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The Shape of New Zealand's Regimental System

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Abstract

Unit cohesion has been identified as a strong factor in the way soldiers overcome their fear of death in battle. Imperial Roman soldiers felt loyalty to the legion and its standard was more than a signal to rally towards in battle; British soldiers show similar loyalty to their regiment and Colours.

Historians of a strong military background often write of the British regimental system as particularly effective in maintaining ethos and fighting spirit. Yet, reading any one of their descriptions of the regimental system offers only a vague insight of the structures and character of a uniquely military organisation. Identifying a regimental system is a particularly difficult task, even for those who are part of one.

Although New Zealand has inherited the idea of regimental system from the British, it is a much smaller nation with a correspondingly smaller all-volunteer armed force and a more egalitarian society. The size of the New Zealand Army, with fewer regiments, seems to suggest that it has escaped both the benefits of regimental cohesion and the damaging effects of aggressive tribalism between its units.

This thesis will challenge that assumption by showing that the New Zealand Army has a strong cultural history with definite characteristics of a regimental system. It will be seen that the New Zealand Army's regimental system adapts its values according to its own particular cultural pressures and legacies.

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Introduction

When it became apparent that this project on New Zealand's regimental system is a cultural study, I initially attempted to bring absolute objectivity to my research. Unfortunately, this has proved impossible. No matter how much I read, how many people I interviewed or how many questions I asked, I could not escape the fact that I have had no direct experience with any military culture, let alone a regimental system in any form. As an outsider, all I can do is bring together the subjective experiences of various people and try to find commonalities and trends.

As an additional limitation, my own subjectivity colours the direction of this research. My own particular frame of reference, made up of upbringing, personal experience and group affiliations, not only affects the level of understanding I've brought to each aspect of the culture studied, but also overshadows those items which I have noticed as strange or different enough to evoke further enquiry. Anyone else attempting this same project would come up with another set of questions and make different decisions on what to include or exclude.

Rather than attempt to limit this, I have decided to acknowledge it. This thesis will therefore include short personal anecdotes as constant reminders to the reader -and to myself- that this study can never be purely objective -nor should it be taken as such.

This does not mean that this thesis is any greater or lesser than what would have been written by a researcher more personally involved with the regimental system, or one with a firmer grounding in cultural study. Its value lies in forming a starting point for what would otherwise be a Gordian knot of information.¹ Nor have I intended to write a thesis coloured by bias, or deliberately used the limitation of cultural study as an excuse for exercising bias. This introduction simply acknowledges, much to my annoyance, the lack of 'correct' answers I can provide. If, however, any conclusion, interpretation or inference I have made within this thesis causes offence, I offer my sincere apologies and assurances that such was not my

¹One commonality I've experienced during this project is the willingness of several writers to attempt explanations of cultural concepts through analogy.

intention.

The first section of this thesis defines what a regimental system is. This is not as simple as might first appear. For every definition of the regimental system, there is an equal and opposite.² I have sought the most common definitions, and ones that are most useful in answering the questions posed in the following sections.

Section Two identifies the major influences on New Zealand's regimental system. Firstly, New Zealand's military history reveals the beginnings of the present regimental system. Professional, structural and cultural demands can produce pressures on the regimental system. How the system is shaped by these factors is the central theme. Although there are many influences that can be selected, attention is focused on those most likely to affect New Zealand.

Finally, this thesis will analyse the shape of New Zealand's regimental system and whether it provides identifiable benefits to the New Zealand Army. This section is a combination of tools used and conclusions made in the previous two sections. The central question is whether New Zealand's military cultural needs are best met by a regimental system and, if not, what would be an appropriate cultural direction.

Section I: General Features of a Regimental System

Introduction

It should be explained that an infantry section contains around eight men, including a machine gun team, commanded by a corporal. Three sections working under a platoon headquarters section make up a platoon, and in an ascending pyramid of threes, a company is formed from three platoons, a battalion from three companies (plus a support weapons company that is often split up in war between the rifle companies). Three battalions make a brigade, three brigades a division and so on.³

Nowhere does the above definition include a description of a regiment. Yet, the phrase 'regimental system' has been used so frequently that its definition has been blurred. Some writers have considered the regimental system in terms of its

²Piers Reid, Personal Communication, 8 November 2006

organisational structure; others discuss it in terms of its contribution to morale, fighting spirit and *esprit de corps*. To further muddy the issue, the word 'regiment' cannot be considered definitive, either. It is not a tactical unit, and its flexible structure means that it can be of varying size, more so than a tactical unit such as a battalion or a company. There is also such a thing as a 'regimental corps', a structure that groups together army units of a specific function, such as engineering or artillery.

To clarify the position of this thesis, it will define the regimental system as a form of military culture, encapsulated within a particular organisational structure. This recognises the effects of structural reform on the regimental system, and its resistance to abrupt change.

A regimental system has several cultural features that interlock to form each regiment's unique character. These features cannot be considered totally in isolation nor can they be grouped into a hierarchy, as each affects the others, producing the cultural expression that is often glibly called a regimental system. With this in mind, these features will be grouped into loose associations only for ease of description.

If we start with the premise that the regimental system is a form of culture, cultural anthropology lends itself as a tool for analysis. Cultural anthropology examines a society by dividing it into three sub-elements: its social structure, its culture and its personality (or the amount of opportunity for individual expression).⁴ These sub-elements seem a good start but have been further defined in this thesis, to recognise the differences between military society and its parent culture.

The first part of this section will examine the regimental system as an administrative structure, the means by which a country controls its military. It also asks the question why a country might choose a regimental system over a continental system in organising its army.

The second part considers how the corporate identity of a regimental system

³ Hugh McManners, *The Scars of War*, London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993 , p. 169

⁴ Marc J. Swartz and David K. Jordan, 'Section Two: Modern Anthropology: Three Guiding Concepts',

through its beliefs and values; and the symbols used to promote these values.

The third part considers the psychological framework that a military culture provides for the individual soldier. The army has been referred to as a greedy institution, as it controls a greater proportion of its employees' daily lives than any civilian occupation. It is also the only employer that asks its employees to risk and take lives. What does it offer in return? What opportunities for the relief of this pressure does it offer?

Administrative Organisation

The Regimental System vs The Continental System

The first step in defining a regimental system lies in comparing it to what it is not. The most obvious difference between the regimental system and the continental system is unit size. During the 1881 reforms, Britain structured its army around the regiment, while the larger "armies of Europe were organizing themselves around the much larger unit of the corps".⁵ "The Continental system is most effective in countries that have a large Armed Forces with a large percentage of conscripts."⁶ It organises ground forces into corps, while the regimental system is based around the regiment. Unlike an army corps, the regiment is not a tactical unit on the battlefield, but an administrative means of grouping battalions.

The second main difference is that the continental system "is based on an industrial model that is based on efficient use of resources, specialization and economies of scale."⁷ Reinforcements are centrally trained and are moved from regiment to regiment as required.⁸

A country with a large army might choose a continental system as a more

Culture: The Anthropological Perspective, New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1980 , pp. 41-160

⁵ Hew Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 204

⁶ Frank Kuschnereit, <http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/Quad/5504/regiment.htm>, p. 2, Last accessed 16 February 2007

⁷ Kuschnereit, p. 2

⁸ Kuschnereit, p. 2

economic means of training large numbers. A small country, with a smaller population base, might choose a regimental system to build cohesion, “a force multiplier in that a cohesive unit can overcome a less motivated enemy that is many times its size.”⁹ Kushnereit reports Brigadier-General D.G. Loomis as concluding that the regimental system has greater long-term benefits and the continental system is more economical in the short term.¹⁰

Regional recruiting is a common feature to both the regimental system and the continental system. “The idea of territorial basing in order to facilitate mobilization... was a [feature of the] Continental system.”¹¹ But, where the continental system uses regional recruiting to facilitate mobilisation, the regimental system uses a region's social bonds to foster cohesion. “The regimental system is a mutually supportive personnel management structure that emphasizes a sense of belonging.”¹²

Regional recruiting has a much older history: “the bonds between [ancient Greek] hoplites on the line did not originate within military service... they were natural extensions of already long-standing peacetime friendships and kinships.”¹³

These community bonds formed the basis of cohesion. “The peer pressure among friends and family within the Greek phalanx grew out of a pride that all men shared in facing danger together.”¹⁴ “The soldiers of the city-state met the charge of the enemy... because of their general and because of the men at their side, the wish to protect them from the thrusts of the enemy [and] the shame of playing the coward before their eyes.”¹⁵ Family relationships within the regiment not only brought displeasure at misconduct from serving members, but possible scorn from the

⁹Kuschnereit, p. 2

¹⁰Kuschnereit, p. 2

¹¹Strachan, pp. 201-202

¹²Michael O'Leary, 'The Regimental System',

http://members.tripod.com/RegimentalRogue/papers/the_regimental_system.htm, p. 2, Last accessed 16 February 2007

¹³Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*, Second Edition, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, p. 121

¹⁴Hanson, p. 125

civilian family community once word of disgrace arrived back home.¹⁶

The Social Hierarchy of Regiments

Ironically, fighting qualities and military efficiency are not the sole, or even the most important, criteria for inter-regimental competition. "It has been argued that a regiment's standing is correlated almost exactly with the educational scale, although other factors, such as the age of the regiment, royal connections and military ability, also count."¹⁷

This ranking, although a "strictly informal exercise... the results of which no two people, let alone regiments, will agree"¹⁸, is most visible in the way in which an officer cadet and a regiment select each other before the cadet faces selection for Sandhurst¹⁹ and during ceremonial duties. In the case of the latter, it appears that long lineage and proximity to royalty are the key criteria.²⁰

Before Britain's Cardwell-Childers Reforms, the purchase system was a key indicator of the social hierarchy of regiments. The oldest regiments, being least likely to be disbanded, and ones with royal connections were the best financial investment. A commission in a high-ranking regiment tied a gentleman's social prestige to that of the regiment. Families "who had made money in industry and commerce and bought land, found that the presence of a son in the army was an aid to social acceptance" amongst the gentry²¹, while the army offered an acceptable profession to younger

¹⁵Hanson, p. 128

¹⁶F.M. Richardson, *Fighting Spirit: Psychological Factors in War*, London: Leo Cooper Ltd., 1978, p. 17

¹⁷David Weston, 'The Army: Mother, Sister and Mistress: the British Regiment', in Martin Edmonds, ed., *The Defence Equation: British Military Systems – Policy, Planning and Performance Since 1945*, London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1986, p. 149

¹⁸Weston, p. 148

¹⁹Weston, p. 148

²⁰Weston, p. 149

²¹Ian Knight, *Go to Your God Like a Soldier: The British Soldier Fighting for Empire 1837-1902*, London: Greenhill Books, 1996, p. 23

sons of the gentry, who considered trade to be vulgar.²²

As the regiment was social as well as a financial investment, regimental reputation came to be closely linked to the Colonel's social position:

Colonels cashiered or transferred officers who had been perceived to have dishonoured themselves, not to protect the honour of the regiment, but to distance themselves and their other officers, some of whom may have had higher social standing than the Colonel himself, from any hint of contamination through association.²³

Although this has been criticised as a factor that threatened military efficiency (as a "very capable officer could as easily be transferred because of a perceived social slight... as for the commission of an ethical offence"²⁴), "the existence of the regiment as the focal point of an officer's loyalty prevented... any state-army clash in Britain, since no cohesive group of officers emerged with political ambitions."²⁵ "Rivalry and competition between regiments then internalizes any inclination in the army's officer corps as a whole to act more cohesively."²⁶ Additionally, "the careerist and the ambitious officer of middle-class origins, who might otherwise be predisposed to political intervention, is instead assimilated into a class structure that apes the gentry."²⁷

This social hierarchy exists independently of military competence, as there is no need for soldiers to continually prove their regiment's fighting abilities to maintain or even advance their regiment's social standing. Instead, it became an extension of civilian social stratification, as the gentry and upper classes used the regiments as tools in their competition for status.

There is a strong degree of internal acceptance of each regiment's standing within the hierarchy. Rather than working on improving the regiment's social standing

²²Knight, p. 23

²³O'Leary, p. 4

²⁴O'Leary, p. 4

²⁵Weston, p. 151

²⁶Strachan, pp. 196-197

(which remains consistent in any case), soldiers themselves focus on characteristics that make their regiment different from others: "Northfield:... You have to realise that the Parachute Regiment has a very warped, sick sense of humour, and that a unit like the Royal Anglians wouldn't do this sort of thing [posing enemy dead for photographs]."28

This is consistent with Britain's civilian social hierarchy: one key problem in World War I was finding enough young men of high social standing for officer recruitment, as "it was the belief of most officers that soldiers preferred to be officered by gentlemen rather than by those of their own class".29

The Cardwell-Childers Reforms

Britain's Cardwell-Childers Reforms have been described as inadvertently stimulating 'the growth of a regimental spirit and ideology, coupled with establishment of a close relationship between the officer and his regiment.'30 Knight estimates Cardwell's greatest achievement lay in 'simplifying the senior administration of the army -which had hitherto been split between a number of military departments- and bringing it under government control.'31 Strachan suggests that an effect of "carrying through reform... was the reinvigoration of the regimental system"32, although reformers themselves focused on army needs above those of the regiment. Insight into important features of a regimental system can be gained through studying how the Cardwell-Childers Reforms produced these effects.

Linking the Regiments

In 1854, the need for British Army reform had come to public attention through journalist William Russell's dispatches from the Crimean War. However, Britain's

²⁷Strachan, p. 197

²⁸McManners, p. 349

²⁹Ian F.W. Beckett and Keith Simpson, eds., *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985, p. 65

³⁰Weston, p. 143

³¹Knight, p. 27

response to the Mutiny in India, portrayed as more successful to the public, diverted attention away from reform.³³

It was Prussia's surprising success in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 that drew British attention back to the issue.³⁴ Major-General James Lindsay reported in April 1869 that the Prussians had linked together line, reserve and militia battalions from the same region so that, with territorial recruitment and mass conscription, they could double the size of their field army within weeks.³⁵

Edward Cardwell, Secretary of State for War 1868-1874, was concerned with controlling army expenditure³⁶ and with doubt that Britain could raise a credible expeditionary force to defend its interests in Europe.³⁷ Following the Prussian example, Cardwell's linked battalion system paired all "Regiments of the Line with a number over twenty-six" to reduce the total number of regiments from 110 to 69, while retaining the number of battalions at 141.³⁸

General Order 32 (1872) divided Britain into sixty-six sub-districts, each allocated to a pair of new 'linked' regular battalions. The Brigade also included two militia battalions and existing Volunteer battalions.³⁹ By sharing the same depot, it was hoped that militia and volunteers would be inspired to regular service⁴⁰ and would benefit from training with the Regulars.⁴¹

Territory-based recruitment later proved unworkable in large-scale conflicts. During World War I, it was found, in 1916, that "casualty rates meant that battalions

³²Strachan, p. 204

³³Knight, p. 26

³⁴Knight, p. 27

³⁵David French, *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army and the British People c. 1870-2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 13

³⁶Knight, p. 26

³⁷Knight, p. 27

³⁸Weston, p. 142

³⁹French, p. 14

⁴⁰French, p. 13

could no longer be reinforced by drafts from within their own regiments.”⁴² Instead, all “conscripts were... allocated to where they were most needed irrespective of their local connections”⁴³ and to “spread the resulting misery amongst the civilian population who were bereaved.”⁴⁴

The “commander-in-chief..., the Duke of Cambridge... pushed Cardwell into linking battalions rather than amalgamating them in 1872, although he recognised that the system would create problems.”⁴⁵ In 1880, the Airey committee of inquiry (gathered by the Duke and the Queen in an attempt to unlink the battalions) discovered that many felt “that inducting a man into a home-based regiment and then shipping him off to serve overseas in another worked against the creation of *esprit de corps*.”⁴⁶ Rather than returning to single-battalion regiments, Cardwell's successor, Hugh⁴⁷ Childers, amalgamated these linked battalions into territorial regiments a decade later.⁴⁸

This initiated a process of constructing new identities for the amalgamated regiments. Some regimental pairings faced difficulties in uniform, particularly regarding changes in Highland regimental tartans⁴⁹, histories and perceived identities.

4 Regimental Systems?

One startling idea is that Cardwell and Childers may have initiated four distinct regimental systems, rather than one overall system:

⁴¹ Knight, p. 28

⁴² Strachan, p. 207

⁴³ French, p. 278

⁴⁴ French, p. 278

⁴⁵ Strachan, p. 201

⁴⁶ Strachan, p. 202

⁴⁷ Strachan reports Childers first name as Henry (p. 202), whereas others have named him Hugh – Weston, p. 142; French, Index, p. 386

⁴⁸ French, p. 15

⁴⁹ Strachan, pp. 204-205

[B]y the early 1880s the British army possessed not one but four regimental systems... the line infantry regiments created by Cardwell and Childers[;]... the two large corps regiments, the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers, and the much smaller departmental corps[;]... the Horse Guards and line cavalry...[;and] the Rifle Regiments... and the regiments of the Foot Guards.⁵⁰

French goes on to state that the line infantry regiments and the corps regiments had the largest degree of functional separation; the cavalry and rifle regiments had aspects of both.⁵¹ A comparison of line infantry and corps regiments underlines what separates the regimental system as practised by line infantry from that of regimental corps.

While a soldier of a line regiment could reasonably expect to spend his entire career within the same regiment, personnel in the corps regiments are seconded into line regiments as needed to support operations⁵². These different career paths mean that the fierce regimental loyalty that characterises line infantry regiments doesn't usually have the same opportunities to develop in corps regiments, nor is it desirable for members of a regimental corps to identify themselves as parts of an indivisible unit. Instead, "[t]hose who serve in these 'tail' arms have to learn to fit in with the character of the regiment or combat unit to which they are attached. For this reason many frequently end up owing greater loyalty to that unit than to their own corps."⁵³

Secondly, personnel in corps regiments experience a greater degree of professional training. "Pride in... any of the ... support corps is due primarily to professional competence and technical skill."⁵⁴ Focus is therefore shifted towards professional pride, and regimental pride is not the sole source of self-image and sense of worth.

Thirdly, regimental corps are usually unique within an army; there is less scope for competition with other organisational groups to fulfill the same roles in that army.

⁵⁰French, p. 30

⁵¹French, p. 30

⁵²Harry Sebborn, Personal Communication, November 7, 2006

⁵³Weston, p. 150

⁵⁴Weston, p. 150

Line regiments have the same equipment and purpose; it is this factor that stimulates the inter-regimental rivalry that underlines each regiment's belief in its fighting qualities.

Towards Professionalism

“The Army has always found its professional identity in the warrior role at the regimental level”⁵⁵, but hasn't always promoted professionalism: “no one has ever upheld the Regimental System as a meritocracy.”⁵⁶ “The distinguishing characteristics of a profession as a special type of vocation are its expertise, responsibility, and corporateness.”⁵⁷ While the British Army until the Cardwell reforms expressed its corporateness at the regimental level, the regimental system did not encourage expertise and responsibility and, in some cases, discouraged individual professional development.

However, it had become traditional for officers for higher command to be selected from the line infantry and cavalry regiments. This made them highly attractive investments in the purchase system. This practice removed military professionalism, or even competence, as a criterion for command.

Cardwell's reforms were intended to redress this lack. The 1871 Regulation of Forces Act abolished the purchasing system as the basis for officer promotion.⁵⁸ While a system based on military merit may have seemed the best option, Cardwell recognised that a merit system was also vulnerable to the same abuses and influence as the purchase system.⁵⁹ The abolition of the purchase system left the entire officer class without the retirement investment they had hoped to later recoup, so the

⁵⁵ Nick Jans with David Schmidtchen, *The Real C-Cubed: Culture, Careers and Climate and How They Affect Capability*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 143, Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 2002, p. 57

⁵⁶ O'Leary, p. 11

⁵⁷ Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 5th Printing, Cambridge Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1972, p. 8

⁵⁸ Weston, p. 142

⁵⁹ Knight, p. 23

government fully compensated all officers, accepting a total bill of £8 million.⁶⁰ Officer promotion was thereafter based on seniority.

While this shows how professionalism was introduced into the British Army, it does not explain why candidates for higher command came to be selected from the least profession-oriented sectors of the army. Military culture is divided into two main subcultures. Jans and Schmidtchen identify these as 'hot' and 'cold' organisations.⁶¹ 'Hot' organisations operate in high-stress situations, where life-or-death decisions must be made frequently. These characteristically occur at the tactical or 'sharp' end of battle, or on board an aircraft carrier, where the takeoff and landing of aircraft is a perilous business. The tempo of decision-making is high, a balance of teamwork and initiative is necessary and a bad decision can prove disastrous.

'Cold' organisations, by contrast, are based around routine. Combat service and combat service support units typically operate under much lower stress situations. Decisions can be made in a more relaxed fashion and a bad decision does not carry the same potential consequences as in a 'hot' organisation. Jans and Schmidtchen point out that the military, in terms of quantity and frequency, is more a 'cold' organisation than a 'hot' one.

Yet the 'hot' organisation, although smaller, overshadows the 'cold'. Military culture, as a whole, has evolved in response to 'hot' situations. The *raison d'être* of the Army is to prepare for and conduct war. Those officers with experience at the 'hot' end of the organisation have greater insight into the abilities and needs of the units fulfilling that function. The 'hot' organisation also captures civilian imagination; a higher commander with experience at the 'hot' end of the Army inspires greater public confidence in times of crisis.

Unfortunately, the merging of a regiment's reputation with those of its officers meant that factors other than military ability influenced higher promotion. Even during the First World War, the regimental system still selected its officers from the

⁶⁰Knight, p. 28

upper classes because it was felt they alone had the necessary qualities to supply officers and gentlemen: "An exclusive social and educational background, the gentlemanly ethos, a commitment to country pursuits, loyalty to institutions, self-confidence and physical courage"⁶². This list does not require a candidate to show any ability or interest in military matters, indicating cultural resistance to Cardwell's reforms.

Officers were not the only personnel, or even the first, to come under scrutiny for their professionalism. As rank-and-file soldiers had enlisted to escape worse civilian fates more often than through a desire to serve in the army, their officers often felt "[b]y and large the rank and file of the British army was composed of riff-raff, and was accorded the kind of treatment it might be supposed to deserve."⁶³

Cardwell's 1870 Enlistment Act reduced the length of service from 21 years to 12 years⁶⁴, which eventually allowed six of these to be served "with the Colours (with an option of re-enlistment), and a further six in the Reserve."⁶⁵ It was hoped that this measure would attract a "better class of recruit"⁶⁶.

It was felt that merchants' sons, as having a stake in the wellbeing of the parent society, would be more motivated to protect its interests and less interested in drink than unemployed slum dwellers: "Better educated, thinking soldiers, highly motivated through training and by esprit de corps, are very much more effective than men who simply obey orders."⁶⁷

At that time, the British soldier had a low reputation, particularly with regards to alcohol. Recruiting sergeants (who were paid a bounty for their work) often found recruits in the local pubs and took them, still drunk, to the magistrate to attest, a

⁶¹Jans and Schmidtchen, p. 49

⁶²Beckett and Simpson, p. 65

⁶³Kiernan, p. 22

⁶⁴Weston, p. 142

⁶⁵Knight, p. 27

⁶⁶Knight, p. 27

⁶⁷McManners, p. 96

doctor for a medical examination, and then on to their regiments. Cardwell attempted to end this practice but succeeded only in forcing recruiting sergeants to wait outside the bars.⁶⁸

One interesting argument against short service was that it “would rob the army of its tried and tested veterans and would replace them with young men who who no sooner learn their trade than leave.”⁶⁹ Yet, these tried and tested veterans “were in many cases – not in all – addicted to rough behaviour, heavy drinking, and hard swearing”.⁷⁰ This behavioural stereotype, and its effect on the reputation of the army and, subsequently, recruitment, were exactly the problems Cardwell hoped to address in his reforms. The continuity of culture that long service had provided for the regiments was replaced by the construction of official regimental identities.⁷¹

Professionalism was a major reason for reform of the regimental system. The lessons of the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny highlighted that, even though the pre-1870 regimental system existed independently from professionalism in the British Army, it had become a hindrance to military efficiency. The system had to change to make the British competitive with their rivals on the Continent. The process of reform was itself slow and the Cardwell-Childers Reforms were never entirely adopted in their intended form.

Corporate Identity and Regimental Ethos

The focus of the regimental system is primarily administrative, rather than tactical. And yet, “comradeship and ultimately Regimental Spirit play an important part in helping men of widely differing outlooks and types to live happily together, to adapt themselves to life in the Army.”⁷² How can an administrative organisation produce such spirit?

⁶⁸Knight, p. 16

⁶⁹Knight, p. 27

⁷⁰William Robertson, 16th (Queen's) Lancers, 1877, in Knight, p. 31

⁷¹French, p. 78

⁷²Richardson, pp. 20-21