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Brian Bond

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to the memory of my mother

OLIVE BESSIE SARTIN

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Medmenham, Bucks, June 1971 Brian Bond

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ABBREVIATIONS

p.s.c.	passed Staff College (Camberley or Quetta)
D.S.-C.	on Directing Staff at Camberley
D.S.-Q.	on Directing Staff at Quetta
C.C.	Commandant Camberley
C.Q.	Commandant Quetta

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Introduction

It was Michael Howard who first aroused my interest in the Victorian Army by directing my postgraduate research towards a reconsideration of the effects of the Cardwell reforms. Over a decade I published a number of articles on various aspects of military reform and edited a book entitled *Victorian Military Campaigns*, but I wanted ultimately to write a book to illuminate the development – truly a transformation – which took place in the character of the British Army between the notorious debacle in the Crimea and the dispatch of the small but highly efficient Expeditionary Force to France in 1914. This development, though real enough, was difficult to pin down; and I was perplexed by the immensity of the field – in which at first very few scholars appeared to be interested. Yet the education and training of officers presents an admirable mirror of the professional quality of the Army, and, furthermore, the history of the Staff College provides a reliable guide to the state of officer education. Indeed the crucial importance of the Staff College before the First World War lay in the fact that it was the only institution devoted to the instruction of the future leaders of the Army after they had been commissioned: the Imperial Defence College and the Joint Services Staff College were as yet unheard of.

In the Crimea era it was still fashionable to deride the necessity for special training for the Staff, but the contribution of the Great General Staff under von Moltke to Prussia's dazzling victories in the 1860s ushered in a new era. In the nineteenth century, Britain possessed no General Staff in the German sense: if there was a 'Brain of the Army' capable of producing a 'School of Thought' it was to be found at Camberley in the Staff College, and nowhere else.

Moreover, working at a time when the performance of British generals in the First World War was once again the subject of bitter controversy, it seemed to me somewhat unrealistic to judge the generals entirely on their achievements *during* the war without taking into account the pre-war education and training that had already to a large extent moulded their professional personalities. Whatever their limitations – and they were certainly serious – it is essential to bear in mind that French, Haig, Robertson and their fellow-generals were regarded as the *élite* of their profession in 1914; they were the outstanding products of a *system*. If criticism was to be tempered by understanding, it was necessary to take that system into account. This leads directly to a close study of the Staff College – through which nearly all the leaders of 1914 had passed – and, later, of the General Staff.

Considering the enormous importance of efficient staff work in modern warfare, it remains a field that has been badly neglected by military historians. As regards the Staff College, Camberley, apart from a booklet to mark the centenary in 1958, the only full-length history is still Maj. A. R. Godwin-Austen's *The Staff and the Staff College*, published in 1927. This lively account was the work of a graduate of the College with a good mind, a sharp pen and a delightful sense of humour. In the almost total absence of Staff College manuscript material – presumed destroyed by 'friendly' action during the First World War – I have been glad to draw on Godwin-Austen's book as a vital quarry; indeed, without it this book could hardly have been written. Why, then, did I consider it worthwhile to do so?

First, Godwin-Austen was writing primarily as a regular officer for a potentially large readership of past, present and future students of the College. Naturally he devoted a good deal of space to such matters as the history of the buildings, sporting events and festive occasions. In a deliberate attempt to lighten the narrative he occasionally, as he admits, adopted a 'flippancy of tone' which erred in the direction of irreverence. This calculated risk succeeded in the all-important respect that his book remains immensely readable, but it had the drawback of

making the tone appear at times to be frivolous and even anti-intellectual. The Drag, for example, though doubtless of great social significance, was a dubious criterion by which to evaluate the professional progress of the College.

Secondly, though Godwin-Austen does attempt to cover 'the Staff' as well as the College by interspersing his narrative with summaries of campaigns, reforms and organizational changes, he is not entirely successful in placing the history of the College within the broader context of the gradual transformation of the Army. This is perhaps a roundabout way of saying that he was not a professional historian. Thus, acutely aware of the problems and pitfalls, I offer no apology for devoting considerable space to such aspects as the Cardwell reforms, the South African War, the formation of the General Staff and the opening phase of the First World War.

Thirdly, our knowledge of British military history before 1914 has been considerably extended and deepened in recent years by the work of scholars such as Jay Luvaas, Albert V. Tucker, W. S. Hamer, John Gooch and Neil Summerton. Their researches, to which my references pay grateful acknowledgement, have – I hope – given this study an extra dimension. In addition I have drawn upon unpublished sources, such as the Edmonds and Haig Papers and the Wilson Diaries, which were either not available to Godwin-Austen, or which at any rate he did not use.

Lastly, there is the matter of scholarly apparatus. Godwin-Austen largely dispensed with footnotes and included only a summary of the principal authorities used in each chapter. On the whole, in quoting and paraphrasing, he handled his sources with scrupulous care, but he has left a tedious task for anyone who wishes to check a particular reference or to pursue the subject further. In the hope that a few readers will be stimulated to extend their reading – as well as to make plain my indebtedness to others – I have given my sources in full.

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CHAPTER ONE

The development of military professionalism and the rise of General Staffs in the nineteenth century

The increased interest in military education in the eighteenth century. The French Revolution underlines the importance of educated and thoroughly trained officers. How potential officers were educated in Prussia, France and Britain. Problems posed by the narrow social sector from which officers were traditionally drawn. The development of a 'professional' structure and spirit in the British Army compared with the growing civil professions. The origins and significance of the Continental General Staff system and why Britain lagged behind.

The military profession is a recent creation of modern society. 'Prior to 1800,' in the opinion of Samuel P. Huntington, 'there was no such thing as a professional officer corps. In 1900 such bodies existed in virtually all major countries.' The nineteenth century had indeed witnessed remarkable developments putting the officer's career structure on a definite basis, both as regards obtaining a commission and subsequent advancement. These developments tended to place a greater premium than hitherto on professional zeal, qualifications and length of service as against privilege stemming from aristocratic birth, influential connections or wealth. Huntington seems to assume, however, that officer corps dominated by mercenaries or aristocrats, and existing in a political context where 'interest' and privilege were enormous assets, were incapable of taking a serious (or professional) attitude to military science, education and training. There is overwhelming evidence on the contrary, to show that a passionate concern with these matters existed – par-

ticularly in France – from the earliest days of standing armies in the sixteenth century. In short, the Napoleonic era marked an important new phase, but not the origin of the concept of the army officer as a professional man.[1]

Perhaps the most important aspect of this development, which only achieved recognition in the course of the nineteenth century, was that would-be officers needed to be specially educated in military or semi-military institutions *before* obtaining a commission, whereas previously a haphazard system of apprenticeship *after* commissioning had been preferred. This radical departure from tradition (which persisted much longer in most navies) in turn raised the controversial question as to whether advanced professional education and training were desirable to qualify officers for positions in the higher command or on the staff.

Before the Napoleonic Wars armies and navies can scarcely be said to have been led by professionals as that term came to be understood in the nineteenth century. Officers were for the most part mercenaries or aristocrats: the former tended to view war as a business, the latter as a hobby. 'In place of the professional goal of expert service, the former pursued profit, the latter honour and adventure.'[2] After the Thirty Years War (1618–48), the military role of the aristocracy had increased while that of the mercenary captain declined. This was but one symptom of the consolidation of nation states whose monarchs felt the need for permanent military forces. Given the comparative poverty of national treasuries and the dreadful nature of the military trade, it was not surprising that the rank and file tended to consist of long-term 'volunteers' from the dregs of society drawn into service – and servitude – by a mixture of bribery and coercion. For their officers the monarchs relied heavily upon the feudal nobility to whom they offered social and political privileges in return for onerous and financially unremunerative service in arms.

Thus the military forces became the property of the Crown rather than of more or less independent individuals. The officers obtained a permanent employer and – more important

as a precondition of professionalism – a permanent focus of loyalty. In the course of the eighteenth century, excepting in the 'scientific corps' of artillery and engineers, the aristocracy, and more especially the lesser and often impoverished nobility, attained a near monopoly of the officer ranks in the European armies.[3] 'The *noblesse* wanted a rewarding life in the open air consonant with their conceptions of honour; the king wanted a loyal officer corps. The *bourgeoisie* generally was more keen on the ring of coin than the roar of cannon.'[4] It is of course dangerous to generalize about the attitude of the *bourgeoisie* since there were national variations in the status of commissioned service. In Austria, for example, being an army officer in the eighteenth century – at least in the lower ranks – carried lower status than in England.

The social composition of the eighteenth-century officer corps to some extent militated against the development of professionalism. In the first place aristocratic birth was virtually a *sine qua non* to obtain entry to all but technical arms. Thus in Prussia Frederick William I compelled the nobility to serve in the Army, while his son Frederick the Great, after having been obliged to admit middle-class officers during the intensive warfare between 1740 and 1763, proceeded to purge the officer corps in the firm belief that only the aristocracy possessed to the full the military virtues of honour, loyalty and courage.

This domination of the Army by the upper classes was reinforced and perpetuated by offering them a near monopoly of places at the cadet academies, several of which were founded in the mid eighteenth century. The French École Militaire, for example, was founded in 1751 expressly to serve the needs of sons of officers and the poorer nobility.

'The regulations organizing the new institution provided for the education of 500 nobles, preference being given to those without fortunes; the purposes of the school were charitable as well as educational. Boys might enter between the ages of eight and thirteen and might stay on until the age of twenty. Besides having to prove their nobility for four generations on the father's side, applicants had only to know how to read and write.'[5]

The French Government blatantly used military commissions as outdoor relief for the aristocracy, with the result that by 1775 there were nominally 60,000 officers – only about one in six actually serving – as against 180,000 other ranks. On the eve of the French Revolution, despite drastic reductions, there were still about 6,333 nobles and only 1,845 commoners and 1,100 soldiers of fortune.[6] In the Prussian service before the catastrophic defeat at Jena in 1806 there were only 700 non-nobles in an officer corps of over 7,000.[7]

Not surprisingly, wealth, birth and interest played a major part in determining advancement to high rank. Except in the artillery and engineers, the British Army retained the system of purchasing commissions up to and including the rank of lieutenant-colonel until 1871. A less institutionalized system of purchase also existed in the Austrian Army up to 1857.[8] Purchase was ended in France before the French Revolution chiefly because it handicapped the poorer country nobles rather than because it prevented recognition of professional merit. Indeed, the purchase system tended to discriminate against poor nobility in favour of affluent *bourgeoisie*. Derisory standards of pay and the absence of regularized pension schemes also severely restricted the social sector from which officers could be drawn.

Although military academies began to spring up in the eighteenth century, the level of professional education was low, and they seldom fulfilled the hopes of their founders. This was so largely because in their administration, governments were attempting to combine two conflicting ideas: that of educating a large number of poor nobles and that of advancing technical education. As to the former motive, a French historian has bluntly described Louis XV's École Militaire as '*une fondation d'intérêt philanthropique plus encore que d'intérêt militaire* . . .'[9] A further obstacle to the development of the academies lay in the fact that there were other and easier ways to obtain military commissions and advancement. This was true of Prussia, where Frederick the Great founded the Ritter Akademie (significantly also known as the Académie des Nobles) in 1765 to provide an education for the diplomatic service as well as the Army.

Although the King himself supervised instruction and regarded the school as a proving ground for promising young officers, it was handicapped by the fact that commissions could be obtained at the age of twelve or thirteen. In France and Britain too it was quite common for young boys – and even occasionally females – to obtain commissions by purchase.[10]

An additional complication was that the new military schools tended to be more concerned with instilling certain values and behaviour in very young boys than with military instruction as such. Hence there arose a chronic debate as to what, beyond regimental drill, military education ought to be. The French, from 1751 onwards, laid heavy stress on mathematics, beyond any practical needs of future infantry officers, for its effect in developing and sharpening the intellect. Scharnhorst, the outstanding member of the Prussian military reform movement from 1806 till his death in 1813, shared this view which was to exert widespread and long-lasting effects on military education. For example, higher mathematics played a disproportionately large part in the syllabus of the British Staff College until well into the second half of the nineteenth century.[11]

Quite separate schools existed to train technically proficient officers for the artillery and engineers. Since what military science there was related chiefly to these arms, it was in the engineering schools that the most strictly professional education could be obtained. The French founded an artillery school at Douai as early as 1679, and an engineering school at Mézières in 1749. Prussia's engineering school dated from 1706. The Royal Military Academy at Woolwich – significantly known as 'The Shop' – was founded in 1741 to provide a gentlemanly and technical education for both engineers and artillery. Although the instruction provided was better than nothing, neither the cadets' military knowledge nor their discipline achieved a high standard in the Academy's first sixty years. Even the passing-out examination instituted in 1764 was dropped on the outbreak of war in 1793.[12]

If the term is employed loosely, 'military staffs' can be traced back to the earliest recorded warfare. Indeed 'when some unknown warrior chief asked help or advice from one of his

co-belligerents, military history saw the first functioning of the military staff'.[13] However, until the advent of more complex warfare in the late eighteenth century, specialist staff training and organization were of permanent importance only in logistics. Consequently the key figure in the early staffs was the Quartermaster General – a title which would later appear anomalous when revived by Germany for its operational chief of staff. With few exceptions, then, the pre-French Revolutionary Staff had little to do with military operations and consequently occupied a lowly status in the eyes of commanding generals. France was exceptional in possessing a truly modern general staff, organized by Lt-Gen. Pierre Bourcet between 1766 and 1771 and revived after 1783.[14] Britain was more typical in having no specialist training and no permanent staff organization before the Napoleonic wars. She was highly exceptional in delaying the creation of a regular general staff until 1906.

The French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, indeed, brought to a head a number of factors which, already before 1789, had begun to put a premium on greater professionalism in the leadership of armed forces in peace and war. In the first place, standing armies were becoming larger so that the individual commander, however brilliant, was unable any longer to maintain personal control in battle: greater responsibility and initiative devolved upon junior commanders. Moreover, even before the injection of ideology and mass enthusiasm in the French Revolutionary wars, improvements in communications and the destructive power of weapons were making warfare more intensive and potentially decisive as an instrument of policy. Above all, armies and navies were becoming sophisticated organizations requiring a multiplicity of experts, as exemplified in the combatant arms by the differentiation of the cavalry into heavy and light regiments, dragoons and hussars, and in the infantry by the emergence of specially trained skirmishers and light infantry units.[15] It became increasingly difficult for the officer to remain competent in all branches of war; moreover the politician and the policeman were begin-

ning to be regarded as specialists in the control of violence by means quite different from the soldier.

Clearly, the growth of nation states also provided a strong impetus to military professionalism. National treasuries provided the necessary wealth to maintain large standing armies while political events, such as the dismemberment of Poland, provided irrefutable evidence of the likely fate of nations which could not defend themselves. The rate of advance of military professionalism was closely related in each country to the degree to which national security was felt to be threatened. Even so it was usually only after a disastrous defeat that governments were prepared to initiate drastic military reforms. Thus, for example, Prussia's emergence as the greatest military power in Europe owed its origins to the reforms following defeat and humiliation in 1806. The quality of the French Revolutionary armies owed a great deal to the extensive military reforms after 1763. France again overhauled her military institutions after 1815 and 1870, Britain after 1856 and 1902, and Austria after 1866.

The modern nation-states system also stimulated professionalism in another way. A professional officer corps must be imbued with a sense of service to the nation. It is a great advantage if the officer's loyalty can focus on a single authority, most obviously a sovereign ruler. 'Where there are competing authorities, or competing ideas as to what ought to be the authority, professionalism becomes difficult if not impossible to achieve.'[16] Here lay one great advantage for Prussia (and later the German Empire) over France between 1815 and 1914.

Huntington has suggested a close link between the introduction of mass conscription and the growth of professionalism. In his view amateur officer corps had been feasible in the eighteenth century only because the rank and file were long-service professionals who knew their trade. After 1815 the continued practice – with varying degrees of thoroughness – of relying upon 'civilians in uniform' demanded greater professional competence on the part of the officers. Certainly the connection appears to hold good for Prussia, which retained the most rigorous system of universal conscription and also developed

the most professional officer corps in the second half of the nineteenth century. Gen. Sir John Hackett has pointed out, however, that the thesis is far harder to sustain from a study of the military history of Britain and the United States. Recent experience of national service also underlines Gen. Hackett's point that in some respects conscription may exert an unfavourable influence on a professional officer corps. In part the disagreement may lie in the interpretation of the term 'professionalism' – Huntington himself is critical of writers who exaggerate the importance of 'the armed horde' – but until further research has been done, it seems safer to suggest that Prussia's early development of a highly proficient officer corps owed more to her total strategic and political environment than to the particular demands of her recruitment policy.[17]

Though civilians frequently pay lip-service to military expertise, it is difficult to grasp imaginatively that the management of violence ideally requires the officer's dedicated attention throughout his career. Not only has the officer to master the art of warfare which is constantly evolving; he is also dealing continuously with people. Above all, broad and deep general knowledge is not just a bonus useful for a top-level commander; it is an integral professional qualification since the organization and application of armed force is closely related to the whole cultural pattern of society. There was, however, great uncertainty about the *nature* of military expertise and how it was best acquired: in the other emergent professions the body of expert knowledge to be mastered was more easily identified.

The development of professionalism, embracing expertise, a sense of responsibility and a corporate spirit,[18] is most clearly observed in the conditions of entry to, and initial education for, commissioned rank, in the systems of promotion and advancement, and in the higher education of officers. How do these aspects of the officers' career structure compare in the experience of Prussia, France and Britain?

Three main stages are discernible in the struggle to secure professional standards at the initial entry to commissioned rank. The first problem was to break the monopoly of wealth, birth

and interest and eventually remove such non-professional considerations altogether. Secondly, to impose certain basic tests of professional competence and training. Thirdly, to require a liberal or gentlemanly education which should be acquired in civil academies *before* undertaking specifically professional education.

Prussia evolved a complicated procedure which managed to combine rigorous educational standards with the preservation of aristocratic – or at least gentlemanly – traditions. The first task of the would-be officer was to gain a nomination by the colonel of a regiment. Next, provided he had achieved the appropriate school-leaving certificate, he would serve in the ranks for at least six months. After this basic military training he could become a 'Sword Knot ensign' (*Portepeefähnrich*), in which rank he would undergo about nine months of professional training at one of the divisional War Schools before taking a special qualifying examination in military subjects. Even this was not the last hurdle, for it was necessary for the young ensign to be formally approved by the officers of the regiment. Thus it remained possible to exclude undesirable officers, however well qualified, and there can be no doubt that this safeguard was exercised in the more glamorous regiments.

Since few of the poorer nobility who provided the backbone of the Prussian officer corps could afford to send their sons to the public *gymnasien* (or grammar schools), the War Ministry maintained special cadet schools which combined military discipline with an inferior education in liberal arts subjects. As the standard of the preliminary examination in general knowledge was steadily raised, the cadet schools began to lose headway to the *gymnasien*. Between 1856 and 1870 the numbers who had passed through the *gymnasien* increased fourfold (of course the Army as a whole also expanded considerably after 1866), but significantly a large proportion of these went into the scientific corps.[19] By 1856, when the War Schools (or divisional schools) began to be reorganized and expanded, the entry system had developed to the point when a good general education could be assumed for all officer candidates. The War Schools were

henceforth able to concentrate on practical professional instruction, omitting even mathematics and foreign languages from their courses. British observers were deeply impressed with the lack of emphasis on competition compared with France: 'the object seems to be, not to establish an accurate *comparison* of the educational attainments of a number of individuals, but to form a *general estimate* of the abilities, character, and military capacity of each ... But the most remarkable feature ... is the care bestowed upon the higher objects of education, upon forming and disciplining the mind and encouraging habits of reflection.'[20]

In France, the Revolution swept away the aristocracy's virtual monopoly of entry to the officer corps and – despite strong pressure for a reversal of policy at the Restoration – it was not restored. Even more than in Prussia, French officers were expected to have gone through a normal secondary education in civil schools before commencing their professional instruction. Only the Prytanée Militaire, founded in 1800 and since 1808 situated at La Flèche, continued to exist as a preparatory military school for officers' sons. France differed sharply from both Prussia and Britain in that, as a consequence of legislation by War Minister Marshal Gouvion Saint-Cyr, in 1817–18, some two-thirds of the officers of the artillery and engineers were recruited from pupils of the École Polytechnique (founded in 1794), while in the Line about two-thirds were promoted from the ranks and only one-third had gone through St Cyr (founded in 1803). Very few of the ex-rankers rose above the rank of captain.[21]

Competition was the keynote at all levels of French military education, and this was especially true for entry into and graduation from the Polytechnique and St Cyr. The former in particular was recognized as the world's outstanding technical school and was imitated in many countries including Russia and the United States. Its students were mostly middle-class young men struggling to obtain a coveted position in the public services. Every successful candidate was entitled to partial or entire support by the State depending on his means. In 1857 not less than a third of the students at each was still financed by the State. An official British study group of 1857 carried away the

impression that each year the thirty or forty ablest graduates from the Polytechnique invariably opted for the Civil Service, so that although military education was comparatively democratic, the Army did not succeed in getting the best brains of the country. They also regarded as a defect 'the exclusively mathematical spirit' encouraged at the Polytechnique. On the other hand, an American, Henry Barnard, writing about the Polytechnique early in the Second Empire, placed the State services selected by the students in the following order: roads, bridges and mines; then munitions, naval architecture, army engineering, artillery, general staff, hydrological corps, tobacco administration, telegraph, general navy; and last, naval artillery.[22]

In Britain, with the exception of the Ordnance Corps, wealth and influence continued to play an important part in securing a commission until 1871, when the system of purchase was eventually abolished. Before that the first major inroad into aristocratic privilege had come with the foundation of the Royal Military College in 1802, since free commissions were in principle available for successful graduates who wished to enter the infantry or cavalry.[23] Nevertheless purchase remained the usual method of entry into the officer corps; for example, of 4,003 first appointments to the Army between 1860 and 1867, 3,167 were by purchase and only 836 without.[24] The Duke of Cambridge was merely echoing the Duke of Wellington and a wide spectrum of conservative military and political opinion when he insisted that, in contrast to Prussia, 'the British officer should be a gentleman first and an officer second'. By the 1800s, then, Britain possessed adequate institutions for preliminary professional education for commissioned service in both the Army and the Navy.[25] But the majority of young men continued to enter directly into their Army commissions, while the Navy – despite the existence of the Naval Academy – continued to 'catch 'em young', enlisting future officers between the ages of twelve and fourteen. Moreover, down to the Crimean War, the education provided at Sandhurst, and to a slightly lesser degree at Woolwich, resembled that at a second-rate public school, and was far inferior to, say, St Cyr.[26]

The first half of the nineteenth century also witnessed, in France and Prussia, the acceptance of a more professional system of advancement *within* the officer corps. In Prussia the system of promotion only after examination, introduced by Scharnhorst among the military reforms following defeat in 1806, was not swept away in the reaction after 1815. Seniority was the chief criterion in promotion up to captain, though qualification for the General Staff often provided for a more rapid advance. Selection was used for a rigorous weeding-out among majors qualified for advancement to lieutenant-colonels, and officers passed over were expected to resign. In France the law enacted by Gouvion Saint-Cyr in 1818 sought to put advancement on a professional basis. Seniority would determine two-thirds of all promotions up to lieutenant-colonel but thereafter all appointments would be by selection.[27] Favouritism and excessively slow advancement in the lower ranks were recognized as the chief defects, and the entire system was overhauled in 1832. Officers were then guaranteed in their ranks subject only to being found guilty of some serious misdemeanour by court-martial. In 1851 a comprehensive scheme of retirement pensions was introduced.

In Britain, however, a really professional system of advancement was incompatible with the existence of the purchase system which of course affected the majority of first commissions offered for the infantry and cavalry, and of promotions up to the rank of lieutenant-colonel.[28] At the time of the Crimean War a captaincy might cost £2,400 and a lieutenant-colonelcy £7,000 – in 'smart' regiments it would be much more. As mess expenses, social activities – in particular hunting – could cost several hundred pounds per annum and the rate of pay remained nominal, it was abundantly clear that – except in India – officers could not serve without substantial independent means. Against these material factors, buttressed by a great weight of military opinion, including that of the Duke of Wellington, attempts to introduce professional qualifications into the system of promotion made little headway. A test case was the attempt to make successful completion of the Staff College course obligatory for appointment to staff posts in peacetime. In the protracted

debate over the proposal to abolish purchase in 1871, Edward Cardwell still found it necessary to emphasize the advantages of a professional officer corps:

> ... if there is one lesson which we have learned from the history of the late campaign [the Franco-German War], it is this – that the secret of Prussian success has been more owing to the professional education of the officers than to any other cause to which it can be ascribed. Neither gallantry nor heroism will avail without professional training.[29]

'The history of military education to the present time,' Correlli Barnett has written, reflecting a widely-shared view, 'has been a tug-of-war between these two qualities: between the conception of a soldier as a fighting-man and the new conception of him, born of the industrial age, as a military manager; between a traditional *élite* and the social changes that have gradually swamped it.'[30] Further reflection, however, suggests that there were actually *three* opposed viewpoints rather than two. These may be summarized as follows: first, soldiers are 'born' whether one is using the concept of genius or of aristocracy; second, military leaders are *moulded* from an early age by institutions that influence every aspect of their personalities – a prison-like regimen plus massive doses of classroom instruction, usually with an emphasis on mathematics; finally, there is the view that officers should be trained, *after* acquiring a basic civilian education, by a programme of realistic practical instruction. The second and third positions are opposed to each other as bitterly as either is to the first: there are even some visible links between the first and third viewpoints in their emphasis on 'natural' education as opposed to 'artificial' classroom indoctrination. The confusion caused by the existence of *three* positions helps to explain some of the prolonged agonizing about whether military 'education' is necessary or beneficial.[31]

The Prussian military reformers after Jena regarded the narrow class basis and inflexible attitudes of the senior officers as the greatest obstacle to a national regeneration. Thus the eloquent Grolman proclaimed that 'In order to fight it is not

necessary to belong to a special class', and in an order of 1808 he stipulated as a general principle for officer selection that 'A claim to the position of officer shall from now on be warranted, in peacetime by knowledge and education, in time of war by exceptional bravery and quickness of perception'.[32] Reservations speedily modified these high ideals. Frederick William III insisted on his right to select regimental commanding officers, and senior commanders were heard to mutter (not for the last time) that staff education, by developing a field marshal's talents in junior officers, would merely encourage insubordination.[33] Indeed traditional, or what Correlli Barnett has termed 'neo-feudalist' attitudes remained formidable on the Continent down to Prussia's astounding military victories in the 1860s.

In Britain, officers with advanced views on military education and training, such as Colonel Le Marchant, Sir John Moore and their successors after 1815, had to contend with even more deeply entrenched attitudes because the British Army had never been infected with revolutionary ideas and in addition had emerged victorious from the Peninsular War and from Waterloo.[34] Not merely the traditional officer class but even military reformers such as Sidney Herbert continued to rate the qualities of a gentleman above those of a professional officer.[35] Lord Wolseley, writing in 1887 of the British officer of fifty years earlier, remarked that 'The very prejudices of the English gentleman only serve to make him all the more popular with his soldiers . . . the officer demanded from his men an implicit obedience, *not only because he was their officer* [my italics], but also their social superior and, as he believed, their natural born leader . . . The relations between the officer and private with us have always partaken very much of the patriarchal and feudal character.' But at that time (1837), Wolseley continued, the officer 'was entirely wanting in military knowledge. Neither he nor even the generals under whom he served recognized its necessity. Had not Marlborough and Wellington won great victories and placed England on a pinnacle of military glory with a previous race of English gentlemen as officers, to whom the science of war was as little known as it was to them? They knew how to lead their men as straight under the heaviest fire