against ‘Meddling with Books in Controversie’ in Scotland.⁵² Against this backdrop, it is likely that *The Soldier’s Monitor*, though non-denominational in content, still risked causing controversy among Presbyterians. After all, the Anglicanism of *The Soldier’s Monitor* was recognizable, even in Prussia: its German translation was undertaken concurrently with that of the Book of Common Prayer as a blueprint for, as Brent Sirota puts it, ‘Protestant reconciliation along broadly Anglican lines’.⁵³

Therefore, just as the army’s multi-confessionalism – encoded in the Articles of War – proved contentious in Scotland, the English SRMs and SPCK found the Tweed a greater barrier than the Irish or the North Sea. The fundamental reason for this contrast was that, while soldiers were targeted by Anglican moral reformers as a ‘non-parochial’ population when abroad, they fell under the jurisdiction of the Kirk when in Scotland, which had its own system of disciplining and moralizing soldiers; a system upon which Anglican reformers were careful not to impinge.⁵⁴ However, while the SPCK respected the

⁵⁰ NRS, GD95/1/3, SSPCK General Meeting Minutes, 31; Clare Loughlin, ‘Concepts of Mission in Scottish Presbyterianism: The SSPCK, the Highlands and Britain’s American Colonies, 1709–40’, in Stewart J. Brown, Charlotte Methuen and Andrew Spicer, eds, *The Church and Empire*, SCH 54 (2018), 190–207, at 194–5. For the early connections between the SRMs and the SSPCK, see Nathan Philip Gray, ‘“A Publick Benefite to the Nation”: The Charitable and Religious Origins of the SSPCK, 1690–1715’ (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2011), 46–87.

⁵¹ NRS, CH1/1/19, Register of General Assembly (1702–1707), 168.

⁵² CUL, MS SPCK/A1/6 Minutes, 54.

⁵³ Sirota, *The Christian Monitors*, 128, 135.

⁵⁴ Gray, ‘The Charitable and Religious Origins of the SSPCK’, 106, 119.

Kirk's established authority north of the border, many army officers were less wary of overstepping its boundaries.

III.

In January 1711, the presbytery of Brechin complained to the commission of the General Assembly that some soldiers found 'guilty of fornication and other disorders' had been shielded from kirk discipline by their officers.⁵⁵ Several months later, the presbytery of Duns voiced a similar grievance about 'scandalous souldiers'.⁵⁶ Crucially, both presbyteries argued that the defiant soldiers and their superiors had not only disregarded the Kirk's ecclesiastical authority, but also violated 'her Majesties proclamation against Immorality', referring to Queen Anne's 1702 proclamation cited above.⁵⁷ While the royal proclamations inspired the SRMs and the SPCK to combat soldierly immorality in England, they were readily transplanted onto an existing ecclesiastical and legal framework in Scotland. Indeed, social historians have picked out Scotland as the prime example for studies of moral control, with its Calvinist discipline and theology rigorously enforced by a hierarchy of church courts after the Reformation.⁵⁸ This well-established disciplinary system, moreover, became a political asset, allowing Presbyterians to argue during the Restoration that '*Presbytery* was a better Bulwark against Error and Prophaneness' than Episcopacy.⁵⁹ The same argument was subsequently used to re-establish Presbyterianism as the church government 'most conducive to the advancement of true piety' at the Revolution.⁶⁰ The Scottish Parliament further introduced a series of 'Acts against profaneness' in the 1690s, consolidating the legal foundation of kirk discipline and making civil magistrates responsible for its enforcement. Notably,

⁵⁵ NRS, CH1/3/12, Registers of Acts of the Commission of the General Assembly (1709–1712), 205.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 261.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 205, 261.

⁵⁸ Rosalind Mitchison and Leah Leneman, *Sexuality and Social Control: Scotland 1660–1780* (Oxford, 1989); Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven, CT, 2002).

⁵⁹ James Gordon, *The Reformed Bishop: or, XIX Articles* (London, 1679), 209, quoted in Raffe, *The Culture of Controversy*, 161–3. Italics original.

⁶⁰ *Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, 1690/4/43, online at: <<http://www.rps.ac.uk>>, accessed 3 August 2024.

the 1695 Act explicitly extended the Kirk's jurisdiction to 'officers, soldiers or others without exception'.⁶¹

Despite this equal claim over civilian and military populations, however, the Kirk's influence over soldiers almost immediately clashed with military authority. Those units with mixed confessions posed particular challenges: while Scottish Presbyterian soldiers also committed moral crimes, including fornication and adultery, Anglican troops were more likely to reject the Kirk's authority outright. In June 1690, just weeks before they padlocked the parish church and assaulted the incoming Presbyterian minister, the English soldiers in Sir James Leslie's regiment had already caused trouble in Inverness by committing 'several abuses' of fornication with local women. The kirk session sought Leslie's assistance in 'Suppressing this Sin', but without success, and only the female delinquents were punished.⁶² The Inverness kirk session's frustration was shared by Brechin and Duns in 1711, where English soldiers again refused to submit to kirk discipline. While more detailed records for Brechin do not survive, the Duns ministers identified the culprits as soldiers in General George Carpenter's regiment of dragoons. When contacted by the Duns session to discipline those soldiers, their officers, also English, hesitated and insisted on waiting for Carpenter's in-person approval, which never materialized.⁶³ It was unlikely that the general was entirely indifferent towards his men's morality. After all, after a short stint as governor of Minorca in 1716–18, Carpenter would later facilitate the SPCK's distribution of *The Soldier's Monitor* and of Archbishop John Tillotson's sermons at the garrison through the Anglican chaplains there.⁶⁴ It is more probable, therefore, that he was unwilling to require his English contingents to submit to Presbyterian discipline, and thus ignored the presbytery's request.

Further complicating matters, these incidents involving English soldiers and officers took place concurrently with the case of James Greenshields, an Episcopalian minister whose use of Anglican liturgy in Edinburgh had caused great alarm. The adoption of the English Book of Common Prayer by Episcopalians – increasingly prevalent

⁶¹ Ibid., 1690/4/116, 1693/4/126, 1695/5/117, 1695/5/119, 1696/9/150, 1700/10/240.

⁶² NRS, CH2/720/11, 43, 46.

⁶³ NRS, CH2/40/6, Brechin Presbytery Minutes (1710–1717), 29; CH2/113/4, Duns Presbytery Minutes (1707–1716), 108, 113, 114, 118.

⁶⁴ CUL, MS SPCK/A1/10 Minutes, 55. Carpenter's own regiment was served by Francis Gore, an Anglican chaplain: see TNA, SP 41/3/182.

under Queen Anne – had been condemned by the 1709 General Assembly as a dangerous innovation in worship.⁶⁵ Greenshields was accordingly banned from ministering by the presbytery of Edinburgh and imprisoned by the magistrates for using the Prayer Book. The Scottish legal decision, however, was overturned by the House of Lords after Greenshields's successful appeal in 1711. The Lords ruled that Episcopalian meeting houses were not prohibited in Scotland, a ruling that facilitated the passage of the 1712 Toleration Act.⁶⁶ It was also at this juncture that Wightman's regiment was first denied, and then allowed, Anglican worship.

Amid the toleration controversy, the grievances from Brechin and Duns thus coincided with growing concerns that the Kirk's established status was embattled. Disparate incidents dealt with by individual kirk sessions and presbyteries accordingly converged into a more systematic national effort to control soldiers' morality. In 1710, the General Assembly, having received 'several references' regarding recalcitrant soldiers, issued an 'Act and Recommendation concerning Soldiers under Scandals'. With the agreed cooperation of David Leslie, third earl of Leven, then commander-in-chief in Scotland, the Act obliged 'both officers and soldiers' to 'submit to the discipline of the Church'; as with the petitions from Brechin and Duns, it cited both the parliamentary laws and 'her majesties gracious proclamations against prophanness' as its legal basis.⁶⁷ The problem persisting, however, the following year the presbytery of Edinburgh wrote to Carstares – then in London to complain about Episcopalian 'intrusions' in Scotland during Greenshields's appeal – urging him to seek Queen Anne's assurance that soldiers guilty of moral crimes would be made subject to the Kirk's authority.⁶⁸

Yet the political odds were against the Kirk's efforts to discipline the multi-confessional army. Caught up in the 'rage of party' under Anne, English officers in Scotland complained to Whitehall about the Kirk's jurisdictional over-reach and found a sympathetic ear in the Tory ministry of the high church Robert Harley, first earl of Oxford.⁶⁹ In response, William Legge, first earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State

⁶⁵ *Acts of the General Assembly*, 418–9; Raffae, 'Presbyterians and Episcopalians', 596.

⁶⁶ Rogers, 'The House of Lords and Religious Toleration in Scotland', 327–33.

⁶⁷ 'Acts and Recommendation concerning Soldiers under Scandals' (1710), in *Acts of the General Assembly*, 442.

⁶⁸ NRS, CH2/121/8, 147–57.

⁶⁹ TNA, SP 41/4/34.

for the Southern Department, wrote to Leven, concurring that no soldier would endure 'the severity of the censures of the Church'. He even threatened to 'send down English Chaplains' to free English soldiers from the Kirk's control. Realizing that this would be a worse outcome for the Kirk, Leven compromised and advised Carstares to exert caution and 'use as much lenity as the rules of the Church would allow' when dealing with military personnel.⁷⁰ In October 1711, Carstares accordingly informed the presbytery of Edinburgh of the government's decision against its proposal. Perhaps to soften the blow, the presbytery reframed the political obstacle as a matter of practicality rather than jurisdiction, recording that it would be 'inconvenient ... for Souldiers to be sent at any great distance for removing of Scandalls'.⁷¹ This uneasy settlement, in turn, fed into the ongoing debates in print on toleration. A pro-Greenshields pamphleteer ridiculed Wightman and Carstares for brokering a self-serving 'Treaty of Peace' between 'the Armies and Kirk': 'the General shall not send his Chaplain to attend and read Prayers to his Regiment; and ... the Kirk shall not trouble any Person in his Regiment on the account of Fornication.'⁷²

Despite these setbacks, the Edinburgh Presbytery pressed on, addressing the committee of the General Assembly again three weeks later. This committee had, however, already conceded that military assistance was not easily forthcoming and changed its direction from seeking support from an external institution (as the 1710 Act had attempted to do) to improving its coordination of different kirk sessions within the ecclesiastical court system instead. The committee's decision, eventually issued as 'Advice concerning Soldiers under Scandals' in 1712, made clear that kirk sessions should aim to examine soldiers before they were reassigned and, if necessary, collaborate with kirk sessions in the soldiers' new stations to uphold discipline.⁷³ Meanwhile, the Stirling Burgh Council responded by tightening its grip over female delinquents, enacting in 1711 that women failing to confess before their soldier accomplices departed should be

⁷⁰ Wodrow, *Analecta*, 1: 352–3.

⁷¹ NRS, CH2/121/8, 158–9, also quoted in Wei, 'The Realities of Toleration', 82.

⁷² *A Letter from a Gentleman in Edinburgh to His Friend in London, Giving an Account of the Present Proceedings Acts of the General Assembly against the Episcopal Clergy in Scotland, for Using English Liturgy There* (Edinburgh, 1711), 19–20.

⁷³ NRS, CH1/3/12, 273; 'Advice concerning Soldiers under Scandals' (1712), in *Acts of the General Assembly*, 472–3.

banished.⁷⁴ This shift of focus from external to internal, and from male to female, effectively signified the Scottish ecclesiastical and civil authorities' acceptance of their jurisdictional limitations vis-à-vis the military population. Even more significantly, there was a notable shift in the Kirk's legal ground for disciplining soldiers: when persisting local grievances prompted the Assembly again to seek redress in 1724, it merely asked the commanding officers to suppress vices 'by a due Execution of the Articles of War against Immoralitys', without any reference to its own discipline or the royal proclamations.⁷⁵ This was a clear admission that the army had become an extra-judicial space in Scotland: it was subject first and foremost to military, rather than ecclesiastical, laws.

IV.

The 1710s and 1720s, therefore, saw the Kirk retreating from its former claim of authority over the army. Nonetheless, this did not mark the end of its military influence entirely. Once the Kirk accepted that the military authorities had ultimate say in religious matters pertaining to the army and stopped contesting this head-on, a new phase of Kirk-army cooperation in supplying preaching to soldiers began. In particular, the Kirk's political situation somewhat improved after the failed Jacobite rebellion of 1715. The majority of nonjuring Episcopalians were Jacobites and many had joined the rising, leading to new legislation and state reprisals against nonjuring meeting-houses.⁷⁶ In Glasgow, English army chaplains became the only qualified Episcopalian preachers and continued to encounter local hostility despite their legal status.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, the Whig ministry of Robert Walpole and Charles Townshend, second viscount Townshend, in London recognized the 'Highland problem' – a perceived lawlessness that had kept Highlanders in a state of rebellion – and appointed George Wade as commander-in-chief in 1725 to pacify the region. For this purpose, Wade raised new Independent Companies as a policing force and started an ambitious barrack and road-building

⁷⁴ Stirling, Stirling Council Archives, SBC11/5, Stirling Burgh Council Minutes (1703–1721), 26 May 1711.

⁷⁵ NRS, CH1/1/30, Register of General Assembly (1720–1725), 500–1.

⁷⁶ See, for example, TNA, SP 54/37/10B; SP 54/37/42A, B; SP 54/37/48B.

⁷⁷ Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3: 256; 4: 19, 26.

programme.⁷⁸ Simultaneously, the Walpole-Townshend ministry endorsed the SSPCK's programme of Christianizing and 'civilizing' Highlanders through its expanding network of charity schools and missionaries.⁷⁹ To strengthen this initiative, the government further introduced the Royal Bounty (an annual grant of £1,000) for the Kirk to employ itinerant ministers and catechists in the Highlands.⁸⁰

By the mid-1720s, then, both the military population under the Kirk's pastoral care and the Kirk's financial capacity to support them had increased. Although aimed at the Highland population, the SSPCK and Royal Bounty schemes also benefitted garrisoning troops. At Fort William, in particular, the civil and military communities were closely intertwined, with the governor overseeing both. This symbiotic relationship originated from Fort William's 1690 charter, which transformed 'the Village next adjacent to the said Fort [Maryburgh] into a Burgh of Barony', thereby making the military commander of the garrison simultaneously the civil baron.⁸¹ This dual role meant that the grammar school at Maryburgh received particular military attention. Established in 1694 with the support of Governor Sir John Hill, by 1700 the school had fallen into disuse and the schoolmaster's salary was discontinued.⁸² In 1707, Hill's successor, Lieutenant-General James Maitland, petitioned the Kirk to reopen the school; however, no funds were secured.⁸³ The SSPCK likewise struggled financially to meet local demands and urged army officers to use their 'Interest with the Government' to secure alternative 'allowance for maintaining a School in Maryburgh', not just for local children but also for the children of the garrisoning troops.⁸⁴ After 1725, with the Royal

⁷⁸ NRS, GD124/15/1263, Account of the Highlanders and Highlands of Scotland made by Lord Grange for Viscount Townshend, Secretary of State; TNA, WO 4/25, 2–3, 6–7, 20, 63–4, 270; Andrew Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil: Army, Empire, and the Scottish Highlands, 1715–1815* (East Linton, 2000), 13–5.

⁷⁹ C. W. J. Withers, 'Education and Anglicization: The Policy of the SSPCK towards the Education of the Highlander, 1709–1825', *Journal of Scottish Studies* 26 (1982), 37–56.

⁸⁰ Domhnall Stiùbhart, 'The Genesis and Operation of the Royal Bounty Scheme 1725–30', *RSCHS* 33 (2003), 63–141.

⁸¹ NRS, GD44/26/1/2, Charter of Maryburgh by King William and Queen Mary, 1690.

⁸² *The Earls of Cromartie, Their Kindred and Correspondence*, ed. William Fraser, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1876), 1: 72–4; Jamie Kelly, 'The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge: Education, Language & Governance in the British State and Empire, c.1690–c.1735' (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2020), 31.

⁸³ NRS, CH1/1/19, 525–6.

⁸⁴ NRS, CH1/2/57, General Assembly Papers, Main Series, 2 (1728), 229; GD95/2/3, SSPCK Committee Meeting Minutes, 274.

Bounty offering new funding possibilities in the Highlands, the SSPCK and the General Assembly both beseeched Wade and Charles Sibourg, governor of Fort William, to consider using the Bounty to pay a schoolmaster.⁸⁵ Although it transpired that the Bounty was reserved for itinerant preachers and therefore could not be allocated to the Maryburgh school, both officers remained committed to the SSPCK's educational efforts, with Wade even proposing a more centrally located school at Fort Augustus.⁸⁶

The adult population at Fort William also lacked regular religious provision, prompting the 1726 General Assembly to order James McGilchrist, minister at the nearby parish of Kilmalie, to 'supply that Garrison as frequently as possible', with the support of Alexander Abercromby of Glassaugh, lieutenant-governor there.⁸⁷ The significant military presence at Maryburgh also meant that, unlike many other Highland parishes, the language used for services was English rather than Gaelic. Controversy had already arisen in 1707, when the Gaelic-speaking Neil McVicar was transferred from Fort William to West Kirk, Edinburgh, and his successor, William Brodie, was resisted for his 'want of Irish'.⁸⁸ Yet it was precisely because Brodie only knew English that he was installed, following a government plan to 'purge' the garrison of 'all Highland soldiers'.⁸⁹ Although the row ended when Brodie moved with his troops (25th Foot) to the Scottish Borders in 1712, and then to Ireland, it was rekindled when George Anderson took over the vacancy in 1733.⁹⁰ In 1735, the presbytery of Abertarff, to which Fort William and Fort Augustus belonged, received a petition from Maryburgh asking to replace Anderson with a Gaelic-speaking minister.⁹¹ However, many members of the presbytery had known Anderson as an itinerant preacher for many years before his ordination and praised his work at the garrison.⁹² Consequently, this request was dismissed on the grounds that, not only did the vast majority of the five

⁸⁵ NRS, GD95/2/3, 425; GD95/1/3, SSPCK General Meeting Minutes, 87; CH1/2/55, General Assembly Papers, Main Series, 2 (1727), 379–81.

⁸⁶ NRS, GD95/1/3, 101–2, 160.

⁸⁷ NRS, CH1/2/53, General Assembly Papers, Main Series, 2 (1726), 266–7.

⁸⁸ NRS, CH1/2/26/4, General Assembly Papers, Main Series (1707), 359.

⁸⁹ Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ*, 2nd edn, 12 vols (Edinburgh, 1915–2021; first publ. 1866–71), 4: 129–30.

⁹⁰ Scott, *Fasti*, 4: 130.

⁹¹ NRS, CH1/2/72, General Assembly Papers, Main Series (1735), 128, 151.

⁹² NRS, CH1/2/62, General Assembly Papers, Main Series (1730), 405; CH1/2/66, General Assembly Papers, Main Series (1732), 173–4.

hundred or so parishioners understand English, but the equally large military population – ‘consisting of Six Companies with their Wives and Children who are constant Hearers Amounting to about five hundred More’ – spoke no Gaelic at all.⁹³ There was then consensus from both the Kirk and the military that the minister at Fort William would simultaneously, if not primarily, serve as the *de facto* chaplain to the garrison. It was due to this military function that the post remained an English-speaking one at mid-century: in 1753, an itinerant minister at Strontian, struggling to learn Gaelic, requested a transfer to Maryburgh, where, he claimed, English was ‘very well understood, by all the Inhabitants of [town] & Garrison’.⁹⁴

Other garrisons without chaplains also benefitted from local ministers. William Blair of Kingussie was particularly notable for travelling between the English-speaking Ruthven garrison and his Gaelic-speaking congregation to serve both communities. In 1745, he petitioned the Kirk for a stipend from the Royal Bounty, fearing that if unsubsidized, he would be forced to neglect the ‘decent congregation’ of soldiers and their families.⁹⁵ Even after the Ruthven barracks were damaged during the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745–6, Blair continued to serve the troops under the fourth earl of Loudoun and Lord John Murray, eventually securing the duke of Cumberland’s endorsement of his salary request.⁹⁶

Another preacher praised by military command was Alexander Dallas, schoolmaster at Fort Augustus. In 1746, Lieutenant-Governor William Caulfeild defended Dallas against rumours of his Jacobite sympathies, testifying to the Kirk that Dallas had, in fact, been ‘very diligent’ in ‘furnish[ing] the army’.⁹⁷ After Dallas’s death, the presbytery of Abertarff petitioned the General Assembly in 1751 for another preacher to serve the garrison. Tellingly, the address again raised the issue of ‘English Chaplains’ in Scotland ‘weaken[ing] the Discipline of the Church’. Unlike in previous decades, however, the presbytery did not dispute the presence of English chaplains or insist that Anglican troops must submit to Kirk discipline; instead, it suggested that a possible remedy might be the employment of Royal Bounty missionaries to preach to the garrison.⁹⁸ This reformed Kirk-army partnership also

⁹³ NRS, CH1/2/72, 132.

⁹⁴ NRS, CH1/2/97, General Assembly Papers, Main Series (1754), 107.

⁹⁵ NRS, CH1/2/85, General Assembly Papers, Main Series (1745), 307–8.

⁹⁶ NRS, CH1/2/88, General Assembly Papers, Main Series (1747), 55.

⁹⁷ NRS, CH1/2/86, General Assembly Papers, Main Series (1746), 260–1.

⁹⁸ NRS, CH1/2/94, General Assembly Papers, Main Series (1751), 136.

allowed Adam Ferguson – chaplain to the Black Watch (43rd Regiment) and later a leading figure of the Scottish Enlightenment – to rally his Highland soldiers during the 1745 uprising, invoking their gratitude for the ‘Free Schools’ and ‘Ministers supported at the Expence of the Crown’ as grounds to defend ‘the King and Government’ against the Jacobites.⁹⁹

V.

The Kirk’s complex and evolving relationship with the military reflected its broader struggle to maintain its established status, with the 1710s and 1720s marking a significant retreat in its influence over the army. This process not only resulted from the 1712 Toleration Act, which allowed for greater religious plurality both in the military and in civil society, but further contributed to the shaping of that plurality. While the Kirk sought to impose its discipline on military personnel in Scotland, the reality of a multi-confessional army made this increasingly difficult. The army, operating under its own set of military laws, gradually became an extra-judicial space where ecclesiastical oversight was limited.

Despite these setbacks, the Kirk did not withdraw from military affairs entirely. It adapted to its re-negotiated parameters by cooperating with military authorities to provide religious services for soldiers in Scotland. This period saw the emergence of new initiatives, such as the Royal Bounty and the SSPCK, which aimed to extend religious education and pastoral care to both Highland populations and garrisoning troops. Through these schemes, the Kirk retained a level of influence over the military, albeit in a more collaborative and less authoritative role. Ultimately, the presence of a multi-confessional army within Scotland forced the Kirk to draw a narrower boundary around what it meant to be a ‘national’ church within the bi-confessional British state.

⁹⁹ Adam Ferguson, *A Sermon Preached in the Ersh Language to His Majesty’s First Highland Regiment of Foot, Commanded by Lord John Murray, at their cantonment at Camberwell, on the 18th day of December, 1745* (London, [1746]), 13–4. This period also saw the SSPCK forge military connections in North America to expand its overseas missions: see Kelly, ‘The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge’, 202–16.