MORALE AND COHESION IN THE ROYAL NEWFOUNDLAND REGIMENT 1914-18

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ROYAL NEWFOUNDLAND REGIMENT 1914-18

by

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ABSTRACT

In 1914, Newfoundland was a self-governing dominion of the British Empire. With the declaration of war, Newfoundland agreed to send five hundred men to serve in the British Army. Very quickly this nucleus of five hundred grew to form the Newfoundland Regiment.

The Newfoundlanders fought as an infantry regiment of the British Army. National identity, however, was maintained through the institution of the regiment. The traditional British regiment functioned as a soldier's home and in this capacity of social organisation, it was significant in promoting troop morale and unit cohesion.

The regiment, and its influence upon morale and cohesion is the focus of this thesis. Throughout the war, the regiment was manned by Newfoundlanders and it maintained a distinctive identity as was encouraged by the traditional regimental system. The support from home bolstered this distinctiveness with care packages which maintained the links with Newfoundland.

This thesis examines the experience of Newfoundland's soldiers through the framework of the regiment. The importance of the "national" regiment and the support from the people in Newfoundland demonstrate the essential link between the soldier and the society from which he comes.

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I owe great debts of gratitude to the staffs of the various archives and collections at which I conducted my research. These are: The Public Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador; The Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University of Newfoundland; The Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa; The Liddle Collection, the University of Leeds; The department of documents, Imperial War Museum, London; and the Public Record Office at Kew, London.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CO	Colonial Office
WO	War Office
PRO	Public Record Office
IWM	Imperial War Museum
PANL	Public Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador
CNS	Centre for Newfoundland Studies
Pte.	Private
Cpl.	Corporal
Sjt.	Sargent
N.C.O.	Non Commissioned Officer
Lt.	Lieutenant
Capt.	Captain
Maj.	Major
Col.	Colonel
Bn.	Battalion
Bde.	Brigade
Div.	Division
G.H.Q.	General Head-Quarters
B.E.F.	British Expeditionary Force

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of the Newfoundland Regiment[1] in the First World War. It is an investigation of morale in a specific infantry battalion of the British Army.[2] The object of this thesis is to demonstrate that together, community support and the institution of the regiment were influential and essential in creating, promoting and maintaining morale. This will explain why the Newfoundland Regiment had significantly better morale than their counterparts in the rest of the British infantry.

It will be argued that the Newfoundland Regiment functioned, in terms of the regimental system, as a traditional infantry battalion when other battalions could not. They demonstrated an example of how the regimental system should work when all around them the system was collapsing. First, the relationship between morale, cohesion and the regimental system will be demonstrated. Then the Newfoundlanders' experience, given their particularly strong community ties, will be shown to be significantly different

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[1]The title "Newfoundland Regiment" will be used throughout the thesis to avoid confusion and temporal qualification. In World War One, the title "Royal" was awarded in 1917.

[2]A typical regiment had two battalions of 1000 men each. The Newfoundland Regiment had only one battalion. The regimental system is discussed in greater detail in chapter two.

than that of the rest of the British Army.

The novelty of this study is in the approach and the source materials. There has been little scholarly research on this particular regiment in the First World War. There certainly has not been a study of the Newfoundland Regiment's morale. Significantly, the regiment has not been studied using the "experience of war" approach.[3] Unfortunately, there has been little use made of the invaluable primary sources of letters, diaries and interviews. This is the first attempt at a social history of the Newfoundland Regiment.

In the broadest sense, this is a case study in troop morale. Necessarily, there is an amount of comparison involved. For the most part, comparisons are limited to other battalions of the British infantry. This is because the Newfoundlanders fought as a unit of the British infantry, within the British command structure. Direct comparisons with other Dominion forces such the Canadians or the Australians and New Zealanders would be of limited use. The Dominion armies used a different system of troop organization which was not strictly analogous to the British regimental system. The scope of the thesis is limited to the British infantry in the

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[3]Also known as the "Face of Battle" approach after J.Keegan The Face of Battle (London:Pimlico;1976) See also P.Simpkins "Everyman at War: Recent Interpretations of the Front Line Experience" in B.Bond (ed.) The First World War and British Military History (Oxford: O.U.P. 1991)

First World War and Newfoundland's role in it.

The first two chapters lay the theoretical ground work. Cohesion and morale are discussed and defined in the first chapter and a working definition is proposed which suggests three essential elements of morale. The idea of the regiment and the significance of the regimental system are discussed in the second. The way in which the regiment fosters the essential elements of morale and cohesion is discussed in this chapter. The following chapter moves from the theoretical to the practical and outlines the effects of battlefield attrition upon the regimental system. This section focuses upon the way in which changes in the regiment were detrimental to the promotion of morale. National identity and the Newfoundlander's corporate identity is the focus of the next chapter. It will be demonstrated that this strong identification with the community was essential in maintaining morale and promoting a commonality of purpose. The final chapter details the morale building efforts specific to the Newfoundlanders. The way morale was created, promoted and maintained in the Newfoundland Regiment will be investigated using, as far as is possible, first hand accounts. Morale can then be explained using the dynamic of the British regimental system.

It has been suggested that military history is "history by virtue of its subject matter, not by virtue of a particular

methodology."[4] By virtue of its subject matter, this is a study in military history. The military, however, does not exist in isolation. The respected historian, Sir Michael Howard, advises that:

> Military history - by which I mean the history of armed forces and their conduct in war - can no more be separated from general history than can the activity of war itself, from the societies that engage in it.[5]

For this reason, the present study is necessarily a work of Newfoundland history. Elsewhere, Howard writes that military operations are "powerfully affected by social and economic considerations" that influence variables such as equipment, training, leadership and troop morale.[6] To learn about the Newfoundland Regiment when it fought in Europe, it is necessary to examine the society from which the regiment came. By subject, this thesis is both military history and Newfoundland history. By methodology, it is one aspect of the social history of war.

The secondary sources consulted in this thesis can

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[4]T.Travers and C. Archer Men at War: Politics, Technology and Innovation in the Twentieth Century (Chicago: Precedent; 1982) p.1.

[5]M.Howard "The Crisis in European History: The Role of the Military Historian" in The Journal of Military History 57:5;127.

[6]M.Howard, The Lessons of History (New Haven: Yale University Press; 1991) p.41.

generally be described as "war and society" literature.[7] They serve two functions. The first is to provide a synthesis for the theoretical discussions of morale, cohesion and the regimental system. The second is to provide context and some limited comparisons for the discussions of the army and British society during the First World War.

The first chapter examines the standard British works on morale and relies chiefly on the American school of military sociology for discussions of cohesion.[8] The chapter on the regimental system draws upon the excellent social and political histories of the British Army before and during the war. Notably, these include Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914* and Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition 1558-1945*.[9] The better treatments of the British Army discuss the importance of the regiment so a number of the broader studies of Britain in the First World War are also brought into this synthesis.

The published sources provide the necessary context into

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[7]See: Bond, The First World War and British Military History, D.Charters *et. al.* Military History and the Military Profession (London: Praeger; 1992) and M.Howard, The Lessons of History (New Haven: Yale University Press: 1991)

[8]A full discussion of this literature is found in the chapter.

[9]E.Spiers, The Army and Society 1815-1914 (London: Longman; 1980) I.Beckett, The Amateur Military Tradition 1558-1945 (Manchester: Manchester University Press: 1991) and I.Beckett and J.Gooch Politicians and Defence 1845-1970 (Manchester: Manchester University Press; 1981).

which the study of morale and the Newfoundland Regiment may be placed. The discussion of attrition, manpower policy and the disintegration of the regiment is based on the recent studies of Britain in the First World War. Keith Simpson's *Kitchener's Army*, Beckett and Simpson's *A Nation in Arms* and Denis Winter's *Death's Men* all examine the army in the context of British society.[10] These are concerned with political and economic questions as well as issues of recruitment, supply, officer-man relations, morale and the soldier's experience.

Unfortunately, literature on Newfoundland in the First World War is limited. General histories mention the subject in passing or ignore it completely.[11] The first specific history was Nicholson's *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, published in 1964.[12] It was written as the official regimental history and it is still the standard reference work on the regiment in the First World War. A very good battle history of the Newfoundlanders at Beaumont-Hamel is Cave's *What Became of*

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[10]I.Beckett and K.Simpson A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War (Manchester: Manchester University Press;1985) K.Simpson, Kitcheners Army: The Raising of the New Armies 1914-16 (Manchester: Manchester University Press; 1988) D.Winter Death's Men (London: Penguin; 1979)

[11]S.J.R. Noel Politics in Newfoundland (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1973) and F.Rowe History of Newfoundland and Labrador (Toronto:McGraw-Hill; 1980)

[12]G.W.L. Nicholson The Fighting Newfoundlander (St.John's: The Government of Newfoundland; 1964)

Corporal Pittman? [13]. The administration of Newfoundland's war effort is the subject of O'Brien's master's thesis entitled "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association and the Administration of the War Effort: 1914-18".[14] This excellent socio-political study examines the war in Newfoundland but does not extend to the Regiment overseas. The most recent scholarly treatment of Newfoundland in the First World War is Sharpe's article "The Race of Honour: An Analysis of Enlistments and Casualties in the Armed Forces of Newfoundland 1914-18".[15] This is a demographic survey in which comparisons are made to the larger context of the British and Canadian experiences. Unfortunately, this is the extent of the scholarship on Newfoundland in the First World War.

There is nothing written specifically on the concept of the regiment in the Newfoundland case. Within the broader aspects Newfoundland history, there exists the opinion that an infantry regiment was not the best way for the colony to contribute to the war effort. This position originated with a statement made by the leader of the Union Party, William

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[13]J.B. Cave What Became of Corporal Pittman? (St.John's: Breakwater; 1976)

[14]P.R. O'Brien "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association: The Administration of the War Effort 1914-18" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland: 1982)

[15]C.Sharpe "The Race of Honour: An Analysis of Enlistments and Casualties in the Armed Forces of Newfoundland 1914-18." Newfoundland Studies 4:1;27-55. (1988)

Coaker, who sat on the opposition side of the House of Assembly. Coaker "opposed the formation of an independent land force as extravagant and wasteful."[16] He suggested that expanding the Royal Naval Reserve would better serve Newfoundland's situation since "most of the cost would be borne by the imperial government."[17] The disastrous cost, both in men and money, is at the heart of other criticisms of Newfoundland's military contribution.[18] Clearly there is another side to this argument.

There is a great void in our knowledge and understanding of this aspect of Newfoundland's history. Conversely, there is a rather smaller, but significant gap in the history of the First World War. Because so little work has been done in this field, there exist many opportunities for a variety of enquiries. The present study uses morale as a window through which the experience of Newfoundland's soldiers may be examined. It will contribute to the writing on morale and the regimental system and will fill a long neglected gap in

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[16]I.MacDonald, To Each His Own: William Coaker and the Fishermen's Protective Union in Newfoundland Politics 1908-25 J.K.Hiller (ed.) (St.John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research; 1987) p.48. Coaker's statement appeared in the union organ, The Weekly Mail and Advocate, September 29, 1914.

[17]MacDonald, William Coaker and the Fisherman's Protective Union p.48.

[18]See: Sharpe, "The Race of Honour" p.25. Noel, Politics in Newfoundland (Chapter 6: Politicians and the War) and O'Brien, "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association" passim.

Newfoundland history.

CHAPTER ONE

MORALE AND COHESION

> The morale of a soldier is the single greatest factor in war
>
> Montgomery of Alamein[1]

It has been suggested that morale and cohesion are really the same thing, the difference being that the British insist on the word morale and the American writers prefer cohesion. This is a false assumption as the two terms, though closely related, are manifestly different. This distinction is especially important with regards to this study of the men of the Newfoundland Regiment. As a point of entry, it is sufficient to say that morale and cohesion are two separate but related ideas. This will become clear as it is demonstrated how, given the right circumstances, cohesion facilitates and builds morale.

Morale is the rather vague word used to describe the "spirit" or "mood" of an individual or group. It is a very important concept in writing about the military as it is widely accepted that to have high morale is good and to have low morale is bad. While there has been some considerable writing regarding the subject, there is little agreement on

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[1]B.L.Montgomery The Memoirs of Field Marshal Montgomery (London: Fontana; 1960) p.83.

what constitutes morale, and even less consensus as to a concise definition of the word.[2]

The Concise Oxford Dictionary provides the following definition of morale: " Morale: noun. Morale condition, especially (of troops) as regards discipline and confidence."[3] Regrettably, the font of all lexicographical knowledge is not of much help in this case. The literature on morale will be reviewed and from this, I will propose a working definition specific to the present study of the Newfoundland Regiment.

A good place to begin is the respected Morale: A Study of Men and Courage by Baynes. He states that "High morale is the most important quality of a soldier. It is a quality of mind and spirit which combines courage, self discipline and endurance."[4] He describes it as "the way in which people react to the conditions of their existence."[5] In an analysis

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[2]See: Lord Moran, Anatomy of Courage (London:Constable;1945) John Baynes, Morale: A Study of Men and Courage (London: Cassell; 1967). F.M.Richardson, Fighting Spirit: A Study of Psychological Factors in War (London: Leo Cooper; 1978) Brent Wilson, 'Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F. 1914-18' Unpublished M.A. Thesis (University of New Brunswick 1978) and John Fuller Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918. (Oxford: Clarendon; 1990)

[3] The Concise Oxford Dictionary Third Edition.(Oxford: Clarendon; 1938).

[4]J.Baynes Morale p.108.

[5]J.Baynes Morale p.92.

from a medical and psychiatric perspective, Major-General F.M.Richardson suggests that group morale is comprised of three factors. They are: first, the membership of a contented unit with confidence in its leaders; second, confidence and respect for comrades; third, determination not to let down friends or the unit.[6]

An oft quoted but less satisfying definition of morale comes from S.L.A. Marshall's Men Against Fire. "... morale is the thinking of an army. It is the whole complex body of an army's thought: the way it feels about the soil and about the people from which it springs."[7] This definition is too general and while it is true that the factors that influence morale indeed arise from the "the soil and about the people from which it springs", it says nothing about what makes good morale, what destroys it and the indicators of high or low morale.

The 1922 Report of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into Shell Shock described morale as "confidence in one's self and ... one's comrades...confidence of the spirit...."[8] It was observed that during the war, "the incidence of Shell

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[6]F.M.Richardson Fighting Spirit p.172.

[7]S.L.A.Marshall Men Against Fire (New York:Morrow;1947) p.158.

[8]War Office (United Kingdom), Report of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into Shell Shock [Command Paper 1734]. (London: H.M.S.O.; 1922) p.208.

Shock varied inversely with the morale of the troops."[9] With this recognition of the significance of high morale came recommendations on how to encourage it. In promoting and maintaining morale "good food, good housing, recreational relaxation and attention to the comfort and well being of the soldier are of the greatest service."[10]

Field Marshal Montgomery knew the value of high morale and determined that it was composed of four essential elements. These are: discipline, self respect, leadership and comradeship.[11] While it useful to know the stuff of which morale is made, it does not offer a definition of the term.

It is agreed that morale is a noun but it is an abstract noun not unlike the words love, confidence or security. They are, like morale, states of being. But so far the literature presents a number of synonyms or impossibly large definitions. Morale is confidence. Morale is the thinking of an army. It is a spirit of discipline and endurance. It is devotion to a group. All these elements, either singly or in combination, may be attributes of high morale but they do not provide us with an exact definition.

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[9]Report on Shell Shock (1922) p.150.

[10]Report on Shell Shock (1922) p.149.

[11]Field-Marshal B.L.Montgomery "Morale in Battle" British Medical Journal (Nov. 9,1946) p.702. Also: Montgomery, A History of Warfare (London:Collins:1968) p.17. And quoted in Brent Wilson "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F." p.2.

Baynes wrote that morale was "the way in which people react to the conditions of their existence." I would expand this to say that morale is a mood or disposition displayed by an individual or by a group which reflects an attitude towards their situation. Montgomery describes the effect of this disposition as being that which "makes men endure and show courage in times of fatigue and danger."[12] In military terms, high morale refers to the positive attitude, which, indeed, may be described as confidence. "Confidence" might describe the state of morale but the term should not be confused as being synonymous with it. Having offered one definition for morale, it would be useful to examine the components of morale and the ways in which it may be promoted and maintained.

One of the most significant conclusions of the 1922 Report on Shell Shock was the advice: "Morale can be, and has to be, created."[13] It had been previously assumed that the British soldier was just naturally brave. Morale, it was thought, was something that occurred rather than something that was created.[14] This line of thought changed during the First World War.

Frederick J. Manning makes a critical distinction between

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[12]Montgomery, "Morale in Battle" p.704.

[13]Report on Shell Shock (1922) p.208.

[14]Anthony Kellett Combat Motivation (Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff; 1982) p.17.

morale and the separate ideas of cohesion and esprit. He claims that cohesion and esprit are used incorrectly as synonyms of morale but are, in fact, separate components of good morale. Cohesion, according to Manning, is "the bonding together of soldiers in such a way as to sustain their will."[15] Esprit, he claims, is a parallel concept to cohesion but at a higher (secondary) level, it is "pride and devotion to a formal group" and can be seen in the soldier's self esteem as it relates to the reputation of the unit.[16] It can be said, therefore, that cohesion and esprit are the building blocks of morale. Both these terms will be discussed in greater detail but this review concerns the literature dealing with morale.

Earlier, morale was defined as a mood or disposition displayed by an individual or group which reflects an attitude toward their situation. The task remains to investigate the characteristics of morale and what indicators may be used to determine the morale of troops.

Baynes' study of one battalion of the Cameronians in World War I is one of the best known and perhaps most

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[15]Frederick J. Manning, "Morale Cohesion and Esprit de Corps" in R.Gal and D.Manglesdorff (eds.) Handbook of Military Psychology (Chichester: John Wiley; 1991) p.457.

[16]Manning, "Morale, Cohesion and Esprit de Corps" p.458.

influential on the subject of morale.[17] He identified five factors as the "main ingredients" of high morale. Of greatest importance, he thought, was regimental loyalty:

> the pride in belonging to a good battalion, in knowing other people well and being known by them; in having strong roots in a well loved community.[18]

Regimental spirit, as will be demonstrated, was perhaps the single greatest characteristic of the Newfoundland Regiment in the First World War. Second on the list was good officer-man relations characterized by mutual trust and confidence. Third was strong discipline. Fourth was a strong sense of duty "developed ... by the realization that someone else would have to do his job if he failed." The final element, and certainly a necessary one, was "sound administration" which made sure that the men of the battalion had what they needed such as food and ammunition.[19] Baynes was, of course, describing the ideal situation. The "mood or disposition" would indeed be positive if the soldier was well provided for, could rely on his mates, had confidence in his superiors and was proud to belong to a team. The combination of these elements should have produced high morale. With these

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[17]J.Baynes, Morale: A Study of Men and Courage (The Second Scottish Rifles at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle).

[18]Baynes Morale p.253.

[19]Baynes Morale pp.253-254.

conditions met, it is entirely plausible that the troops with high morale were able to put up with more hardship than those with low morale and were less prone to break psychologically under pressure.[20] This is borne out by the War Office's inquiry into shell shock. It reported that "The incidence of shell shock varied inversely with the morale of the troops."[21] It warned ominously: "to neglect morale in any of its aspects is to invite large and unnecessary casualties in battle and in times of stress."[22] Clearly, there were consequences of having poor morale.[23]

In "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F. 1914-18", Wilson investigates the yardsticks by which the General Headquarters (G.H.Q.) Staff tried to measure morale. He evaluated the effectiveness of three statistical indices. They were figures regarding trench foot, shell shock and courts-martial. The evaluation of morale was difficult as these statistical guides were unreliable. He concluded that "Classification of trench foot and shell shock was confusing and the meaning of the

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[20]See; Moran, Anatomy of Courage pp.X, 36, and 181.: Baynes Morale p.93.: J.Fuller Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.30-31. and T.Copp and W.MacAndrew Battle Exhaustion (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press; 1991.) p.100.

[21]Report on Shell Shock p.150.

[22]Report on Shell Shock p.156.

[23]Copp and MacAndrew Battle Exhaustion p.82. "Battle Exhaustion rates were directly affected by the state of the unit's morale, leadership, competence and esprit."

statistics was obscure."[24] Courts-martial figures were more reliable, according to Wilson, but their utility was limited.[25] If the indices used during the war were flawed, what can be used as a reliable indicator for morale?

Ahrenfeldt states "deserters and absenteeism could be regarded very largely as an index of morale."[26] Desertion is explained in this context as the result of a lack of "morale-building factors" such as the self-confidence accrued from good training and the identification with a given group.[27] Other causes of desertion were external strains such as battle stress and individual emotional trauma such as changes to or separation from the group, death of a comrade or officer, personal guilt or injury and domestic stress.[28] This reinforces the caveat made by the War Office Report on Shell Shock in 1922 that "to neglect morale ... is to invite large and unnecessary casualties...."

Similarly, indiscipline is described in terms of a symptom of poor morale. S.L.A.Marshall maintained that good morale did not come from harsh discipline; rather, good

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[24]Wilson "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F." p.311.

[25]Wilson "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F." p.311.

[26]Robert Ahrenfeldt, Psychiatry in the British Army in the Second World War (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; 1958) p.204.

[27]Ahrenfeldt, Psychiatry in the British Army p.204.

[28]Ahrenfeldt, Psychiatry in the British Army p.204.

discipline was a product of high morale.[29] John Fuller concurs with this assessment and suggests that good discipline in a volunteer army was seen to be obedience by consent.[30] A breakdown in discipline is seen as lack of self-respect, and disregard for the group and its leaders.[31] A withdrawal of the consent to obey would signify an individual at variance with his group. Lord Moran explained the difference between morale and discipline as being the difference between the authority coming from within and without.[32] Discipline is the enforced obedience to an external authority and is less effective than the obedience by consent. It is presumed that the man displaying high morale will be prevented from acts of indiscipline because of his respect for his leader, fear of disapprobation of his peers, and his desire to uphold the good name of the unit.[33] Not surprisingly, for something as nebulous as the concept of morale, there are few definite indicators to point to the absence or presence of morale. Baynes suggests that the size of the sick parade on any given day is a good assessment of morale. If many men present

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[29]S.L.A.Marshall, Men Against Fire (New York: Morrow; 1947) p.158.

[30]J.Fuller Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.52.

[31]Wilson "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F." p.3.

[32]Moran The Anatomy of Courage p.173.

[33]Baynes Morale p.95.

themselves as being sick, then the morale of the unit is in trouble. Baynes claims that the men with high morale will always want to stay with the unit and will fall out only when seriously ill.[34] This assertion can be supported by isolated first hand accounts but without regular regimental statistics or Medical Officer's records, the size of the sick parade is not a reliable indicator.[35] Trench foot was thought to be indicative of malingering and therefore a sign of low morale. Later research has shown that this affliction was much less of a "self-inflicted-wound" than it was a genuine, unavoidable casualty. So the incidence of trench foot is not a good indicator of poor morale.[36]

As has been shown, there exists a relationship between morale and the incidence of psychiatric casualties.[37] The statistics collected during the First World War for such casualties are unreliable because of the confusion over shell shock, the way it was diagnosed and the way it was recorded.[38] While the statistics used by the G.H.Q. were

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[34]Baynes Morale p.96.

[35]See: John Gallishaw Trenching in Gallipoli (New York: Century; 1916) "I was almost crying at the thought of leaving..." p.190. A notable exception is J.C.Dunn The War The Infantry Knew 2nd ed. (London: Cardinal; 1987) -Memoirs of a Regimental M.O.

[36]Wilson "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F." p.254.

[37]Report on Shell Shock p.150.

[38]Wilson "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F." p.254.

unreliable, the incidence of shell shock and any of the names it went under (such as Not Yet Diagnosed - Nervous) may be useful as an indicator of morale. The incidence of Shell Shock should not be used as a measure of morale but it has utility as a symptom of weakening morale.

Discipline, or indiscipline, as reflected by criminal convictions can also be an indicator of morale. Wilson warns that data on crime rates are useful only at the local level and even then, are ambiguous at best.[39] The reporting and recording of crime is another big variable as is the type of crime which is reported. Discretion on the part of the regimental officer either in reporting the crime, or in sentencing the crime has much to do with the uncertainty built into regimental crime statistics. Again, these figures may indicate either the absence or presence of morale, but they cannot be used in any empirical survey due to the variance of the data.

A number of sources agree that the root of high morale lies in the physical well being of the soldier. "The standard causes of good morale are good food, adequate rest, mail, proper medical care, efficient equipment and good welfare services."[40] In a list of the determinants of morale, Manning

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[39]Wilson "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F." p.312.

[40]Baynes Morale p.101.

includes "Health, good food, adequate rest, clean, dry clothes, washing facilities and protection from the cold."[41] It is evident that the fulfilment of basic needs such as food and rest, form the foundation for a unit's morale. It was Baynes who insisted that the sound administration of a battalion is essential to morale. In the final analysis, it is the creature comforts which are important in trying to build the confident and positive outlook that characterizes good morale. I suspect that soldiers were content when they were given a reason to be content: dry feet and a hot meal went a long way to promote and maintain morale.

Baynes' list of the five essential ingredients for morale is an accurate catalogue of the characteristics of that which is the "single greatest factor in war". The battalion was shown to be important for the pride in belonging and the "home" it afforded the soldier. This particular aspect will be addressed in greater detail in the following discussion regarding cohesion. Healthy officer-man relationships were necessary for the promotion of mutual trust and confidence in the officer's ability to lead, and the men's ability to discharge their duty. Discipline was demonstrated to be a fair indicator as to the absence or presence of morale. The men's sense of duty reflected their self-respect

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[41]F.J. Manning "Morale, Cohesion, and Esprit de Corps" p.459. and Richardson Fighting Spirit p.171.

and the pride they had for their unit. Finally, sound administration was demonstrated to be essential to the maintenance of morale. It is an element that is not noticed when it works, but it is sorely missed when it is absent. Thus characterized, the determinants, and then also the indicators of morale can be identified and qualified within the context of a battalion in combat. The present study concerns itself with the morale of the officers and men of the Newfoundland Regiment in the context of the British Army in the First World War.

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While cohesion is not simply another word for morale, the two are closely related concepts. Very simply, cohesion can be seen to be the "mechanical" or management feature of a social group. It is descriptive of how well something operates. The cliched analogy of the well-oiled machine best illustrates this point. If the group is an electric motor, then morale may be compared to the electricity which provides power for movement. Cohesion may then be compared to the smooth and efficient action of the gears which facilitates effective movement. Morale may be what makes a battalion tick, but cohesion is the machinery that permits morale to work upon the battalion.

The dictionary defines cohesion as "the tendency to stay united" and this is perhaps as good an explanation as any, of

what cohesion is.[42] Manning provides a more detailed definition:

> ...the bonding together of soldiers in such a way as to sustain their will and commitment to each other, the unit, and mission accomplishment despite combat or mission stress.[43]

In another article, Manning and Ingraham state that "Cohesion represents feelings of belonging, of solidarity with a specifiable set of others who constitute 'we' as opposed to 'them'."[44] Cohesion is much easier to define and perhaps for this reason, easier to understand than morale. Cohesion describes the relationship between the members of the group. It is the solidarity, unity or sense of belonging found in groups which operate effectively.

Ingraham and Manning suggest that cohesion is an idea which comes from social psychology and that the concept of morale can be traced to sociology and military history.[45] The claim is that studies of morale differ from studies of cohesion in their scope of inquiry and the perspective of

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[42]The Concise Oxford Dictionary (Third Ed.) (Oxford: Clarendon: 1938)

[43]F.J.Manning "Morale, Cohesion and Esprit de Corps". p.457.

[44]L.H.Ingraham, and F.J.Manning "Cohesion: Who Needs it, What is it and How do we get it to Them?" in Military Review (1981) 61:6:6.

[45]L.H.Ingraham, and F.J.Manning "Cohesion: Who Needs it, What is it and How do we get it to Them?" p.6.

investigation. The important works on the subject of cohesion are sociological and psychological studies, sponsored by the military, produced by American scholars, and using largely the American Army as their focus.

There are four seminal works on cohesion which directly impact upon this study of the Newfoundland Regiment overseas. Each new perspective seems to inspired by the experience of America's involvement in a war. World War II, the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War were each the subject of new and influential studies on the social organization of soldiers. The first to be published was "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II" by Shils and Janowitz in 1948.[46] This work used interviews with German prisoners of war to determine why the Wehrmacht was able to keep fighting so doggedly at the close of the Second World War. They concluded that "the motivation of the determined resistance of the German soldier was the steady satisfaction afforded by the social organization of the army."[47] Which is to say, as long as the soldier felt he belonged to the primary group, he would continue to offer resistance. It is significant that the concept of the primary group is introduced in this article.

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[46]J.Shils and M.Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II" in Public Opinion Quarterly (1948) 12:1:281-315.

[47]Shils and Janowitz "Cohesion and Disintegration" p.281.

In the following year, The American Soldier was published under the editorship of Stouffer.[48] While Stouffer's focus was more on why men fight rather than how, the sociological data in these volumes are enormous. For example, Stouffer makes the perfectly reasonable claim that men will fight for their buddies but not for their country or other "patriotic" ideals.[49] Of significance to the present study, The American Soldier demonstrated how important the group was to the soldier and that the soldier's identification and solidarity with the group was crucial.[50] It was a landmark work in the study of the soldier in his society and one which, for the purposes of this paper, demonstrates the existence and importance of the primary group.

The next development in the study of unit cohesion came with Roger Little's "Buddy Relations and Combat Performance" in 1955.[51] This was a study based on interviews with the men of a rifle unit in combat in Korea. Little's contribution to the debate was the suggestion that the meaningful bond of

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[48]Samuel Stouffer, The American Soldier Combat and its Aftermath (Vol.II.) (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press; 1949).

[49]Stouffer The American Soldier (Vol.I.) p.418.

[50]Stouffer, The American Soldier Especially Chapter 5, p.105.

[51]Roger Little, "Buddy Relations and Combat Performance" in Morris Janowitz (ed) The New Military: Changing Patterns of Organization (New York: Norton; 1969) pp.195-224.

solidarity was made, not to the group, but to another individual: a buddy.[52] He did not refute the idea of group solidarity but suggested that group and buddy loyalty were compatible and not mutually exclusive. The more significant of the attachments, according to Little, was to the infantryman's buddy.[53] This conclusion began the debate as to which bonds of solidarity were the more important and the question then as to how big could the "small group" become before it was too large to foster loyalty and interpersonal bonds.

The next contribution on this subject came from a study of infantrymen in Vietnam entitled "Cohesion and Disintegration in the American Army".[54] Savage and Gabriel attempted to demonstrate that the American military in Vietnam was suffering from disintegration and that the culprit was the destruction of primary group cohesion by a rotation system.[55] The dangers of rotation within the unit, instead of rotation of the unit as a whole, were indicated in Shils and Janowitz. The significance of this study is the way in which it focused attention back upon the primary group by examining the

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[52]Little "Buddy Relations and Combat Performance" p.195.

[53]Little, "Buddy Relations and Combat Performance" p.207.

[54]A.Savage and W.Gabriel, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the American Army" Armed Forces and Society (1976) 2:3:340-376.

[55]Savage and Gabriel "Cohesion and Disintegration in the American Army" p.341.

indicators of disintegration. It reinforces the idea that good cohesion is a function of internal military factors. It concluded that the American military's problems originated from within its own structure. The problems were largely organizational and managerial. This would suggest that, like morale, cohesion can be created.

Before describing the characteristic elements of the cohesive group, it would be instructive to discuss the sociological theories upon which the idea of cohesion is built. The literature regarding motivation and morale in armies focuses upon "the primary group". C.H.Cooley described the primary group as being "those individuals who share face to face association, mutual identification and co-operative activity aimed at common goals."[56] The socialization of men in a co-operative and often inter-dependant group is not only desirable, but essential.

There is some discussion as to what size of group constitutes a primary group. As previously stated, Little proposed that the strongest bonds came, not from the group, but between two individuals. [57] Savage and Gabriel's study

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[56]C.H.Cooley Social Organization (New York: Scribner; 1909) p.23. and quoted in Shils and Janowitz "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War Two" p.283. and Bartone & Kirland "Optimal Leadership in Small Army Units" in Handbook of Military Psychology p.394.

[57]R.Little "Buddy Relations and Combat Performance" p.200.

of infantrymen in Vietnam reinforced the emphasis on the group as the focus of a soldier's loyalty and source of support.[58] The literature on the First World War, while not necessarily sociological, agrees that membership in the small group was a very important element in the soldier's experience of war. It remains, however, to determine which unit of organization, (platoon, company, battalion etc.) would fit the description of the "primary group" in the context of the British Army in the First World War. In his detailed study of the soldier's experience of 1914-18, Winter states: "Arguably the small group was the strongest single sustaining force in the war."[59] The group afforded the individual a sense of belonging and identity. The membership within the group, combined with the traditions of the military, provided the positive bonding which held soldiers together.[60]

There were several levels of troop organization. The soldier could claim membership in each of these groups as one was a sub-division of the other. Some groups were of much greater significance to the soldier than others.[61] Some

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[58]Savage and Gabriel "Cohesion and Disintegration in the American Army"

[59]Winter Death's Men p.55.

[60]Winter, Death's Men p.52.

[61]A section had 15 men, Platoon: 60. Company: 250. Battalion: 1000. Regiment: 2000. Brigade: 4000. Division: 12 000. Corps: 50 000. Army: 200 000. Winter Death's Men p.53.

designations, such as the army or corps, were far too large and impersonal to be remembered as important by the soldier. The division was the largest unit to have any significance to the individual.

The division was a self-contained unit which had its own identity and was employed in battle as a single entity. This amount of continuity promoted a kind familiarity which made the division a recognizable entity to its own men, and to the men in other divisions. A sense of *esprit de corps* evolved at the divisional level. The author of *The Story of the 29th Division* called it divisional *esprit de corps* and suggested that it was "self consciousness ... engendered by a sense of solidarity in success and failure."[62]

Winter identifies the small group as the section, composed of 15 men, or possibly the platoon which contained 60 men.[63] These smaller groups meant more to the men because they were more intimate and would therefore engender a stronger sense of belonging and solidarity. The same argument may be made for the company which had 250 men at full strength and was commanded by a captain. The company was the smallest

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[62]Stair Gillon The Story of the 29th Division (London: Nelson; 1925) p.v.

[63]Winter Death's Men p.54. Winter's primary group is based on the experience of post-attrition units. In that case, the section might be the primary group only after the man's battalion ceased to exist.

"self contained" tactical unit in the Army complete with its own specialists such as mortar bombers and machine gunners. However, it is the battalion with which the soldier most strongly identified.[64]

The battalion is the focus of the present study of the Newfoundland Regiment in World War I. That the 1000 men of a single battalion constituted one primary group may be difficult to accept initially. It will be argued later that the sense of community developed in a properly composed battalion demonstrates many of the attributes of cohesion usually only associated with the primary group. In the way the battalion functions as an organizational entity, it is reasonable to refer to it as a primary group. The current research into the Newfoundland battalion demonstrates that in this case, the battalion behaved as a primary group.

It is sufficient to say that the size of the group is a significant factor in the cohesion and morale of its members and to the unit as a corporate entity. The characteristics of cohesion discussed here refer to the smaller group. The small group, distinguished by personal relationships, is the "primary group" and the larger unit, such as the division, may

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[64]See: Keith Simpson, "The British Soldier on the Western Front" in Home Fires and Foreign Fields P.Liddle (ed.) (London: Brassey's; 1985) p.147. and Winter, Death's Men p.54.

be described as the "secondary group".[65]

The group solidarity as displayed by a cohesive unit may also be observed in examples of indiscipline. The "mutinies over disbandment" in the Australian infantry demonstrate this point but it also demonstrates the significance of the battalion to the soldier. In September of 1918, the 25th, 37th, and 54th battalions were all under-strength and were ordered to disband so that the remaining men could reinforce other units.[66] In total, seven battalions refused the order and demanded that they be allowed to go into battle with their identities intact. Military discipline was maintained within the "striking" battalions and rations were provided by other Australian units who supported their mates' act of indiscipline.[67] Against the united front of battalion solidarity, the Australian commanders retracted the orders, reprieved the mutineers and found alternative arrangements for the under strength battalions.[68]

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[65]Manning "Morale, Cohesion and Esprit de Corps" p.458. A Secondary Group is "...an impersonal [bond] relating soldier to institution rather than soldier to soldier as in the case of unit cohesion."

[66]Patsy Adam-Smith, The ANZACS (London:Hamish Hamilton;1978) p.320. and C.E.W. Bean Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18 Vol.VI. p.938.

[67]J.Fuller Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.24.

[68]P.Adam-Smith The ANZACS p.321. and J.Fuller Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.24.

One other example of unit loyalty and indiscipline is to be found in the only British mutiny of the Second World War. The "Salerno Mutiny", of September 1943, occurred when 192 battle hardened men of a particular draft refused to be posted to a unit other than their own.[69] That they righteously refused to report to a different division demonstrates the high morale and solidarity of the cohesive unit. The men were court martialled but had their sentences suspended.[70] Both examples serve to illustrate the dynamic of the group. The primary group has incredible influence upon its membership. It commands extraordinary loyalty and can determine behaviour. Obviously the "mutineers" felt strong attachments to the group and it was the battalion to which they showed loyalty. The cohesive group need not always be the obedient group but it is important that the action, whether obedient or disobedient, is conducted within the group.

Three elements can be considered to be contributing to good unit cohesion. They are: a common social background, the shared experience, and confidence. These all help to engender a sense of identity within the group.

Manning claims that the common social background creates a homogeneous unit whereas the heterogeneous unit tends to

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[69]Ahrenfeldt, Psychiatry in the British Army in the Second World War p.216.

[70]Ahrenfeldt Psychiatry in the British Army p.216.

discourage unit cohesion.[71] The traditional British county regiment recruited from the same area and would therefore, at least theoretically, have a better chance of achieving homogeneity within the ranks. I will demonstrate that the Newfoundland Regiment was similarly a homogeneous unit.

The shared experience is the factor which contributes the most in groups which exhibit high degrees of cohesion. Increasing the opportunities for interaction within the group will promote cohesion. "The primary group must remain intact and in close contact long enough to accumulate a significant body of common experience."[72] Obviously, the group in which the membership is constantly changing, either due to reassignment or casualties, has less chance to build a critical mass of shared experience. The administration of personnel is crucial in this respect.

The shared experiences promote the development of the interpersonal bonding necessary for good cohesion. This bonding cannot be achieved if the membership of the group is constantly in flux. The sharing of experiences continues in all aspects of the life of the group and can be described as the continuity of service. It can be observed in activities such as training together, being hospitalized together, and it

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[71]Manning "Morale, Cohesion and Esprit de Corps" p.462.

[72]Manning "Morale, Cohesion and Esprit de Corps" p.462.

is certainly a significant factor which bonds the survivors of combat closer together.

If the shared experience is the necessary ingredient in a cohesive group, then its opposite would be the concept of "turbulence". This is the movement of personnel in or out of the group which inhibits the forging of personal bonds and is detrimental to the morale, cohesion and efficiency of the unit. In *The Anatomy of Courage*, Lord Moran recognized the problem of turbulence. He observed that in the British infantry in World War One,

> ....companies in the line were perturbed when a proved and seasoned soldier was hit: they knew that when he was fit he would be sent to another unit and that his place might be taken by some raw conscript.[73]

Savage and Gabriel blamed the disintegration of morale and cohesion in the American Army in Vietnam on the policy of individual rotation in and out of groups.[74] The individual was not able to make the close personal bonds necessary to engender feelings of solidarity or identity with the group. His presence then became a disruptive factor to the well being of the other members of the group. The primary group, and with

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[73]Moran, The Anatomy of Courage p.181. See also Ahrenfeldt Psychiatry in the British Army p.204. "changes in the group".

[74]Savage and Gabriel "Cohesion and Disintegration in the American Army" p.341.

it cohesion, was destroyed by the rotation system.[75] Turbulence in the small group prevents the members of the group from building up a critical mass of common experiences. The interpersonal bonds are therefore not as evident, and the group suffers from a lack of identity, and solidarity. Just as shared experiences contribute to cohesion, turbulence destroys it.

According to Manning, the end point of homogeneity in composition and the shared experience, is to give the soldier confidence.[76] He should possess confidence in the abilities of himself, his peers and his leaders. The confidence in and the trust of the other members of the group result in the mutual identification and co-operative effort which Cooley identified as the definitive characteristics of the primary group. If the group then demonstrates cohesion and behaves in a manner befitting that cliched "well oiled machine", then it is said to be an "effective group". The shared experience and homogeneity of membership are props which contribute to the cohesion. Confidence is indicative of good cohesion but is supported by the first two elements.

These elements allow the relationships to develop within the group. They promote the bonding which leads to feelings of

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[75]Savage and Gabriel "Cohesion and Disintegration in the American Army" p.341.

[76]Manning "Morale, Cohesion and Esprit de Corps" p.463.

solidarity, unity or a sense of belonging. Cohesion then, as well as morale can be created, promoted and maintained. The task remains to identify, within a particular group, the absence or presence of the factors which contribute to high morale and good cohesion. The Newfoundland Regiment is the group in question. By identifying the constituent parts of cohesion and morale in this regiment, it may be possible to gain a greater understanding of the Newfoundlanders' particular experience of war.

CHAPTER TWO

THE IDEA OF THE REGIMENT

The regiment was an essential element in the creation and maintenance of morale. It has been suggested that, with regards to the stability of British morale in the First World War, "the impact of the regimental tradition and its local identity cannot be overestimated."[1] Indeed, John Keegan recognized the influence of the regiment in the lives of new recruits in England:

> The volunteers who flocked forward in 1914 ... went forward not to disappear inside a faceless juggernaut, but to join an identifiable unit whose reputation was a point of local folklore.[2]

Keegan compares this "identifiable unit" to a large family with strong ties to the community.[3] As a part of the British Army, the Newfoundlanders who enlisted were organized into a regiment of their own. The regiment, as an institution, is a highly effective way through which to approach the soldiers' experience. It would be instructive then, to take a closer look at the British regiment and how it came to exist

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[1]Ian Beckett. "The Nation in Arms, 1914-18" in A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War Ian Beckett and Keith Simpson (eds.) (Manchester: Manchester University Press; 1985) p.24.

[2]John Keegan "Regimental Ideology" in War Economy and the Military Mind A.Wheatcroft (Eds.) (London: Croom Helm; 1976) p.11.

[3]Keegan "Regimental Ideology" p.11.

in the particular form it took in the summer of 1914.

The origins and evolution of the regiment in the British Army have been discussed elsewhere.[4] It is beyond the scope of this study to detail the history of this institution from earliest times. The story of the regiment, as was recognizable in 1914, begins with Edward Cardwell's tenure as Secretary of State for War from 1868 to 1874. It was the Cardwellian reforms that emphasised the importance of the regiment as the basic unit of army administration. Cardwell's system remained, with only slight modifications by R.B.Haldane, up to the outbreak of the War.[5] The concept of the regiment familiar to soldiers and civilians during the First World War had been in existence for some forty years.

Cardwell's reforms were largely an effort to rationalize the Army to make it more efficient and, most important, more economical for the purpose of policing the empire.[6] The

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[4]Especially; Ian Beckett, The Amateur Military Tradition 1558-1945 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991); Ian Beckett and John Gooch (eds.), Politicians and Defence 1845-1970 (Manchester: Manchester University Press: 1981) and Edward Spiers, The Army and Society 1815-1914 (London: Longman; 1980).

[5]Spiers The Army and Society pp.267-75. In 1907 Richard Burdon Haldane (later Viscount Haldane of Cloan) rationalized the militia, yeomanry and volunteers into what became the Territorial Army (T.A.) and planned to use the regular army as an expeditionary force and to keep the T.A. for home defence.

[6]Anthony Bruce "Edward Cardwell and the Abolition of Purchase" in Ian Beckett and John Gooch (eds.) Politicians and Defence 1845-1970 (Manchester: Manchester University Press; 1981) p.26. Also see Keegan "Regimental Ideology" p.7.

growth of regimental spirit and ideology was an accidental product of Cardwell's reorganization.[7] The reforms were promulgated in three Acts of Parliament between 1870 and 1872. "The Enlistment Act" (1870) reduced the enlisted man's career from twenty-one to twelve years (Six years with the colours and six in the reserves). "The Regulation of Forces Act" (1871) abolished the purchase of commissions and introduced the promotion by means of seniority and merit. "The Military Localization Act" (1872) created the "linked battalion" system in which each regiment would be attached to a specific region, such as a county or a city. While one of the Regiment's two Battalions was in Britain training and recruiting, the other was performing the duties of the Imperial garrison.[8] Although it was the abolition of the purchase of commissions for which Cardwell is best known, for the regiment, it was the localization scheme that was the essence of the reforms.

"The Military Localization Act" gave each regiment more than the specific "catchment basin" for recruits, as was the intended result. The regiment now had a "home", a focus of regimental life and, conversely, the regiment became a focus of community life. It created local pride in the regiment

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[7]David Weston "The Army: Mother, Sister and Mistress: The British Regiment" in M.Edmonds (ed.) The Defence Equation: British Military Systems, Policy, Planning and Performance (London: Brassey's; 1986) p.139.

[8]Spiers, The Army and Society pp.189-196.

which was not previously evident.[9] It guaranteed local feeling, which one author argues, was "epitomized by the phenomena of the 'Pals Battalions'" in the First World War.[10] Comparisons between the "Pals Battalions" and the Royal Newfoundland Regiment will be made later in this study. It is sufficient to say at this stage that the local pride in the regiment and the Newfoundland Regiment's identification with the community are crucial to understanding the relationship between the soldier and his unit and the creation of morale within that unit.

The other effects of the Cardwellian reforms were felt within the regiment. With the abolition of the purchase system, an officer could seek promotion and advancement only within the framework of his own regiment. This meant that an officer would spend his entire career in the same unit thus strengthening ties with the other ranks and promoting greater continuity within the regiment as a social entity.[11] For soldiers spending long periods of time garrisoning the Empire the regiment provided a social function. As the soldier was far from home, often in an alien culture, the regiment acted

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[9]Keegan, "Regimental Ideology" p.10.

[10]Weston "British Regiments" p.144.

[11]Weston "British Regiment" p.143.

as a surrogate family - a very close knit family.[12] It is unrealistic to make a direct comparison between the battalions of long service professional soldiers which policed the Empire and the battalions of volunteers which fought in Great War. On the other hand, the idea of the regiment remained unchanged and there are enough social parallels to suggest that "the concept of the family is still important to a real understanding of what a British Regiment means."[13]

The creation of the regimental ethos can be attributed to Edward Cardwell, no matter how unintentional this result may have been. Cardwell's reforms made it possible for the "county regiment" to develop its three distinguishing features. First, the other ranks, and to an extent, the officers, were recruited from the same region and would therefore have that one thing in common. Second, The Military Localization Act of 1872 created ties with the community that resulted in the identification of the regiment with the county and the county with its regiment and fostered mutual pride in that relationship. This, in part, gave the men of the regiment a greater sense of identity. Third, the rituals and traditions

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[12]J.Fuller, Troop Morale and Popular Culture in British and Dominion Armies 1914-18 (Oxford: Clarendon; 1992) p.23. Also Weston, "British Regiment" p.142.

[13]Dennis Barker, Soldiering On: An Unofficial Portrait of the British Army (London: Andre Deutsch: 1981) p.104. Also: Weston "British Regiment" p.143.

of the regiment became more important as the regiment assumed greater importance as a social entity. The common place of origin, the identification with the county and the appeal to tradition are the three distinguishing features of the Cardwellian regiment. These, I would argue, are also the defining characteristics of any regiment that went into battle in 1914. Circumstances would change over the course of the war to shatter the reality of the "idea" of the regiment but if one was to speak of "the regiment" in 1914, this is what would be meant and would be understood by contemporaries.[14]

There are then two meanings for the noun "regiment". It could mean the actual structure of military administration, the details of which are outlined previously. It also means the regiment as a family with the correlates of family life such as identity, belonging, loyalty and an awareness of history and tradition. Keegan's comparison of the regiment to a large family with firm roots in the community is an appropriate one. It is important to remember, however, that while this was the concept of the British regiment, battle attrition soon changed the character of the beloved local regiments.

The Newfoundlanders quickly became, what was to all

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[14]Nicholas Perry "Nationality in the Irish Infantry Regiments in the First World War" War and Society (1994) 12:1;68.

observers, a "traditional" regiment. The raising and administration of the regiment has been detailed elsewhere.[15] Attention will be paid to how this regimental ethos was maintained throughout the war when other, more established regiments were having difficulty maintaining personnel and as a result, suffering serious lapses in morale and discipline.

The word "regiment" therefore had two meanings. In the first sense, it was the soldier's "home" and "family", the particular prism through which the soldier's military experience would be seen and remembered. The other definition of regiment is the administrative meaning of the word. It is but one of the organizational units in the military hierarchy. In the pre-war army, a regiment had two thousand men and officers and was commanded by a colonel. A regiment was composed of two battalions ideally with some one thousand officers and men each. Under the Cardwell System, which lasted from 1881 to the outbreak of the war, one battalion served at the depot in the British Isles and
the other was on duty garrisoning the Empire. The battalion, then, was the basic operational unit of the British Army.[16]

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[15]G.W.L. Nicholson The Fighting Newfoundlander (St.John's: Government of Newfoundland: 1964) and P.R. O'Brien, "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association: The Administration of the War Effort 1914-18" Unpublished M.A. Thesis (Memorial University Of Newfoundland, 1982)

[16]Keith Simpson, "The British Soldier on the Western Front" p.147.

When war was declared, the strength of the British infantry stood at 157 battalions, 74 of which were overseas policing the empire.[17] Haldane's provisions for an expeditionary force and the establishment of the territorial army were designed for the contingency of an European war.[18] However, the existing army of six divisions would need to be expanded to fight what was predicted, by Kitchener at least, to be a long war. On August 6, 1914, Kitchener, as Secretary of War, received parliamentary approval to expand the army by a half-million men and immediately made a public appeal for one hundred thousand volunteers.[19] With the explosion in recruitment, the army simply increased the number of battalions in a regiment rather than alter the structure of the infantry by creating several new regiments. The usual methods available to the War office for recruitment were found to be inadequate for the sudden flood of volunteers in early September.[20] Civilian recruiting committees headed by leading

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[17]F.W.Perry The Commonwealth Armies: Man Power and Organisation in Two World Wars Manchester: Manchester University Press; 1988. p.7.

[18]John Gooch, "Haldane and the National Army" in Politicians and Defence Ian Beckett and John Gooch (eds.) Manchester: Manchester University Press; 1981. p.84.

[19]Keith Simpson, Kitchener's Army: The Raising of the New Armies, 1914-16 (Manchester: University of Manchester Press; 1988.) p.39.

[20]Simpson, Kitchener's Army p.75.

citizens sprang up and relieved the pressure on the recruiting centres of the Regular Army and Territorial Army.

The most significant and best known result of the civilian recruiting effort was the creation of the Pals Battalions. These units were raised by local authorities and recruited men who "lived in a particular city or district, or who shared a common social or occupational background."[21] These units were added as service battalions to existing regiments and took the characteristics of the old regiment with the same sense of tradition, locality and social cohesion. The phenomenon of the Pals Battalions was not a rare example of local patriotic fervour as 215, or 38% of the 557 volunteer battalions, were recruited by bodies other than the War Office.[22] The raising of the Pals Battalions most closely parallels the creation of the Regiment in Newfoundland.

These men recruited in this way were attached to a battalion of the local regiment but were intended to remain together as a unit. The incentive given to enlist was the promise of serving with friends from civilian life. So the "Leeds Pals" were the 15th. Battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment, the men of the North Western Railway formed the 17th

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[21]Simpson, Kitchener's Army p.79.

[22]Simpson, Kitchener's Army p.79. These 215 battalions were raised from the beginning of the War to the enacting of conscription in 1916.

Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers and the 16th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment were known as the "Public Schools" Battalion.

> This feeling of being part of a community is arguably, another factor in the morale equation, for not only was the soldier serving with his home unit, he was also fighting alongside friends from the same area.[23]

Major-General Ivor Maxse, Commanding Officer of the 18th. Division, observed that the New Armies (volunteers) had a distinctive *esprit de corps* which came from their strong social cohesion. The way they were raised gave them a powerful local identity. The way they were trained afforded time for social bonding as the men came from a common background and class, often the men knew each other in peace and the officers had time to learn of the men's abilities and deficiencies.[24] This *esprit de corps* makes perfect sense if it is seen as a function of the battalion behaving as a traditional British Army unit should, benefitting from the traditions of the parent regiment and the drawing from the camaraderie of the recruits.

Keith Simpson suggested that the best vehicle for the creation and maintenance of institutional and group loyalty

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[23]Weston "British Regiment" p.151.

[24]Simpson, Kitchener's Army p.317.

was the regimental system.[25] He added the caveat, however, that "The group loyalty of the British soldier on the western front did not extend beyond his own battalion..."[26] Indeed, with some regiments having up to twenty and thirty battalions, the regiment was perhaps of less importance to the soldier than the particular battalion in which he fought. The attachment to the battalion, on the other hand, became stronger.

The battalion has been described as being like "a small town, full of remembered faces, shared experiences and old friends."[27] It has been argued that it was the battalion with which the soldier identified since it was this unit that earned a reputation in battle and gave a soldier his "prestige as a fighting man."[28] When convalescing at the Newfoundland Regiment's depot from an illness contracted at Gallipoli, Cpl. John Gallishaw wrote, "We're tired of the depot already. They're a new bunch here and we want to get back with the

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[25]Keith Simpson, "The British Soldier on the Western Front" in Home Fires and Foreign Fields Peter Liddle (ed.) p.147.

[26]Keith Simpson, "The British Soldier on the Western Front" p.147.

[27]Desmond Morton, When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in The First World War (Toronto: Random House; 1993.) p.77.

[28]Denis Winter Death's Men: Soldiers of the Great War (London: Penguin; 1978) p.54.

crowd we know."[29] He continued this sentiment with, "I hated to leave the men of the first battalion ... some of their names I did not know but they were all my friends."[30] The battalion therefore became the focus of the soldier's life. All his experiences were coloured by the environment of the battalion and by the men with whom he served.

The regiment from Newfoundland had only one operational battalion named, somewhat presumptuously, the 1st. (Battalion) Newfoundland Regiment. In the letters, memoirs and diaries, the terms battalion and regiment are used interchangeably. There was a second battalion at Ayr, Scotland, which later moved to Hazeley Down, Winchester, which served as the head-quarters depot. This battalion acted only in an administrative capacity and the strength never rose above two companies or about five hundred men. New recruits were sent to the depot for training and convalescing soldiers returned to the regiment via the depot.

All British infantry regiments were, theoretically, organized and administered the same way. Each had a depot located in their recruiting area which supplied the battalion at the front with reinforcements. This system maintained the soldiers' continuity of service within the same battalion and

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[29]John Gallishaw Trenching at Gallipoli p.235.

[30]Gallishaw, Trenching at Gallipoli p.236.

permitted men from the same region to serve together. This system changed drastically when the heavy casualties of the Somme in 1916 created a manpower shortage.

The "training reserve" battalions were introduced in September of 1916 and men were sent to reinforce any unit wherever they were needed, regardless of regimental affiliation. The effects of these changes will be examined in greater detail later in this study. It is sufficient to say, the battalion's ties to a region or city were severed and its men could no longer claim exclusive membership in a particular unit. This new reinforcement policy shattered unit cohesion and made the promotion of morale an almost impossible task. The dislocation of the man from his unit caused by the "training reserve" battalions effectively destroyed the Cardwellian ideal of the regiment. The Newfoundlanders, partly because they were a national contingent, were not subject to the reinforcement policy and thus survived as a Cardwellian-style regiment. While other battalions were falling apart, the Newfoundland Regiment carried on with its identity intact thereby avoiding the serious problems of morale and cohesion affecting the British Army generally after 1916.

The Newfoundland battalion maintained its unique identity because it functioned the way that regiments were supposed to function under the old regimental administrative system. The Newfoundland contingent operated like many other regionally

recruited regiments with a reserve depot in Britain and the battalion in the field. This maintained the continuity which supported a sense of community and regimental spirit. Because the Newfoundland Regiment had its own administrative structure, distinct from that of the British Army, it was able to control the movement of its men when they were not at the front. As in the case of other "undiluted" units such as the Royal Naval Division or the Guards Division, it was largely administrative factors which physically kept the unit together.[31] These factors contributed to the strong unit cohesion and regimental spirit of the Newfoundland Regiment for the duration of the war. This was because the regiment continued an association with the older, Cardwellian, regimental structure characterized by a common place of origin, identification with the community and the appeal to tradition.

Local identity had been the telling characteristic of the traditional British regiment. Before long, the Newfoundland Regiment very soon assumed the appearance of a typical British Regiment. The Newfoundland Regiment was composed almost exclusively of Newfoundland residents[32], 52 percent of whom

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[31]J.Fuller, Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.8.

[32] Of 6061 recruits, only 62 men enlisted in Great Britain including 36 in the regimental band, some Newfoundlanders resident in Britain and some ex-British Army as instructors and Headquarters staff. Statistics of The Military Effort p.774.

came from the capital, St.John's.[33] Colonel Nicholson, the official historian of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment wrote: "...no other body of troops was so singularly and closely identified with the community from which it came."[34] Their identity was self-evident. They were Newfoundland's national contingent. A regiment composed of local boys with familiar names became the focus of the war for the people at home in Newfoundland. It became the single identifiable group in whose achievements all Newfoundlanders could take pride and whose dead a nation could collectively mourn. In local parlance, both among soldiers and civilians, the regiment was simply nicknamed "Ours".[35]

The third characteristic of the British regiment was the appeal to tradition. Lacking a military tradition, the Newfoundlanders had to build one quickly. This was achieved by adopting the traditions of the British Army and by developing new ones as they gained wartime experience. Another source was the colony's long and proud history.

In the British Army, distinctive traditions set each regiment apart and even distinguished between battalions

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[33]Sharpe "The 'Race of Honour': An Analysis of Enlistments and Casualties in the Armed Forces of Newfoundland 1914-18" p.37.

[34]G.W.L. Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander (St.John's: Government of Newfoundland; 1964.) p.xiii.

[35]Frank Lind The Letters of Mayo Lind A.Robinson (ed) (St.John's, Creative: 1919)

within the same regiments.[36] The Newfoundlanders quickly adopted the traditions and forms of the British Army such as the rank structure and marching drill as well as bugle calls and colour parades.[37] When they joined the 29th Division in September of 1915, they became part of a "famous", elite unit with a well earned reputation for toughness and military efficiency.[38] A second source of tradition was the heritage of the nation itself. "Britain's oldest colony" was a common patriotic epithet for Newfoundland.[39] Newfoundlanders did not have to be reminded of their national history and traditions. The third source of tradition was naturally occurring and came from within the battalion itself. The regiment soon had its own distinctive badge, regimental colours and Newfoundland dog mascot. From their active service few would forget names like Gallipoli and Beaumont-Hamel. Despite the fact that the Newfoundland Regiment was new and created from scratch, the traditions characteristic of the British Army were quickly adopted and then built upon by the regiment as it gained in

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[36]See Baynes, Morale pp.18-21.

[37]G.W.L. Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.113.

[38]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.168. See also: Fuller, Troop Morale p.30. and Keegan The Face of Battle p.216.

[39]See: Journal and Proceedings of the House of Assembly (Second Session of the 23rd General Assembly) Sept. 05, 1914. p.5. Governor Davidson "..the sons of Britain's oldest colony" and The Royal Gazette "Speech from the Throne" April 7, 1915. p.1.

experience and achievement. These were the traditions which served to create and maintain *esprit de corps* and morale within the unit.

A discernible regimental system existed in the British Army at the outbreak of the First World War. Voluntary recruitment in Great Britain followed this regimental pattern. This was the system into which the Newfoundland Regiment fit. The Newfoundland Regiment was organized, administered, and operated in the manner of a traditional British regiment. Therefore it was, and remained throughout the war, a "Cardwellian" regiment.

In this study, the soldier's experience of war is being examined through the framework of the regiment in which he served. It has been suggested that, "As a creator of morale, the alliance between the man and his regiment has no equal."[40] I would suggest that the soldiers from Newfoundland were well served by their relationship to their regiment. I will demonstrate that the experience of the Newfoundland soldier was significantly different because the morale and cohesion of the Newfoundland Regiment was significantly better than in most other British Regiments. The main reason for this was simply that the Newfoundland Regiment continued to function as a traditional British regiment long after other

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[40]Trevor Royle, Anatomy of A Regiment p.80.

regiments could not.

CHAPTER THREE

MANPOWER, ATTRITION AND THE DEMISE OF THE REGIMENTAL SYSTEM

Attrition killed the Cardwellian regimental system. The war affected the traditional regimental system such that the battalion's importance to the soldier as a "family" diminished to the point of insignificance. At the end of the war few soldiers could identify with their unit or feel the strength of loyalty known by pre-war regulars. Unlike the other British infantry units, the Newfoundlanders preserved the characteristics of a traditional regiment throughout the war. It will be demonstrated that battalion, as described by the Cardwellian system, ceased to exist by late 1916 and that cohesion and morale suffered as a result.

It has been argued that the battalion acted as an agent or facilitator of morale. The precondition to group morale is strong unit cohesion which is based upon what the sociological literature calls, the "primary group". With attrition, changes occurred to the organization of the battalion which impaired the unit's performance as a primary group and in its ability to foster the primary group. When the battalion lost control over the administration of its men, the ability of the battalion to preserve the primary group was severely restricted. When circumstances occurred such that the primary

group was either diluted or destroyed, morale suffered and the soldier's experience of that unit changed.

The problem was one of attrition. The changes to the battalion were caused by the inability of the army to consistently reinforce the unit in the field with men from the same battalion. There were two major institutional changes in the way soldiers and their battalions were administered by the army. The first, in September 1916, was the creation of the "Training Reserve" Battalions.[41] The second measure was the rationalization of the brigade from four battalions to three in January 1918.[42] In both cases the object was to keep all divisions up to strength and readily supplied with reinforcements to replace those who had fallen. In both cases the measures had adverse effects upon morale and cohesion. Before the effects of the administrative changes are discussed, the conditions that caused the changes must be addressed.

Insufficient manpower was at the root of the trouble. The changes were brought about by the need to maintain a force in

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[41]Clive Hughes, "The New Armies" in A Nation in Arms Ian Beckett and Keith Simpson (eds.) (Manchester: Manchester University Press; 1985) p.114.

[42]Brent Wilson "Morale and Discipline in the British Expeditionary Force" Unpublished M.A. Thesis (University of New Brunswick 1978) p.265.

the field of well over a million men on the Western Front.[43] Men were being killed or wounded faster than they could be replaced. The (2nd) Scottish Rifles was decimated at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, March 10, 1915, and yet, two months later, the battalion was in action again with 800 new men. Their historian wrote, "They carried on in name, but the men were entirely different".[44] Heavy British losses were also sustained at the Battle of Loos (September 1915) and in the Gallipoli campaign (April to December 1915). British voluntary recruitment tapered off after the initial patriotic enthusiasm had died down and conscription was enacted in England, Scotland and Wales in January of 1916.[45] The manpower shortage was not solved by compulsory service. The year 1916 is remembered for the Battle of the Somme and its inconceivable carnage:

> it was the casualty rate which determined a unit's survival as a recognized entity ... disintegration was greatly accelerated with the heavy casualties on the Somme.[46]

July 1, 1916, was the single worst day for the British

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[43]Troop strength on the Western Front: 1916: 1,378,663. For 1917: 1,800,705. and for 1918: 1,763,980. As quoted in K.Simpson "The British Soldier on the Western Front" p.137.

[44]Baynes, Morale p.9.

[45]Winter, Death's Men p.29.

[46]Ian Beckett The Amateur Military Tradition p.232.

Army in the First World War. On that one day, the British suffered 57,470 casualties, 19,240 of which were fatal.[47] The first of July is remembered as Memorial Day in Newfoundland. The beginning of the Battle of the Somme was the bloodiest day for the Newfoundland Regiment. Before the battle of Beaumont-Hamel, the battalion strength stood at 801 men and officers.[48] After the battle, 710 had become casualties, 272 of which were fatal.[49] Newfoundland's only battalion lost eighty nine per-cent of its number in less than an hour.

Before the regiment's next action at Gueudecourt, on October 10, the battalion strength had risen to 601 men and officers but was still 400 men short of a full battalion.[50] The Newfoundland Regiment had begun the process of rebuilding while maintaining a sense of identity. It took until December for the strength of the unit to rise to the pre-Somme mark of

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[47]John Terraine The Smoke and The Fire: Myths and Anti-Myths of War (London: Sidgwick and Jackson; 1980) p.45. and Nicholson The Fighting Newfoundlander p.277.

[48]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.262. The strength was: 25 officers (O) and 776 Other Ranks (O.R.)

[49]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander pp.274-6. J.B. Cave What Became of Corporal Pittman? (St.John's: Breakwater; 1976) Appendix "A". and W.D. Parsons Pilgrimage: A Guide to the Newfoundland Regiment in World War I. (St.John's: Creative; 1994).

[50]Public Record Office (P.R.O.) W.O./95/2308 Newfoundland Regiment War Diary: October 14, 1916. Strength before battle: 29 Officers and 572 O.R. Casualties: 10 Officers, 229 O.R.

800.[51] As the example of Beaumont-Hamel demonstrates, the Newfoundlanders were beginning to learn about attrition, about the constant wearing down of men and materiel. This was not a unique experience: the Newfoundland Regiment was just one of 143 British battalions that attacked on the first day of the Somme.[52] This problem was one shared by all of the army.

The problem was straight forward: high casualties left vacancies at the front that needed to be filled. The solution was more difficult. Reinforcements, most often routed through regimental or battalion depots, were not getting to the front fast enough or in sufficient numbers. The familiar methods of reinforcement were quickly discarded in favour of a more centralized system of manpower replacement.[53]

The Newfoundlanders and all other locally raised battalions were ordered to create depot companies in December 1914. In 1915, these companies became reserve battalions designed to provide drafts of reinforcements for the parent units already at the front.[54] In this way, even the newly created battalions were able to maintain links with the local

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[51]P.R.O. W.O./95/2308 Regimental Diary; December 26, 1916. Also, Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.285.

[52]Keegan, The Face of Battle p.216. 97 of the 143 battalions were "war raised" units just like the Newfoundland battalion.

[53]William Moore The Thin Yellow Line (New York: St.Martins Press; 1975) p.87.

[54]Simpkins, Kitchener's Army p.313.

recruiting area and continuity of service for the men and officers.

The Newfoundland Regiment maintained a depot in Britain at which new recruits were trained and the wounded recovered before going back to the front. There new recruits were able to mix with the veterans and any member of the regiment who was wounded or sick would be returned to the unit by way of the regimental depot. The depot promoted continuity. New recruits were drawn from the same region as the old soldiers which helped preserve the homogeneous composition of the battalion. Continuity and homogeneity are two of the essential components of strong unit cohesion.[55] The regimental depot, in preserving homogeneity and promoting continuity, strengthened unit cohesion.

These local reserve depots were discontinued after the disastrous casualties suffered in July of 1916, with the beginning of the Battle of the Somme. In September of 1916, the local reserves were replaced by "training reserve" battalions. These units, "shorn of regimental connections disrupted any strong local link by sending drafts from what was effectively a common pool of conscript manpower."[56]

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[55]Manning, "Morale, Cohesion and Esprit de Corps" p.462.

[56]Clive Hughes "The New Armies" in A Nation in Arms I.Beckett and K.Simpson (eds.) (Manchester: Manchester University Press: 1985) p.114.

One hundred and twelve "training reserve" battalions were established in September 1916.[57] These holding units were composed of newly conscripted men and men returning from being wounded. Drafts of soldiers from several different units were sent to fill the depleted battalions.[58] One author identifies the creation of the "training reserve" battalions as the event that ended the distinctiveness of Britain's volunteer army.[59] Volunteers, and after April 1916, conscripts, would be placed into this "common pool" and largely sent to where they were needed regardless of battalion affiliations. In Siegfried Sassoon's Memoirs of an Infantry Officer, the character George Sherston complains upon returning to the front from being wounded.

> I'd been posted to the Second Battalion; this gave me something definite to grumble about, for I wanted to go where I was known and the prospect of joining a strange battalion made me feel more homeless than ever.[60]

The men of the Newfoundland Regiment, because it was the national regiment, were not mixed in with the "common pool of

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[57]F.W.Perry, The Commonwealth Armies (Manchester: Manchester University Press; 1988) p.20.

[58]W.Moore, The Thin Yellow Line p.87.

[59]Hughes, "The New Armies" p.114.

[60]Siegfried Sassoon, Memoirs of an Infantry Officer (London:Faber and Faber:1930) p.168. This incident is based in fact. He recorded in a memoir of March 12, 1917: "I had been posted elsewhere than to the 1st Batt. which I regarded as my spiritual home in France." Dunn The War The Infantry Knew p.307.

conscripts". The Newfoundlanders were therefore able to maintain their identity long after the other "local" regiments such as the "Pals Battalions" had lost their distinctiveness. The preservation of a reserve depot was one of the organizational elements which contributed to the continued operation of the battalion as a traditional British regiment.

Within the British army, only two divisions were unaffected by this change: the Royal Naval Division (R.N.D.), and the Guards Division. The Royal Naval Division presents an interesting case in the high degree of success this unit had in maintaining continuity and thereby supporting morale and cohesion. The R.N.D. was an infantry division composed of regular Royal Marines, Naval reservists and a number of army recruits. John Fuller states that only the Guards (1st Division) and the R.N.D. (63rd Division), were immune from the interchange of battalions and personnel which so changed the character of other units in the British Army.[61]

Unlike other units, the R.N.D. managed to keep a depot in Britain throughout the war. There, a sense of *esprit de corps* was maintained by a continuity of personnel, both of officers and men. When men were wounded at the front, they were hospitalized together and were returned to this depot for training before being reunited with the unit in the field.

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[61]John Fuller, Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.8.

Similarly, the officers and non-commissioned officers (N.C.O.s) came from within the same battalion, providing another instance of continuity. The comradeship and pride grew as the veterans returned to the depot and mixed with the new recruits. *Esprit de corps*, morale and cohesion were strengthened by the existence of the permanent depot in Britain.[62]

The depot was a home and the division became the family. Comradeship developed here whereas in other units it did not because there was a continuity of men and officers. Unlike the men of the other regiments, the men of the R.N.D. were sustained by a feeling of belonging to a particular constant family. This organizational anomaly was made possible by a quirk of administration. The R.N.D. was the self-contained branch of the Royal Navy which served on land and fought as infantry. As such, reinforcements had to come from the relatively small pool of men in the Division. Similarly, the officers all belonged to the unit and as it was a branch of the Royal Navy, neither the officers nor the men could be replaced by a member of any other regiment and conversely, none of the men of the R.N.D. could be used to fill in spaces in other regiments. The Division maintained its unique identity because it functioned the way that regiments were

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[62]Douglas Jerrold, The Royal Naval Division (London: Hutchinson; 1923.) pp.51-54.

supposed to, under the old regimental administrative system.

In contrast, the "training reserve" battalions interrupted the local association between the region and the battalion and, more important, the link between the soldier and his battalion.[63] This disruption had a serious effect on the unit's function of promoting cohesion and solidarity through the primary group. In their seminal study of cohesion and disintegration in World War Two, Shils and Janowitz observed that deterioration of group solidarity occurred mostly in hastily fabricated units.[64] As a result, the recruit who was thrown into a new unit and not fully integrated as a member of the group, was more prone to shell shock.[65] The replacement system also had a deleterious effect upon the surviving members of the group. In The Anatomy of Courage, Moran observed that when a seasoned soldier was wounded, it affected his company as they knew that "when he was fit he would be sent to another unit and his place would be taken by some raw conscript."[66] The dilution of the battalion with outsiders was damaging to the cohesion of the

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[63]Hughes, "The New Armies" p.114.

[64]Shils and Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II" p.288.

[65]Ahrenfeldt, Psychiatry in the British Army p.215. Also: Copp and MacAndrew Battle Exhaustion p.100.

[66]Moran, The Anatomy of Courage p.181.

unit, and therefore adversely affected the *esprit* and morale of the men. With the mounting casualties, it was impractical and impossible to maintain the policy of reinforcing men to specific units. Previous to the establishment of the "training reserve" units, each battalion could call upon the reserve depot in Britain for drafts. Ideally, the depot would train new recruits and reintegrate men returning from sickness or being wounded. The drafts from these companies would, theoretically, reinforce the same battalion in the field.[67]

However, since there were not separate reserve companies for every battalion at the front, the replacements for these units in the field might have come from other regiments and would have little in common with the rest of the men.[68] For the soldier who thought of his battalion as his home, being posted to another unit was a traumatic experience. It was said that soldiers were "shuffled round into depleted regiments like cards in a pack."[69] A non-commissioned officer of a battalion nicknamed the "Birmingham Fusiliers" complained on July 28th, 1916, that "as drafts came in we became less

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[67]Simpkins, Kitchener's Army p.313.

[68]Fuller, Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.43.

[69]Winter, Death's Men p.52.

English and more Welsh."[70] The high casualties of the Battle of the Somme demonstrated the drawbacks of recruiting from a narrow regional base, as in the case of the Pals Battalions and the Newfoundland Regiment. Driven by the needs of the battalions at the front and the difficulty of administering the segregated system of troop replacement, the training reserves were established and reinforcements were sent where they were needed.[71]

Battalion morale and cohesion suffered as a result of this reinforcement policy. The Medical Officer of the 2nd Royal Welch Fusiliers recorded that in July of 1916, "men recruited and trained by the Cheshires, Shropshires and the South Wales Borders arrived resentful of their transfer and unwanted by us."[72] He continued, "The quality of drafts made those who were used to a different personnel fearful for our immediate future."[73] The new reality was that a soldier would not serve with the same unit throughout the war. This constant change of personnel is what would later be described as

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[70]Dunn, The War the Infantry Knew p.246. (R.Q.M.S. T.Powell)

[71]Fuller, Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.43.

[72]J.C.Dunn The War The Infantry Knew p.245.

[73]Dunn, The War the Infantry Knew p.245.

"turbulence".[74] This referred to the personal turbulence of the individual being shunted around as well as the disquieting effect the personnel changes had on the membership of the unit.

The institution of the battalion was being whittled away in everything but name. Due to the correlates of high casualty rates and "indiscriminate" reinforcement practices, the battalions "steadily lost any real connection with the particular locality or social group from which they might have been raised."[75]

For the Irish regiments, there was the contentious issue of non-Irishmen fighting in Irish units. This became a necessity as the proportion of Irish born serving in Irish formations fell from 86 percent in 1914 to 56 percent at the end of the war.[76] The postal censors reported that, in letters home from the front, "The 36th (Ulster) Division complained that they are being made up with drafts of non-

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[74]See: Savage and Gabriel, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the American Army" in Armed Forces and Society (1976) 2:3;362. and Beckett, "The British Army: The Illusion of Change" p.110.

[75]I.Beckett "The British Army 1914-18: The Illusion of Change" in Britain and the First World War J.Turner (ed) (London: Unwin Hyman; 1988) p.110.

[76]Nicholas Perry, "Nationality in the Irish Infantry Regiments in the First World War" War and Society (1994) 12:1;69.

Irish recruits and men of different religions to their own."[77] An officer in another war-raised battalion, the 6th Leinsters, wrote: "as the war dragged on the dearth of Irish recruits led to an increasing dilution of the division (10th Irish Division) by alien elements."[78] For the Irish infantry regiments and especially the "Pals Battalions", it is true that an identity founded upon locality was "uniquely susceptible to destruction."[79]

The year 1917 has been identified as the critical period of the war regarding British troop morale.[80] Wilson states that by December of 1917 there was general discontent in the trenches and "morale had sagged to the lowest levels of the war."[81] While he provides possible reasons for low morale such as bad weather and shaken confidence, it would be most instructive to examine what he terms the "apex of attrition."[82] For example, the strength of the 29th Division was reduced by fifty percent over the two days, 20-21 November

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[77]Imperial War Museum (I.W.M.) 84/46/1 Capt.M.Hardie G.H.Q. Intelligence: Censor's Office Report on Morale. December 7, 1916.

[78]N.Perry "Nationality in Irish Infantry Regiments" p.65.

[79]Fuller, Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.44.

[80]B.Wilson, "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F." p.212. See Also: I.Beckett "A Nation in Arms" in A Nation in Arms p.23.

[81]Wilson, "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F." p.212.

[82]Wilson, "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F." p.212.

1917, during the Battle of Cambrai.[83] If frequent and rapid changes in the personnel of a battalion are destructive to unit cohesion and good morale, then the "apex of attrition" must also signal the nadir of cohesion and morale.

The attrition of 1917 cumulated with yet another crisis in manpower at the end of the year. As if the casualties of Arras, Passhendaele and Cambrai were not enough, the Germans had begun to reinforce their positions with divisions from the Eastern Front made available after the collapse of Russia. The British solution was to reorganize the composition of their tactical units following the example of French and German brigade organization. On January 10, 1918, the Army Council decided to reduce the number of battalions in a brigade from four to three.[84] This had the effect of maintaining the same number of divisions in the field with fewer men. As a result, 141 battalions were disbanded and the men were used to fill the ranks of the more senior regiments which remained.[85] No "regular" battalions were disbanded so the units to be cannibalized were chosen from the New Army battalions and some selected territorial units.[86]

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[83]Gillon, The Story of the 29th. Division p.175.

[84]Wilson "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F." p.265.

[85]Wilson, "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F." p.266.

[86]Moore, Thin Yellow Line p.131.

This reorganization had deleterious effects upon troop morale. Relationships between units were broken up which affected the morale of those units as well as the *esprit de corps* of the larger entity of the brigade or division.[87] One divisional historian remarked, that in divisions and brigades with strong territorial associations, "such changes could not be without their effect upon morale."[88] For example, the 50th (Northumbrian) Division, a Territorial formation, was reduced to cadre strength after sustaining heavy casualties in the German offensive of March 1918.[89] By the time the Division was reconstituted in July 1918, not even one battalion of the original division remained.[90] The units of the newly reborn division had not served together and were going into the line with no *esprit de corps* and with little confidence in the other units' ability in battle. This great change in organization had dire effects upon morale at the brigade and divisional levels.

At the personal level, the deleterious effect upon morale was no less great. The effect of turbulence on the individual

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[87]Wilson, "Morale and Discipline in the B.E.F." p.266.

[88]C.Falls, The History of the 36th. (Ulster) Division (London: McCaw, Stevenson and Orr; 1922) p.184.

[89]I.Beckett, "The Territorial Force" A Nation in Arms p.147.

[90]E.Wyrall The History of the 50th Division (London: Lund, Humphries;1939) p.353.

and his unit has been discussed previously and needs no retelling. It is reasonable to expect that a soldier would want to stay amongst friends where he felt that he belonged.

> Returning wounded particularly resented being sent to units where they were among strangers, in regiments with alien traditions and a different regional background.[91]

The damage to morale is illustrated by the experience of one soldier whose battalion was disbanded. Cpl. G.V. Dennis was a signaller in the 21st. King's Royal Rifle Corps, (The Yeoman Rifles). His great attachment to his own unit was demonstrated when the Medical Officer asked him why, if he was ill, did he not report sick ? He replied "I did not want to leave the battalion."[92] He was wounded and was in hospital when he learned that his unit had been disbanded and the survivors were sent to various other battalions of the regiment. Although he was a Yorkshireman, he was posted to the Cameron Highlanders in June, 1918. He bemoaned his lack of friends in the new unit and felt that his old unit was superior. He wrote: "My waterbottle disappeared. Such a loss would not have happened in the old Yeoman Rifles."[93] Cpl. Dennis' morale was

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[91]Moore, The Thin Yellow Line p.88.

[92]Imperial War Museum (I.W.M.) 78/58/1 G.V.Dennis (Memoir)

[93]I.W.M. 78/58/1 G.V.Dennis Memoir

directly affected by the company he kept and the unit in which he served. Like the establishment of the training reserves, the rationalization of the brigades might have improved logistical efficiency but it had a destructive effect on cohesion and morale.

It has been the object of this chapter to demonstrate that the institution of the battalion changed over the course of the war because of the vast number of soldiers that would pass through the unit. By the summer of 1917, there was such a great turnover of personnel in any given battalion that the composition and character of the unit was completely different from when it began active service. Morton records that the average Canadian infantry battalion absorbed between 4,500 and 5,500 men to maintain a fighting strength of about 1000 soldiers.[94] The experience of the Newfoundland Regiment fits this pattern as 5046 men served overseas in an effort to keep just one battalion in the field.[95] The Regiment's War Diary records that on September 18, 1918, out of 841 officers and men, "fifty percent of the men had not been in action before."[96] The changes in personnel were dictated by the

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[94]D.Morton When Your Number's Up p.77.

[95]Stastics of the Military Effort Of the British Empire During the Great War (London: H.M.S.O.; 1922) p.776. See also: Sharpe, "Race of Honour" pp.34-35. Not all of the 5046 were combatants.

[96]P.R.O. WO 95/1775 "War Diary, Royal Newfoundland Regiment, 28th. Bde. 9th Div." Sept. 28, 1918. But all were Newfoundlanders

constant need for manpower caused by high casualties suffered at the front. Many battalions lost their distinctive identities or were disbanded altogether because the members of the original group were killed or wounded and their places were filled with strangers to the group. The Newfoundlanders maintained their distinctive identity because casualties in the battalion were replaced by men of the same unit, who called the same region home.

The Regiment sustained heavy casualties in the Battle of the Lys in April 1918. Because it was under-strength and sufficient reinforcements were not forthcoming, the battalion was withdrawn from the 29th. Division and sent to General Headquarters at Etaple to rebuild.[97] This was the consequence of trying to maintain a homogeneous regional unit with a limited pool of reinforcements. Not surprisingly, the only other "regional" battalion in the Division, the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry, was also withdrawn. This was a Territorial battalion which had not seen action before joining the division in October of 1917.[98] That the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry lasted only five months at the front demonstrates the rate of attrition and the difficulty of keeping a battalion up to strength. Unlike the Newfoundlanders, the battalion from

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[97]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander, p.460.

[98]Gillon, The Story of the 29th. Division p.147. and 196.

Guernsey was removed from the line permanently.

By late 1916, the Cardwellian infantry battalion ceased to exist. Battle attrition and measures taken to keep units reinforced were to blame. To cope with the increasing manpower crisis, the Army sent men to where they were needed most, not to where they belonged. The men had no ties, loyalty or solidarity to the new unit or the other soldiers in the unit. In this way, infantry battalions were kept up to strength, but at the expense of unit cohesion and battalion morale.

For the soldier, the effect of the battalion's demise was disastrous. Group and individual morale dropped because unit cohesion fell apart. Because men were entering and leaving the battalion as though through a revolving door, men experienced "turbulence" which is caused by a difficulty, or an inability to integrate into the group. Turbulence contributed to war neuroses such as "shell shock".[99] Without the community of the battalion, soldiers no longer experienced a sense of solidarity, identity or belonging. The group had lost its influence over the men and with it went the confidence and mutual support characteristic of a good battalion. The Army's reinforcement policies killed the Cardwellian battalion. Because the Army interfered with the traditional link between the soldier and his battalion,

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[99]Copp and MacAndrew, Battle Exhaustion p.100. and Ahrenfeldt, Psychiatry in the British Army p.215.

cohesion and morale suffered.

CHAPTER FOUR

NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE NEWFOUNDLAND REGIMENT

The distinctive characteristic of the Newfoundland Regiment was its strong national identity. The sense of community in this battalion was stronger than in other British units because for the men, it represented a connection with home in an otherwise unfamiliar and hostile environment. The battalion's role as a home away from home was familiar to soldiers of the Regular Army who had served in the far-flung garrisons of the Empire.[1] In these outposts of Empire, far from home and in an alien environment, the battalion was the focus of social events and welfare measures for the troops. The promotion of the battalion's role as a surrogate family was common practise in the pre-war army. As the institution of the battalion diminished during the war because of attrition, its function as the social focus of the men's life disappeared. As the war progressed, the battalion characterized as a close knit community became more the exception than the rule.

The cornerstone of the Newfoundlanders' morale was the strong national identity of the battalion. Field-Marshal Montgomery recognized this kind of relationship which existed

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[1]Weston, "The Army: Mother, Sister and Mistress: The British Regiment" p.142. and Baynes, Morale pp.32-4.

between the soldier and the society from which he comes.

> The soldier is not chiefly a military figure, he is primarily a social figure. He is influenced by his home, his upbringing and historical tradition. The national character is therefore of immense importance.[2]

Fuller demonstrated that this "national character" was a factor in the strong cohesion of Australian units. He suggests that the bonds amongst the group were magnified by the distance from Australia both geographically and temporally.[3] R.D. Mitchell described it this way: "Long separation from Australia cut us away from the land of our birth ... our only home was our unit."[4] Fuller concluded that such loyalties were unknown in the British units.[5] Such loyalties demonstrated proof of the presence and degree of cohesion in the unit.

Like the Australians, the Newfoundlanders were also far from home and dependent on the community of the battalion for a "surrogate family". W.C. Hawker, a ranker in the Newfoundland Regiment, described how unit cohesion was created by serving overseas with the regiment.

> Distance and the trials of camp and field, the

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[2]B.L.Montgomery, "Morale in Battle" British Medical Journal (Nov. 09, 1946) p.702.

[3]Fuller, Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.23.

[4]R.D. Mitchell, Backs to the Wall (Sydney, 1937) p.168.

[5]Fuller, Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.23.

> common hardships and privations knit one and all in close comradeship, and national prejudices melted forever in the warmth of the Brotherhood of Service. [6]

It may be accepted that, for the Newfoundlanders, serving overseas drew the battalion closer together as a community and thus strengthened cohesion. The soldiers held two things in common which served to unify the battalion: continuity and homogeneity. It was not only the shared experience of "common hardships and privations" but they also shared a common place of origin. More than ninety percent of the men came from the one small colony.[7] As much as they could identify with the unit, the men could equally identify with their comrades. As long as they remained with the same battalion, then they could consider themselves at home. Strong identity in the battalion was an indicator of good cohesion and a contributor to high morale. A Newfoundlander described the influence of the national character on the regiment as a builder of *esprit*:

> *Esprit de corps*, as is well known, is the spirit which inspires the training of the British Army and in the case of our regiment the spirit was deepened by national consciousness.[8]

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[6]W.C.Hawker, "Some Characteristics and Traditions of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment" The Veteran (April 1928) 7:1:48.

[7]P.A.N.L. MG 632/23 "Reports of the Patriotic Association" Recruitment Committee, Annual Report 1916. By years end, of 3288 recruits, only 50 (1.5%) listed home towns outside Newfoundland.

[8]W.C.Hawker "Some Characteristics and Traditions of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment" The Veteran (April 1928) 7:1;47.

That the Newfoundland Regiment maintained its identity throughout the war is neither accidental, nor the function of luck. It was the product of a deliberate and active campaign on the part of the regimental administration at home. It has been suggested that "no other unit in the British Army had such a degree of personal interest concentrated upon it."[9] This came from both official and civilian agencies. Until 1917 the body responsible for the administration of the regiment was The Patriotic Association of Newfoundland. With the establishment of the coalition government in 1917, these duties were assumed by the newly formed Department of Militia. The Patriotic Association was an apolitical, nondemoninational body composed of more than fifty leading figures from Newfoundland's political, mercantile and social life. Chaired by Governor Sir Walter E. Davidson, the committee claimed to have the kind of popular support that no government could enjoy as it was non-sectarian and non-partisan.[10] Thus, with a relatively powerful lobby working on its behalf, the first five hundred of the Newfoundland contingent sailed for England to come to the aid of the motherland in the great European

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[9]P.R. O'Brien, "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association" p.179.

[10]C.O. 194 /288 Letter: Davidson to Harcourt Sept 07, 1914 Dispatch #155 Comments on the "Volunteer Force Act". See Also: Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.103.

war.[11]

The Newfoundlanders were confident about their identity as a national military force but seemingly few could distinguish them from the Canadians. However, this may have worked to further unify the Newfoundlanders. According to the historian, E.J.Hobsbawm, "There is no more effective way of bonding together peoples other than to unite them against outsiders."[12] They were first mistaken for Canadians even as they were heading overseas on the *S.S.Florizel*. On October 12, 1914, Owen Steele recorded in his diary that another ship in the convoy passed by and was greeted by three cheers.

> her band responded with the new Canadian Anthem evidentially putting us down for Canadians. We responded with "Britannia Rules the Waves".[13]

On the 14th, the *Florizel* docked at Devonport. One private remembered that to welcome the Newfoundlanders, the band played "Oh Canada".[14] Upon arriving in the United Kingdom,

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[11]I use the qualifier "relatively" to describe powerful as it will be shown that when the Patriotic Association conflicted with the Army, the Army usually won.

[12]E.J.Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism Since 1780 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1990) p.91.

[13]Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives (C.N.S.) Memorial University of Newfoundland. Coll - 179 Diary of the Late Owen Steele. October 10, 1914.

[14]A.J. Stacey "The Memoirs of A.J. Stacey: A Newfoundlander at War" (Unpublished MSS memoir) C.N.S., M.U.N. p.5.

Frank Lind complained that "Everywhere in England we were taken as Canadians...." and expressed the opinion that "They [the English] did not seem to know that Newfoundland is not Canada."[15] As if it was not enough to be mistaken for Canadians by the English, the Newfoundlanders found their identity threatened even more when they were sent to a Canadian encampment at Salisbury Plain.

At Pond Farm Camp, the 540 men of the Newfoundland Regiment were attached to a Canadian Brigade and put under the command of a Canadian officer, Lieutenant-Colonel E.B.Clegg.[16] Owen Steele, then a Sargent, wrote to his parents:

> We are all very particular here that we should not be classed as Canadians ... we are much prouder of our distinction as Newfoundlanders....[17]

To make matters worse, it was suggested that the Newfoundlanders should amalgamate with a half battalion from Nova Scotia also camped at Salisbury Plain.[18] If they were amalgamated, the contingent would "lose its name and individuality" and it was reported that, "the feeling of the

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[15]Frank Lind, The Letters of Mayo Lind p.23.

[16]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.123.

[17]C.N.S. Coll - 179 "Diary of the Late Owen Steele" Letter to his parents, December 02, 1914.

[18]"The Blue Puttees" The Veteran (Dec. 1921) 1:4;14.

Blue Puttees against the suggestion was very strong."[19] Steele noted, "our officers are very strongly opposed to any such intention." All fears were allayed on December 3 when it was announced that the Newfoundlanders were to move to Fort George, Invernesshire, far away from any Canadians. The Canadian Commander at Salisbury Plain informed the Newfoundlanders that they were to be moved because they were to be brought up to battalion strength, a decision, he said, which would preserve the contingent's identity.[20] More recruits came from Newfoundland and with the battalion up to strength (about 1000 men), they established their depot in Ayr and began training in earnest.

Having escaped annexation to the Canadians, the Newfoundland battalion maintained its individuality and was sent to the Dardanelles in August of 1915 as part of the 29th Division. The next threat to the integrity of a battalion was the faceless reinforcement policy as manifested by the "training reserve battalions" in September 1916. This policy has been discussed in detail earlier in this study. It is sufficient to say that the redirection of men to the "training reserve battalions" was one of the major causes leading to the

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[19]"The Blue Puttees" The Veteran (Dec. 1921) 1:4;14.

[20]C.N.S. Coll - 179 "Diary of the Late Owen Steele" Letter to his Parents, Dec. 03, 1914. The commander was premature in his announcement as the Government had not yet decided to raise a full battalion. Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.127.

end of distinctive battalions and the disintegration of the regimental system.

The Newfoundlanders did not suffer from the dilution of their battalion with outsiders. One of the reasons for this was their immunity from the rest of the army's reinforcement system. It is true that while reinforcements for British battalions might come from any regiment, colonial contingents were privileged by having only national reinforcements.[21] If a Canadian was wounded, he would return to a Canadian unit but probably not the same battalion he left at the front.[22] Similarly, wounded Australians would be returned to an Australian Division, but had no guarantee that they would be returned to their old unit.[23] It could be argued that the Newfoundlanders came under the classification of "colonial troops". Technically, they were the national contingent and were, like the Canadians, entitled to have only national reinforcements. It must be remembered that the Newfoundlanders were not part of a colonial contingent, they belonged to a

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[21]Winter, Death's Men p.42.

[22]Morton, When Your Number's Up p.77.

[23]C.E.W Bean The Official History of Australia In the War of 1914-18 Vol.III. (St.Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press; 1981) pp.177-179.

regular army division of the British infantry.[24] If the Newfoundland Regiment, like the regionally-based "Pals battalions", could not maintain sufficient numbers to keep up to strength, they too would be disbanded. Indeed, the regiment was pulled out of the line in April 1918 because it was under strength. The options given to the Newfoundland Government were either to find reinforcements or have the battalion disbanded.[25] Newfoundland's contingent was not protected solely because of its colonial status in this regard. Rather, the unit kept its identity because of the way it functioned within the British Army: as a Cardwellian battalion would function under ideal circumstances.

The Newfoundland Regiment's depot was important for fostering regimental identity. This is an administrative detail, but it was important for creating cohesion. The maintenance of a depot was an advantage that the British battalions did not have after 1916. There, men convalesced from hospitalization and new recruits from Newfoundland would train and become integrated with the other members of the

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[24]Journal of the House of Assembly 1914 "An Act Respecting a Volunteer Force in this Colony" "[The Force]...may be put under the command of his Majesty's Army."

[25]Rev.T.Nangle, The Trail of the Caribou (St.John's:Daily Star;1918) Lecture published as a pamphlet. A recruiting appeal appears on the page following the lecture.

regiment.[26] Men and officers returning from instruction or hospital would return to the front via the depot thus providing a sense of continuity within the regiment. A veteran of the Newfoundland Regiment explained how continuity was maintained within the battalion:

> Close association with the "old hands" .... was largely responsible for this [esprit] and as the war lengthened, the new hands became the old and the traditions grew with the regimental doings.[27]

Reinforcement drafts for the battalion at the front would be sent only from this depot, and would be composed only of men of the Newfoundland regiment.[28] The turnover of personnel grew proportionately with the increasingly high rate of casualties. The new recruits would be unfamiliar faces to the "old hands" at the front but at least they were Newfoundlanders. These reinforcements had enough in common with the rest of the soldiers in the battalion to integrate successfully into the unit and feel that they belonged to the community. The Newfoundland Regiment's control over its own reinforcements proved to be a significant factor in preserving continuity and homogeneity within the unit and thereby

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[26]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander, p.215.

[27]W.C.Hawker "Some Characteristics and Traditions of the Newfoundland Regiment" in The Veteran (1928) 7:1;47

[28]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.285.,320. & 440. Also: Gallishaw Trenching at Gallipoli p.148. and The Correspondence of Capt.L.S.Woods, Royal Newfoundland Regiment 1911-1921. (Private Collection).

maintaining unit cohesion.

As mentioned, even when the Newfoundlanders were wounded, they could be sure that they would be returned to their old regiment. If their wounds were serious enough to send them back to Britain, they would be accommodated in the same hospital. Dr.Cluny MacPherson, a St.John's physician and later Royal Army Medical Corps Officer, made arrangements with the senior British Medical officer, Sir Alfred Keogh to see that this would be done.[29] The regimental history records "that as far as possible, wounded Newfoundlanders in the United Kingdom would be concentrated in the 3rd. London General Hospital at Wandsworth."[30] Indeed, the Newfoundlanders were privileged in this respect. Even when the War Office converted Wandsworth into an Officers' Hospital, a section of the facility was reserved for Newfoundlanders of all ranks.[31] Prime Minister Sir Edward Morris visited the more than three hundred wounded Newfoundlanders at this hospital some six weeks after the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel.[32] In late 1917, Lieut. Lloyd Woods was hospitalized there with another officer

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[29]Colonial Office (C.O.) 194 /289. Letter: Lord Islington to Sir Alfred Keogh., April 12, 1915. Also: P.A.N.L. MG 632/17 Newfoundland War Contingent Association Memo: "Visiting and provisions for the sick and the wounded" November 1915.

[30]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.224.

[31]"A Friend and Admirer of Ours" The Veteran (1922) 2:1;65.

[32]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.290.

of the Newfoundland Regiment, Lieut. Fred Rendell.[33] The comfort of being with friends and familiar faces, especially during something as unpleasant as hospitalization, cannot be underestimated. Cpl. Ralph Shears recalled that when he was wounded for the second time, "I was disappointed when I knew that I was not going back to Wandsworth."[34]

The Newfoundlanders did not suffer the dilution of their ranks with alien reinforcements as did other locally recruited battalions. The survival of the battalion in this respect is due partly to the to the privileged position the regiment held as a colonial contingent and partly due to the administration of the regimental system. Unlike the situation of the British regiments, it was advantageous for the war effort in Newfoundland for the regiment to keep its national identity.[35] This political or propagandist end was not fulfilled to the detriment of military efficiency. In April 1918, the Newfoundland Regiment was removed from the front because they were under-strength and unable to discharge their assigned duties.

The degree to which this protection was a function of the

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[33]Woods' Correspondence: November 2, 1917.

[34]Interview, R.C.Shears (Interviewed by the author) May 20 1990.

[35]P.R. O'Brien "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association" "The population maintained the regiment out of pride." p.335.

Newfoundland Government or of the British Army is unclear. It is difficult to ascertain who had the final say. The regimental historian records that even as early as 1914, the regiment's Commanding Officer, Lt.Col. H. de R. Burton, was servant of two masters. On the one hand, he was answerable to the General Officer Commanding, Scottish Command. On the other hand, Lt.Col. Burton had to report to Governor Sir Walter Davidson who was Colonel in Chief of the regiment as well as chairman of the Newfoundland Patriotic Association.[36] Similarly, Lt.Col. C.W. Whitaker, Commanding Officer of the 2nd Reserve Battalion, was caught in a bind over the unpopular removal of the reserve Battalion from Ayr to Barry in 1917.[37] When he represented the position of the Government of Newfoundland against the move, he incurred the displeasure of his superiors in Scottish Command. Governor Davidson cabled the Colonial Office expressing his "great dissatisfaction" over the move of the reserve battalion.[38] The Army moved the battalion and seemingly ignored the wishes of the Governor of Newfoundland, the chairman of the Patriotic Association and the Colonel of the regiment. The influence of the regimental organization in Newfoundland was limited. While the leaders in

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[36]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.132.

[37]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.374.

[38]P.A.N.L. MG 632/22d Telegram: Davidson to Long, Colonial Office. July 03, 1917.

St.John's did what they could to influence the fate of their battalion, it is clear that military expedients took precedence over the desires of the colonial government.

The continued existence of the Newfoundland Regiment in France was important for the war effort in Newfoundland. It was said that the regiment "symbolized the colony's identity" and "instilled ... a truly national purpose."[39] On occasion Governor Sir Walter Davidson threatened the Colonial Office with the spectre of voluntary recruitment drying up if the regiment was not handled as the Patriotic Committee saw fit.[40] It is not clear how well or how often this kind of "blackmail" worked. In September 1917, Davidson appealed to have the regiment granted the title "Royal" but was refused.[41] In this case, Field Marshal Haig's thinly veiled appeal for recruits seemed to changed the mind of the Army Council. On December 7, 1917, Haig wrote:

> I hope the colony will keep this splendid regiment up to full establishment and speedily send the men required to replace those who have given their lives.

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[39]O'Brien, "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association" p.335.

[40]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.371. Also: P.A.N.L. MG 632/ 22c "Governor's Correspondence" Cable Feb. 1, 1916. Re. Raising a second battalion. MG 632/ 22d Cable July 3, 1917 Re. Moving depot to Barry. and P.R.O. WO 32/5012 Correspondence re. granting the title "Royal" to the regiment.

[41]C.O. 194 /293 Cable: Sept. 3, 1917 Davidson to Long. Also: P.R.O. WO 32/5012 "Application for the title Royal to be granted to the Newfoundland Regiment"

...hope that vacancies will be filled at once....[42]

The following day Sir Herbert Creedy of the War Office wrote to Buckingham Palace with a request and suggested that the effect of granting the honour might "stimulate the [Newfoundland] Government to fresh efforts in the matter of recruiting."[43] On December 10th, the title "Royal" was granted to the Newfoundland Regiment. In this affair, the combination of recruitment politics and help from friends in high places changed army policy and brought about the desired effect.[44]

It is significant that the Newfoundland Regiment survived intact when the brigades were rationalized from four to three battalions in February 1918. From each brigade, one battalion was either broken up and the men used to reinforce other units, or a battalion was moved to replace other disbanded units. It would be instructive to examine the fate of the other battalions in the 29th Division at that time. In the 86th. Brigade, another war-raised unit, the 16th. Middlesex Regiment, was disbanded and its members were dispersed. The

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[42]P.R.O. WO 32/5012 "Application" Cable: Dec. 7, 1917, Haig to War Office.

[43]P.R.O. WO 32/ 5012 "Application" Letter: Dec. 8, 1917: Creedy to Lord Stanfordham.

[44] P.R.O. WO 32/5012. "Application" The help was undoubtedly solicited help. Haig states in his Dec. 7 telegram that he was in communication with Davidson who was then in France.

1st. Inniskilling Fusiliers of the 87th. Brigade, a regular unit, was moved to the 36th. (Ulster) Division to replace a disbanded Irish battalion. In the Newfoundlanders' brigade, the 88th, the 1st. Essex Regiment was moved to replace a disbanded battalion.[45] The blow to morale was twofold. Old comrades left the brigade, and except for the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, the remaining battalions were reinforced with the men from any number of disbanded units. That the Newfoundlanders were not disbanded at this time demonstrates the case for military efficiency over political meddling or national sentiment. As late as February 1918, the Royal Newfoundland Regiment was a viable force and was still acting as a traditional British regiment.

By September, 1918, the Newfoundland Battalion was back up to strength and was sent to join the 9th (Scottish) Division. Ironically, the Newfoundlanders replaced another colonial contingent, the South Africans. The South African experience also demonstrates the effects of attrition. Four infantry battalions made up the 28th. Brigade as a national formation in early 1916. By April 1918, the South African contingent was so weakened that of the entire brigade, there was only enough men to form one composite battalion.[46]

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[45]Gillon, The Story of the 29th Division p.256.

[46]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.476.

The example of the South African Brigade shows the effects of attrition and the difficulty of maintaining a "national" force. The Newfoundland Regiment was subject to the same conditions as other battalions of the British Army yet it preserved its distinctive identity where other units could not. This anomaly was made possible because the Newfoundland battalion was organized and administered as a traditional British regiment. When traditional means of administration and reinforcement fell victim to the exigencies of war, regionally-based battalions became diluted with recruits from other units. Because the Newfoundlanders were nominally under the control of the Newfoundland Government, they enjoyed a degree of protection from the Army Council's decrees that effectively destroyed the individual nature of the traditional battalion.

National identity in the Newfoundland Regiment was important for the men of the battalion and for the war effort at home. For the soldiers, it was an essential element in unit cohesion and a contributor to high morale. On the homefront it provided a focus for voluntary recruitment drives as well as fund raising campaigns. National identity was promoted by two distinct but complementary entities. First, within the traditional "Cardwellian" regimental system, battalion organization served to foster unit identity which, in this case, was Newfoundland's national identity. Second, the

regiment's status as a colonial contingent preserved that identity by protecting the battalion from the Army's centralized reinforcement policies and by occasionally bringing political pressure to bear upon the War Office. National identity was promoted because it made for a cohesive unit and it benefitted the war effort at home. As will be demonstrated, national identity is inextricably linked to the efforts to promote cohesion and morale in the Newfoundland Regiment.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DELIVERY OF MORALE

The 1922 Report on Shell Shock advised that "Morale can be, and has to be, created."[1] This chapter will demonstrate how morale was created and how it worked within the regimental structure. It will examine some of the specific measures taken to promote and maintain morale in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. In particular, this chapter is concerned with the efforts in Newfoundland to provide the troops with some of the comforts of home as well as the initiatives for entertainment which came from within the battalion. In previous chapters the preconditions and facilitators of morale were studied. It was established that the regimental system was the best vehicle for the promotion of morale. This chapter will examine how morale was introduced to the unit and how it functioned within this dynamic.

Within the Newfoundland Regiment efforts to promote morale came from two sources: the battalion in the field and civilian agencies on the home front. At the front, the battalion organized sporting events, concerts and other entertainments about which more will be said later. There can be no doubt as to the necessity for these recreations and

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[1]Report on Shell Shock (1922) p.208.

"distractions". The author of a recent study on the relationship of popular culture to troop morale suggested that: "It was precisely because the war was so terrible, so hideous a reality after the civilians' dreams of glory that men, to survive, had periodically to escape."[2]

On the home front, the civilian population contributed to the general welfare and comfort of their soldiers (sailors, airmen and nurses[3]) in the form of voluntary societies which raised money and sent packages to the troops. Seemingly simple items such as Newfoundland cigarettes, newspapers, knitted goods and culinary treats lifted the men's spirits. The "comforts", as they were known, performed three necessary functions. First and foremost, they addressed the soldier's personal comfort and happiness. Second, they provided the vital link with the man's home and a connection to a place where there was no war. Third, the packages from Newfoundland were tangible demonstrations to the men that the people at home had not forgotten about them. In this way, civilians participated in the war effort and felt that they were "doing their bit". More importantly, this strengthened the bond between the regiment and the community. This moral and material support came from two agencies: the Women's Patriotic

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[2]Fuller Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.176.

[3]The Journal of the House of Assembly 1919 (Appendix) "The Report of the War Contingent Association." pp.593-608.

Association (W.P.A.) and the Newfoundland War Contingent Association.

The Women's Patriotic Association was founded in St.John's at the end of August 1914 by the Governor's wife, Lady Margaret Davidson.[4] Its purpose was to produce comforts for the troops such as shirts and socks and "Red Cross Work", which included bandages and dressings. It became the outward demonstration of patriotism for the women of Newfoundland. This quickly became a popular body with 183 branches and over seven thousand members across the country in the first year of operation.[5]

The case of the W.P.A. demonstrates the degree and extent of the community's interest in the soldiers' welfare. Branches were established in many of the smaller communities and were usually organised by the clergyman's wife or other leading ladies of the community. Branches were set up along the lines of the British "Queen Mary's Needlework Guild". Like a cottage industry, the guild distributed materials to the membership who would then turn out finished pieces for distribution by

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[4] **See:** P.A.N.L. MG 635/1 Women's Patriotic Association Minutes 1914-21. The Daily News September 01, 1914. **and** Patriotic Association of the Women of Newfoundland Annual Report 1916 (C.N.S. Memorial University of Newfoundland) **and** B.Doran "Women's War Efforts" (Unpublished MSS, C.N.S. 1988) p.1.

[5] O'Brien, "The Patriotic Association" p.53.

the central authority.[6] Often, the membership of the W.P.A. followed existing women's social organizations such as church groups and fraternal groups.In St.John's there were branches representing The Presbyterian Hall and its affiliate, the Young Ladies' Guild of St.Andrew's, as well as the women's associations of the Anglican Cathedral, St.Thomas's and St.Mary's.[7] There is no reason to suggest that this was not also the pattern outside of St.John's. Riding on the back of the network of existing women's organizations, the W.P.A. spread quickly and extensively throughout the country.

There was a kind of universality of support not enjoyed by any other wartime institution in Newfoundland. Even in communities hostile to the recruitment efforts, the recruiting parties reported meeting "a dedicated group of women working long through the winter nights in the remote settlements, often the only sign that a war was in progress."[8] The women of the Newfoundland, indeed the whole population, were concerned for the welfare and comfort of their representatives in the war. The Newfoundland Regiment was fortunate that it had such close ties with the community. Moreover, since they were the only military force from the island, they received

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[6]P.A.N.L. MG 635/1 The W.P.A. Records. Minute Book, 1914-16.

[7]C.N.S. W.P.A. Annual Report 1916 November 16, 1916. p.6.

[8]O'Brien, The Newfoundland Patriotic Association" p.53.

the undivided attention of its population.[9] O'Brien suggests that "no other unit in the British Army had such a degree of personal interest concentrated upon it."[10] They enjoyed such attention and interest because they were the only identifiable representatives of the people of Newfoundland in the War. The W.P.A. was one example, but a very important example, of the "personal interest" expressed in the regiment.

By June of 1918, the W.P.A. had produced roughly thirty thousand pairs of socks, fifteen thousand shirts and some sixty-five thousand pairs of mittens. Further to this, they raised well over three hundred thousand dollars for various causes including refugee relief, the Red Cross, Ambulances, and a fund for Fish and Brewis (a traditional fish dish) for the Newfoundland Troops.[11] The primary focus of the W.P.A. was that of the comfort and welfare of Newfoundland's soldiers and sailors both at home and overseas. At home the men were accessible in barracks training, or in hospital convalescing in St.John's. Overseas, the W.P.A. needed the help of another agency to distribute the packages designated for the Newfoundlanders. In this way the War Contingent Association

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[9]The men of the Royal Naval Reserve often felt forgotten or ignored eventhough they were cared for by the W.P.A.

[10]O'Brien, "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association" p.179.

[11]Journal of the House of Assembly 1917 (Appendix) pp.343-345. Journal of the House of Assembly 1919 (Appendix) p.588. **and** Nicholson, Fighting Newfoundlander pp.224-226.

complemented the work of the W.P.A.

The Newfoundland War Contingent Association was created in London in September 1915 by a number of prominent citizens who were either Newfoundlanders or who had Newfoundland connections. The founding members included Sir Edgar Bowring of the St.John's mercantile family, Sir William MacGregor, a former Governor of the Colony, and Sir Arthur Steele-Maitland M.P., the Undersecretary for the Colonies.[12] It is significant that when this body was first proposed in January of 1915, the plan was to appoint a subcommittee to the Dominions War Contingents Advisory Committee.[13] It was later decided that hospital visits and the distribution of comforts would best be effected by a Newfoundland operated organization which existed solely and specifically for Newfoundland's men in uniform.

Its mission was to "promote in every way possible the welfare and comfort of soldiers in the contingent."[14] It fulfilled this objective in three ways: comforts for men on service, for the sick and the wounded and for the prisoners of war. In a report given at the end of the war, the War

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[12]Journal of the House of Assembly 1919 (Appendix) p.608.

[13]P.A.N.L. MG 632/17 Records of the Newfoundland Patriotic Association. Meeting of 22 January, 1915.

[14]P.A.N.L. MG 439 Capt. Leo C. Murphy Papers "Newfoundland War Contingent Association Articles of Association"

Contingent Association stated that it existed "so that Newfoundland boys may feel that there are friends in this country as anxious for their welfare as their own relatives on the island." [15]

Again, this promoted morale in three ways. It provided the means to improve the soldier's creature comforts, it provided yet another link with home and it showed that the people at home cared. This reinforced the soldier's identity with his community and strengthened his sense of belonging to his unit. As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, national identity in the Newfoundland Regiment was not merely a matter of patriotism, but an important influence upon unit cohesion. Without a doubt, the soldiers' "welfare and comfort" was critical to morale.

The first duty of the War Contingent Association was to distribute the work of the W.P.A. and other small luxuries to the men. As one would expect, the troops were enthusiastic in their praise of the comforts. The comments, however, say as much about the nostalgic effect of the parcels as they did about the physical luxuries of socks or a sweater. While home on leave in 1916, Lt. Gerald Harvey was asked about the value of comforts to the troops. He replied "I think that from a sentimental point of view and perhaps from the point of view

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[15] Journal of the House of Assembly 1919 Appendix p.597.

of necessity it is advisable to have these comforts sent."[16] From Gallipoli, Frank Lind remarked "Chocolates and Cakes are very much appreciated ... Sweetmeats taste so much better under the conditions than they would at home."[17] Later on he thanks "the W.P.A. and the good people at home" and continues; "There is no sock like the Newfoundland home-made sock."[18] Great interest was expressed in the men's welfare by those on the home front. Indeed, a commission was struck to investigate claims that, amongst other things, the W.P.A. comforts were not reaching the men.[19] The packages from Newfoundland addressed some of the soldier's physical needs and reinforced his sense of identity with the community and the unit. The comforts and the men's response to them demonstrate the essential link between the soldier and the society from which he comes.

The second duty of the War Contingent Association was that of visiting the men in hospitals. An early directive instructed that "visitors are to see that the men want for

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[16]P.A.N.L. MG 632/2.d. Reports of the Newfoundland Patriotic Association (Joint Committee to Enquire into Certain allegations regarding Food, Clothing, Pay and Comforts) Hereafter "Deficiencies Enquiry" p.16.

[17]Lind, The Letters of Mayo-Lind p.19.

[18]Lind, The Letters of Mayo-Lind p.135.

[19]P.A.N.L. MG 632/2.d. Records of the Newfoundland Patriotic Association (Deficiencies enquiry)

nothing."[20] Sargent Norman MacLeod was wounded at Gallipoli and was invalided back to England. The day after he arrived in an English hospital he wrote in his diary: "Visiting day. Members of Nfld War Contingent Assoc. came. Met Miss Hayward, an old friend of Miss Butler."[21] The visitors also provided the men with a toiletry bag complete with razor, soap, toothbrush etc.[22]

Another responsibility of the hospital visitor was to write the soldier's family to report on his condition. Lloyd Woods' father received a letter from the War Contingent Association informing him that his son would be visited by someone who "will see that he is supplied with everything necessary for his comfort."[23] A second letter soon followed from the association's visitor for Bristol area Hospitals, a Miss Arnaud. She had lived in St.John's and said that she "had something in common with the Newfoundland boys."[24] To Lloyd's

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[20]P.A.N.L. MG 632/17 Reports of the Newfoundland Patriotic Association (War Contingent Association)

[21]Norman A. MacLeod Diary (April 19, 1916) (Collection of W.D.Parsons, St.John's)

[22]P.A.N.L. MG 632/17 Reports of the N.P.A. (War Contingent Association) Annual Report 1918. **and** Journal of the House of Assembly 1919 (Appendix) p.599.

[23]Woods Correspondence. Letter, Newfoundland War Contingent Association, London, to Mr.S.Woods, St.John's. October 27, 1915.

[24]Woods Correspondence. Letter, Miss Annette Arnaud to Mr.S.Woods. October 30, 1915.

father she wrote: "He seemed to be bright and cheerful and pleased to have a visit from someone so closely allied to his own hometown."[25] Woods was appreciative of the attention and later wrote home to say that he had received a card and tobacco pouch from "the Nfld Association in London."[26] At the organization's final meeting in 1919, it was boasted that "upwards of three thousand men had passed under our personal care in hospitals in this country."[27]

The War Contingent Association was strictly a civilian enterprise and the hospital visitations did not directly influence troop morale at the front. It was, however, an important element in maintaining morale in the regiment. Earlier, the regiment was compared to a close-knit family.[28] In the Newfoundlanders' case this was amplified by the distance from their home and loved ones. The War Contingent Association functioned as an extended family for the men of the regiment. In the same way the comforts promoted morale, the hospital visitors attended to creature comforts, and

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[25]Woods Correspondence. Letter, Miss Annette Arnaud to Mr.S.Woods October 30, 1915.

[26]Woods Correspondence. Letter to Parents December 22, 1915.

[27]P.A.N.L. MG 632/17 Reports of the N.P.A. (War Contingent Association) Meeting of October 31, 1919. Elsewhere the figure is given as 2600. Journal of the House of Assembly 1919 (Appendix) p.601.

[28]Fuller. Troop Morale p.23.

represented Newfoundland at a time when the soldier was far from home and separated from the "family" of the battalion. Ideally, wherever the soldier was, he was in touch with one of the elements that supported morale be it his battalion, his community or his nation.

The War Contingent Association had greater difficulty attending to the third group in its mandate, prisoners of war. The War Contingent Association endeavoured to keep track of each of the 179 men of the Newfoundland Regiment who were taken prisoner during the war. Once the prisoner was located, the association directed the parcels of food to him from the various relief organizations such as the Red Cross.[29] The only contact permitted under the German regulations was through officially sanctioned agencies such as the Red Cross and the British and Foreign Sailors' Society.[30] The War Contingent Association could fill only an administrative function with regard to the prisoners of war.

The battalion at the front was the other source of morale. All the parcels from home would mean very little if high morale was not maintained at the battalion level. Steps were taken within the regiment to make life more bearable for the ordinary infantryman. To this end, sports, concert parties

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[29]Nicholson, Fighting Newfoundlander p.226. and pp.363-4.

[30]Journal of the House of Assembly 1919 (Appendix) p.602.

and canteens were organized for when the men were at rest.

With respect to troop welfare in France, the Newfoundlanders benefited from the experience of the more senior units with whom they served. The Newfoundlanders were fortunate in that they belonged to a regular army division. Because the regular army battalions had been stationed in various far-flung parts of the Empire, they were able to operate as self-contained, self sufficient units. They were used to adapting to an alien environment and provided for the needs of the soldier within the community of the battalion. In the First World War, the regular divisions took the lead in organizing concerts, sports events and canteens.[31] The Newfoundland Regiment was then in the unusual position, for a war-raised unit, of stepping into a well organized division experienced in providing for the welfare of its troops. While the opportunity for entertainment could be provided by the division, the degree of success depended upon the participating battalion. The Newfoundlanders' experience demonstrates how such a distraction as sport benefited morale.

Sport served not only to relieve boredom, but also to bolster battalion *esprit de corps*.[32] In early 1918, a report on morale made by the chief postal censor recognized that:

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[31]Fuller, Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.57.

[32]Fuller Troop Morale and Popular Culture p.90.

> Relaxation and sport of every kind tend to promote cheerfulness and good spirits: and are of immense value in maintaining the morale of the army at its present high level.[33]

Although the record shows the Newfoundlanders were less than successful footballers, it is evident that the battalion team was well supported and that matches generated great interest. A.J. Stacey records in his memoir the excitement caused by an inter-battalion football match.

> ...on these occasions Mick Smythe would mount a mule belonging to the transport bedecked with ribbons and lead the regiment to the grounds where the match was being played.[34]

While the Newfoundlanders were training in Egypt after Gallipoli, they played the other battalions in the 88th Brigade as well as the Field Ambulance and managed to lose each game.[35] They fared better, however, in games of baseball against American and Canadian teams.[36]

Competition inspired pride in the battalion and supported, and sometimes created, a sense of identity and *esprit de corps*. In late August, 1916, the Newfoundlanders won

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[33]I.W.M. 84/46/1 Captain M. Hardie, Chief Censor, Army Postal Service: "Report on Morale" February 22, 1918.

[34]Stacey, "Memoirs of A.J.Stacey: A Newfoundlander At War" (Unpublished MSS, C.N.S. Memorial University) p.28.

[35]C.N.S. Coll- 179 "Diary of the Late Owen Steele". January 26, 1916 to February 11, 1916.

[36]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander, p.462.

top honours at a Brigade assault-at-arms competition.[37] An officer in the Worcestershire Regiment was sufficiently impressed to record in his diary: "NFLD came out on top in the brigade - of which they may be proud - against three regular units."[38] To win a battlecraft competition in an elite division and against regular troops was certainly something for which they could be proud. It was undoubtedly a boost to the Newfoundlanders' morale.

Games were also organized within the battalion. Boxing was popular with both the men and the officers. At Stob's Camp in Scotland, R.S.M. MacKay organized matches in which Corporal, later Lieutenant, Stan Goodyear established his regimental boxing title.[39] Steele recorded that on occasion, boxing matches would be held in the Officer's mess.[40] Sports meets became popular with participants and spectators alike. In Alexandria, the Worcestershire Regiment's sports day was well attended by members of the Newfoundland battalion.[41] A

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[37]P.R.O. WO/95/2308 "Newfoundland Regiment War Diary" August 26, 1916. The battalion won 5 first places and 2 seconds.

[38]The Liddle Collection (L.C.), The University of Leeds. "Strang, William (Lord) Diary" August 30, 1916.

[39]Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander, p.152.

[40]C.N.S. Coll - 179 "Diary of the Late Owen Steele" February 26, 1916.

[41]C.N.S. Coll-179 "The Diary of the Late Owen Steele" February 26, 1916.

regimental sports day was the featured attraction as the Newfoundlanders celebrated their third anniversary away from home in October of 1917.[42]

The object of the games was not only to occupy otherwise bored soldiers. The greater significance of the sports was the way in which they seemed to make life a little more normal. Putting a boy in uniform did not fundamentally change him or make him somehow different from the rest of society. Fuller, in his study of popular culture and troop morale, focuses upon the continuities rather than the differences between civilian and military life.[43] Soldiers spent their leisure time engaged in the same kind of pursuits they enjoyed before they volunteered or were conscripted. The Newfoundlanders were no different. Woods wrote his parents about the ice-hockey game he played in Edinburgh in March 1915. The teams were divided according to the players' old hockey clubs back in St.John's. He reported; "We had a hockey match there, the Crescents *vs.* the Feildians. Of course we won, the Crescents always do."[44] Sport offered a brief respite from the war and gave the soldier an opportunity to engage in a familiar activity with strong links to civilian life.

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[42]P.R.O. WO/95/2308 Newfoundland Regiment War Diary. October 04, 1917. Also: Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander, p.387.

[43]Fuller, Troop Morale and Popular Culture pp.114-160.

[44]Woods Correspondence. Letter to Parents, March 10, 1915.

Maintaining the continuities with civilian life had no small effect on morale. The Newfoundlanders' experience of sport confirms this. Similarly, concerted efforts were made to bring things that were familiar in Newfoundland to the troops in France. It would be instructive to examine a number of these undertakings which maintained the soldiers' ties with his home but which did not originate with the either the battalion or the organizations charged with troop welfare such as the War Contingent Association or the W.P.A. It would be appropriate then to look at the influence on morale of the four "necessities" of mail, food, cigarettes and music.

The Army made mail delivery a top priority and every effort was made to maintain frequent and regular deliveries, even to the men in the front lines.[45] The mail would go up to the men in the trenches together with their rations. Stacey recalled that the Commanding Officer put him in charge of the battalion's mail and then lectured him on the importance of the position.[46] MacLeod recorded in his diary: "Letters from V.E. and Auntie. Very glad to hear from them."[47] Woods wrote his mother and said that her letters "cheered me up

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[45]Winter Death's Men p.164.

[46]A.J.Stacey Memoir, p.59.

[47]N.A.Macleod Diary. January 4, 1916.

wonderfully."[48] Newfoundland papers were another close link with the world they had left behind. Gallishaw noted that in Gallipoli, "newspapers are argued over as they are very popular ... all hands wanted to read news from home."[49] Any contact with home was welcomed. In the Newspapers "even the advertising columns came in for a great deal of attention and comment."[50] This link with home helped soothe the personal loneliness of the soldier but it also fed the sense of community, identity and belonging.

The object of many morale boosting efforts was to replicate a little bit of Newfoundland at the front. This was the rationale behind the independently organised "Fish and Brewis Fund". In the words of a fundraiser, it was designed to provide "the national dish ... for which all Newfoundlanders yearn when away from home."[51] By January 1917, $2201 had been raised and with it, 100 bags of bread and 100 quintals of Fish were sent to the battalions in

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[48]Woods Correspondence. Woods to Parents December 22, 1915.

[49]Gallishaw. Trenching at Gallipoli p.121.

[50]"The Third Fag" The Veteran Vol.2. No.1. April 1922. p.10.

[51]Journal of the House of Assembly 1917 (Appendix: Reports of the N.P.A.) p.344. The dish consists of dried cod and "hard tack" biscuit soaked together and boiled usually accompanied by "scrunchions" (pork fat).

France and Scotland.[52] Cpl. Walter Tobin noted in his diary that he had a "feed of fish and bruise", a wash and a good rest before going into the firing line the next day.[53] The fish was more than a welcome break from the usual army food. When presented at the same time as the bathing parade and much needed rest, it was evidently used as a morale booster before the men went into the line.

Along the same lines was the "Mayo-Lind Fund". This fund, which raised over $8000 by the end of the war, was dedicated to providing the troops with their favourite, familiar brand of Newfoundland tobacco.[54] The name of the appeal came from the name of the tobacco, "Mayo", and a Private of the Regiment who wrote letters to a local paper telling of their progress overseas. In one letter, Pte. Frank Lind innocently commented; "it is impossible to get good tobacco in this country, a stick of Mayo is indeed a luxury."[55] Seeing that their representatives overseas were in need, a collection was spontaneously organised and the tobacco was dispatched post-haste. Later Lind thanked the donors of the "Mayo" and wrote,

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[52]P.A.N.L. MG 632/2.a. Reports of the N.P.A., Meeting of January 17, 1917. **Also:** Nicholson, Fighting Newfoundlander p.402.

[53]Tobin Diary. February 27, 1917. (Collection of W.D. Parsons)

[54]Lind, The Letters of Mayo-Lind p.174. **and** Nicholson, The Fighting Newfoundlander p.402.

[55]Lind, The Letters of Mayo Lind p.38. and The Daily News June 6, 1915.

"God bless the dear friends at home ... you may be sure we will never forget them."[56] Although it may seem insignificant, the fact that familiar cigarettes were available at the front was important. Along with the mail, the newspapers, the hand knit socks, and the other attentions from home, the tobacco contributed to the men's personal comfort overseas and provided yet another strand in the many links with home.

Music is an obvious example of an easily transported cultural artefact. The songs of James Murphy, the contemporary St.John's song writer, were popular as were the British music hall tunes.[57] Many songs came from the men of the regiment, often as parodies or with words specific to the battalion. A rather irreverent, fifteen verse version of the Regiment's adventures at Gallipoli was written by two officers. Sargent MacLeod copied it into his diary. It concludes on the optimistic note: "We'll go back to Terra Nova, to the girl we left behind. At Placentia or at Glenwood, What her name is never mind."[58] Another song made fun of their draconian Commanding Officer, Col.A.L.Hadow.

I'm Hadow, some lad-o,
I've just come off the staff

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[56]Lind, The Letters of Mayo Lind p.54.

[57]Lind, The Letters of Mayo Lind p.139.

[58]Macleod Diary.

> I'm with the Newfoundlanders,
> and they know it, not half.
> I'll work them, I'll drill them,
> I'll make the buggers sweat
> For I'm Hadow, some lad-o,
> I'll be a general yet.[59]

Traditional Newfoundland music was in great demand whether at concerts or in the trenches. These were especially sentimental. An officer described an impromptu performance in a dug-out in Flanders in 1917.

> *The Banks of Newfoundland* rang in our ears and we saw once more the tented slopes at Quidi Vidi on Regatta Day ... then the player changed to a northern song and we saw the rugged coast of our island home.[60]

As long as the regiment was overseas there were enough reminders of Newfoundland to transport them, for however brief a moment, to a place far from the battle, back to their pre-war, civilian home.

The comforts, mail, songs and cigarettes that were sent to the troops from Newfoundland promoted morale in three ways. First they addressed the comfort or physical condition of the soldier. It was usually something that was instantly gratifying like a new pair of socks, tobacco, or a newspaper

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[59]Liddle Collection, University of Leeds: 28/7/93. G.Hicks Reminiscences. **Also:** Mr.W.Tobin: Videotaped interview by W.D.Parsons 30/7/88. Both songs were attributed to the Medical Officer, Dr.Frew.

[60]"Meal in a Dug Out" The Veteran Vol.2. No.4. December 1922, pp.8-19.

from home. Secondly, it was a tangible reminder of the man's home and a connection to civilian life. This association with home produced the third, albeit subtle factor of identity. The regiment's identity was inextricably linked with national identity and, as has been demonstrated, this was not without beneficial influence on morale. Since, in the Newfoundlanders' case, home and the surrogate home of the battalion were largely analogous, each invocation of "home" reinforced the man's identity with, and sense of belonging to his unit. This paid dividends for both morale and unit cohesion.

The military's initiatives for morale such as sports and entertainment were also designed to ameliorate the soldier's condition, if only for the duration of the activity. Football games and concerts were connections with what the soldier identified as being "normal". They represented continuity with his civilian life.

The 1922 Report on Shell Shock recommended that for the promotion and maintenance of morale, "good food, good housing, recreational relaxation and attention to the comfort and well being of the soldier are of the greatest service."[61] According to the Report on Shell Shock and the evidence presented, the efforts to create morale from both the civilian and military agencies were successful. The men were far from

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[61]Report on Shell Shock (1922) p.208.

Newfoundland and in a hostile environment. The close connection with home was vitally important for the creation and support of high morale in the Newfoundland Regiment.

CONCLUSION

> The impact of the regimental tradition and its local identity cannot be over estimated.[1]

This was especially true of the Newfoundland Regiment. The twin keys to morale in this regiment were the traditional structure of the regimental system and the extraordinary moral and material support of the people at home. The British army provided the administration and social organization of the traditional regimental system. The regiment created a cohesive group which facilitated the promotion of morale. The people of Newfoundland, by their attention to the comfort and welfare of the troops, contributed efforts which would promote morale within the framework of the regiment.

The Newfoundlanders survived the experience of war better than other battalions of the British infantry for two corresponding reasons. It was because they maintained the traditional regimental structure when other british battalions could not, and because of the strong support from the community.

It is possible to identify a number of preconditions for the creation and maintenance of morale. The overwhelming conclusion is that morale is best served through the

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[1]I.Beckett, Nation in Arms, 1914-18" p.24.

institution of the battalion within the context of the traditional British regiment. Unit cohesion is a necessary precondition for high group morale. The British infantry battalion acted as a closely knit community which is a most effective vehicle for promoting the solidarity characteristic of a cohesive unit. The state of morale depends largely upon the composition of the group and the degree to which the members of the group work together. The battalion was the matrix for the creation of morale. It provided the machinery for morale, but the fuel to run the machinery had to be added from elsewhere.

Morale was defined as a mood or disposition which reflects an attitude toward a situation. This attitude can often be described as confidence. Significantly, the 1922 Report on Shell Shock concluded that "morale can be, and has to be created."[2] Cohesion can be created as well. The common social background of members contributed homogeneity to the group and a critical mass of shared experiences would develop if there was enough continuity within the group. Together, they engender a sense of corporate identity which results in confidence in the group by its members. It was concluded that cohesion was a necessary precondition to morale.

It has been shown that the Newfoundland Regiment was

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[2]Report on Shell Shock (1922) p.208.

organised and administered no differently than the other regiments of the British army. This "Cardwellian" regiment had three defining characteristics: the common place of origin for recruits, identification and connection with that locality and an appeal to regimental tradition. The "Cardwellian" regiment then, was an ideal vehicle for the promotion of cohesion and without cohesion there could be no morale.

The great change occurred after the vast number of casualties in 1916 when the Army was forced to change its reinforcement policies. The new policies ended the special connection between the soldier and his regiment. This effectively killed the "Cardwellian" regiment and terminated its role in promoting cohesion and morale. The Newfoundlanders, largely because they were considered to be a national contingent, were immune from the reinforcement reforms and continued to function as a "Cardwellian" regiment. The Newfoundland Regiment survived with the structure of the regiment intact. This structure was, at best, a framework and morale and cohesion had to be added from external sources. The influence of the soldiers' home now becomes important. The homogeneity afforded by the men's common place of origin contributed to cohesion. Cohesion was strengthened by the regiment's national identity. The nation and the regiment were analogous and anything that supported the nation, reinforced regimental cohesion.

Similarly, troop morale was influenced by the remarkably close connections with home. The country of Newfoundland took great interest in the comfort and welfare of the soldiers. The mail, cigarettes and socks sent by the people of Newfoundland contributed in no small way to the relatively high morale in the regiment. The army's administrative structures could produce conditions conducive to good morale and strong cohesion but the morale and cohesion themselves had to be provided from another source. This source was the people of Newfoundland, the society from which the soldiers came.

The point of this thesis is to demonstrate the influence of the regimental system in the promotion of morale and cohesion. The case of the Newfoundland Regiment in the First World War suggests that the traditional regimental structure was an essential precondition to good morale. The Newfoundlanders had an advantage that few other infantry battalions enjoyed: they were able to maintain strong ties with their community and thereby keep their local identity. Had the men from Newfoundland been dispersed in different regiments throughout the army, there could be no focus of morale. It was because they fought together as a unit, as an extension of the close knit society from which they came, that efforts to promote morale and cohesion within the battalion were successful.

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