IN SERVICE OF THE STATE: DESERTION, DISCIPLINE, AND ARMY LIFE
IN THE HABSBURG MONARCHY, 1753-1781

A Dissertation in
History
by
Jeffrey M. Horton

© 2016 Jeffrey M. Horton

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2016
The dissertation of Jeffrey M. Horton was reviewed and approved* by the following:

R. Po-Chia Hsia  
Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of History  
Dissertation Advisor  
Chair of Committee

A. Gregg Roeber  
Professor of Early Modern History and Religious Studies

Matthew Restall  
Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Colonial Latin American History, Anthropology,  
and Women’s Studies

Daniel Purdy  
Professor of German Studies

Carol Reardon  
George Winfree Professor of American History

David Atwill  
Director of Graduate Studies, Department of History

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School
ABSTRACT

The first standing army in the Habsburg Monarchy was officially founded in 1649. Until the monarchy’s dissolution in 1918, it had problems recruiting sufficient numbers of soldiers and preventing those soldiers from deserting. “In Service of the State: Desertion, Discipline, and Army Life in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1753-1781” is an examination of the treatment of deserters by the legal and administrative bodies of the Habsburg Monarchy. At its heart, it seeks to answer the question: why did some soldiers serve and why did others choose to flee military service? In particular, this dissertation is concerned with the multiethnic, multi-confessional, and multilingual nature of the Habsburg Monarchy—a monarchy that encompassed parts of almost two dozen modern European countries—and how the diversity of the recruited soldiers influenced the legal and administrative processes of the Habsburg standing army from 1753 to 1781. Given the amount of diversity in the Monarchy, how did the military forge a unified force? Based on the records of the Hofkriegsrat (the highest military administrative body in the Habsburg Monarchy until 1848) and collections of legal documents, this dissertation is composed of: an analysis of the legal status and treatment of deserters, a history of the actions of the Hofkriegsrat regarding desertion, and case studies of specific acts of desertion by individuals and groups. By studying deserters, “In Service of the State” provides insight into the development of state power in the eighteenth century and ultimately the relationship between the individual and the state. Desertion and the aiding of deserters were complex social phenomena, often resulting from socioeconomic pressures as well as the consequences of military decisions. Since the relationships built during the Habsburg era (1500-1918) have had long-term effects on the development of modern European political institutions, “In Service of the State” provides insight into the beginning of the many complex social, political, and economic dynamics that helped create the Europe of the twenty-first century.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Documentation and Sourcing</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Summary of Primary Source Materials</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Chapter Summaries</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 Desertion, Running Away, and ‘Turning Traitor’ – A Historiographical Introduction to the Habsburg Monarchy and Military in the Eighteenth Century</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. History of the Habsburg Standing Army and the Study of Desertion</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. “Bella gerant alii”: An Introduction to the Habsburg Monarchy</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. “…Nam quae Mars aliiis dat…”: An Introduction to the Habsburg Standing Army</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Early Modern Habsburg Military Historiography</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Studies regarding Desertion in the Early Modern Habsburg Monarchy</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Historiography of Desertion in the Habsburg Monarchy</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Limits and Lacunae</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Studies Regarding Desertion in other European Contexts</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Desertion and the Development of the Standing Army in Early Modern</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Desertion: The Influence of Geoffrey Parker and the Military Revolution</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Desertion: The Hohenzollern Dynasty and the Kingdom of Prussia</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Desertion: At home and aboard in early modern Great Britain</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Desertion: Other Contexts and Historiographical Lessons</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2 “Should I Stay or Should I Go?” – Introduction to Desertion and Case Studies from the Habsburg Monarchy in the Late Eighteenth Century</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Introduction</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Habsburg Standing Army and Desertion</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Crime of Desertion</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sources and Methodology</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Case Study I – The Baron Preysacische Infanterie Regiment</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Case Study II – The Oroszischen Infanterie Regiment</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Analysis and Conclusion</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3 “Die gantze Ursach der Desertion wäre die nahe Gränzte”: The Habsburg Monarchy in the Eighteenth Century and Case Studies in Desertion, Part II</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B  List of Hofkriegsrat Heads .................................................................269
APPENDIX C  Transcription of a furlough pass exemplar appended to a desertion declaration for Oberösterreich .................................................................271
APPENDIX D  Transcription of passes for returned or captured deserters that met certain qualifications based on their land of origin ...........................................272
APPENDIX E  Full list of archival documents used by “In Service of the State” from the Austrian State Archives (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv) .........................273
APPENDIX F  Coburg Dragoon Regiment Straf Protocollen: 1 November 1773 to 8 August 1774 ..............................................................................................................275
APPENDIX G  Map of Major Ethnicities in Habsburg Monarchy at the Start of the Eighteenth Century ...............................................................278

WORKS CITED ............................................................................................................279

Primary Documents ....................................................................................................279
Publications ..................................................................................................................280
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1 – “Paper Strength” of the Habsburg Army during the Eighteenth Century……………………………………………………………………………………………………….27

Table 1-2 – Composition of a ‘German’ Infantry Regiment from 1740-1797………………………………………………………………………………………………………28

Table 2-1 – Returned Soldiers of the Baron Preysacische Infanterie Regiment……………………………………………………………………………………………………….94

Table 2-2 – Missing Soldiers of the Baron Preysacische Infanterie Regiment………………………………………………………………………………………………………98

Table 2-3 – Missing Soldiers of the Oroszichen Infanterie Regiment………………………………………………………………………………………………………103

Table 2-4 – Returned Soldiers of the Oroszichen Infanterie Regiment………………………………………………………………………………………………………105

Table 2-5 – Punishments, Number of Desertions, and Characterizations for the Oroszichen Infanterie Regiment…………………………………………………………111
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 0-1 – Map of Austria and the Ottoman Empire, 1718-1792...............................4
Figure 0-2 – Portrait of Empress Maria Theresa..........................................................5
Figure 1-1 – Portrait of Raimondo Montecuccoli.............................................................25
Figure 2-1 – Map of Hungary..........................................................................................92
Figure 3-1 – Map of the western half of the Habsburg Monarchy.................................131
Figure 4-1 – Number of Files Marked “Desertion” Per Year from 1753 to 1801

  in the Hofkriegsrat Akten in ÖSTA.................................................................183
Figure 5-1 – Map depicting the partition of Poland.........................................................216
Figure 5-2 – Example of a Habsburg Proclamation, dated 22 April 1745.................220
When placed in an acknowledgements section, it seems trite to channel the truism that “it takes a village,” but the sentiment rings true. Dissertations are monuments to personal stamina, self loathing, the power of human relationships, and intellectual growth—in that order. My friends and colleagues provided good times when asked, kind words when needed, and the motivation to overcome adversity. A good friend always used the analogy of doctoral programs being akin to running into a burning building—it is something that you might rationally think twice about doing, but when someone needs help, you do it without hesitation. And anyone who has done it will understand the impulse. To the Vortex of (Un)Productivity, many thanks: Matthew Padron, Rebekah Padron, Lauren Kaplow, Joel Zaslow, Alicia Shatley, J. Adam Rogers, Niki McInteer, Rob Shafer, Don Vosburg, Prof. Mike “Putt-Putt” Putnam, and to the many, many others throughout the years.

To my NIAC 15-12 family and friends: good times.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the members of my committee for their support: Dr. Ronnie Hsia, Dr. A. Gregg Roeber, Dr. Matthew Restall, Dr. Carol Reardon, and Dr. Daniel Purdy. I know it looked pretty bleak at times, but their continual support over the years made the experience worth it. Very special thanks go to Dr. Ronnie Hsia—without his guidance, there would be no dissertation. A student could ask for no better teacher. I would also like to thank every member of the Penn State Department of History for the friendship, support, and encouragement they provided over the years.

Thank you Dr. Kathy Cooke, Dr. Dave Valone, and Dr. Ron Heiferman of the History Department at Quinnipiac University for inspiring me to pursue a degree in history. Extra thanks go to my friends, colleagues, roommates, and the members of the History Cult.
Thank you to Dr. Michael Hochedlinger (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv) and Dr. Lothar Höbelt (Universität Wien) for hosting me during my research phase, providing invaluable guidance, insight, and (occasionally) a necessary hard truth. More thanks go to my wonderful research- and adventure buddies in Vienna: Paul Buehler, Ben Esswein, Tessa Wegener, Ann Weber, Madalina Veres, John Deak, and Geoff Wawro.

Throughout my graduate career, I have received aid, support, and gainful employment from many wonderful organizations. Outside of the academy, special thanks go to: the United States Marine Corps Trademark Licensing Office, the Marine Corps History Division, and the United States Naval History and Heritage Command. To any student that has ever dreamt of stepping outside, I say, “Try it.” From inside the academy, I would like to thank: the Austrian-American Educational Commission, the Central European History Society, the Moravian Archives (Bethlehem, PA), and the Pennsylvania State University College of Liberal Arts.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to the hard-working librarians and archivists at: the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, the Universität Wien Fachbereichsbibliothek Geschichtswissenschaften, the European Reading Room at the Library of Congress, and the Interlibrary Loan offices at the Pattee and Paterno Libraries at Penn State, as well as the George Mason Fairfax County Public Library. Special recognition goes to the Starbucks off Old Keene Mill Rd. in Springfield, VA—my “corner office,” where far too many baristas over the course of three years knew me by face, name, and drink order.

Special thanks go to my family for always believing in me. I hope that I have made them proud to have another “doctor” in the family.

The most important acknowledgement goes to my wife, Dr. Rebecca Zajdowicz, who I met when I started down this road. Without her unfailing support, love, and dedication I would have never made it through my awful decision to go through graduate school. Thank you!

To Luna the cat, thank you for letting me borrow the keyboard—you can have it back.
INTRODUCTION

In George Bizet’s opera Carmen, which was first performed in 1875, the backdrops of passionate, unbridled Spanish love and a pervasive martial honor were contrasted with the descent of one soldier from service to desertion at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This soldier’s path went from honorable service in the army to insubordination, desertion, and in the end, murder. The story of Don José, a Corporal of Dragoons, follows his trials and tribulations as a garrison soldier finding love. Prepared to heed his family’s wishes to marry their choice in the beginning, Micaëla, José soon finds himself infatuated with a gypsy woman, Carmen, while away from his home. To win Carmen’s heart, he deserts his military duties with the dragoons and runs away, only to end up killing the object of his infatuation in a fit of jealous rage upon losing Carmen’s affections to another man: an infamous toreador. José had chosen, for whatever reason, to take service with the army and when placed in a situation to choose whether or not to stay in that service, chose for better and worse to accept the potential consequences of deserting.¹

Bizet’s José is not the only one in popular culture to face these issues—the story is a familiar one and has served as the backdrop to literary pieces across time and space. Desertion by a Confederate soldier during the U.S. Civil War provided the backdrop for Charles Frazier’s 1997 novel Cold Mountain (adapted to film in 2003). The protracted conflict in Vietnam from the late 1950s through the early 1970s set the stage for Jack Todd’s 2001 autobiography Desertion: In the Time of Vietnam.²

² In the case of Cold Mountain (Atlantic Monthly Press, 1997), the author delves into the intensely personal details of W.P. Inman’s determination to run away from service and get home. In the case of case Jack Todd, he provides a similarly intense accounting of his own story, what led to his decision to desert during
Desertion is a broad term that covers all manner of activities relating to the intentional leaving of military service. It would be disingenuous to say that circumstances have no bearing on desertion, since context mattered. Desertion could mean: 1) leaving one’s military service (but not necessarily with the intention of never coming back), 2) leaving one’s military (with the specific intent of never coming back), or 3) leaving one’s military to take up with another service, both friend and foe. It is this range of activities called ‘desertion’ that this dissertation uses, with the specific intent of using the concept of desertion as a lens for looking at broader themes within the history of the Habsburg Monarchy and, more broadly, the historiography of military history.

“In Service of the State” is a study of desertion by soldiers serving the Habsburg Monarchy during the eighteenth century and is an attempt to further develop the field of military history in the context of early modern Austria. As a topic of academic study, army desertion in the early modern period—for the purposes of this dissertation, a period roughly delineated as the years between 1500 and 1800—provides valuable insight into the organization and administration of standing armies during an era of nascent, expanding, and centralizing state institutions. Furthermore, desertion and the measures taken to prevent it or ameliorate its consequences reveal

---

3 The historiography and information presented here is heavily indebted to the works of: Michael Hochedlinger, Christa Hämmerle, Gunther Rothenburg, Charles Ingrao, Christopher Duffy, and the pioneering works of many, many other scholars.
to scholars much “about the extent of state authority in an age characterized by ‘social disciplining’ and the creation of ‘eine gute Polizei.’” The practical significance of desertion to military administrations and soldiers can not be understated. The ability and motivation of soldiers to leave service was an important calculation that goes into all levels of civil and military thinking. Will the Empress be able to call on the requisite number of soldiers to defend the Empire? Will all of those soldiers follow through with their duty? If they do not, what can the Empress do to rectify the situation? How will the Empress find new soldiers? How will the Empress deal with those that have quit or run away? What costs (politically, socially, and economically) will the Empress and the monarchy have to pay to achieve its national defense (for lack of a better term) and war goals? ‘In Service of the State’ views issues of recruitment and retention as two sides of the coin, focusing primarily on the retention side and the main symptom of failures in retention: desertion.

A number of important factors go into the framing of a historical study on desertion during the early modern period: the chronological parameters, geographic or national focus, the definition of desertion, and the analytical frameworks tying all of those things together. For “In Service of the State,” the chronological parameters begin just before the outbreak of the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763), with 1753 as the general starting point. This study ends before the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Period (1789-1815), with 1781 as the general ending point. Geographically, this dissertation is limited to acts of desertion committed by soldiers and officers

---


5 In an eighteenth-century context, it is anachronistic to speak of “national” ideals or priorities, as the concept of a “nation”—unifying the concept of a state with a specific ethnic or group identity—was not necessarily the terms in which contemporaries would have spoken. For the purposes, the phrase “national defense” is used as a less cumbersome and more familiar alternative to “the Monarchy.”
in service of the monarchy of the House of Habsburg. More will be explained regarding this often nebulous term in Chapter 1, but for the purposes of this section, the Habsburg Monarchy generally refers to the lands under Habsburg suzerainty or lands that owed dynastic allegiance to the Habsburg dynasty, whether by succession, marriage, or other means. In general, this refers to: the Austrian ‘hereditary lands’ centered on the city of Vienna, the Kingdom of Hungary, Bohemia, and the Austrian Netherlands, as well as various parts of Italy, Poland, the northernmost parts of the former Yugoslav countries, modern Germany, and Romania.6

Figure 0-1

Austria and the Ottoman Empire, 1718-1792. Map courtesy of Paul Magocsi Historical Atlas of Central Europe.7

6 The places listed here refer to the “Austrian Habsburgs,” rather than those that could be included with the “Spanish Habsburgs”—a distinction owing to the split in the Habsburg ruling family when Charles V (Holy Roman Emperor), as known as Carlos I of Spain, abdicated his Holy Roman and Austrian titles to his brother, Ferdinand I, and his Spanish titles to his son, Philip II, in 1556. “In Service of the State” focuses on events, personages, and administrations of the Austrian Habsburgs. For a broad introduction to the Habsburgs as an empire and geographic entity, see Robert Kann, History of the Habsburg Empire 1526-1918 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974). For a broad introduction to the Habsburg and Imperial eras of the Spanish monarchy, see J.H. Elliott, Imperial Spain: 1469-1716 (New York: Penguin, 2002).

With the middle and latter half of the eighteenth century as the chronological focus of a study on the Habsburg Monarchy, this roughly equates to a study of military history during the reigns of two specific monarchs: Maria Theresa (b. 13 May 1717, d. 29 November 1780), Holy Roman Empress consort and Queen of Hungary, and Emperor Joseph II (b. 13 March 1741, d. 20 February 1790).8

Figure 0-2

Portait of Empress Maria Theresa, from the Schönbrunn Gallery. Courtesy of Christopher Duffy, Instrument of War.9

---

8 Due to her being a woman, Maria Theresa did not carry the full title of Holy Roman Emperor, which was instead reserved for her husband, Francis Stephen of Lorraine (Holy Roman Emperor Francis I, r. 13 September 1745 – 18 August 1765). In a 1744 proclamation, Maria Theresa’s full title was: “…von Gottes Gnaden in Hungarn / Boeheim / Dalmatien / Croatia / und Selavonien Koenigin; Ertz=Herzogin zu Oesterreich / Hertzogin zu Burgund / Steyer / Caernten / Crain / und Wuertemberg / Graefin zu Habsburg / Flandern / Tyrol / Goertz und Gradisca u. u. vermaehlte Hertzogin zu Lothringen und Baar / Gross=Hertzogin zu Toscan." See ÖSTA, FHKA-SUS-Patente Kt. 79.4 “30 Jaenn 1744.”

9 Christopher Duffy, Instrument of War: Volume I of the Austrian Army in the Seven Years War (Rosemont, IL: The Emperor’s Press, 2000): dedication page.
For desertion, recent phenomena in history, such as two World Wars and American involvement in the conflict in Indochina, have spurred great academic and popular interest in the study of those that choose to leave military service behind. The ‘deserter’ provides a vivid background, as Bizet showed in *Carmen*, on which to study or develop notions of: honor, patriotism, morality, duty, treachery, and justice. “In Service of the State” builds off of earlier works by continuing to ask the question: what are the motivations to leave military service? What drives other men to never leave military service? Are the motivations to desert “fairly constant over time,” as military historian Arthur Gilbert posited in 1980 when comparing the circumstances of the eighteenth-century British army deserters to the types of desertion seen by forces engaged in the Vietnam War? Or are the motivations behind the will to desert military service “too multifaceted” as to defy the best efforts of scholars to generalize, as Gudrun Exner supposed in her 1997 dissertation on nineteenth-century Austrian desertion, seen through the example of one regiment in the Vormärz period? To add further consideration and put these questions in another light: Is desertion motivated by fear of the battlefield, discontent with the terms of one’s military service, or a disdain for the military establishment and the political systems associated with it, rather than being a constant variable in manpower calculations?

During this time period, the middle and late eighteenth century, when desertion was generally considered to be a capital offense, what factors brought men to face the risks—ranging from death or serious corporal punishment to hard labor imprisonment and confiscation of one’s worldly goods—to give up the flag? What drove soldiers to become a “Meineidige Flüchtling”, as such people were described in a 1750 Habsburg Monarchy patent regarding the punishments for deserters and the persons that aided them? And once these soldiers had made their fateful

---


11 ÖSTA, FHKA-SUS-Patente 95.31, 27 August 1750, “Strafpatent gegen die Verhehler von Deserteuren.”
decisions, what repercussions did these soldiers actually face in the legal, social, economic, and physical realms?

The individual motivations of each soldier to desert are only one side of the coin when one brings a critical lens to bear on military institutions of any period. On the other side of the coin are the collected actions and responses of their officers and military administrators. How did Habsburg military and civil officials define desertion during the eighteenth century? What, if any, precautions or efforts were made to prevent its occurrence or mitigate its consequences relating to military preparedness and social cohesion? In a time period before the advent of instantaneous or near-instantaneous communication, in what ways did military commanders and administrators keep track of the soldiers under their command and aegis? Politics, nationalist tensions, and ethnic divides would, by 1918, help tear the Habsburg Monarchy asunder following its defeat in World War I—and there is a vibrant literature on the effects of World War I on Austrian and Habsburg history. With that being said, to what extent were political considerations behind issues related to desertion and were there connections to those same ethnic divides within the Habsburg Monarchy in the eighteenth century? In what ways did the army of the Habsburgs represent the state that it defended and what broader lessons can we derive from its military history in order to illuminate the larger social, political, and economic story of the Habsburg Monarchy? In what ways does the story of the development of an early modern army inform the history of the Habsburg Monarchy and, conversely, how does the story of the early modern Habsburg Monarchy influence the broader development early modern armies, Europe as a whole, and military history? It is these questions and others that “In Service of the State” seeks to

---

12 Furthermore, as any scholar of a non-modern period can attest, it can be notoriously difficult to pinpoint or generalize the personal motivations or beliefs of “the common man” without a sufficiently robust source base. Though by no means absolute, the literacy rate tended to be higher for officers than for the enlisted soldiers, so, while not necessarily easy, it is less difficult to get an officer’s perspective than an enlisted’s perspective. The specific difficulties regarding this period and setting are addressed in the “Documentation and Sourcing” section.
answer through the use of Habsburg-era archival records preserved in Vienna, published sources from the last several hundred years, as well as various other academic publications.

“In Service of the State” focuses on the middle and latter parts of the eighteenth century, bracketed at the beginning by the War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748) and, on the other side, by the War of Bavarian Succession (1778-1779) and a series of “smaller” wars with the Russian and Ottoman Empires. Roughly, this equates to the reigns of Maria Theresa (r. 1740-1780) and her son Joseph II (r. 1765-1790). This period was chosen for the discrete nature of the military and political developments that took place during it—it begins with the ascension of one strong Habsburg leader, during a time when the Habsburg army was perceived as weak and beset by numerous social and political crises, and ends with the reign of another strong Habsburg ruler, one that ended his reign during one of the greatest periods of political and social upheaval in Europe, the French Revolution of 1789. In between these bookend events, these two monarchs, both possessed of a strong will and desire to rule well, served as co-rulers for a period of 15 years, further cementing the discrete nature of their combined rule as a potential, single unit of analysis.13 Under the military leadership of a succession of highly successful non-Austrian generals, in particular Raimondo di Montecuccoli (b. 1609, d. 1680) and Prince Eugene of Savoy (b. 1663, d. 1736), the Habsburg army and state had expanded greatly into eastern and southern Europe at the expense of the Ottoman Empire between 1683 and the 1720s, pushing further and

---


further back the threat of another attack on Vienna itself.\textsuperscript{14} Reaching the middle of the eighteenth century and not too long after the death of Prince Eugene, the Monarchy was viewed as being weak and in decline.\textsuperscript{15} The period of 1740-1780 was bracketed on each end by major conflicts, but it was also divided by one of the first great European/Global conflagrations, the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763), with the British and French fighting for control of colonial empires as Prussia sought to assert its position as the dominant central European power.\textsuperscript{16} By using a period that is both bracketed by major Habsburg-involved conflicts and split by a major European war, “In Service of the State” traces major developments in social, political, and economic organization that affected military development through periods of prolonged, high-intensity, continent-wide conflict and peace: or, more accurately, periods of lesser conflict.\textsuperscript{17}

On one hand of this chronological organization stands the early eighteenth century and the beginnings of what is now collectively referred to as ‘the Enlightenment’—an intellectual movement in which cultural and intellectual forces across Europe emphasized reason and

\textsuperscript{14} The first siege of Vienna by the Ottoman Empire was in 1529. The second siege was in 1683 and resulted in a longer campaign to push back the influence of the Ottomans out of the Habsburg’s ‘Hungarian’ territories. See Thomas M. Barker, \textit{Double Eagle and Crescent: Vienna’s Second Turkish Siege and Its Historical Setting} (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1967).

\textsuperscript{15} For information on this period, see Charles Ingrao, \textit{The Habsburg Monarchy, 1618-1815}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

\textsuperscript{16} The Habsburg, Austrian, and Austro-Hungarian army staffs never completed a “Generalstabswerk” for the Seven Years’ War. To date, some of the most expansive information regarding the Austrian aspects of this conflict are covered by Christopher Duffy in \textit{The Army of Maria Theresa: The Armed Forces of Imperial Austria, 1740-1780} (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1977). For more information on the Seven Years’ War and its wider impact, see Franz Szabo, \textit{The Seven Years War in Europe: 1756-1763} (Routledge: 2007). Regarding the Prussian aspects of the war, see Dennis Showalter, \textit{The Wars of Frederick the Great} (London and New York: Longman, 1996) for an introduction, while Christopher Duffy, \textit{The Army of Frederick the Great} (Newton Abbot, London, and Vancouver: David & Charles, 1974) provides some of the greatest detail regarding the Prussian army’s activities during the middle of the eighteenth century.

\textsuperscript{17} While no country of Europe could be said to have been in a constant state of war throughout the entirety of the eighteenth century, the century, as a whole, was marked by a near-constant state of conflict. Western Europe was the site of the great conflicts between Britain, France, the Netherlands, Spain, and the Habsburgs, while central Europe found itself the site of multiple wars between states seeking supremacy in the German-speaking world. Eastern and northern Europe was the site of an over-twenty-year war between an ascendant Russian monarchy and descendant Swedish state, involving a weakened Polish state and omnipresent threat from the Ottoman Empire and its client states.
individualism rather than traditional lines of authority.\textsuperscript{18} The practical implications of these intellectual and sociocultural shifts could be felt across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as the political balance began to shift, both from within certain states and as a result of conflict. As historian Nicholas Henshall described the fallout of the ‘General Crisis’ of the seventeenth century: “In France the ruler lost his capital for a year; in Spain he lost two mighty provinces, Catalonia and Portugal; in Denmark-Norway he lost his right to make unilateral decisions; in Poland he lost the Ukraine; in England he lost his head.”\textsuperscript{19} For military historians, one of the great hallmarks of the eighteenth century was the organization of the state and society along lines perceived as necessary for the efficient creation and deployment of military forces. To the troika of monarchy, church, and nobility that long supported the medieval, three additional pillars would be added to the supporting structure of the Habsburg state: the army, the state and military bureaucracies, and the managed economy.\textsuperscript{20} This process is roughly encompassed by the term \textit{Josephinism}.\textsuperscript{21} However, while it is certainly a process worth noting, one preeminent scholar of Austrian history, Michael Hochedlinger, cautions that scholars should not go too far in claiming

\textsuperscript{18} For an introduction into the importance of the Enlightenment to ruling regimes like the Habsburg Monarchy, see: Hamish Scott, ed. \textit{Enlightened Absolutism: Reform and Reformers in Later Eighteenth-Century Europe} (Basingstoke/London, 1990); Franz Szabo, \textit{Kaunitz and Enlightened Absolutism 1753-1780} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
\textsuperscript{21} For the purposes of this chapter, Josephinism is loosely-defined as the reforms begun by Maria Theresa and brought to fruition by her son, Joseph II. It included a strengthening of the bureaucracy, a reformation of the tax system to include the nobles, and a placement of limits on the power of the papacy in Austria. Not all of these activities were completely successful and some would be reversed after Joseph II’s death. For a broad discussion of the impact of Joseph II’s reign, see Merry Wiesner-Hanks, \textit{Early Modern Europe, 1450-1789} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 313-315. An excellent introduction into the reforms of the mid eighteenth century can be found in Hamish Scott, ed., \textit{Enlightened Absolutism} (1990). For more targeted discussion of Joseph II’s life and the circumstances surrounding his decisions as emperor, see Derek Beales, \textit{Joseph II}, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987 and 2009) and T.C.W. Blanning, \textit{Joseph II} (London, 1970).
that the development of standing armies was at “the center of state building, bureaucratization, and centralization.” This dissertation is not meant to be a ‘grand reevaluation’ of the nature of the intellectual and political developments that have framed discussions regarding the Enlightenment in Central Europe during the reigns of Maria Theresa and Joseph II. Rather than redefining absolutism, the Enlightenment, or the concepts and developments that have intersected with those two terms, as some scholars have sought to do, “In Service of the State” seeks to place these concepts within a study of military history to highlight what understandings of each has to offer the other.

A. Documentation and Sourcing

Regarding the primary documentation used in this dissertation, the analytical chapters of “In Service of the State” draw primarily on archival and original documents from the collections of the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv in Vienna, Austria. The records of the Hofkriegsrat (Aulic War Council) in the Kriegsarchiv and the collections of decrees and patents in the Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv provide the bulk of the primary documents used in this dissertation, with both document groups preserved to varying degrees over the last three hundred years. For a long period of time and to the frustration of scholars across the twentieth century, one of the greatest obstacles to studying the Habsburg Monarchy was its sheer geographic breadth. In particular, the Monarchy’s suzerainty and influence spread across a vast portion of the European continent,

including over a dozen modern countries. Many of those countries spent the Cold War (approx. 1947-1991) “behind the Iron Curtain” under the influence of the Soviet Union and were thus (to varying degrees) inaccessible for Western scholars. Since the end of the Cold War and the opening of records repositories made possible in these countries, a document-based study of the Habsburg Monarchy still poses geographic challenges to researchers. While many of the records of the Monarchy are found today in the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv and Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, Austria, many were removed to the successor states as part of the Monarchy’s breakup starting in 1918. Document groups were either 1) broken up so that sections relating to the governance of specific regions were handed over to their respective newly-founded states or 2) removed wholesale in a manner that, depending on the subject, benefits researchers with the ability to stay mobile and hinders research for those tied to singular areas. In other words, depending on what a researcher is looking for, the sources necessary to complete a task—for example, historical inquiry of central governing institutions—might be spread across numerous national borders and thousands of miles.

Furthermore, it was not uncommon for military and justice-related records from the 18th century to not have been stored with their respective central administrative offices in either Vienna or Bratislava—in some cases, the result of either concerted efforts on behalf of certain officeholders or the result of negligence on the part of a military unit’s administrative apparatus. Such records may therefore require visits to provincial and local archives—particularly if one is interested in using *Militärmatriken*, the *Tagebücher* of the unit’s chaplains, or a unit’s *Musterlisten*. *Musterlisten* (muster lists) provided information on each and every soldier on the rolls of a regiment: name, age, rank, place of origin, etc. It was not until well into the eighteenth century that regiments, using centralized naming conventions and designations, would be

---

required to submit regular reports and updates—including accurate muster lists—to the authorities in Vienna. The regulations of 1769, amongst other things, assigned “consecutive numbers to the infantry and cavalry regiments…gradually replac[ing] the old practice of distinguishing regiments only by the name of the colonel-proprietor.”

Oftentimes the goal of keeping and requiring such reports was to provide the central authorities with accurate information on the size of their active forces, as well as to discourage dishonest accounting practices. For example, it was not an unheard-of practice for officers to claim absent or nonexistent soldiers as present to claim pocket the extra support monies and pocket it for themselves. The legacy of regimental proprietorships, the backbone of the early modern army through the Thirty Years’ War and the early parts of the eighteenth century, meant that the paper records of many regiments remained in the possession of the private proprietor and his family, rather than with the central authorities. It should be noted that this phenomenon was not unique to the Habsburg or central European experience. Tracking the location of these records across time, space, and national borders provides an extra layer of difficulty for military history researchers.

26 In his 1981 book on the training of the British army during the eighteenth century, J.A. Houlding would defend his primary use of records from central archives by stating that it was: “…by default. During the period under consideration each regiment was responsible for its own training, and hence for its tactical skill and drill proficiency. The central authorities administered and cajoled from afar. It is the papers of the central authorities that survive; and most unfortunately, those belonging to the corps themselves—orderly books, regimental record books, etc.—have not. Before the Victorian army with its regimental depots, the papers of the regiments (like all the rest of their possessions) went where the regiments. Thus, the eighteenth-century records of the old 28th Foot, for example, ‘were unfortunately lost in the Peninsular War’; and all those of the old 14th Foot ‘were lost in a ship wreck off Guadeloupe on Christmas Day 1838.’” See J.A. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army 1715-1795* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), ix.
B. Summary of Primary Source Materials

The primary source materials for “In Service of the State” can be broken down into two general groups: 1) copies of correspondence in the Kriegsarchiv, with attendant notation papers, and 2) copies of official proclamations and decrees in the Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv and Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, with attendant notation papers and correspondence. There are also published codices and compendia of the laws and decrees passed during the relevant period, the most important of which being the 8-volume work of Joseph Kropatschek from 1786-1789:

*Sammlung aller k. k. Verordnungen und Gesetze vom Jahre 1740 bis 1780.* These groups of legal codices are supplemented by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century books, histories, and commentaries in the published secondary literature: an example being the multi-volume works of Alfred von Arneth (1819-1897) and his 10-volume *Geschichte der Maria Theresa*, published between 1863 and 1879. The first group of sources, the correspondence in the Kriegsarchiv, is further enriched by secondary material on Habsburg law, society, and military development produced during the intervening three centuries. The vast majority of the correspondence used to create the case studies that support this dissertation is drawn from the papers of the Hofkriegsrat: the Aulic War Council, which was main military administrative body of the Habsburg Monarchy from 1557 until its official replacement by the *Kriegsministerium* in 1848.

---

27 The full title of Kropatschek’s work is: *Sammlung aller k. k. Verordnungen und Gesetze vom Jahre 1740 bis 1780, die unter der Regierung der Regierung des Kaisers Joseph des II. theils noch ganz bestehen, theils zum Theile abgeändert sind, als eine Hilfs- und Ergänzungsbuch zu dem Handbuche aller unter der Regierung des Kaisers Josephs des II. für die k. k. Erbländer ergangenen Verordnungen und Gesetze in einer chronologischen Ordnung.* Published in 1786, Kropatschek’s volumes represent a larger body of legal codices and volumes preserved by the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv and Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

28 See Oskar Regele, *Der Österreichisch Hofkriegsrat 1556-1848* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Staatsdruckerei, 1949) and Martin A. Reif, “‘Dignity and Obedience’: Social Prestige in the History of the Austrian Hofkriegsrat,” *Wichita State University Bulletin, University Studies*, no. 61, vol. XL, no. 4, (1964): 1-16 for more information on the history of the Hofkriegsrat. The Hofkriegsrat, as an administrative body during the 1700s will be explored more in-depth in Chapter 4.
There are over 5,600 cartons of paperwork preserved by the Staatsarchiv, as well as over 7,200 bound volumes of the supporting Protokoll Bücher. The collected papers of the Hofkriegsrat represent a mixed bag of correspondence, copies of official decrees, notation papers, and drafts of memoranda. The collection is also representative of the ever-changing nature of bureaucratic institutions during the early modern period, with 1) the amount and types of paperwork saved and 2) the level of its organization by contemporary keepers subject to frequent change. For a study focused on desertion, this is particularly noticeable during the eighteenth century when, starting in 1753, the paperwork of the Hofkriegsrat was organized for the first time along thematic lines using a system of rubrics. Before 1753, paperwork was organized along provenance and chronological receipt. A rudimentary rubric system was introduced in 1753, with numbers assigned to subject headings such as “Deserteure” and then a number assigned to the document: for example, a-x-y, where a was the year, x represented the document subject, and y the document’s assigned number. Unfortunately for scholars, though, it would take almost fifteen years for the system to be applied and collected on by the Hofkriegsrat’s records-keepers with any sense of regularity. Other related rubrics to the study of desertion in the 1753 system included: Militärjuridiktion, Rekrutierung und Remontierung, Falschwerber, Arrestanten, and the overriding rubric of Ausweisungen, Abschiedung, Abschaffung.

The focus and reliance on primary source documents from ÖSTA creates a natural bias in the narratives and discussions that are formed. Drawn from the collections of institutions centralized under Habsburg control during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the documents presented here will not, and cannot, provide a comprehensive view of all of the actions taken by the Habsburg Monarchy, its agents, and its subsidiary powers regarding desertion during the

---

29 A sample ÖSTA archive designation for Hofkriegsrat cartons is: KA-ZSt-HKR-Karton… (Kriegsarchiv, Zentralstellen, Hofkriegsrat, Karton…). A sample ÖSTA archive designation for Protokoll Bücher is: KA-ZSt-HKR-Bücher… (Kriegsarchiv, Zentralstellen, Hofkriegsrat, Bücher…)

30 This first organization of the HKR rubric system would be in place until 1761 before being changed. An in-depth discussion of the Hofkriegsrat source material is provided in the introductory section of Chapter 2, under “Sources and Methodology.”
period in question. While many of the desertion cases under review here in the case studies take place on the geographic periphery of the Habsburg Monarchy, the documentation used to tell (part of) their story comes from those documents saved by the center. These studies focus on events and cases that were brought to the attention of the Hofkriegsrat and the Generalkommandos in Pressburg (Bratislava) and Vienna. Furthermore, focusing on the documents of the Habsburg Monarchy’s central administration means that German-language sources may be inadvertently prized over those of other major languages used by the Monarchy’s inhabitants. It is hoped that the insights into the causes of desertion and the administrative handling of desertion provided by “In Service of the State” will help overcome its linguistic and geographic shortcomings and inspire future scholars to pick up where it has left off.

C. Chapter Summaries

The first chapter of “In Service of the State” starts with a brief historiographical survey of the standing army of the Habsburg Monarchy from its inception through the nineteenth century. Under this heading, several important informational points are made regarding what defines the Habsburg Monarchy, both historically and geographically, and why it is significant for scholars of any century to properly define their parameters when dealing with central Europe. This discussion then moves to the specific developments of the early standing army created by the Habsburgs in 1649 in the wake of the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) up through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This includes a statement on one of this project’s specific historiographical interventions: the study of desertion as an expansion of underrepresented sectors in the fields of early modern military history and Habsburg historiography.

Chapter 2, entitled “Should I Stay or Should I Go?,” is a specific examination of two desertion case studies done at the regimental level. Using the contemporaneous monthly reports
of two infantry regiments stationed on the different borders between late 1780 and early 1781, this chapter examines the demographics of the early modern Habsburg army and the reasons why many soldiers decided to run away given the penalties they could face for doing so. The desertion rate during peacetime (or, at a minimum, away from a battlefield) in these cases was well under five percent and Chapter 2 addresses some of the practical, administrative, and social reasons why some soldiers stayed and why others chose to leave. The individual reports point to a wide variety of reasons for desertion: from homesickness to escaping from prosecution for other crimes and from drunkenness to a crime of opportunity.

Chapter 3, entitled “Die gantze Ursach der Desertion wäre die nahe Gräntze,” builds off of the analysis begun in Chapter 2 by expanding to include the experiences of two dragoon (mounted infantrymen) regiments serving on two different borders in 1774. Dragoons, like the cavalry, tended to draw from different socioeconomic classes as the infantry, so Chapter 3 places their experiences in the context of other units during the mid-to-late eighteenth century. The Zweybrückischen and Coburgischen Dragoner Regiments reported to their superiors on desertion and other disciplinary issues. The reports were generally summative in nature, with less of a focus on the specific narratives of desertion cases. In doing so, these reports introduce an important element to desertion analysis: the role of commanding officers and military administrators. For the officers of these two regiments, in spite of the supply, quartering, and disciplinary issues raised by the soldiers, the most important cause for desertion was the availability of unguarded borders: that desertion was a crime of opportunity.

In a departure from the regimental level of Chapters 2 and 3, Chapter 4, entitled “Hochlöbl. Kaŷl. Königl. Hof Kriegs Rath”, focuses on the institutions of the Habsburg standing army: in particular, the Monarchy’s supreme military administrative body, the Hofkriegsrat (Aulic War Council). This chapter serves a dual function: 1) providing a survey of this administrative body’s actions during the same time period as the previous case studies and 2)
serving as an update to a historiography that has been chronically underserved for over 60 years. The Hofkriegsrat, as an institution and important cog in the machinery that made the Habsburg Monarchy function, has been largely ignored and dealt with in an episodic manner. Utilizing a broad range of available archival sources, Chapter 4 traces the actions and reactions of the Hofkriegsrat to information regarding acts of desertion from the 1750s through the 1780s. Through the use of primary source documents Chapter 4 shows how desertion, as a larger part of military discipline, was an issue with military, civilian, and various levels of administrative interests. In reacting to desertion or in seeking to prevent it, administrators and officers often needed to force (and, in certain other circumstances, entice) compliance from civil authorities, civilian subjects of the monarchy, and the fellow soldiers of potential deserters. In other cases, the Habsburg Monarchy needed to cooperate or secure the cooperation of foreign governments to control desertion or to set up mechanisms for exchanging deserters caught crossing the border.

The fifth and final chapter, entitled “Proclamations from the Habsburg Monarchy: Legal structures, political frameworks, and “das schaedliche Uibel der Desertion” in the eighteenth-century,” focuses on Habsburg desertion policy and the use of proclamations as a legal mechanism. This chapter combines the institutional and case study-driven types of study of the previous three chapters to show connections between 1) the on-the-ground decisions of military officers, seeking to control desertion, and soldiers, doing the deserting and 2) the Monarchy-level policy decisions concerned with desertion. It addresses the question: Was the Monarchy proactive or reactive in its stance on desertion? Many of the decisions documented in this chapter were reactive and the primary source stories look at these reactions from both the side of the soldier and the state that the soldier served.
Chapter 1

Desertion, Running Away, and ‘Turning Traitor’ – A Historiographical Introduction to the Habsburg Monarchy and Military in the Eighteenth Century

A. History of the Habsburg Standing Army and the Study of Desertion

1. “Bella gerant alii”: An Introduction to the Habsburg Monarchy

The story of the House of Habsburg and its monarchy in central Europe has been, for many, a story seeming to present only two sides. One side has been the study of tactful diplomacy, fortuitous marital arrangements, and, on the other end of the spectrum, its spectacular collapse in 1918—the story of a royal/imperial family with romantic appeal, but a difficult-to-discern high point—it is often in the realm of matters military and the battlefield where the richness of Habsburg history can be found. Derived from Ovid’s *Heroides* 13.84, the phrase “Bella gerant alii, tu felix Austria, nube! Nam quae Mars aliis dat tibi regna Venus!”—roughly translated, it means “Let others wage war, you lucky Austria, marry! For what kingdoms Mars gives to others, Venus gives to you.” This phrase provides a neat framework for the historiography of the Habsburg Monarchy: described by one of the field’s chief twentieth-century historians as a “mildly centripetal agglutination of bewilderingly heterogeneous elements,” brought together by an equally varied set of circumstances over the course of several centuries.31

The collection of the Habsburg lands, both for the Austrian branch and Spanish branch, was not a simple story Napoleon-style conquest, but rather a longer story combining conquest, dynastic

alliances, and political engineering. Gathered over the course of centuries as the prizes of war, marriage, and treaty, these heterogeneous elements, lands that spread from modern-day Belgium in the west to Romania in the east, have provided much fodder for scholars to discuss.\textsuperscript{32} Even in the nineteenth century, Czech historian and publicist František Palacký is credited with positing the sentiment that if the Habsburg Monarchy did not exist, circumstances would have necessitated its creation.\textsuperscript{33} While Spain, France, Britain, Prussia, and Russia are all colloquially known for developing homogenous nation-states by (or during) the nineteenth centuries, the Habsburgs would continually carry the stigma of being a multiethnic, multicultural composite state.

For scholars studying the history of the Habsburgs, the historiographic question for any work regarding the Habsburg domains has stood as: how, at any basic level, was the multiethnic, multicultural, geographically-heterogeneous Habsburg Monarchy formed? Furthermore, what allowed this “agglutination” to function as a state? Robert Kann (1906-1981), noted historian of the Habsburgs and central Europe, sought to answer this basic question and began one of his studies on the Habsburg Empire by asking two questions of his own. Why and “how did the monarchy, which emerged in 1526-27, attain by the eighteenth century ‘a sense of community and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a ‘long’ time, dependable expectations of peaceful change among its population?’” Kann surmised that


\textsuperscript{33} For more information, see the discussion in Ingrao, \textit{Habsburg Monarchy}, 2.
the “…Austrian case, in clear contra-distinction to [others], presents a centuries-old security-community which is not now [1957] considered to be, but actually was, more durable than many comparable [states].”34 Unlike other contemporary monarchies (ex. France, Spain, and England) that were marked by having relatively large core lands, the lands claimed by the Habsburgs were a multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual, and multiconfessional state oftentimes spread afar and disconnected, yet still tied together by their bonds to the Habsburg dynasty that never grew into one the ‘singular’ or ‘signature’ nation-states, which scholars since the nineteenth century have used as the benchmarks to define statehood, progress, and modernity. The dynasty and the ‘state’ were inextricably intertwined, from the earliest days of their Herrschaft in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries all the way until the Monarchy’s dissolution in 1918. As one historian of Prussia stated in his 1958 work on Prussia during the early modern period: “…the agglomeration of territories held by the Austrian Habsburgs had no common name until 1804, when ‘the lands of the House of Habsburg’ became the ‘Austrian Empire.’”35

While some elements of the Austrian state existed beyond the Habsburg monarchs themselves, the differing levels of monarchical or constitutional authority wielded by the Habsburgs within each part of the domain meant that state-level institutions—in particular, the standing army—were marked heavily by ‘dynastic state’ characteristics.

The Habsburg Monarchy provides a particularly interesting case for studying the development of the early modern state and early modern military institutions, as its geographic position placed burdens on their governing structures with which other European polities were generally not saddled. On the one hand, the ever-present threat of low-intensity conflict on the

---

Hungarian border or full-scale invasion by the forces of the Ottoman Empire—which had previously culminated in two unsuccessful sieges of the city of Vienna in 1529 and 1683—necessitated the creation and administration of a strong border-garrison system where the issues of finance, supply, and bureaucratic distribution became apparent. On the other hand, monarchical competition with the kings of France and the ever-present conflict with the princes and estates of the Holy Roman Empire meant that the authority and power of the Habsburg Monarchy was consistently being challenged. As such, there is little doubt that the Habsburg Monarchy’s army and its supporting government institutions underpinned the Monarchy’s international and domestic standing.

2. “…Nam quae Mars aliis dat…”: An Introduction to the Habsburg Standing Army

The most important development of the seventeenth century, though there is great debate about the precision of this dating, was the change from the largely mercenary and peasant levy armies of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance to the gunpowder-equipped standing armies of the early modern period. This shift from a mercenary-based army to a state-controlled and state-owned army was a characteristic of the greater ‘military revolution’ context. There certainly were periods of crossover with both types of forces serving side-by-side, as the spirit of

38 See Geoffrey Parker’s response to a forum by Jeremy Black et al in the second edition of his The military revolution. Parker contended that the military revolution was a process and a grander trend than the conventional definition for revolution, citing it as a period of change, rather than an event. Jeremy Black argued that nothing that lasted three hundred years could be considered a “revolution.” See Geoffrey Parker, The military revolution: military innovation and the rise of the West, 1500-1800, 2nd ed. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
mercenary (or ‘private’) service is still alive and strong today. During the Thirty Years’ War, many sides of the conflict benefitted from the abilities of ‘military enterprisers’ to build and sustain effective fighting forces—for the Habsburg Monarchy, Albrecht von Wallenstein provides one of the most interesting examples of the type of relationship that the Habsburg Monarchy had with private military enterprises. Yet the circumstances of the Thirty Years’ War made it evident to the Habsburg monarchs, Ferdinand II in particular, that professional, state-controlled, standing armies were the better choice. Underlying the value of standing armies was a standing officer corps and its decreased reliance on military entrepreneurs, those soldier-captains for hire, who were often businessmen first and soldiers second: making decisions, it was assumed, in that order. The Thirty Years’ War ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Its tangible results were: a decimated population, large debt, and devastated countryside in the Holy Roman Empire, particularly in the north. The lessons learned by the parties involved, though in some cases intangible, were of great value to the developing centralized administrations.

For the Habsburg Monarchy, “[the war…] made it clear that the [Holy Roman] Empire would not be united in religion or transformed into a strong state…” and that, despite relative gains in power by the removal of some Protestant-aligned nobles, the Habsburgs would begin to focus more on the East and their crown lands where the opportunities for expansion of both

---

39 Though not often used as the sole source of troops by most governments, the utility and proliferation of “private security companies” in the post-World War II era has certainly played a role in the way modern armies are organized.
central authority and geographic size were much greater.\textsuperscript{42} Emperor Ferdinand III decided after the war had ended to break the practice of disbanding the entire army and chose to maintain a nominal standing force of approximately 25,000 soldiers to provide protection to the state and a kernel for future expansion in times of war.\textsuperscript{43} Thirty years of intermittent-to-constant warfare had demonstrated the gross inefficiencies and deficiencies of employing large mercenary armies, the high costs of permanent, state-controlled standing armies, and the lack of discipline in most armies in general.\textsuperscript{44} The discipline that is an assumed characteristic of military organizations was an illusion, once the field of battle was left. In many cases, soldiers (mercenary and “professional”) were often one delayed paycheck from banditry. Often left to fend for themselves, with their pay chronically in arrears or insufficient because of ‘service fees’ taken by commanding officers, soldiers in early modern armies often took matters into their hands to receive compensation. Large-scale desertions were common and many units resembled more closely a band of marauders than an actual army.

Throughout the seventeenth century, the Habsburg’s standing army was an army on the rise. Under the leadership of a string of competent, if not brilliant, leaders, the Habsburgs held back the political and territorial ambitions of the Bourbon French monarchy during the 1660s and—with the aid of allies—pushed back the armies of the Ottoman Empire threatening the ‘gates of Christendom’ outside of Vienna in 1683. In large part, the success of the Habsburg armies against the French came from the leadership style of generalissimo Raimondo di

\begin{itemize}
\item[42] Merry Wiesner-Hanks, \textit{Early Modern Europe}, 313.
\item[43] The number of ‘effectives’ was oftentimes much lower than the stated number of troops. The description of the initial founding of the Habsburg Monarchy’s standing army can be found in John A. Mears, “The Thirty Years’ War, the ‘General Crisis,’ and the Origins of a Standing Professional Army in the Habsburg Monarchy,” \textit{Central European History} 21 (1988): 122-141. Also see the contribution of Philipp Hoyos, “Die kaiserliche Armee 1648-1650” in \textit{Schriften des Heeresgeschichtliches Museums in Wien (Militärwissenschaftliches Institut)}, no. 7 (Vienna, 1976): 169-232.
\end{itemize}
Montecuccoli. Modenese by birth, he would rise to the presidency of the Hofkriegsrat by 1668 and stay in that position until the time of his death in 1680. As a general, he took full advantage of the ‘war of maneuver’ that characterized the seventeenth century, guided by a principle best summed up as ‘never risk the main’—that unless victory could be guaranteed, it was better to continue to maneuver the army into a more advantageous position than risk the whole of the army.

Figure 1-1

Raimondo Montecuccoli. 17th century print owned by Mr. Áron Petneki, Budapest. Frontispiece of Thomas Barker’s The Military Intellectual and Battle.

The rising star of the Habsburg Monarchy would be tested in the 1680s, when a resurgent Ottoman Empire swept through Hungary and threatened Vienna itself in the infamous siege of 1683. The Ottomans were ultimately pushed back as a result of intervention by a largely Polish

---

45 Barker, The Military Intellectual and Battle: Raimondo Montecuccoli and the Thirty Years’ War (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), frontispiece. Known to posterity by his full title, Count Raimondo Montecuccoli, Prince of Spain, Lord of Hohenegg, Osterburg, Gleiss, and Haindorf, Privy Councilor of His Imperial Majesty, Knight of the Golden Fleece, President of the Court War Council (Hofkriegsrat), Chamberlain, Lieutenant General, General of Artillery and Governor of Győr, he would die on October 16, 1680, three years before the second great Ottoman siege of Vienna and would be buried in a church in Vienna that was destroyed by bombing in World War II. Only a slab of concrete marks his grave. See Barker, Military Intellectual, 7-47.
army under King Jan Sobieski. The Habsburgs would continue to press the Ottomans and under
the leadership of the most famous of Habsburg generals, Prince Eugene of Savoy, push all the
way to the gates of Belgrade, expanding the buffer zone between the Habsburg capital and the
Ottoman Empire.

Under Prince Eugene’s leadership, the Habsburg “age of heroes” saw the Monarchy’s
position strengthen, as war waged around them with ascendant power plays coming from Prussia
and Russia, even as France continued to push for greater influence in Spain, Poland, and beyond.
The downside of Prince Eugene’s preeminent role in the Monarchy was his longevity—he
continued to exert leadership over political and military affairs until his death in 1736. After the
turn of the eighteenth century and until Eugene’s death, the Habsburg army ossified to a point
that, when challenged by the Ottoman Empire—the ‘sick man on the Bosphorus’—it was not able
to defend itself well. “Austria’s ‘heroic age’ was definitely over” and it became incumbent upon
Emperor Charles VI and his immediate successor, Maria Theresa, to defend the Monarchy from
being broken up piecemeal. There are many potential reasons for why the Monarchy found itself
in this position, on the losing side of the terms of peace in both the War of Polish Succession and
the Turkish War of the 1730s, but two particular factors are often cited: the aforementioned
military leadership issue and the inability of the Monarchy’s governing institutions to grow in
efficiency on pace with territorial expansion. As one historian put it, “by 1718 the Monarchy had
in effect become a dangerously far-flung territorial colossus that could no longer be manoeuvred
with the traditional political and administrative instruments…resource mobilization was still
woefully inadequate.”

46 Hochedlinger, Austria’s Wars of Emergence, 217.
The State of the Army in the Middle of the Eighteenth Century

On the eve of the succession war set off by Charles VI’s death in 1740, the Habsburg army generally numbered over 100,000, oftentimes reaching into the range of 140,000. On paper, in 1739, the army numbered almost 160,000 divided between 52 infantry regiments and 40 cavalry regiments. By 1740, financial constraints saw the paper strength of the army drop to approximately 142,000, though the functional strength of the army was more likely closer to just over 100,000. This trend continued throughout the War of Austrian Succession, with the army’s paper strength reaching as much as 200,000 in 1744, but always being anywhere from 30-40% below strength. Similar trends could be discerned in the other arms, including artillery and support arms throughout the rest of the eighteenth century. The following table shows just how much the paper strength of the Habsburg army changed throughout the eighteenth century.

Table 1-1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Paper strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1741</td>
<td>134,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1742</td>
<td>166,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1743</td>
<td>174,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1744</td>
<td>200,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1745</td>
<td>202,576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1746</td>
<td>176,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1747</td>
<td>171,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1748</td>
<td>157,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1749</td>
<td>156,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750</td>
<td>192,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1751</td>
<td>201,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1752</td>
<td>177,497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1753</td>
<td>153,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1754</td>
<td>154,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td>163,611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1756</td>
<td>193,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1757</td>
<td>202,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1758</td>
<td>214,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1759</td>
<td>215,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>313,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761</td>
<td>314,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1762</td>
<td>215,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1763</td>
<td>315,074</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47 Hochedlinger, Austria’s Wars of Emergence, 300. Hochedlinger sourced the information for this table from the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv/Kriegsarchiv, Hofkommission Nostitz-Rieneck 9, which was printed part in P.G.M. Dickson, Finance and Government under Maria Theresa 1740-1780, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), appendix A.1.
Why such a large discrepancy between actual and paper strength? Proper force accounting was particularly difficult during this period, as the recordkeeping efforts of each unit was not always accurate and there was the potential for units to use different criteria for counting—all men under arms? Include men on furlough? Include support servicemen?\(^{48}\)

Furthermore, each of these regiments could vary greatly in their size and composition. In general, infantry regiments were classified based on their land of origin, with some of the most standardized coming from the so-called ‘German’ lands: Hungarian, Italian, and Belgian being the other types. The following table shows how the composition of a ‘standard’ infantry regiment changed over the course of the eighteenth century, including what kind of difference a state of war would make.

\(^{48}\) This also does not discount the possibility of officers and regimental commanders not honestly reporting the number of men under arms so that they could receive increased pay and supplies for men not actually there.

\(^{49}\) Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 302. The table was sourced from: Wrede, *Geschichte der k.u.k. Wehrmacht: Die Regimenter, Corps, Branchen und Anstalten von 1618 bis Ende des XIX.*

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
<th>Company strength</th>
<th>Regimental strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1740-48</td>
<td>15 fusilier companies in 3 battalions, 2 companies of grenadiers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>fusilier: 126 men</td>
<td>2,446 (1740), 2,007 (1744-45), 2,267 (1744-48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1749-56</td>
<td>16 fusilier companies in 4 battalions, 2 companies of grenadiers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>fusilier: 136 men</td>
<td>2,408 (German regiments in Italy: 1,032)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1757-61</td>
<td>16 fusilier companies in 4 battalions, 2 companies of grenadiers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>fusilier: 136 men</td>
<td>2,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1762-63</td>
<td>16 fusilier companies in 4 battalions, 2 grenadier companies</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>fusilier: 140 men</td>
<td>2,693 (1757), 2,760 (1758-61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1764-67</td>
<td>16 fusilier companies in 3 battalions (2 field battalions &amp; 4 companies, 1 garrison battalion &amp; 4 companies), 2 companies of grenadiers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>fusilier: 116 men</td>
<td>2,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1768-78</td>
<td>16 fusilier companies in 3 battalions (2 field battalions &amp; 6 companies, 1 garrison battalion &amp; 4 companies), 2 companies of grenadiers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>fusilier: 113 men</td>
<td>2,071 (1766-74), 2,215 (1775-77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1779-07</td>
<td>16 fusilier companies in 3 battalions (2 field battalions &amp; 6 companies, 1 garrison battalion &amp; 4 companies), 2 companies of grenadiers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>fusilier: 155 men</td>
<td>2,766/3,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1781-86</td>
<td>16 fusilier companies in 3 battalions (2 field battalions &amp; 6 companies, 1 garrison battalion &amp; 4 companies), 2 companies of grenadiers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>fusilier: 180 men</td>
<td>3,175 (1780-83), 2,808/2,956 (1791)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799-07</td>
<td>16 fusilier companies in 3 battalions (2 field battalions &amp; 6 companies, 1 garrison battalion &amp; 4 companies), 2 companies of grenadiers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>fusilier: 232 men</td>
<td>4,537 (1779, 4,575/4,580)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-05</td>
<td>16 fusilier companies in 3 battalions, 2 companies of grenadiers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>fusilier: 115 men</td>
<td>4,788/50, 1792/95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1-2

Table showing the composition of a ‘German’ regiment from 1740-1797, particularly highlighting how the number of soldiers and organizational units changed. Table courtesy of Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*.\(^{49}\)
Similar variations can also be seen in the organization of the various types of cavalry regiments during the same period.

The Habsburg officer corps, a group that has been historiographically underrepresented, provides an interesting look into the social dynamics of the Monarchy. At the time of Maria Theresa’s coronation, it was estimated that composition of the officer corps was evenly divided between nobles and commoners. Over the course of the 1700s, to encourage greater service and make up for any deficiencies in recruiting, there were ready paths for commoners to find their way into officer ranks and, from there, into the nobility. After the 1757 victory over Prussia at Kolin, it was possible for non-noble officers with at least 30 years of meritorious service to apply for ennoblement. Any recipient of the Military Order of Maria Theresia was considered to be a member of the nobility and could demand a rank at the level of baron.\(^{50}\)

As a direct result of multiple conflicts with Prussia during this period, Prussian influence in Habsburg military organization can be most readily seen in the organization and training of the forces. In 1769, President of the Hofkriegsrat Lacy oversaw the issuance of new regulations for the infantry and cavalry. It was not uncommon for large-scale demonstrations, drills, and maneuvers to take place in front of the Habsburg family. Another element that changed in 1769 was a move towards greater centralization of military administrative authority, as the traditional authority of the regimental Inhaber as colonel-proprietor was eroded. In 1769 the army decided to attribute numbers to each number in a sequential manner, part of a larger move to undo the custom naming a regiment after the colonel-proprietor. Before this, in 1766, Inhabers lost the right to appoint officers above the rank of captain.\(^{51}\)

---

\(^{50}\) Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 305-306.

\(^{51}\) Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 312-313. For more information on the Habsburg army during the middle of the eighteenth century, see Duffy’s *Army of Maria Theresa* (1977) and *Instrument of Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1 (Vienna, 1898-1905); Österreichisches Staatsarchiv/Kriegsarchiv, Hofkommission Nostitz-Rieneck 9, which was partially printed in Dickson, *Finance and Government*, vol. 2, appendix A.1; k.u.k. Kriegsarchiv, *Österreichischer Erbfolgekrieg*, vol. 1; and k.u.k. Kriegsarchiv, *Krieg gegen die Französische Revolution*, vol. 1.
The Habsburg army, in moving towards professionalization and centralization of authority on the models viewed as successful as a result of the Prussians, went through many changes throughout the middle of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{52} It underwent numerous changes and at the end of the period under consideration in this dissertation, would face even greater challenges after the outbreak of revolution in France in 1789. For the study of desertion, however, two of the most important changes and challenges were rooted in the changing nature of the Habsburg state an economy: the advent of a military furlough system and the abolition of serfdom. The genesis of furlough systems can be found in the struggle to balance the need for a permanent, standing military force with a stable economy, while the abolition of serfdom had far deeper sociopolitical roots.

3. Early Modern Habsburg Military Historiography

In a 1999 article published in the \textit{Austrian History Yearbook}, Michael Hochedlinger, a senior archivist with the Kriegsarchiv (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv) in Vienna, Austria, enumerated many of the failings that he perceived as having developed in the field of Austrian military history over the previous century, particularly since the re-founding of Austria after World War II. Hochedlinger gave three specific examples of deficiencies in the field of Austrian military history: 1) a dearth of involvement from continental (in particular, Austrian) scholars in the historical writing process, 2) a lack of coherence in the use of historical perspectives and methodologies, such as what was then known as the ‘New Military History’—the melding of

\textsuperscript{52} For one of the most expansive accountings of the changes undertaken by the Habsburg military during the eighteenth century, see Hochedlinger, \textit{Austria’s Wars of Emergence}, 291-329.
traditional battlefield history with methods pioneered by social, political, cultural, and economic histories—and, 3) the chronological gaps in deep scholarship on Austria and the Habsburgs.53

Established Austrian scholars of military history and politics, as of the writing of that article, had not developed a framework for military history that was capable of integrating both the Habsburg (pre-1918) and Republic (post-1918) periods. Before 1918, military history in the Habsburg Monarchy was almost exclusively the purview of the military and its organs, so once the Monarchy was no more, 1918 became an artificial chronological boundary that reflected shifts in Austrian culture—as the new Austrian state, its military, and its academic establishment attempted to come to grips with the ‘recent past,’ these shifts seemingly discouraged studies wide-ranging enough to cover the early modern period.54 Karl Vocelka, noted Austrian historian, argued that this was an outgrowth of Austria’s difficulties in coming to grips with its relationship to Germany, the Holy Roman Empire, and the House of Habsburg: indeed, a complex social, economic, and political history. Vocelka argued that three basic factors separated the development of Austria from other parts of the German lands. First, Austria was the Hausmacht, the familial seat of power, for the House of Habsburg, a dynasty that also served from 1438 to 1806 (almost uninterruptedly) as the titular head of the Holy Roman Empire. Second, through its geographic position on the outskirts of the German world and its special legal position within the empire (as the Hausmacht of the dominant dynasty) created the impression that it “grew out of the Reich”—blurring the historical and historiographical lines as to where the ‘boundaries’ of one ended and the other began. Third, Austria was forced to build a solitary state out of the remnants

54 Hochedlinger, “Bella gerant alii,” 245. Hochedlinger went on to elaborate on the long-term consequences of this state-centric approach for later researchers of Austrian military history: “Consequently, the emphasis lay on war, operations, and battles—though with some interesting loopholes…[but which] were forcibly insufficient to compensate for the absence of full-scale academic support. In contrast to the Prussian case, Austrian scholars after 1918 and 1945, if at all anxious to pay the military side of history its due tribute, have thus found, and will still find, that it is extremely difficult to provide a satisfying picture of the complex relationship between army and society in early modern Austria without extensive archival research.”
of its empire, creating a struggle to build its identity as a separate sovereign state from Germany, yet no longer imbued with the ‘special status’ in the German world that hundreds of years of Herrschaft had provided it.\[^{55}\]

Michael Hochedlinger pointed out that after World War II, large numbers of scholars either focused on medieval history or new political history (a “history of political culture, ideas, and discourse”)—topics that were viewed by the academic establishment as ‘safe,’ as those topics allowed scholars to avoid many of the questions surrounding Austria’s ‘near past,’ such as its role in the Second World War.\[^{56}\] Overall, this has meant that the number of Austrian scholars available or willing to study the early modern period, let alone early modern military history, has been insufficient. For the better part of the Cold War and through the 1990s, this dearth of local or indigenous academic work has been in part compensated for by robust contributions from the Anglo-American and French historical communities.\[^{57}\] The trend of “military history from without” has only been seriously challenged by researchers within from the Habsburg successor states during the last ten to fifteen years, as scholarly exchange between the successor states themselves has increased and more and more volumes and articles are being produced and shared at conferences.\[^{58}\]

In citing the New Military History, which has been a boon to the once dying field of military history, Hochedlinger looks to focus on the socio-historical application of military

\[^{56}\] On the state of the historical field in Austria in the late 1990s, Michael Hochedlinger noted: “[I]f we discount the brain drain of scholars towards Zeitgeschichte and the traditionally strong quota of Austrian medievalists, to name only the two most important questions, there are just a few scholars available for so large and important a subject as early modern Austrian history.” Hochedlinger, “Bella gerant alii,” 239-240. As a further consequence of Austria’s relationship with Germany, and the earlier relationship between the Prussians and the Habsburgs, Hochedlinger goes on to comment on the intertwining of state identity with inquiries of development of early modern states (243).
\[^{57}\] Hochedlinger specifically cited the contributions of: T.C.W Blanning, Thomas Barker, Derek Beales, Jean Béranger, P.G.M. Dickson, Christopher Duffy, R.J.W. Evans, Charles Ingrao, Karl Roider, Gunther Rothenberg, Paul Schroeder, John Spielman, John Stoye, and Franz Szabo. He also cited T.C.W. Blanning’s deliberately incendiary comment that early modern Austrian military history was too important to be left to the Austrians themselves to handle. See Hochedlinger, “Bella gerant alii,” 239.
\[^{58}\] For example, see the works of Christa Hämmerle, Petr Mat’a, Thomas Winkelbauer, and Gabor Agoston.
history—viewing the military not as a sum of its battles, but rather as the sum of its constituent political, economic, social, and scientific effects and causes. Citing the example of the Military Revolution in Prussia in the eighteenth century, Hochedlinger points out that “…the Prussian kings did everything in their power to reconcile the never-ending demands of the military juggernaut with the needs (and reservations) of the civilian world […y]et that does not alter the fact that both sectors were merging together…." 59 Rather than envisioning matters military as a separate field of history, military historians now study war and the battlefield as part a larger social phenomenon. Hochedlinger echoes this sentiment:

…we should be aware of the possible pitfalls if military history clings too strongly to international or diplomatic history…. Campaign and battle history, the history of the actual use of armed forces, is not only old-fashioned and likely to arouse deep-rooted prejudices against a discipline that still has to struggle for its place in the sun…. [T]he older narrative literature has largely and in considerable detail exhausted the study of campaigns and battles. The most urgent need now…is for full-scale studies of the armed forces not as an executive instrument of foreign policy but as a multifaceted institution of state, fully integrated into the administrative, social, economic, and intellectual context and thus perfectly inseparable from the civilian’s world. 60

The so-called ‘New Military History’ focus, in part indebted to the military revolution thesis, on the connections between the armed forces, the state, and the society at large will allow future scholars to highlight any chronological gaps: in particular, the period from 1648 to 1713.

Michael Hochedlinger’s 2003 Austria’s Wars of Emergence: War, State and Society in the Habsburg Monarchy 1683-1797 is the only recent, extensive work on the political-military development of the Habsburg Monarchy in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Primarily a book for referencing the military history of the Habsburgs during the period, Austria’s Wars of Emergence, the work provided one of the most extensive bibliographies and

historiographic essays on the topic as of 2003—expanding and reviving the field of military history in the same way that the works of Petr Mat’a and Thomas Winkelbauer have helped socioeconomic and political history.\textsuperscript{61} It refuses to see “early modern phenomena” as strictly geographically limited: in this case, the application of military force and the forces of state centralization. Hochedlinger proposes that the Habsburg Monarchy after the Thirty Years’ War was held together through both the forces of arms and paper, the early modern projections of power: the army and a strong, centralized bureaucracy. Whereas R.J.W. Evans, in his analysis of Hungary, views the years between 1690 and 1710 as a missed opportunity for political centralization and greater social integration by the Habsburgs, Hochedlinger’s thesis is that this lack of centralization (as seen in comparison to France, England, or Prussia) was not a specific deficiency of the Habsburg monarchy and Austria.\textsuperscript{62}

Resulting from 1) successful campaigns against the Ottomans after the lifting of the siege of Vienna in 1683 and 2) actions in league with the enemies of France (particularly the Dutch Republic and Great Britain), Austria’s rise to prominence was not a missed opportunity. It can instead be interpreted as an opportunity that was not carried far enough. Hochedlinger states that as of the 1730s, Austria “lacked the political, fiscal and military infrastructure to sustain her new role and accordingly suffered serious defeats, and its very existence was threatened” from all sides during the War of Austrian Succession.\textsuperscript{63} Karl Roider, who has also written on this topic,

\textsuperscript{61} Originally published in 2003, \textit{Austria’s Wars of Emergence} is an essential bibliographic tool for any scholar of early modern Austria and was further enhanced by Hochedlinger’s historiographical interludes. Hochedlinger released a revised historiographical and bibliographical discussion in 2011 for the later period of Habsburg history, from the French Revolutionary wars to the beginning of the First World War. See Michael Hochedlinger, “Kleine Quellenkunde zur österreichischen Militärgeschichte 1800-1914,” \textit{Glanz-Gewalt-Gehorsam: Militär und Gesellschaft in der Habsburgermonarchie (1800 bis 1918)}, eds. Laurence Cole, Christa Hämmerle, and Martin Scheutz (Essen: KlarText Verlag, 2011), 387-410.


\textsuperscript{62} Evans, \textit{Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs}, 12.

\textsuperscript{63} Hochedlinger, \textit{Austria’s Wars of Emergence}, 1.
focused his analysis on the (seemingly) frenetic nature of the Habsburg administration. Their influence within the German lands waning after 1648, the Habsburgs were presented with the opportunity to expand east. Even though the conflict in the west had concluded, the Ottoman Turks still represented the larger military and political threat to the stability and existence of the Habsburg Monarchy. Initial successes bled into a situation where, Roider argues, the Habsburgs were presented with an opportunity to take advantage of their conquests in the Balkans at the expense of the Ottoman Empire and failed to capitalize as a result of a disdain for ruling over non-Catholic, poor lands.64

Perhaps even more than a disdain for the lands east of Vienna was the potential for disinterest in the lands and states east and south of Vienna. The Habsburg dynasty originated in the area where modern-day Germany, Austria, and, Switzerland meet and had long-standing interests in the areas of western and central Europe—whether it was the long-lived Habsburg claim to (and, after 1715, interest in) the throne of Spain or the perennial power political competition with France and England in which the dynasty engaged. The Ottoman Empire, far from defeated, was still perceived as a lesser opponent in the grand scheme—in spite of the Ottoman’s abilities to hand the Habsburgs defeats during the war of 1735-1739 while the ascendant Russian state of Peter the Great and his children, was perceived as a great threat to the balance of power. Derek Beales, in an article reviewing Roider’s *Austria’s Eastern Question*, further supplemented the argument that by the mid-18th century Russian interests had become strong enough that “if success was to be won in the East, Vienna must be allied with Berlin,” which “was impossible until after 1763, and Kaunitz prevented it until the 1790s.”65

B. Studies regarding Desertion in the Early Modern Habsburg Monarchy

1. Historiography of Desertion in the Habsburg Monarchy

a. General Overview and the 19th and 20th centuries

The study of desertion is certainly not a new topic for military and non-military historians, even for the Habsburg Monarchy and the various states of Austria. Over the last 20 to 30 years, there has been a small amount of coverage of the legal and administrative treatment of desertion in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by historians of the Habsburgs and Austria. The document record from the later-19th and 20th centuries tends to include more printed sources, including both Gothic and modern Latin-based typefaces, and saw a dramatically decreased use of Latin, Italian, and French in official correspondence. Whether resulting from 1) a fascination with the decadence and decline of the Habsburgs in the 19th and 20th centuries, as István Deák has offered, 2) the comparative lack of heroic “military success after 1718”, as Michael Hochedlinger asked in 1999, or 3) from the increased availability and level of organization of the archival sources, there has been a tendency towards covering the 19th and 20th centuries over the pre-Napoleonic periods of Habsburg history.

66 German was the de facto official language of the Habsburg Monarchy, based on its privileged position within the Habsburg dynasty, but the widespread nature of the Habsburg holdings (and the cosmopolitan nature of the army’s officer corps) meant that it was common for correspondence to be written in other languages—in particular, French and Italian. Latin was the official language of correspondence for the Hungarian land until a short interlude in the 1840s and then permanently replaced after the Ausgleich in 1867. During the later eighteenth century, it was not uncommon for official publications, such as decrees, to be published in multiple languages, side-by-side. More and more sources after 1848 (particularly after 1867) would be published with multiple languages side by side, or solely in eastern European languages—though these attempts to include non-German languages were not always successful. For more information on the latter parts of the Monarchy, see Mark Cornwall, ed., The Last Years of Austria-Hungary. A Multi-National Experiment in Early Twentieth-Century Europe (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004) and Kann, History of the Habsburg Empire 1526-1918 (1974).

67 Deák, Beyond Nationalism, 222. Though more than a decade old at this point, Michael Hochedlinger’s 1999 article on the status of military history in Austria remains useful and provides numerous insights on
For the 19th century, one of the more prolific writers on military topics such as desertion has been Christoph Tepperberg, currently in charge of the Kriegsarchiv in Vienna, Austria. In a 1993 article, “Rechtsnormen zum “Verbrechen der Desertion” in der K.K. Armee, vornehmlich für die Zeit des Vormärz,” Tepperberg provides insight into the causes of and punishments for desertion in the early 19th century, particularly how desertion influenced military administration. Making use of the extant documents in the Kriegsarchiv, Tepperberg highlights how the prevalence of desertion influenced the processing of new recruits and how the Austrian (Habsburg) government administered the army. For example, using the records for Infantry Regiments No. 48 and No. 49 from 1814 to 1830, Tepperberg found that at least 10% of soldiers serving the Habsburgs deserted one or more times during their service. Though the life-term of service was generally abolished in the 19th century, the terms of service for soldiers were often quite long and exigent circumstances could lead to unilateral extensions of a soldier’s service. Regiments were often filled with members of the lowest classes, resulting from the “capriciousness” of the recruitment process and the “greater potential for advancement for the uneducated and illiterate” classes. Based on further analysis of the documents of Infantry Regiments No. 48 and No. 49, Tepperberg also found that 80% of soldiers listed their peacetime occupation as “ohne Profession” (without occupation) and their marital status as “ledig” (single)—both of which were indicators of a soldier coming from lower-class or poor background.


68 Muster lists and other administrative documents can be found for many regiments in the collections of the Kriegsarchiv under the heading “Personalunterlagen.” A list of all available document groups can be found in the Archive Information System (AIS) of the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv at www.oesta.gv.at.
70 Tepperberg, “Rechtsnormen,” 96.
in 1993 in the *Jahrbuch für Landeskunde von Niederösterreich*, one finds the crux of Tepperberg’s research regarding desertion—was desertion an isolated-yet-constant variable in military planning or a symptom of larger, more nuanced problems of military administration? Surveying cases and legal documents related to robbery, murder, and the activities of vagabond bands, he found that it was not uncommon for deserters to turn to crime, as both groups (criminal bands and the military) often drew from the same pool of persons. Tepperberg notes:

> Die Armee hatte also ein erhebliches, wenn auch ziffernmäßig nicht faßbares kriminelles Potential aufzuweisen. Militär und kriminelles Milieu hatten gewissermaßen eine personelle Schnittstelle.... Angehörige der unteren Volks-Classen waren es auch, die zusammen mit Bettlern, Landstreichen und zweifelhaften Existenzen, die dem Militär von der Gesellschaft zur Disziplinierung und Besserung übergeben worden waren, die Armee frequentirten. Ein kriminelles Reservoir bildete überdies auch jene Gruppe entlassener, beurlaubter und invalidier Soldaten, die sich nach den napoleonischer Kriegen nicht mehr in das Zivilleben einfügen konnten.71

Desertion was not an isolated phenomenon, but rather intricately tied into other social, economic, and political circumstances—in this case, the existence of criminal bands. It was not uncommon for the civil authorities in charge of recruitment to use the military as a dumping ground for vagabonds and “[b]esonders Leute mit schlechtem Lebenswandel, sogenannte *Malviventi.*”72 With military recruiters actively taking advantage of the lower and criminal classes, Tepperberg points out that it is not surprising that deserters could and did turn (or, in many cases, return) to lives of crime—both while under arms and while on the run from military authorities. Military recruiters, it should be noted, were often no better in their practices. In the 19th century, “the conditions of the unfortunate enlisted men” meant that “desertions were a common occurrence, and the mountainous regions, especially Carniola and Carinthia...provided shelter for many bands of deserters who constituted an intermittent threat to the security of the civilian...”

---

72 Tepperberg, “Räuber, Mörder, Deserteure,” 199.
population.” In the 18th century, Charles de Ligne, an Austrian field marshal (from Brussels) and friend of Joseph II, recommended setting up a recruiting table at county fairs and to wait several days after the beginning of the fair to start active recruiting. The logic was that, with the passage of time at the fair, where a man could readily find games of chance, alcohol, and women—a ‘potential’ soldier had plenty of time “to run out of money and get into fights” or otherwise become “only too keen to escape justice by enlisting in the army.” The need for soldiers exceeded the number of volunteers and ‘good-charactered’ conscripts that armies of the 18th and 19th centuries, such as that of the Habsburg Monarchy, were often forced to make do with ‘sub-standard’ soldiers.

One of the more ambitious studies of desertion in the context of the Habsburgs and Austria was Gudrun Exner’s 1997 dissertation at the University of Vienna, which was published in 1998 as Deserteure im Vormärz: Eine computerunterstütze Untersuchung der Grundbuchblätter des vierten Infanterieregiments (Hoch- und Deutschmeister) für die Jahre 1820 bis 1840. Exner’s study makes use of the greater availability of muster lists and administrative documents in the early 19th century to provide both a qualitative and quantitative analysis of desertion within one regiment over the course of 20 years. Beyond providing quantitative insight into the functions of the 4th Infanterie Regiment between 1820 and 1840, Exner also provides an excellent review of the secondary literature and the historical uses of desertion in literature. In regards to the reasoning behind individual cases for desertion, Exner points out that one of major difficulties in studying desertion is that it was often used, whether in popular literature or

---

73 Gunther Rothenburg, *Army of Francis Joseph*, 14. Rothenburg also states: “To be conscripted into the ranks was regarded as a disaster and indeed the life of the common soldier was harsh and had few compensations.” See 13-14.
75 For more discussion on the calculations that went into making such decisions, see Sanders Marble, ed., *Scraping the Barrel: The Military Use of Sub-Standard Manpower, 1860-1960* (Fordham University Press, 2012).
academic studies, as a catch-all for persons that refused to serve—regardless of their individual motives:

Die Motive, die zur Desertionführten, waren zu vielfältig, als dass man den Deserteur in überhöhter Weise auf den Typus des Helden, Widerstandskämpfers, Rebellen, Individualisten o.ä. reduzieren könnte. Es gab unter den Fahnenflüchtigen auch Kriminelle und Leichtsinnige, die beispielsweise desertierten, um der Strafe für ein von ihnen verübtes Gewaltverbrechen zu entgehen oder um sich bein einem anderen Regiment nochmals anwerben zu lassen, damit sie mit dem Werbgeld für einige Zeit ein lustiges Leben führen konnten. Andere wieder dürfte mit ihrer Desertion gar keine höheren Ziele verfolgt haben, sondern reagierten auf einen momentanen Auslöser und ergriffen die Flucht, ohne lange Überlegungen anzustellen.77

Desertion, rather than always being characteristic of a soldier’s decision to leave service, became a catchall for any of the social or mental maladies that drove soldiers to not fight or stay in garrison. “In Service of the State”, like Exner’s own work, seeks to break down (or, at the very minimum, problematize) these oversimplifications.

The House of Habsburg and Austria would play a large role in the eventual defeat of Napoleon and in the maintenance of the European balance of power in the early 19th century—it was during this period that the Habsburg army reached its third stage of development, in the words and historical model of Gunther Rothenberg, when it became “a reliable state instrument capable of withstanding the strain of the Prussian and French wars.”78 Yet, revolutions in the 1840s and defeat at the hands of the Prussians in the 1860s greatly damaged Austria’s prestige abroad by showing its inability to conduct effective military operations. Though it may have been a slightly exaggerated to say that Austria had sunk to the level of a “second rate Oriental power”—one Austrian general was quoted as saying “We have sunk to the level of Turkey”—the problems faced by the Habsburg Monarchy in Austria-Hungary would continue to grow. The Prussians introduced a different method of conducting a war in the 1860s and their enemies—the Danish, the Austrians, and the French—were too slow in adapting to the changes in strategy and

77 Exner, *Deserteure im Vormärz*, 9.
tactics, too often finding themselves on the defensive and incapable of preventing flanking assaults. The period before 1866 was marked by the leadership and institutions of Benedek. After 1866, there were attempts to reform the Austrian army and its organizational structure along Prussian lines: tactics to be changed, weapons updated, and leaders changed. By 1869, however, Field Marshal Albrecht (Habsburg, Duke of Teschen) had noted the problem with the Austrian army was in its training and that what was lacking was “responsibility at all levels, by the far the most important thing in war.”\textsuperscript{79} Albrecht was Generalinspektor (Inspector General) for the Austro-Hungarian army until his death in 1895 and would order:

\begin{quote}
...fewer parades, more practical training, and an end to the rigid \textit{Formalismus} that had set in during Benedek’s years in Verona. Austrian officers, [he] insisted, would have to learn to plan and execute sensible operations in the Prussian style; Austrian men would have to learn to stand their ground and stop being so exasperatingly \textit{desertionslustig}.\textsuperscript{80}
\end{quote}

Yet the very nature of the Dual Monarchy after the 1867 \textit{Ausgleich}, divided in many ways but united in others, meant that maintaining high standards in recruiting, equipping, and training soldiers across the entire state was difficult. These combined difficulties meant that Austro-Hungarian army would “crumble under Serbian and Russian blows” when the Great War broke out in 1914.\textsuperscript{81}

The Austro-Hungarian army would, like the state it protected and served, be strained to the breaking point during World War I. The Habsburgs struggled to deal with the Serbians early, found some defeats at the hands of the Russians, and needed support from the Germans throughout the war to stabilize several fronts, including in the conflict with the Italians.\textsuperscript{82} Mobilization on the grand scale necessary for ‘total war’ was, in some ways, not achieved by the Habsburgs. In particular, they were late and oftentimes half-hearted in their attempts to actively ...
mobilize their political and propaganda resources—a gap that their enemies were all-too-willing to fill for them and that would have a major impact on the number of soldiers deserting from the Habsburgs. Mark Cornwall, noted historian of the late Habsburg Monarchy and its military, pointed out that, without having a clear set of propaganda, educational, and national goals at the start of the war, Austria-Hungary found itself constantly in a reactive position and therefore ultimately incapable of holding itself together under the weight of their enemies’ assaults. The combination of Austria-Hungary’s ineffective military positions and the propaganda efforts of its enemies created a crisis of desertion by 1917. By the summer of 1917, the number of soldiers deserting brought about an official investigation by the commander of the Tyrolean front. Conrad von Hötzendorf, who had served as army’s Chief of Staff until his removal in March 1917, would later describe propaganda as “the greatest example of stupidity which has ever been exhibited by the human race”—though he would grudgingly admit to its effectiveness. In that region, the first six months of 1917 saw 115 desertions, yet the following two months alone saw 82 desertions.

Starting at the beginning of the war in 1914, the predominantly-German officer corps tended to blame desertions and disciplinary issues on nationalist tropes and ethnic stereotypes, with the Armeeoberkommando (AOK) generally recommending that troops of Serbian, Czech, Romanian, and Ruthene heritage be mixed with “more reliable groups,” such as: Germans, Magyars, Croats, Slovenes, and Poles. A September 15, 1917 report to the AOK cited “internal factors in the administration of the war” as causes of the desertions—to be considered “apart from nationalist agitation and war-weariness”—of the increased desertion on the Italian front. In particular, the report cited: the use of a general amnesty in July 1917 and the (temporary)

---

84 Cornwall, “Morale and patriotism,” 179. After his removal as Chief of Staff, Hötzendorf would be placed in command of the South Tyrolean front before his final removal in July 1918. For more information on the late Imperial army, see Rothenburg, Army of Francis Joseph (1976).
abolition of two frequently-used, brutal punishments (tying up and chaining up), which “meant that field commanders were left with only the possibility of placing malcontents in ‘labour units’.”85 The report went further to blame the depletion of manpower reserves, which tended to bring less-disciplined soldiers and a “…steady influx of ‘unreliable elements’ from the hinterland.”86 By the end of World War I, Mark Cornwall points out that Austro-Hungarian policies towards returning prisoners-of-war, which included some 500,000 after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918, were helping swell “the bands of deserters…, while those who returned to their units fomented unrest and were, on the whole, responsible for the six major rebellions which took place in the interior in May 1918.”87

In response to the need to increase the “patriotic education” of soldiers, the AOK took two noteworthy actions to help stem rising dissention amongst the troops. Early in the war, the standard “patriotic education” practices of the Austro-Hungarian army was that officers would engage soldiers in personal conversations “in order to gain insight into the psyche, mentality, and level of intelligence of his subordinates…[to] discover the destructive elements, socialists, anti-militarists, etc.,…[to] paralyse their damaging influence.” Furthermore, the Kriegspressequartier drew up a weekly journal to provide supplementary patriotic education as a non-government publication. However, there were only German and Hungarian editions, with a Czech edition being a translation of the other editions. In the words of Mark Cornwall, historian of the Dual Monarchy:

It was a major irony that in a multi-national empire the authorities could not produce a multi-national literature. But it was also the case that to do so, and to appeal realistically to individual national sentiments among the armed forces, could now have the effect of

85 Cornwall, “Morale and patriotism,” 177. ‘Tying up’ and ‘chaining up’ were frequent types of punishments among militaries of the time, generally involving a soldier being tied or chained to a fixed object, oftentimes with arms or legs in stretched or stressed positions. These two specific punishments would be reinstated “under extraordinary circumstances” by Chief of Staff Arz von Straussenburg after a naval mutiny at Cattaro in early 1918. See ibid, 178.
86 Cornwall, “Morale and patriotism,” 178.
87 Cornwall, “Morale and patriotism,” 183.
undermining the very patriotic outlook [of pro-Habsburg] which the AOK wished to instill.88

The tendency to blame the “hinterland” or internal dissent for the problems at the front would carry throughout the war for Austria-Hungary. Officers (Unterrichtsoffiziere) from the official education department (Feindespropaganda Abwehrstelle) were hamstrung in their abilities to address the concerns of soldiers at the front. They could not address domestic political or national issues, viewed as too controversial or potentially subversive, and were to instead focus on the maintenance of discipline, through punishment and shaming those that thought of or attempted to desert. The concerted lack of “patriotic education” combined with acute shortages in supplies and food left Austro-Hungarian soldiers of every nationality susceptible to desertion and many chose to do so—with estimates suggesting that over 250,000 deserters were “roaming around the interior and sheltered by the local population.”89

Desertion by the soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian Empire during World War I was driven by a multitude of factors. Food and equipment shortages brought on by internal distribution problems and external trade difficulties imposed by the Allies created discontent throughout the entire state. Furthermore, as the war progressed, the Monarchy’s decision (or non-decision) to not promote a coherent narrative of political goals through expanded education and propaganda opened up Austro-Hungarian soldiers to all sorts of predation—internal forces of dissention and external propaganda campaigns rallied nationalist and separatist sentiments that brought many soldiers to desert. Whether deserters went individually to escape the harshness of life on the front or en masse desertions to units fighting for the Entente powers, such as the Czechoslovak Legions, deserters were motivated by a variety of factors, not all of which could be directly controlled by the military-administrative bodies of Austria-Hungary. In the case of the infamous en masse desertions by Infantry Regiment No. 28 in April 1915 to the Russians,

88 Cornwall, “Morale and patriotism,” 184.
89 Cornwall, “Morale and patriotism,” 184-190.
nationalist sentiments and anger over mistreatment drove the predominantly Czech soldiers to rebel against their predominantly Hungarian officer corps. A member of the Kriegspressequartier would comment in 1918, before the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, that the lack of discernible propaganda goals, except for the maintenance of “preserving existing conditions…would rapidly cause internal antagonism.” This would haunt Austria-Hungary until its dissolution in 1918 as pieces of the Dual Monarchy, fed up with their participation in the war and their treatment under the Habsburgs, deserted like the soldiers disillusioned by defeats and food shortages at the front.

\[b. Desertion in the Eighteenth Century\]

For the Habsburgs in the 18th century, desertion has generally been treated more episodically than the 19th and 20th centuries, though this is not entirely for lack of effort by scholars. The writing of military history after World War II was perceived as too wrapped up in nationalism and militarism, topics seen as taboo in the former Axis countries. As such, Austrian scholars did not focus much on military history—modern politics and medieval topics, as mentioned earlier, were perceived as safer. This meant that for the better part of 30 to 40 years, many of the histories of the Habsburg military were written by non-Austrian scholars. This means that there is a general dearth of labor- and archive-intensive quantitative studies of the military of the Habsburg Monarchy for scholars, both inside and outside of Austria, to use as bases for their studies. The sources for document-intensive, quantitative studies of muster lists,

---

90 Rudolf Jeřábek, “The Eastern Front 1914-1918,” in Cornwall, Last Years of Austria-Hungary, 115. Jeřábek’s contention is that the 3 April 1915 desertion from this regiment should not have come as a surprise to anyone, as the investigation afterwards found “a string of blunders and mishandling of soldiers of Czech nationality (from Prague and its surroundings) by Hungarian officers.” Nevertheless, that would not stop commentators from blaming the Czechs as a whole and spur resentment in other quarters.

91 Cornwall, “Morale and patriotism,” 190.

92 For more information on military and diplomatic history in post-World War II Germany and Austria, see Hochedlinger, “Bella gerant alii,” 237-77.
desertion reports, and auxiliary force reports exist in the archives of the successor states of the Habsburg Monarchy—they just await scholars to take advantage of them. 93 In the introduction to his two-volume work on Joseph II, Derek Beales pointed out one of the fundamental problems of being a foreigner and doing Habsburg history:

> Historians based within the lands of the [former] Monarchy can spend much longer in their archives than foreign students dependent on travel grants and sabbatical leave. I must have missed points that are obvious to those who live on the spot and speak some of the languages fluently.94

Expediency, whether in the breadth or types of sources used, will always create difficulties for foreign scholars—though some scholars within Austria are working to rectify this situation by creating reference works for military historians.95

Regarding desertion and discipline in the early modern Habsburg Monarchy, there are several studies worth noting. While Michael Hochedlinger’s important Austria’s Wars of Emergence (2003) provides both introductory and in-depth coverage of a large number of topics, desertion is not covered to the same extent as the wars fought or state of the Habsburg Monarchy’s finances during the eighteenth century. In general, desertion was covered under...

---

93 Christopher Duffy, one of the most important 20th-century scholars of the Habsburg military, found that the issues with muster lists can be broken down into two categories: availability and quality. In his titanic work Instrument of War (2000), he found that he had to make critical decisions regarding which muster lists to use based on what was available, “which made it necessary to look for the best remaining sets closest to the target date.” As such, Duffy stated that the quantitative information presented is “the product of a number of a number [sic] of subjective decisions.” Furthermore, in regards to the quality of the quantitative materials used fall “short of modern statistical standards.” While the quality and quantity of available muster lists might speak against their use, Duffy had this to say about their use: “I was persuaded to go ahead [with using them] when I recalled the range of information which has survived in the muster lists, and nowhere else [italics added], and by the truly massive bulk of that information; after all, ‘quantity has its own quality.’ We will probably not go far astray if we are content to regard the evidence of the muster lists as the equivalent of anecdotal evidence of a higher standard.” Duffy, Instrument of War, 479.


95 For example, Dr. Antonio Schmidt-Brentano undertook the herculean task of sifting through a massive number of archival and secondary documents to produce two documents, available from the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv’s webpage (http://www.oesta.gv.at). The first, “Kaiserliche und k.k. Generale (1618-1815)” is a 112-page list of generals and flag officers that served the Habsburgs, including the known dates of their promotions and titles. The second document, “Personenregister,” is an index of the persons and officers from the “Standardwerk zur Organisationsgeschichte der kaiserlichen, kaiserlich-königlichen und schließlich kaiserlichen und königlichen Armee” (p. 2)—Alphons Freiherr von Wrede and Anton Semek’s Geschichte der k. und k. Wehrmacht (5 vol., Vienna 1898-1905, reprinted in Starnberg, 1985).
either 1) the general rubrics of military justice in the development of the standing army in the
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and 2) the difficulties associated with accurately counting
the number of soldiers under arms at any given time. Hochedlinger notes that there “is not much
on military justice” and notes a tendency towards generalities regarding the development of
Kriegsartikeln ("Articles of War") in the German lands.96 Systemic changes to the Kriegsartikeln
were few and far between, with the Kriegsartikeln of 1673 in force until 1808, “only slightly
amended and modified by subsequent service regulations.” As a result of the mercenary and
proprietorship roots of the Habsburg army in the seventeenth century, military discipline was
often at the discretion of the regiment’s commanding officers. This trend would continue into the
eighteenth century until the Habsburgs developed a system of professional lawyers and courts to
deal with military infractions. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were marked by an ever-
increasing centralization of authority and the decision-making processes regarding military
discipline and administration—for example, regimental proprietors saw their influence decline,
particularly in regards to the choice of officers, and lower officers found themselves limited in the
types of and amounts of discipline they could dispense.97

Discipline in the early modern army was brutal—though some of the worst excesses of
 corporal punishment were expressly forbidden, officers “were more or less expected to give their

96 Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 148. For further reading on the subject, see: Wilhelm
Erben, “Ursprung und Entwicklung der deutschen Kriegsartikel,” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für
Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, suppl. vol. 6 (1901): 473-529; Reinhard Baumann, *Landesknechte. Ihre
Geschichte und Kultur vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Dreißigjährigen Krieg* (Munich 1994); Peter
Rolle der stehenden Heer innerhalb der frühneuzeitlichen Gesellschaft,” *Klio in Uniform? Probleme und
Perspektiven einer modernen Militärgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Ralf Pröve
(Cologne/Weimar/Vienna 1997), 5-34.
97 As of 1838, company commanders were limited to handing out 25 strokes with a cane, battalion
commanders limited to 40 strokes, and regimental commanders limited to 50 strokes. In 1855, those
numbers were reduced to 20, 30, and 40 respectively. The aforementioned 1838 law limited the number of
soldiers to be used in a gauntlet run to 30 and reduced the maximum number of gauntlet runs to 100,
though the duration could be allowed to go over several weeks—before this point, the duration, severity,
and count of strikes were not limited. Two other punishable offenses were striking an officer (70 strokes)
inferiors the stick to uphold discipline.” Underlying this brutality, however, there was an appreciation that a trained soldier was a “valuable resource,” making capital punishment for desertion a rarity. As Hochedlinger’s 2003 work is primarily a historiographical one, he does not provide any exact numbers. The causes of desertion could vary greatly, though it can be argued that one consistent factor in desertion was the fortune of the army in which the soldier served. For the Habsburg and Austrian generals, the importance of battlefield success would dominate discussions relating to the standing army—and, indeed, would play a role in how historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries framed their arguments regarding the efficacy of Habsburg political and military organization. However, where “In Service of the State” pushes the field forward is by heeding (and attempting to answer) the question posed by Michael Hochedlinger almost two decades ago: “Is it really the fascination of decadence and decline…that makes the study of the Austro-Hungarian armed forces…still an attractive undertaking, while little (if anything) is being written on the early modern Habsburg army, which, though lacking in military success after 1718, did have considerable achievements to record?”

2. Limits and Lacunae

a. What about the role of religion?

Lamentably, there is one aspect of the Habsburg military experience that remains underexplored and, as such, is not fully fleshed out as part of this dissertation’s analysis: the role of religion and religious experience. In a state so well known in annals of European history for its staunch association with the Catholic Church across the centuries, it is more than fair to ask why religion would not play a much larger role in the analysis of Habsburg military organization,

action, or inaction. In a large part, this is the result of the source material that the Hofkriegsrat has left behind for scholars to use. Issues of religion, theology, and spiritual affiliation were not generally addressed in the types of reports and correspondence sent back to the central military administration. The desertion reports and their related correspondence do not generally address religious issues, such as discontent among soldiers with non-Catholic backgrounds, as worthy of discussion unless it is specifically raised during an investigation relating to a deserter. References to religious issues can be found in the reports—for example, in March 1774, there was the case of Paul Sieber (specifically addressed in Chapter 3, as a member of the Coburg Dragoon Regiment) who was unable to go on furlough to visit an Evangelical service. Yet that report is by a wide margin the exception rather than the rule.

By and large, however, the issues of the state’s religion and a soldier’s religious beliefs are central to the narratives told by the sources. Religion provided a basis for social unity and social separation, the development of family units and community standards. So what are the implications of this lacuna for the study in particular and for its relation to the field as a whole? The dominance of Catholicism in Habsburg military affairs was part of a two-fold shift during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and was in many ways a direct outgrowth of the development of the early modern Habsburg Monarchy. The early Habsburg monarchs were tightly bound to the Catholic Church, as a mark of personal piety for some and a political calculation vis-à-vis international relations. Habsburg monarchs of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries maintained a close relationship with the Society of Jesus in their personal and professional lives.

---


101 Regarding the role of the Jesuits during the Thirty Years’ War and the influence wielded by the Jesuits during the seventeenth century, which would carry through into parts of the eighteenth century, see Robert Bireley, *The Jesuits and the Thirty Years War: Kings, Courts, and Confessors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
Yet, in spite of some of their best efforts during Counter-Reformation, the Habsburgs did not rule over a uniformly Catholic populace. Particularly in military affairs during the Thirty Years’ War, with many of the soldiers and generals serving the Habsburgs hailing originally from non-Catholic parts of the Holy Roman Empire, the Habsburgs could not afford to be completely dogmatic regarding religion in their military affairs. The expedience of religious toleration for generals made sense for the Habsburgs during the height of the Thirty Years’ War. Of the two most successful and infamous military leaders that served the Habsburgs during this period, Albrecht von Wallenstein was a convert and Peter Melander von Holzappel was a Calvinist. Before and during the Thirty Years’ War, the social and economic makeup of armies was as much a reflection of the circumstances under which they were created and the men that led them. After the war, however, when the Habsburgs moved towards the ‘professionalization’ of the standing army—an army recruited, staffed, supplied, and paid for by the state rather than a military enterpriser such as Wallenstein—officers looking to advance needed to look to their leadership for inspiration and guidance. To stay in the good graces of the Emperor, many officers


found conversion to Catholicism to be an expedient step. For the rank-and-file soldiers of the Habsburgs, the dominance of the Catholic confession was in large part an outgrowth of the army’s demographics in the afterwar period. Recruitment quotas resulted from the power dynamics that influenced negotiations between the Monarchy and the regions under its control, with a greater number of soldiers being drawn from the areas where the Habsburgs had the greatest influence. This meant an overrepresentation of the Austrian and Bohemian core lands, areas that either remained Catholic after 1517 or that were forcibly returned to Catholic predominance in the century and a half of conflict that followed.104

What then of the religious life of the Protestant soldiers that served the Emperor?105 Indeed many Protestants must have served, as the Habsburgs frequently recruited from many of the predominantly Protestant free cities of the Holy Roman Empire. If those soldiers were lucky enough to be in the vicinity of a non-Catholic church, they would have to find ways to exercise their religion outside of the confines of the military. Two well-known possibilities were 1) the chapels of ‘foreign’ auxiliaries or 2) the chapels in the embassies of Protestant countries in Vienna, but, as Hochedlinger noted in 2003, “…the former were not allowed to conduct services in public, while the latter [would have been] accessible to higher officers at most.” At the same time, the daily experience and routines of all soldiers, regardless of their personal beliefs, were Catholic in nature, being obligated “to take part in Roman Catholic rites: morning, noon and evening prayers, Mass on Sundays and religious holidays, obligatory confessions and a general absolution on the eve of the battle.” Protestant leaders were also required “to appoint a Catholic—mostly Jesuit—priest as regimental chaplain.”106

104 Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 136-137.
105 Implied yet unaddressed by this question are the issues faced by non-Christians (Jews and Muslims), Orthodox Christians, and members of other non-Catholic or non-Protestant confessions (Uniates). For example, the Monarchy’s population of Jews greatly increased with the addition of Galicia. After 1788, Jews could be drafted, for short periods, into the army. See Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 275-276.
106 Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 137.
With the prevalence of these Jesuit chaplains with Habsburg regiments, then why does “In Service of the State” use so few of the records they might have produced? The chaplains for many regiments produced voluminous records over the course of time. For regimental recordkeeping purposes, the most important of these would be 1) their personal writings or journals (Tagebücher) and 2) the regiment’s military metric books (Militärmatriken). Generally written by the regimental chaplain, Militärmatriken were logbooks of all of the births, marriages, and deaths to take place within a regiment and its dependents. As a result of the major purposes served by these books, they were also known as Tauf-, Trauungs- und Sterbebücher (lit. baptism-, marriage- and death books). The chaplains also generally kept Tagebücher of all of the events and news related to the regiment, as well as information regarding any relevant correspondence with Vienna or their own Catholic order. These records, however, were not, as a rule, automatically records to be held by the state. If they were not retained by the regiment as property in accordance with guidance from a regiment’s patron-proprietor (or the Hofkriegsrat in Vienna), they might just as likely have been retained by the local bishopric—as a religious record for the area—or sent to the archives or headquarters of the chaplain’s order—as part of a chaplain’s personal papers and effects. It was not until 1816 that regimental chaplains were required to keep these types of records in duplicate and send them to the central military religious administration (das Apostolische Feldvikariat).107

What effects does this reality of the source material have on this study and the study of desertion? The greatest effect it has is on the qualitative nature of the story told about religion, as it means that the colorful and potentially insightful narratives told by the personal writings of Habsburg regimental chaplains during the eighteenth century are potentially spread across the entirety of the former Habsburg Monarchy, with no easy-to-access central repository for scholars to use—particularly regarding those operating outside of the Habsburg successor states. Quantitatively, the same can be said for the Militärmatriken, of which the Austrian State Archives in Vienna have a small number from various units, but none in a sufficient quantity or concentration as to be able to provide insight into longitudinal patterns. Providing a sufficiently quantitative or qualitatively robust accounting of the activities of the chief military religious figures serving during this period was beyond the scope of this research project. In highlighting this research lacuna, “In Service of the State” lays the groundwork for future scholars to develop the necessary resources, historiographical support, and historical framework to someday tell the story of how the multiconfessional religious experiences of Habsburg soldiers intersects with the study of desertion.

b. What about the role of serfdom?

For soldiers serving in any European state, from the Middle Ages through the nineteenth century in some areas, the institution of serfdom was an unavoidable influence on the social,

---

108 Beyond the issues of the number of extant examples, the use of Militärmatriken by scholars for military research is made more difficult by the restrictions placed on their use by the Austrian government. The Austrian State Archives provides the following guidance regarding the use of Militärmatriken by researchers at their facilities: “Da es sich bei den Matriken nicht um Archivalien im Sinne des Bundesarchivgesetzes, sondern um Personenstandsunterlagen im Sinne des Personenstandsgesetzes handelt, stehen die Findmittel dem Benutzer nicht im Lesesaal zur Verfügung. Die Einsichtnahme in die Findmittel und in die Militärmatriken erfolgt gegen Voranmeldung in separaten Räumlichkeiten unter Aufsicht des Personenstandsbeamten.” ÖSTA. “AT-OeSTA/KA Matr Militärmatriken (Matr), 1618-1938 (Bestandsgruppe).” Accessed 23 January 2016.  
political, and economic dynamics of armies. Serfdom, or Leibeigenschaft, is a monolithic historical concept for what, in practice, was really representative of a multitude of social, political, and economic organizing practices—as P.G.M. Dickson argued in the late 1980s, “peasant society in general is...recognized as complex and heterogeneous.” The rules, regulations, and customs that guided what peasants could and could not do varied between states and over the course of reigns of specific rulers. Serfdom, or the condition of being considered a member of the peasantry, was different in Bavaria—characterized as Grundherrschaft, or administrative dependence but relative freedom to cultivate the land—than in states like Mecklenburg or Pomerania—more likely to be characterized as a Gutswirtschaft or the lack of freedom, Leibeigenschaft. In Galicia—where officially serfdom did not exist, yet was abolished during the state’s partition—the restrictions were so onerous that a peasant’s only option was to flee. If a peasant could flee for one year and a day, they would officially be considered lost to their lord.

The institution of serfdom, or the idea of a peasant bound to the land, combined the many layers of obligation—both physical and economic—that the different layers of the Habsburg state held: whether it was the robot / Arbeit (the lord or state’s compulsory labor requirements), taxation (in kind or currency), or military service. As already stated, the different constitutional relationships that the Habsburgs had with each part of the state reflected the effects Leibeigenschaft (or its relatives) had on the populace and state. For example, the restrictions placed on the movement of peasants within the Monarchy necessary to enforce the ‘serf economies’ made the efficient use of labor difficult and, with an increasing population and demand for goods, the impracticalities of a system based on forced labor pointed towards the need for change. One Austrian historian noted that while “humanitarian outrage at the oppression

---

109 Dickson, Finance and Government 1, 116.
110 Dickson, Finance and Government 1, 115.
111 Dickson, Finance and Government 1, 120.
of the peasant population did…influence policymakers…,” it was the practical considerations that forced change.\textsuperscript{112} Throughout the 1780s, Joseph II moved to abolish the compulsory labor system that underpinned serfdom across the Monarchy, with varying levels of success as it was resisted in some areas more than others.\textsuperscript{113}

What influence, if any, did the shift away from Leibeigenschaft have on military recruitment, administration, and desertion? That is a difficult question to answer and one that deserves greater examination by future scholars. This is because the attempts to abolish serfdom came at the same time as many other large shifts in the organization of the Habsburg state and army. In direct response to the failures (both actual and perceived) of the military’s many arms during the wars with Prussia, the recruitment system changed over the period in question. The system for allocating recruiting quotas (\textit{Konskriptions- und Werbbeizirkssystem}) took over ten years to be fully functional in parts of the Monarchy. Each change in the recruiting system brought about social and economic incentives or disincentives to serve in the army. As early as the 1760s, parts of the Monarchy functioned on voluntary enlistment while others had compulsory service or recruitment quotas.

One of the most important shifts in military administrative policy during the 1700s had great social and economic consequences for the Monarchy: the enshrinement of a furlough system for the standing army. Furlough, a system of allowing soldiers capable of working in agriculture or trades to spend only a few weeks a year under arms, greatly expanded the ability of the Habsburg army to organize and recruit armies. By training soldiers and then allowing them to spend most of their time away from the army, they could shift the financial burden of a soldier’s maintenance on to the soldier. The popularity and importance of the system cannot be denied—

\textsuperscript{112} Hochedlinger, \textit{Austria’s Wars of Emergence}, 273.

\textsuperscript{113} As Hochedlinger pointed out, the western German territories were more likely (though not universally) to have already adjusted to a cash payment option instead of service. See Hochedlinger, \textit{Austria’s Wars of Emergence}, 274.
by the early 1780s, almost 20% of the Habsburg army was granted some type of furlough.

Furthermore, soldiers trained and inculcated into a state program of service and loyalty could act as evangelizers for social discipline, while providing the necessary kernel for future growth of the army’s strength. Other changes brought about during this period included: the first major cartographic efforts of the Monarchy, the first major census, changes to the manorial prerogatives of landlords, and changes to the taxation and service systems. The development of a reliable census, while placed in the backdrop of a system designed to promote the productivity of merchants, tradesmen, and farmers, also provided the means for the state to better track men aged 18 to 40 for military service—and decide which groups would bear the brunt of service.

The influence of serfdom, in the areas where it actually existed and as conceptual catchall where it did not, on eighteenth-century military policy and military historiography cannot be denied. As Joseph II found in his attempts to change it, it was not as simple as decreeing limits on the amount of labor a peasant could be compelled to perform. Changing it would be a slow process, involving many moving parts as the society upon which the system was built adapted to new circumstances. While “In Service of the State” does not specifically address the social implications of serfdom, it does address in Chapters 4 and 5 the development of furlough systems on military recruitment and retention. “In Service of the State” lays the groundwork for future scholars to develop the necessary resources and historiographical framework to tell the story of

---

115 Dickson, *Finance and Government* 1, 27.
116 To better understand the scope of Maria Theresa and Joseph II’s attempts to change the Habsburg Monarchy, P.G.M. Dickson’s two-volume *Finance and Government under Maria Theresia 1740-1780* (1987) and Derek Beales’ two-volume *Joseph II* (1987, 2009) are the best Anglophone references. For an examination of the military’s relationship to the state as of the 1770s, the special edition (Sonderband 8) of the *Mitteilungen des Österreichisches Staatsarchivs* edited by Michael Hochedlinger and Anton Tantner provides great insight: “der größte Teil der Untertanen lebt elend und mühselig” Die Berichte des Hofkriegrates zur sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Lage der Habsburgermonarchie 1770-1771” (2005). See also Erich Zöllner’s edited volume *Österreich im Zeitalter des aufgeklärten Absolutismus* (Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1983).
how major shifts in social and economic organization affect the military, particularly how militaries bring soldiers in and prevent them from leaving.

C. Studies Regarding Desertion in other European Contexts

1. Desertion and the Development of the Standing Army in Early Modern Europe

a. The Military Enterpriser and Simplicissimus

One aspect of desertion that requires mention is how desertion changed for European armies over time—in particular, how did changes in the recruitment and organization of armies affect the tendencies of soldiers to desert and the actions of commanders and administrators to prevent or punish desertion? By the 1700s, the existence of the state-controlled standing army, “officered by elites, its rank-and-file made up of men who enlisted for increasingly long periods of service” was the norm for most European states.\(^{117}\) Whether the recruitment system in question was the feudal levy or the mercenary system of military enterprisers that marked much of the early modern period, desertion (like many other disciplinary issues) could be seen as a function of the structure and execution of a military system.\(^{118}\) Fritz Redlich noted three characteristics regarding the recruitment and payment of soldiers that played a role in the effectiveness of an early-to-mid-17\(^{th}\) century army. First, the use of recruitment policies, such as the Kontribution common in the German lands, that are “a parasite on the civilian population among whom [the army] was quartered” will lead to soured relations—an army that does not


\(^{118}\) For information on desertion during the Middles Ages through the era of Thirty Years’ War, see the following works: Peter Burschel, *Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 1994); the collected chapter contributions in Ulrich Bröckling and Michael Sikora, *Armeen und ihre Deserteure: Vernachlässigte Kapitel einer Militärgeschichte der Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 1998).
have the support of the population that supports it will have a difficult time procuring the
necessary levels of supply. Second, an army’s tactical and strategic usefulness was generally
proportional to its ability to sustain supplies and wage payments: “An army could not move into
nor sustain itself in an exhausted theater of war…. An army which could not be fed and would
not be paid would dissolve or riot.” Third, and “probably most important” in Redlich’s opinion,
“discipline…was a function of the punctuality of wage payments.”\textsuperscript{119}

While Redlich is correct to assert the importance of timely payment mechanisms in a
mercenary system, it is worth keeping in mind the importance of other supply and battlefield
issues—as Redlich himself pointed out, one need look no further than Grimmelshausen’s
\textit{Simplicissimus} and the narrator’s conversations with the character Oliver for confirmation of the
early modern mercenary soldier’s ‘predicaments’:

\begin{quote}
I up and away to Lippstadt and there took service with the Hessians: yet there I
remained not long, where none could trust me, but tramped away further to the Dutch.
And there did I find, ‘tis true, more punctual payment, but too slow a war for my humour:
for there were we kept in like monks and must live as chastely as nuns…\textsuperscript{120}
\end{quote}

Oliver would then go on to state that he was a serial deserter, not above committing other acts of
indiscipline or crimes:

\begin{quote}
So since I could no more shew my face among either Imperials, Swedes or Hessians, had
I been willing wantonly to run the risk, as having deserted from all three, and since I
could now no longer stay with the Hollanders, having violently deflowered a maiden,
which act seemed likely presently to bring about its results, I thought to take refuge with
the Spaniards…\textsuperscript{121}
\end{quote}

The image of the soldier as low-born, lacking in morals, and prone to violence is one with deep
roots, across time and space, and one that has generally resonated well amongst historians and
literary figures.

\textsuperscript{119} Redlich, \textit{German Military Enterpriser}, 509.
\textsuperscript{120} H.J.C. von Grimmelshausen, \textit{The Adventurous Simplicissimus}, trans. A.T.S. Goodrick (London:
Heinemann, 1912), Book IV, Ch. XIX. Italics added. Text taken from “The Simplicissimus Project” at
http://rbsche.people.wm.edu/teaching/grimmelshausen/index.html.
\textsuperscript{121} H.J.C. von Grimmelshausen, \textit{The Adventurous Simplicissimus}, trans. A.T.S. Goodrick (London:
Heinemann, 1912), Book IV, Ch. XIX. Italics added. Text taken from “The Simplicissimus Project” at
http://rbsche.people.wm.edu/teaching/grimmelshausen/index.html.
The indiscipline of soldiers in the 16th and 17th centuries that led many such as Oliver to desert, however, was not always viewed as worthy of systemic draconian crackdowns. While some military scientists and commanders viewed deserting soldiers as deserving of punishment, one of the Philip IV’s advisors, Don Sancho de Zúñiga y Monroy, Marquis of Castañeda, took a wider view of the causes of desertion—especially when the alternatives to desertion were considered. In response to one of Philip’s advisors recommending that all of the borders be sealed to prevent desertion from the Army of Flanders, Castañeda argued:

> Even if it were possible [he told the council] to put such a plan into action – which he doubted – and close all the exits from the Netherlands and all the entries into Spain and Italy, desertion springs principally from the ill-treatment and necessity which characterize the Army of Flanders. The oppression, and the impossibility of escaping from it, would therefore lead to a reappearance of the Flanders mutinies. Those would indeed provide [the soldiers] with the freedom of leave – and with the money to do so! Since experience had shown the great inconvenience of all that, surely it was better to permit the troops to enter the service of the rebels or of other princes suspect to His Majesty.  

In Castañeda’s opinion, common soldiers in the 16th and 17th centuries generally had only two options for redressing grievances: running away or fighting back, desertion or mutiny. As the Spanish found out repeatedly during their wars to hold on to the Netherlands, soldiers fighting back in response to ill treatment could be expensive and disastrous.

> For Castañeda, it was better to offer soldiers the opportunity to run away and absorb any attendant losses, such as equipment or horses, than to risk open rebellion by army units: “If something blocked resort to one [such as the proposal to close the borders], discontent flowed

122 Italics added for emphasis. Quotation from Archivo General de Simancas, Guerra Antigua (with legajo and folio) 1052, unfol., consulta of the Council of War, 21 June 1632, voto of Castañeda. As quoted in Geoffrey Parker, The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567-1659, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), 175.

123 While it was possible for soldiers to petition their commanders and lords, that was often not possible or viewed as a legitimate avenue of redress by soldiers. The authority of unit commanders over their soldiers was generally not viewed as subject to review. Furthermore, to be able to petition for help or seek redress of a grievance, a soldier would need to either physically find someone capable of helping them (which they may not have been allowed to do) or write a letter to seek help (which they may not have been able to do).

124 There were over 40 mutiny incidents between 1570 and 1607, costing hundreds of thousands of escudos and florins in settlements. See Parker, Army of Flanders, 253-256.
irresistibly into the other.” From the viewpoint of the soldier, desertion also seemed a better
option than mutiny—while there were financial incentives (potential payouts or looting if
successful) to mutiny, there was also an increased chance of death (whether from capital
punishment or death in battle) and a decreased likelihood of gaining freedom. This was
representative of a conflict that can be traced across time and geography in the realm of military
history, the battle between pragmatic approaches to treating recruited soldiers, on the one hand,
and the need to maintain force cohesion through strong disciplinary measures. The Spanish
experience in Flanders was a developmental experiment in finding out how far Spanish
authorities could push their soldiers before the ‘return on investment’ of mutiny outweighed the
consequences of remaining under arms. It is this very tension, tracking the tensions between the
desire of military administrators to maintain discipline among their forces and the desire of
soldiers to remain under arms, which “In Service of the State” attempts to illuminate in the
context of the Habsburg Monarchy.

2. Desertion: The Influence of Geoffrey Parker and the Military Revolution

As a historiographical concept, the “Military Revolution” dates back to the works of
Michael Roberts from the 1950s that grew out of his research into the early modern armies of
Sweden. The so-called ‘New Military History,’ a framework of analysis from which “In Service
of the State” drew much influence and inspiration from the works of Roberts and the subsequent
work of Geoffrey Parker. The field of military history shifted substantially over the latter part of
the twentieth century and into the beginning of the twenty-first century—to the point that in 1997,
noted military historian John Lynn could speak of academic military history as “embattled” and
“swimming against the professional tide,” while just ten years later Robert Citino could write in

125 Parker, *Army of Flanders*, 176.
that ‘New Military History’ ‘…has established itself so firmly, that it seems silly to keep calling it ‘new.’’ In 2014, the pioneering work of the ‘New Military History’ became so commonplace as to be, in the words of the Society for Military History, ‘simply what military history is today: broad-based, inclusive, and written from a wide range of perspectives.’

The basic argument of Roberts was that war and society were intricately intertwined—that advancements in military organization and military technology were not isolated the wider social, political, and economic developments that characterize an era. Starting in the 1970s, Geoffrey Parker expanded upon the work of Michael Roberts and developed what is now recognized as the “Military Revolution.” Parker’s main contribution to the development of the Military Revolution was his focus on the importance of technological innovation as a specific motivating force for the tactical, strategic, organizational, and bureaucratic shifts that characterized the early modern period—in particular, the development of fortifications (ex. *trace italienne*) to defend against gunpowder weapons. The debate begun by Parker in the 1970s and 1980s continues to this day, providing much of the nuance that characterizes modern discussions of the Military Revolution.

---

131 Parker’s Military Revolution thesis has been the focus of much criticism and debate since its introduction. These criticisms generally fall into two categories: conceptual and executional. Clifford Rogers and Jeremy Black, in particular, have argued that Parker’s chronological frame for the Military Revolution, 1500 to 1800, is far too long for something to be called a “revolution”—and argue instead that the Military Revolution either does not exist or is, instead, an evolutionary concept. Others, such as Kelly DeVries, focus their criticism of Parker’s thesis on his use of specific facts and/or his interpretation of the
In Parker’s *The military revolution*, the focus of his research on desertion is the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—which is to be expected, given his research focus on the Dutch fighting the Spanish. Desertion is treated episodically, but Parker’s research provides valuable insight into desertion’s influence on organizational and strategic matters. In the case of Spanish armies in Morocco, he notes: “Desertion…exercised the most volatile and unpredictable influence on an army’s strength” and that “conditions of service could become so appalling that…almost an entire army would vanish into thin air.”132 One example of controlling the ‘appalling conditions’ was to provide better pay and offer soldiers expanded opportunities “to enrich themselves” through plundering—though, Parker points to one “cynical French commentator” from 1623 that wrote “for every soldier who grows rich by war ‘you will find fifty who gain nothing but injuries and incurable diseases.’”133 For the study of the Habsburg army in the eighteenth century, Parker, using seventeenth-century examples, notes that the “combination of heterogeneous methods of recruiting, high wastage rates, and considerable mobility within the ranks soon destroyed any sense of corporate identity among the individual formations of every early modern army.”134 The differing constitutional relationships between each piece of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Habsburgs meant that it was not until the eighteenth century that any semblance of parity in recruiting practices would be achieved—and it would not be until the nineteenth century that available sources. For Parker’s rebuttal to the criticisms of the Military Revolution, see his “Afterword: in defence of The military revolution” in the 2nd ed. of *The military revolution*, 155-176. For criticisms, see the works of Kelly Devries, Jeremy Black, and Frank Tallett to start.

134 Parker, *The military revolution*, 60. The importance of grouping specific soldiers together or, more precisely, the importance of a corporate identity to military units, was not entirely unknown to the Habsburgs in the eighteenth century. In the late seventeenth century, Raimondo Montecuccoli, the well-known Habsburg general and President of the Hofkriegsrat, dealt with this topic as part of his collected writings, seeing the value of specific ethnic troops over others and of grouping them together. For many of Montecuccoli’s original writings (translated into German), see Alois Veltzé and the Direction des k. und k. Kriegs-Archivs, eds., *Ausgewählte Schriften des Raimund Fürsten Montecuccoli: General Leutnant und Feldmarschall*, 4 vols. (Vienna and Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller k.u.k. Hof- und Universitäts-Buchhändler, 1899). For a study of the specific *Kriegsführung* elements of Montecuccoli’s writings, see: Barker, *Military Intellectual and Battle* (1975).
homogenous systems of recruiting and universal service would prevail. The issues of recruitment, corporate identities, and wastage rates (the inevitable results of ever-increasingly accurate weapons) are addressed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, examined under the rubric of military organization and the development of the Hofkriegsrat.

With the spread of state-financed and state-run standing armies in the 17th and 18th centuries, the methods of recruitment, quartering, and provisioning soldiers would also change and exert an ever-increasing influence on whether or not soldiers chose to fight or run away in the face of mistreatment. Though impressment, the drafting or dragooning into one’s own forces those of another entity, would continue into the nineteenth century, its effectiveness in bringing soldiers in could often be undermined by the resentment it engendered—when Frederick II “pressed the 17,000 survivors [of the Elector of Saxony’s army in October 1756] into his own army, [they] deserted in droves, reassembling as a 10,000-strong auxiliary corps that joined the French after March 1758.” Changes in recruitment practices, however, were not adopted uniformly and the experiences of two ‘small’ German states provide instructive examples regarding the actions of soldiers—Hesse and Württemburg provide examples of state-run ‘mercenary’ military enterprises and the use of impressment by eighteenth-century German states, both of which are addressed in the subsequent chapters.

For “In Service of the State”, it is worth investigating the history and historiography regarding desertion in two comparative contemporary examples—the Kingdom of Prussia and Great Britain. Throughout the course of the eighteenth century, these three powers (Prussia, Great Britain, and the Habsburg Monarchy)—two firmly seated on the continent and the other

135 For more an introduction to the recruitment system of the Habsburgs during the eighteenth century, see Hochedlinger, Austria’s Wars of Emergence, 291-297. For a more in-depth discussion of the Konskriptionssystem, see Michael Hochedlinger, “Rekrutierung-Militarisierung-Modernisierung: Militär und ländliche Gesellschaft in der Habsburgermonarchie im Zeitalter des Aufgeklärten Absolutismus” in Stefan Kroll and Kersten Krüger, eds., Militär und ländliche Gesellschaft in der frühen Neuzeit (Hamburg: LIT Verlag Münster, 2000), 327-375.
136 Wilson, German Armies, 270.
not—would find themselves in direct competition both militarily and politically—and, conversely, they would find themselves at times on the same side when faced with the specter of aggression by the Kingdom of France or Russian Empire. In an age with mass printing, military and political leaders could draw upon much of the same intellectual base, whether it be the Greek or Roman classics on military matter (ex. Xenophon or Vegetius) or works of a more-recent vintage (ex. Raimondo Montecuccoli or Maurice de Saxe), when making decisions. In the case of Prussia, geographic proximity and a shared political sphere, the Holy Roman Empire, meant that the Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns provide one of the standards of comparison for historical development in central Europe. In the case of Great Britain, the multitude of constitutional and monarchical relationships that held the United Kingdom together provides a fair point of comparison with the Habsburg Monarchy, at least as far as military organization matters are concerned. The military and political administration of these two powers provides a starting point for placing the eighteenth-century developments of the Habsburg Monarchy in a broader context.

3. Desertion: The Hohenzollern Dynasty and the Kingdom of Prussia

One of the most common states used as a point of comparison for the Habsburg Monarchy, particularly in the 18th century, is the Kingdom of Prussia. Generally situated in the northern regions of the German lands, Prussia’s rise to prominence began in the aftermath of the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648). The rise of Prussian influence on the German lands, the

---

137 For example, the protracted Great Northern War of the early eighteenth century saw Britain, France, Austria, and Prussia having to balance their own interstate conflicts versus their own designs for the entirety of central and eastern Europe—particularly as the Great Northern War straddled the War of Spanish Succession, which was viewed as the more important conflict. For more information on the shifting diplomatic field before, during, and after these conflicts, see Robert I. Frost, The Northern Wars: war, state, and society in northeastern Europe, 1558-1721 (London: Longman, 2000).
European balance of power, and, most importantly for this project, the study of military history has been well documented and the subject of numerous studies. In particular, historians have done much to illuminate the disciplinary regimens of the Prussian army and state across time and space, as part of the Prussian development into modern Germany and the long shadow that its influence has cast (Entpreuβung) on the development of the states around it.\(^{139}\)

Regarding the ‘myth’ of Prussian military efficiency, the common argument has been focused on the perception that Frederick William I had a penchant for brutal forms of discipline and a fondness for the use of corporal punishment. There is the well-known story of a young Frederick the Great attempting to run away from Prussia with his tutor and confidant Hans Hermann von Katte—they were caught and to reinforce his position, Frederick William had Katte’s punishment upgraded from a court martial to beheading, which he then forced Frederick to watch. Frederick William I, compared to his contemporaries, took a large amount of pride in the disposition of his armed forces and was noted as saying:

> My father...found joy in beautiful buildings, large quantities of jewelry, silver, gold and furniture and external magnificence—please allow me my pleasure as well, which consists mainly in a large of good troops.\(^{140}\)

Frederick William I and his successors, in differing ways, took pride in the army of Prussia, whether for its victories on the battlefield or its ability to impress visitors on the parade field. In his 2003 monograph, *The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism and the Rise of the State in the Early Modern Europe*, Philip Gorski argues that the effectiveness of the Prussian drill and disciplinary regimens can be attributed to two factors: 1) its uniformity, being based on a single, widely-distributed regulation book starting in 1714 and 2) its intensity. In particular, unlike many contemporary armies at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Prussians had: a single drill

\(^{139}\) For how this specifically relates to the Habsburg Monarchy, see Hochedlinger, “Bella gerant alii,” 243-245.

regulation book, regularized and intense drilling periods, and the use of officers (rather than non-commissioned officers) to supervise drill.\textsuperscript{141} While the regimentation of Prussian military service was important for their successes on the battlefield, one of the most important military administrative developments of the Prussians, one that would be copied by the Austrians later in the eighteenth century, was the introduction of a military furlough system. The year-round provisioning and quartering of a standing army was an inefficient allocation of resources that created a double drain on the economy of early modern states—deprived of part of the labor force, a smaller portion of the population needed to work harder to provide for the year-round standing army. Beyond its cost-saving features, the granting of furlough provided a solution to the issue of soldiers being unwilling to permanently their families or homes: “In this way, Frederick William I sought to make military service more bearable for the popular classes…. And not without success: the desertion rate at the end of his was only 5 percent of what it had been at the beginning.”\textsuperscript{142} It must be remembered, however, that the desertion rates for German armies during the eighteenth century was generally less than 5 percent, being closer to 2 percent.\textsuperscript{143}

While Frederick William I laid the groundwork for a strong Prussian army, his son and successor, Frederick II (the Great) Hohenzollern, has garnered much of the attention of historians—military or otherwise. For the study of desertion and army discipline, Frederick the Great left behind a large corpus of personal writings on history and military science—the most important of which are the writings that are today collectively referred to as his \textit{Art of War}. The army of Frederick the Great has for many years been viewed as a well-oiled machine, where a Spartan-like fear of imminent death or corporal punishment drove soldiers to great acts of obedience and bravery. As Christopher Duffy, noted historian of the eighteenth century,

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{141} Gorski, \textit{Disciplinary Revolution}, 97.  \\
\textsuperscript{142} Gorski, \textit{Disciplinary Revolution}, 98.  \\
\textsuperscript{143} For more information on this topic, see Wilson, “Violence and the Rejection of Authority,” 1-26.
\end{flushright}
summarized it in his 1974 work: “Self-respect and esprit de corps were useful in themselves, but in Frederick’s view they were no substitute for the knowledge that the officer’s sword and the NCO’s spontoon were pointing at your back.”

In Frederick’s words, “[G]ood will can never induce the common soldier to stand up…he will only do so through fear.” With his dual role as the strong, martially-inclined king and field commander, Frederick felt that:

One would have to be a completely pitiful human being, bogged down in inertia and unnerved by high living, if he wished to shrink from the trouble and work that the maintenance of discipline in the army demands. But in exchange for his efforts, the king certainly would find his reward in victories and fame which in even more valuable than the highest peak of grandeur or the pinnacle of power.

Frederick II was keenly aware of the dangerous and deleterious effects of desertion on an army in the eighteenth century. For the Prussian king, one of the “most essential duties of generals commanding armies…is to prevent desertion.” In his collected writings, which were edited and translated into English by Jay Luvaas in the 1960s, Frederick offered fourteen suggestions to commanders to aid in preventing desertion. They were as follows:

1) By not encamping too near a wood or forest unless military considerations require it.
2) By calling the roll several times daily.
3) By sending out frequent hussar patrols to scour the country around the camp.
4) By placing chasseurs in the wheat fields during the night and doubling the cavalry posts to strengthen the chain.
5) By not allowing the soldiers to wander about and taking care that the officers conduct their troops to water and forage in formation.
6) By punishing marauding severely, since this is the source of all disorders.
7) By not drawing in the guards placed in the villages on marching days until the troops are under arms.
8) By forbidding, under rigorous punishment, the soldier to leave his rank or division on days of march.
9) By avoiding night marches unless there is absolute necessity for them.
10) By sending hussar patrols forward on both flanks while the infantry pass through a woods.
11) By placing officers at both ends of a defile to force the soldiers to return to the ranks.

---

144 Duffy, *Army of Frederick the Great*, 62.
146 Luvaas, *Frederick the Great*, 44.
147 Luvaas, *Frederick the Great*, 121.
12) By concealing from the soldier any retrograde marches are forced to make, or by making use of some specious pretext that would flatter him.
13) By always seeing to it that the necessary subsistence is not lacking, and taking care that the troops are supplied with bread, meat, brandy, beer, and the like.
14) By examining desertion as soon as it creeps into a regiment or company. Inquire whether the soldier has had his bounty, if he has been given the other customary indulgences, and if the captain is guilty of any misconduct. On no account, however, should there be any relaxation of strict discipline. Perhaps you will say that the colonel will give it his attention, but this is not enough. In an army everything must lead to perfection, to make it appear that all that is done is the work of a single man.  

Frederick II’s suggestions focus for the most part on many of the daily organizational details that either aided or impeded soldiers in their attempts to desert. For commanders and officers concerned about deserters, they can act to minimize the potential opportunities for desertion by providing control parameters for situations prone to chaos and disorder—ex. guiding men to water, providing escorts to foraging groups, avoiding night marches, and ensuring that there is a constant watch. Measures such as these, numbers 1 through 11, could be effective at preventing soldiers from being physically able to desert, but they focus on the symptoms of desertion rather than the causes. In this, Frederick was a product of his time, where it was not uncommon for generals and officers to have a low view of the common soldier, his proclivities for indiscipline, and the necessity to use external controls on behavior. In his thirteenth recommendation, Frederick focused on one of the underlying causes of desertion: the propensity of soldiers not provided with sufficient and timely provisions to engage in misconduct and, potentially, desert. In his fourteenth recommendation, Frederick goes even further by recommending that, in investigating desertion, that commanding officers ensure that the misconduct of common soldiers is not the result of malfeasance or misconduct of officers—are the officers withholding soldiers’ pay or being abusive? For Frederick the Great, discipline was the paramount concern and

---

148 Luvaas, Frederick the Great, 121-2.
behavior that created the appearance of disorder, regardless of its source or cause, needed to be rooted out.\footnote{Other important works on the influence of the Prussian army includes: Otto Büsch, \textit{Military System and Social Life in Old Regime Prussia, 1713-1807: The Beginnings of the Social Militarization of Prusso-German Society}, trans. John Gagliardo (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1997); Rosenberg, \textit{Bureaucracy, Aristocracy, and Autocracy} (1966); and Jörg Muth, \textit{Flucht aus dem militärischen Alltag: Ursach und individuelle Ausprägung der Desertation in der Armee Friedrichs des Großen} (Freiburg: Rombach Verlag, 2003).}

4. Desertion: At home and aboard in early modern Great Britain

In the case of Britain in the 18th century, there have been several works examining the causes and influence of desertion on military administration. Whether focusing on how recruiting and training practices inspired or impeded soldiers and sailors in their attempts to desert or how officer and administrative opinions of how soldiers should be motivated, research on the 18th-century British military experience provides insight into the problems faced by the Habsburg Monarchy. One of the most interesting examples of how British and Habsburg studies crosses is found in the study of how armies were trained during the early modern period. In his 1981 volume on the training of the British army during the eighteenth century, J.A. Houlding highlighted the tension between maintaining a well-trained fighting force and the efficient use of peace-time resources. Unevenness in the methods of recruiting, the training of the British army, and the widespread deployment of the British army during the late eighteenth century created circumstances rife for desertion. Homesickness, discontent from the lack of proper training and equipment, and concerns related to contractual obligations (ex. length of service term when serving in the Caribbean) were particularly acute concerns for the ‘multinational’ army of the British.\footnote{J.A. Houlding, \textit{Fit for Service}, 388-395. Concerns regarding contractual obligations would be particularly important during the Seven Years’ War, when the British made use of large numbers of militia and colonial troops. See Thomas Agostini, “‘Deserted His Majesty’s Service’: Military Runaways, The...}
The culture of the officer corps and general views of discipline are another area of similarity for researchers studying desertion in the Habsburg Monarchy and Britain in the eighteenth century. As Arthur Gilbert explained in his 1980 article, “Why Men Deserted from the Eighteenth-Century British Army”, the administrative culture of the British officer corps, and of the administrators of its armed forces, was such that soldiers were not always viewed as capable of self-guided responsible behavior. Terms of enlistment were not always respected, if they were even negotiated in the first place, and sufficient pay was viewed “a desertion control device,” but rather an invitation for abuse by the rank-and-file soldiery:

Aristocratic officers faced with soldiers drawn from the unemployed, vagrant, and even criminal classes simply assumed that extra funds would be spent on liquor, and improved living conditions would spoil the men for the harsh demands of military campaigns.  

Gilbert argued that, rather than making military service into an attractive vocation, with fair working conditions and consistent, above-subsistence-level wages, British army administrators, like their counterparts across the continent, used three approaches to prevent desertion: 1) tightened physical control, 2) tightened mental control and the fear of severe punishment, and 3) the use of occasional pardons or amnesties to entice deserters to return.

As mentioned before in Frederick the Great’s recommendations, one of the most common methods of preventing desertion in the eighteenth century was restricting the movements of the soldiers. To prevent ease of escape, the British set up their military encampments in places where quick escape was not easy: for example, the Isle of Wight allowed them to control the comings and goings of soldiers. Furthermore, “pass” systems were developed to ensure that soldiers stayed near their assigned areas— it became “established practice to treat as a deserter any soldier caught over a mile away from camp no matter what the reasons for his wandering might be.”

The punishments received by soldiers, up to and including the death penalty, were often brutal—at the regimental level in the British army, “there were no limits on the number of lashes that could be given out.” The distribution of punishments was intended as much to inflict fear among the rest of the soldiery, as they were intended to be a corrective influence upon the actual deserters.

Low pay and difficult or monotonous service terms in foreign (not their home, but not necessarily ‘abroad’) environments—“…where loneliness, primitive living conditions, unusual weather, and encounters with foreigners added to the dissatisfaction…”—meant that alcohol abuse could be quite common. As Gilbert’s research pointed out, this was a frequent cause of desertion, both intentionally and unintentionally. Soldiers tired of their condition would find the wherewithal when drunk to act on their desire to leave. Or, rather commonly, soldiers under the influence of alcohol would find themselves engaging in activities (ex. such as venturing beyond specific areas in a city or outside of a camp) that were officially defined as desertion—activities that today would be more commonly defined today as having gone AWOL. When comparing “deserter profiles” across time and space, Gilbert highlighted three basic criteria for separating desertion in the eighteenth century from other contexts: in his case, American deserters during the Vietnam War. Gilbert concluded that desertion was heavily influenced by the disciplinary regimes of the eighteenth century. The restrictive and controlling discipline of the eighteenth-century British army was such that soldiers: 1) were more likely to wander off when “fortified with drink,” 2) were more likely to be defined as a deserter for “failing to report to roll call,”

---

154 Gilbert, “Why Men Deserted,” 558. In particular, where local conditions created above-average attrition rates (ex. diseases in the Caribbean), desertion would be treated more harshly as “the target of pent-up frustration of officers who daily watched their regiments decline in strength.”
because of movement restrictions, and 3) were not granted the same “liberal furlough policies” as modern soldiers.\textsuperscript{155}

While Gilbert’s 1980 article focused generally on the British army in the eighteenth century, Thomas Agostini’s 2007 article on desertion focuses on the Seven Years’ War outside of ‘the continent’: in particular, the war between the French and the British in the American colonies.\textsuperscript{156} Instead of using the official documentation of British military units in the Americas, Agostini would make extensive use of published wanted posters to get at the socioeconomic consequences of desertion and the larger questions surrounding the motivations of soldiers to serve and/or leave service. In particular, his use of wanted posters, generally published in local newspapers and bulletins, is meant to correct some of the perceived deficiencies related to using official government or military sources. A study based on official documentation would most likely not provide, in Agostini’s opinion, sufficient contextual information to get at: “Who were the individuals who deserted, and what were their ethnic and occupational backgrounds? What methods did army officers and civil officials use to apprehend runaways or prevent their departures? Last, what strategies and artifices did deserters use to get away from their units and how did they continue to elude their pursuers?”\textsuperscript{157} Therefore, extant copies of newspapers from 1755 to 1762 are used to fill in the blanks left by official sources from the colonial and British governments.\textsuperscript{158} With information, such as expanded Bertillon-style descriptions (ex. accent, unusual features, last known possessions, etc.), the publication of “deserter advertisements”

\textsuperscript{156} Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service,” 957-985
\textsuperscript{157} Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service,” 958.
\textsuperscript{158} For scholars working on the Habsburg Monarchy and lands of the Holy Roman Empire, there are collections available to those wishing to use wanted posters (Steckbriefe) as a primary source. The Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv section of the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv possesses a large collection of Steckbriefe from across the Habsburg and Holy Roman domains. While wanted posters and notices provide a wealth of qualitative data on deserters—ethnicity, occupation, background, and personal motivations—administrators did not post public notifications of every soldier and the collection in Vienna did not provide a sufficient ‘critical mass’ of exemplars for desertion Steckbriefe, in the Author’s opinion, on which to base “In Service of the State.” More information is available from the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv at: \url{http://www.archivinformationssystem.at/detail.aspx?ID=150}. 
represented the public side of efforts made by military administrators to prevent or capture deserters.

Rather than just what was published in official accounts or reports to the military and political administrations, Agostini labels these publications and advertisements as part of a “shadow war” waged by military administrators against desertion: “On one side were officers and civil officials who used a variety of methods, including the press, to curtail desertion. On the other side were the deserters themselves, who used fast feet and sharp wits in their efforts to elude capture and escape punishment.” Agostini found that British and colonial administrators used a mixture of enticement, deterrence, and fear to prevent desertion and its spread:

…officials offered soldiers new cloths, withheld pay, or encouraged chaplains to persuade troops that desertion was a sin..., imposed harsh punishments on some and pardoned others while sheriffs, recruiting parties, and even high-ranking royal officials scoured towns and the countryside for signs of deserters.

Related to this mixture of enticement and deterrence, Agostini builds off of Gilbert’s 1980 article by highlighting the importance of alcohol to the soldier of the eighteenth century. The circumstances of service could be conducive to developing alcoholism—many soldiers entered military service unwillingly and would find solace in alcohol when the terms of service, location, or garrison conditions became too much to bear. It was not uncommon for recruiters to use the availability of alcohol as an inducement to potential recruits. Furthermore, when particularly difficult tasks were at hand, it was not uncommon for officers and administrators in the British army to provide “a daily ration of beer, wine, whiskey, or rum” to keep the troops happy. Or, in some cases because of their location, the army unit and its attendant camp of followers were the only sources of readily-available alcohol.

159 Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service,” 959.
160 Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service,” 975.
161 Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service,” 974. On the role of the ‘baggage train’ and the ‘camp followers’ that accompanied military units wherever they went, see Hochedlinger, Austria’s Wars of Emergence, 132-134, 314-316.
In conclusion, however, Agostini disagrees with the broad assumption that alcohol and its effect were the main cause of desertion—when desertion is defined as a specific, intentional act of leaving military service. While alcohol could certainly play a role in soldiers engaging in criminal behavior or being absent without leave, desertion required not just leaving the actual place of encampment, but also “required mobility” to outfox the soldiers, civilians, and bounty hunters looking for him. In Agostini’s opinion, “it is highly unlikely that many confirmed alcoholics willingly left their only reliable source of liquor behind.” In other words, ‘true’ desertion required a level of determination and mental fortitude that is not necessarily associated with the behavior of a person engaging in drunken escapism or revelry. Agostini agrees with Gilbert that soldiers were expensive to come by and that drunkenness often provided a “lesser charge” with which soldiers could be charged, rather than the capital offense of desertion.

“Drunkenness was a convenient excuse some used to explain their actions…,”and, as eighteenth-century regulations such as those of Frederick the Great lend credence to, the side effects of drunkenness (ex. wandering about) were often incompatible with the tight controls put in place by officers to maintain discipline and control. In this way, the claim of ‘drunkenness’ gave soldiers a certain amount of leeway to engage in inappropriate behavior, or a ready ‘out’ if they second-guessed their desertion attempt. On the flip side, it allowed officers to maintain a level of discipline without having to execute already-trained soldiers—a trend that can also be seen in the way the Habsburg Monarchy treated deserters.

---

162 Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service,” 974, 985. Alcoholism is a not modern phenomenon and alcohol abuse has been studied to an extent in the early modern British army, with Agostini suggesting that the extremes soldiers went to, including the risk of serious corporal punishment, indicated addiction. See also Paul E. Kopeman, “‘The Cheapest Pay’: Alcohol Abuse in the Eighteenth-Century British Army,” The Journal of Military History 60 (1996): 445-470.

163 Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service,” 975.
D. Desertion: Other Contexts and Historiographical Lessons

The study of desertion is certainly not limited to continental Europe during the eighteenth century. Indeed, there are numerous other contexts and studies across time and space that can help illuminate the broader struggles for military control and discipline. The Civil War (1861-1865) in the United States provides a particularly salient example of how a composite/federal state, the Confederacy, would struggle to maintain its recruitment numbers and discipline throughout the conflict. Furthermore, studies regarding desertion during the American Civil War provide valuable methodological insights. In particular, scholars note the importance of defining “desertion” as opposed to “absent without leave”: a distinction made by intent, which is often subjectively measured. This is especially important in consideration of the possibility that proper recordkeeping is not something upon which one can count, even in the mid nineteenth century—the problem of defining intent was exacerbated when the exact number of soldiers killed, wounded, and captured in any specific engagement was not exact. Furthermore, the complexity of the American Civil War has provided opportunities for introspection regarding the use of mono-causal explanations for desertion. Studies of the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War (1954-1975) explain the importance of weighing sociopolitical considerations when formulating models of military policy. As has been noted, less than 5% of deserters from the U.S. armed forces during Vietnam that subsequently returned under the clemency programs initiated by President Gerald Ford were actually in combat units—units


where harsh living conditions and the imminent threat of death were more likely, rather than units away from the front or not yet deployed from the continental United States. The personal stories told by the Vietnam-era deserters provide further insight into the larger sociopolitical calculations that went into a soldier’s decision to leave the service.

The academic study of desertion as part of military history has received a wide amount of coverage across both time and space. “In Service of the State” incorporates this historiography, builds off of it, and, hopefully, advances the general understanding of the field.

---

167 A particularly good example of this genre is Jack Todd’s Desertion in the Time of Vietnam (2012). Jack Todd’s story provides an introduction to the period, though his story was not a typical one. After induction into the United States Army, Todd, who had been a journalist in Miami, would flee to Canada in protest and subsequently surrender his American citizenship.
168 For even more information on desertion in other contexts, a must-read is a published seminar syllabus by Christa Ehrmann-Hämmerle (Universität Wien), available at http://www.univie.ac.at/igl.geschichte/ehrmann/ws_05_06/ceh_ws_05_06_se.htm.
Chapter 2

“Should I Stay or Should I Go?” – Introduction to Desertion and Case Studies from the Habsburg Monarchy in the Late Eighteenth Century

A. Introduction

In a letter dated 19 January 1781 to the Hofkriegsrat in Vienna, a commanding officer at the Siebenbürgisches General Commando in Hermannstadt (Sibiu) explained a major problem faced by the Oroszischen Infanterie Regiment: desertion. In the month of September 1780 the regiment had 25 soldiers desert—this represented, depending on the actual strength of the regiment at the time, about 1 percent of the average infantry regiment during this period.

These soldiers were described as “generally bad people” and, given the ease with which soldiers could sneak across the border to Wallachia and find people to hide them, these soldiers took advantage of the unit’s location and deserted. Hundreds of miles away in the town of Eperies in Galicia, an officer representing the Baron Preysacische Infanterie Regiment wrote a

---

169 Modern-day Transylvania, from the German name for the seven medieval fortress cities of Transylvania and Romania: Mediasch (Mediaş), Muhlenbach (Sebeş), Hermannstadt (Sibiu), Clausenburg (Cluj-Napoca), Schässburg (Sighișoara), Reussmarkt (Miercurea-Sibiului), and Broos (Orăștie). Two other cities were later added: Bistritz (Bistriţa) and Kronstadt (Brasov).
170 In 1739, regiments were supposed to have 2,000 men, with some exceptions. After 1748, the wartime strength of regiments was set at 2,400 men. Until 1779, infantry regiments ranged from 2,070 to 2,215 men during peacetime. After 1779, the size of regiments would increase from 3,176 to 4,575 with the introduction of the Konskription system. See Hochedlinger, Austria’s Wars of Emergence, 299-300 and Gunther Rothenberg, Napoleon’s Great Adversaries: The Archduke Charles and the Austrian Army, 1792-1814 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 23-25. The numbers cited above, however, could fluctuate greatly, as non-desertion attrition took a toll on regimental rolls, as well as the possibility that the number of soldiers shown on the rolls may not have actually been there. For more information regarding the calculation of actual army strength, see John Lynn “Recalculating French Army Growth during the Grand Siècle, 1610-1715” French Historical Studies, vol. 18, no. 4 (Autumn 1994): 881-906.
171 “…jeden dieser Deserteurs ins besondere, und alle 25 überhaupt als schlechte Leüte beschreibet, und noch aufführet, daß die nahe gelegene Wallacheÿ die Leichtigkeit zu Desertion gebe, und daß die Deserteurs im Land selbst Verheeler fänden.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306, 1781-14-18, 1.
172 Presumably a reference to the modern-day city of Prešov, located in eastern Slovakia.
similar report on December 7, 1780 to the Hungarian General Commando in Pressburg (Bratislava). In this case, 28 soldiers deserted from the regiment in Galicia during the month of August 1780. For the officer in Galicia, 16 of these soldiers either returned willingly or were apprehended by other authorities--12 of the soldiers did not return and the inquiring officers were left to speculate about the soldiers’ motives for deserting. The officer in Hermannstadt was able to report to the General Commando that 21 soldiers were recovered, with 4 escaping for the time being with no word of their whereabouts. The stories told by the 37 returning soldiers illuminate part of the life of the common soldier serving in the Habsburg Monarchy in the eighteenth century and, in doing so, provide insight into some of the potential reasons why soldiers served and why many chose to flee service.

1. The Habsburg Standing Army and Desertion

A study of desertion, as well as the administrative and legal underpinnings of its punishment, allows scholars to focus on a point of confluence for the pillars that supported the Habsburg Monarchy. R.J.W. Evans has stated that the Habsburg Monarchy, a “mildly centripetal agglutination of bewilderingly heterogeneous elements,” was like any other early modern state that developed out of the late Middle Ages—held up by the three pillars of the medieval European state: the monarchy, the nobility, and the church. As the state expanded its influence throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in both geography and scope, new supporting mechanisms developed and came to the fore of domestic and foreign policy: the state-funded standing army, the state and military bureaucracies, and the managed economy. The Habsburg Monarchy, a conglomeration of multiethnic and multinational entities with varying constitutional

173 “Theils selbst Revertirt Theils Attrapirt worden.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306, 1781-14-1, 2.
174 Evans, Making of the Habsburg Monarchy, 447.
175 Evans, Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs, vii.
relationships, was a dynastic state and has generally proven difficult to shoehorn into models of
eighteenth-century governance. In spite of this difficulty, the Habsburgs provide a particularly
interesting case for comparative historians, as their geographic position placed burdens on their
governing structures with which other European polities were not usually saddled: 1) the ever-
present threat of invasion by the Ottoman Empire, culminating in two unsuccessful sieges of the
city of Vienna, 2) a vested, monarchical interest in the German lands as a result of being the
elected Holy Roman Emperor and 3) few natural geographic boundaries to aid in national
defense. All of these conditions necessitated the creation and administration of a strong border-
garrison system with attendant support troops, where the issues of efficient finance, supply, and
bureaucratic distribution became apparent. The reporting and punishment of deserters
(Deserteure) highlights the points at which many of these state pillars intersected. It is the story
of how the army operated as an extension of the state and the ways in which its ruling classes
interacted with it—the army was simultaneously part of the state and representative of it, its
components, and its struggles.

Desertion, as a crime, was a serious business for governments in the eighteenth century
and the Habsburg Monarchy was no exception—in both of the cases mentioned earlier, the
reporting officers were responding to specific orders from the General Commando for
information regarding their statuses. As Peter H. Wilson noted in his work on the military in
Württemberg in the eighteenth century:

The reason why desertions were considered so serious was that, with limited funds at
their disposal, it was difficult and time consuming for military administrations to replace
even the small numbers involved.177

The soldier of the eighteenth century, while not treated with the same dignity as his officers,
represented an investment of time and money that fiscal states oftentimes could not afford to lose.

177 Peter H. Wilson, War, state and society in Württemberg, 1677-1793 (New York: Cambridge University
Press, 1995), 81.
Desertion was an issue for every military in the eighteenth century. While the fortunes of armies may have differed across the states, the long- and short-term difficulties of military service did not vary as much for soldiers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The views of the generals and military scientists, however, were often as much in line with the ancients as with their contemporaries. Raimondo Montecuccoli (1609-1680), one of the most famous presidents of the Habsburg Monarchy’s Hofkriegsrat after the Thirty Years’ War, viewed preventing desertion from one’s army and the eliciting of desertion from the opposing force as keys to battlefield victory. In his *Sulle Battaglia*, Montecuccoli offered examples from the ancients and his contemporaries as to how one prevented desertion, with the main theme being: “The men must be deprived of all hope and every means of saving themselves through flight. They must be forced to fight.”178 The belief that soldiers were best motivated by fear rather than encouragement was a theme that carried throughout the early modern period.

Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia, a state known for extracting the most from its relatively small population, was quoted as stating: “If my soldiers began to think, not one would remain in the ranks.”179 As such, Frederick recommended that the officers and NCOs be more fearsome than battle itself. Christopher Duffy explained in *The Army of Frederick the Great* (1974), in Frederick’s eyes, no amount of positive reinforcement could “substitute for the knowledge that officer’s sword and the NCO’s spontoon were pointing at your back.”180 George Washington, while still serving the British army, noted during the Seven Years’ War, “In short, [deserters] tire my patience, & almost weary me to death! The expence of pursuing them is very considerable;

---

178 From Raimondo Montecuccoli, “Preventing Desertion,” as section of “Things to Consider Before a Battle” in *Sulle Battaglia*. As quoted in Barker, *Military Intellectual and Battle*, 82.
180 Duffy, *Army of Frederick the Great*, 62.
and to suffer them to escape, without aiming at pursuit is but giving up the point, altho’ we have had but little success of late.”

For the Habsburgs, recruitment to create and fill regiments was an issue handled as a negotiation between the powers-that-be: typically, the monarchy and the estates. Military administrations could be consulted in these matters, but one area where they had more control was in the handling of deserters and the ‘re-recruitment’ of soldiers. In Hesse-Cassel, a state financially dependent on its ability to recruit soldiers so as to rent out armies, the Landgrave issued frequent pardons and actively engaged with neighboring entities to provide “for the mutual pursuit and exchange of deserters”—in 1792, the Landgrave approved a treaty that provided higher bounties for taller soldiers. Prussians had night watchmen to prevent “desertions of soldiers as well as peasants” and, when called upon, local peasants were required, under penalty of hard labor or fining, to provide horses and assist in the recovery of deserters.

For those seeking to desert, escape from one’s duty post was only the first hurdle faced in the eighteenth century. To aid in the capture of deserters within the borders of the state, it was common for soldiers “unfit for regular field duties” to be assigned to internal border units, such as the Habsburg’s Military Frontier Cordon Detachments, which were tasked with policing internal boundaries to catch deserters. Those that ran away knew that they risked the confiscation of their property and/or a forcible return to one’s unit. As Wilson noted, “desertion was…a highly

181 Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service,” 977.
183 Peter K. Taylor, Indentured to Liberty: Peasant Life and the Hessian Military State, 1688-1815 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 83. These political agreements could also become points of contention in the realm of foreign policy, as Württemberg would find in the early 1700s, having to balance its cartel relationships between Prussia and Austria. See Wilson, War, state and society, 196-197.
184 Büsch, Military System and Social Life, 14.
185 Rothenberg, Napoleon’s Greatest Adversaries, 25.
unsatisfactory way to escape involuntary military service” and that the best route to escape military service “was to avoid being called in the first place.”\textsuperscript{186} For civilians that came into contact with deserters, the consequences could also be dire. Employers were expected to turn over deserters or furloughed soldiers without the paperwork to the military authorities.\textsuperscript{187} The crime for hindering the return of a deserter or actively resisting the efforts of the military to capture a deserter was death—for men, it meant hanging and for women it meant the sword. Conversely, civilians were also empowered to capture deserters and collect bounties—and, in some cases, civilians were expected to either capture a deserter or report his presence to the proper authorities, lest they face punishment themselves for having aided and abetted a deserter.\textsuperscript{188} For example, in a proclamation dated October 12, 1744, a subject that brought a deserter to the nearest military post could receive several ducats as reward—conversely, a person that intentionally failed to denounce or deliver a deserter could face stiff punishment.\textsuperscript{189} During the reign of Maria Theresa, however, these punishments were supposed to be relaxed to encourage more open compliance from her subjects.\textsuperscript{190}

2. The Crime of Desertion

Officially, desertion was a capital offense, though the application of the death penalty would decrease throughout the course of the eighteenth century as attitudes at the highest levels

\textsuperscript{186} Wilson, War, state and society, 81-82.
\textsuperscript{187} ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente Kt. 171.5, 28.09.1768, “Soldaten beurlaubte, und desertirte.” This proclamation has no specific mention of the punishment for employing deserters.
\textsuperscript{189} ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente Kt. 80.19, “12. Oktober 1744.”
\textsuperscript{190} Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 80.
adapted to the changing realities of military administration. Shifts in battlefield technology, such as more reliable muskets and the expansion of fortification systems, meant that the average soldier needed more training than his counterpart from the previous century. The use and aiming of a musket was no simple matter, as Christopher Duffy explained:

The parade-ground rate of fire of five rounds per minute sank to two or less in real combat. All the same, the soldiers were under continual pressure to maintain the rate of fire, and they were liable to adopt a number of more or less pernicious practices [as shortcuts]…. On top of this the musket of the time was inaccurate in the extreme. The Prince de Ligne once issued the 144 men of a company with ten rounds each and ordered them to fire at a long cloth target which he painted to represent the frontage of four enemy platoons. Out of the 1,440 carefully-aimed rounds only 270 hit the cloth. He found that at 100 paces it was necessary to aim at the knees, at 150 at the buckle of the belt, at 200 at the chest, at 250 at the moustache and at 300 at a point one foot above the man’s head.

The soldier of the eighteenth century needed to be able to execute complex marching maneuvers, as well as be able to rapidly load, fire, and reload a musket in synch with others—while responding to a complex system of signals by drums and trumpets—during the chaos and noise of battle.

Given the amount of time and effort required to train a soldier of the eighteenth century and the ever-increasing need for larger and larger armies, governments showed a willingness to relax penalties for desertion in the interest of recouping battlefield losses. As Michael Hochedlinger put it, there was an “appreciation that a trained soldier was a valuable resource, too valuable simply to be hanged by his own employer” for running away from service. To condemn a soldier for desertion required that another soldier be found, paid, trained, clothed, and equipped—in the end, for many commanders, “it was far cheaper to extend mercy to a soldier

---

191 Unfortunately for this project, there were no available statistics for the number of soldiers actually put to death for desertion. Future research into the collections of the Oberste Justizstelle and the collections of the Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv and regional archives (Ländesarchive) would prove fruitful.
192 Duffy, *Army of Maria Theresa*, 80.
193 Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 104.
194 Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 135.
than it was to execute the offender” and start over. For example, Hochedlinger points to the large losses of the Seven Years’ War, which are estimated to have been in the range of 300,000 between 1756 and 1763. From this, there were an estimated 62,000 deserters—while some “no doubt reported back to their units”, that figure represents a substantial portion of the losses and, potentially, even more given the estimated 19,600 soldiers listed as missing.

The need for trained soldiers—particularly seasoned, long-service soldiers, which Istvan Deák described as truly valuable and expensive commodities—was regularly strong enough that military authorities were willing to look past a soldier’s earlier indiscretions and apply a lesser penalty than death. Furthermore, the military administration evolved throughout the eighteenth century and, while desertion was always considered a crime worthy punishment, its definition would develop an important loophole: intent. By the middle of the century, the Habsburg articles of war distinguished “between the Deserteur, who simply ran off, and the treacherous Überläufer who actually went over to the enemy.” Moving into the 19th century, Christoph Tepperberg points out that in the Kriegsartikeln (Articles of War) in 1855 that the soldier’s intent in running away played a role in his punishment:

Selbst derjenige, der sich ohne die Absicht zu desertiren eigenmächtig entfernt und längere Zeit ausbleibt, auch der sich entfernende Recrut, der noch nicht zur Fahne geschworen hat, ist, obgleich nicht als Deserteur, doch immer sträflich.

As the two case studies to follow will show, punishment for desertion was something that could not be avoided. Yet, the application and type of punishment could vary greatly, depending on many different factors.

While the death penalty was on the books as the punishment for desertion, not every deserter received the death penalty. Generally, if the death penalty was to be applied, the

195 Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service,” 967.
196 Hochedlinger, Austria’s Wars of Emergence, 292.
197 Deák, Beyond Nationalism, 104.
198 Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 57.
preferred methods were hanging and firing squad. Since clemency or reprieves could be granted, it was also customary for an ensign or other low-ranking officer to be stationed at the ready to hop on a horse and speed word of a granted reprieve to the execution site. There is a story of Maria Theresa intervening personally in one case. When “the news of whose death-sentence reached her while she was playing cards,” she sent a note to the Hofkriegsrat, stating “that desertion by itself did not merit a hanging.”

It should also be noted that the Habsburg Monarchy was not the only state to see this shift—Württemberg would stop executing deserters after 1757.

If a soldier were to be punished for his desertion and not receive the death penalty, there were several other punishments available to commanders for dealing with lapses in discipline. Generally these punishments were corporal, though, depending on the soldier’s socioeconomic status, the forfeiture of his property was also possible punishment. Other non-physical punishments that officers could dispense were: giving the soldier a verbal dressing-down in front of the unit, time in the stock house, or extra duties as punishment. During the 1740s and 1750s, with the guidance of Field Marshal Daun and Maria Theresa, limitations were placed on the types of punishment that officers could dispense. Under the changes, it “became an offence for an officer or NCO to kick a man, or beat him with a stick over the head, in the face or on the feet.”

These limitations and proscriptions would be codified in the 1763 special regulations, down to the technical details of how blows were to be struck. The monarchy also maintained a series of prisons and building projects (fortresses and fortifications) where a soldier could be sent to do Schanzarbeit, or hard labor. While these labor punishments were not intended to kill the soldier, often the conditions under which the soldier labored were dangerous and brutal. Rations were

---

200 Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 56.
202 Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 56.
203 Hochedlinger, Austria’s Wars of Emergence, 135.
often insufficient, with the clothing potentially inappropriate for the work or climate. The possibility of infection from the wounds caused by the ever-present iron shackles was a constant threat. If a soldier was kept on Schanzarbeit long enough, the punishment could be the same as condemning the man to death.204

The two most common forms of corporal punishment for desertion were Stockstreiche (caning) and Spießenruten/Gassenlaufen (running the gauntlet). Stockstreiche were generally not assigned as a singular punishment for desertion and, in the two cases this chapter will examine, all soldiers that received Stockstreiche also received some other form of punishment. The soldier would be stripped to the waist for the punishment and the cane used was required to be: “of hazel wood, no thicker than the caliber of a rifle, undamaged and with no leaf growths or blemishes.”205

In general, the cap for the number of strikes to be applied was 100—76 or more strikes required a military justice ruling, with 50 to 75 strikes requiring only a legal sentence, and less than 50 strikes being at the discretion of a regimental commander for regular disciplinary purposes.206

The running of the gauntlet, Gassenlaufen or Spießenruten, was the “classic punishment” for desertion. With a long history, the practice had by 1752 become ingrained into the practices of military justice in the Habsburg Monarchy and other states. The deserter, with a bare back, was made to march between two lines of other soldiers (sometimes up to 300 total) while the lined-up soldiers struck at him with rods. Generally the rods were not sharpened or allowed to have edges. In case the deserter was a cavalryman, leather straps were used instead of rods. There would normally be a “Kontramarschieren” soldier who, armed with a bayonet, walked backwards through the gauntlet to prevent the punished soldier from running too quickly. Starting under Maria Theresa, to prevent instant death from the wounds, the punishment could be stretched over

204 Tepperberg, “Rechtsnormen,” 110.
several days to give the soldier time to heal or for a higher authority to intervene and lessen the punishment—furthermore, the role of the “Kontramarschieren” was limited or eliminated to prevent abuse of the position. The punishment would be refined and its specifics revisited throughout the latter part of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century—altering the number of men involved, the “standard” number of runs per punishment, the types of weapons used by the gauntlet soldiers, and whether or not the punishment could be stretched over several days. Running the gauntlet would be a standard punishment for desertion or other military misconduct until it was abolished on July 1, 1855 and replaced with “hard” incarceration. Caning would last until December 22, 1868, when corporal punishment was officially banned in the Habsburg Monarchy.207

Returning to a unit was facilitated by the granting of pardons, either the result of a specific soldier’s petition for clemency or the result of a general pardon issued by the monarchy.208 For example, on June 30, 1759 the Hofkriegsrat, headed by Count Joseph von Harrach and Count Wilhelm Neipperg, issued a general pardon in Maria Theresa’s name to the entire monarchy. Under the terms of this pardon, deserting soldiers that returned to their units within six weeks of the publication of the patent would have “the errors and perjury they committed [...] forgiven, tolerated, forgotten, and suspended without punishment or prosecution and without consequences to their honor or good repute.”209 Soldiers that did not return or persisted in their desertion would face “stiff punishments, without mercy or relief.”210 Deserters, whether they were still within the boundaries of the monarchy, were generally given a period of

---

208 Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 57.
209 “…ihren begangenen Fehler und Meineid ohne einiger Bestraf=und Ahndung, oder Nachtheil ihrer Ehren und guten Leymuts, allernägigst vergeben, nachgesehen, vergessen, und aufgehoben habe, welche vom Tag der Publication dieses Patents innerhalb sechs Wochen freywillig zurück kehren…” ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 130.8, “1759-06-30.”
time from the publication of the patent to voluntarily return to claim a pardon for their desertion. In general, they were required to return to their original units, though such language was not always included. Deserters that ignored the pardon, or those that were captured rather than voluntarily returning, could face stiff penalties for their desertion—though that was also not always the case. Furthermore, the general pardon for desertion did not exempt soldiers from punishment for other crimes or misconduct committed. While there are no numbers available regarding the number of soldiers that returned under general pardons, the fact that “they were repeated regularly throughout the eighteenth century suggests that a sufficient number of soldiers returned to the fold to make the practice worthwhile.” At the very least, the practice was seen as a viable method of recouping the number of soldiers lost to desertion. Neither of the case studies shown here, as far as can be determined, were affected by the issuance of a general pardon. With or without a general pardon, these two case studies find that the circumstances surrounding a soldier’s disappearance and return could mitigate the punishment received for desertion—or, the connection between desertion and other crimes could intensify the punishments meted out.

3. Sources and Methodology

For the following case studies, there are several things worth noting regarding the sources and methodologies used. The source material for these first two case studies came from the gathered correspondence of the Hofkriegsrat, which are today found in the Kriegsarchiv of the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv in Vienna—there are over 5,600 cartons of Hofkriegsrat paperwork and correspondence from 1557 to 1848. In the cartons of Hofkriegsrat papers (KA-ZSt-HKR-Karton…), most correspondence is organized according to its subject matter and its provenance,

---

with each piece being assigned a ‘signatur,’ generally a three-digit code based on: its year, its rubric number, and an assigned document number. In some cases, it is possible to verify the contents of these documents and files against the registers kept by the Hofkriegsrat’s staff at the time. The Protokoll Bücher (KA-ZSt-HKR-Bücher…) can be also be found in the collections of the Kriegsarchiv—there are over 7,200 bound volumes for the Hofkriegsrat Expedit and Registratur, including indices.

For documents from the eighteenth century, there are generally no page numbers given, so best approximations are provided for folios without page numbers and any applicable page headings are used to help differentiate the documents within a file. Hofkriegsrat correspondence from before 1753 was organized by the order in which it was received or when the last related piece of correspondence was sent out by the Hofkriegsrat. Starting in 1753, however, rubric systems were introduced to organize correspondence by its subject matter, such as: quartering, military justice, prisoner exchange, armaments, border troops, etc. This numbered rubric system would carry on with one exception until 1801, being altered and updated several times along the way. There was no rubric system used for the years 1762-1766, a period that is consistent with a shift in leadership in the Hofkriegsrat: the tenure of Count Leopold Joseph von Daun (1762-1766). The rubric system was reinstituted for 1767 during the tenure of Count Franz Moritz von Lacy as HKR president (1766-1774). The numbers of the system were not constant, being changed every 5-10 years. For example, between 1753 and 1801, desertion (Deserteure) had 4 different rubric designations: starting with 36, 14, 27, 20, and 14 again.212 The rubric system would be radically overhauled for correspondence after 1801 during the presidency of Archduke  

---

212 A more detailed explanation of the holdings of the Hofkriegsrat can be found online in the Archive Information System of the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv. For more information on the collections of the Kriegsarchiv, see Egger, “Kriegsarchiv,” 39-66. See also Christoph Tepperberg, “The Austrian War Archives in Vienna (Kriegsarchiv Wien) and its Records Pertaining to Personnel,” East European Genealogical Society 8 (2000): 9-24.
Charles and was used, in one form or another, until the Hofkriegsrat was replaced by the Kriegsministerium in 1848.213

One advantage to using the correspondence of the Hofkriegsrat to trace desertion is the central collection of the documents: the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv. This allows a researcher to follow the thematic and chronologic development of the administrative body. However, this advantage does come with several caveats. While in many cases it appears that great effort was put into keeping files in order, the correspondence of the Hofkriegsrat does not always provide a complete picture of the case hand. This is particularly true of cases that, after being addressed to the Hofkriegsrat, are then resolved by the relevant General Commando or local unit commander—in those cases, there is no guarantee that any follow-up correspondence would be included in the relevant files. Furthermore, while provincial offices sending correspondence to the Hofkriegsrat were expected to include all of the preceding correspondence and relevant documents, this is not always the case and historians are left to fill in the gaps.

Each of the case studies in this chapter is based off a single file of documents, each of which contains: original correspondence and petitions, copies of subsequent responses, reports, attachments, and an outer ‘jacket’ folio. Most often the outer folios contain: draft versions of the final piece of correspondence to be sent, a list of the recipients, and, if being sent to numerous places, any specific notations for individual recipients. Both Case 1 and Case 2 also each include tables of information regarding the personnel involved, though the type of information provided by each regiment was different. Case 1 provides a broader accounting of the circumstances surrounding each soldier’s desertion and the circumstances surrounding his return, with no information regarding the type or severity of punishment that each soldier received. Case 2

213 For an introduction into the work of Archduke Charles during his tenure as president of the Hofkriegsrat, see Rothenburg, *Napoleon’s Great Adversaries* (1982). In particular, pp.16-19 provides information regarding the state of the Hofkriegsrat before the Archiduke’s term, while pp. 66-70 specifically covers the Archduke’s reform efforts.
provides more contextual information for the career of each involved soldier with an accounting of his punishment, but provides much less information surrounding the exact circumstances of his desertion and the manner in which he returned to the regiment, if at all.

In each case, the documents are representative of the views and writings of officers and members of the Hofkriegsrat. Neither of these folios contains any personal documentation or correspondence from the soldiers involved. The only windows into the minds of the deserting soldiers are the listed motives in the provided tables and reports. This information, however, is only seen through the voice of the officer(s) or scribe(s) that wrote the report. As such, we cannot be certain exactly what each soldier said during his interrogation and, in the cases of the soldiers that did not return, we can only speculate about the statements given on their behalf by their officers and colleagues.

1. Case Study I – The Baron Preysacische Infanterie Regiment

In the case of the Baron Preysacische Infanterie Regiment, the unit was stationed in Galicia.\textsuperscript{215} The desertion report in question was dated December 7, 1780 and came several months after the unit received orders from the Hungarian General Commando in Bratislava that it would relocate outside of Galicia—in the copy of the report on file with the Hofkriegsrat, the destination was not given.\textsuperscript{216} Of the 28 deserting soldiers, 12 soldiers were not caught or did not return of their own volition. 16 of the soldiers were either caught or returned voluntarily. The soldiers that returned, whether voluntarily or not, were all interrogated by the regiment’s officers. The personal information of all 28 deserters and summations of the interrogations were provided to the Hungarian General Commando in the form of a table ("\textit{Ausweis}"). The table gave the following information: name of company in which the soldier served ("Compagnie"), rank ("Chargen"), name ("Nomina"), place of birth ("Geburtsland"), place and time of desertion ("Wo und wann desertirt"), whether and when the soldier was captured or voluntarily returned ("Ob und wann Attrapirt oder Revertirt"), supposed reason for deserting for the soldiers that did not return ("Muthmaßung der Desertions Ursache"), and reason for deserting attributed to soldiers that did return ("Haben bey ihrer zuruckkunft zur Desertions Ursache angegeben, so in ihren Verhör bestättigt worden").\textsuperscript{217}

The deserting soldiers in this sample came from 9 different companies in the regiment. The largest number of soldiers (11) is noted as having deserted from the area of one of the main garrison points for the regiment, the city of Lemberg (Lviv, Ukraine): 6 deserted from around

\textsuperscript{215} Galicia, encompassing parts of modern-day Poland and Ukraine, became part of the Habsburg Monarchy starting with the First Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian state in 1772.
\textsuperscript{216} "...daß das Regiment aus Gallicien zu Marchiren befehliget gewesen..." ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306, 1781-14-1, 2.
\textsuperscript{217} ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306, 1781-14-1, table.
Obertin (Obertyn, Ukraine), 5 from around Snyatin (Sniatyn, Ukraine), 4 from around Tismaniez, and 2 from around Przezany (Berezhan, Ukraine). 218 7 of the soldiers deserted singularly, with the remaining soldiers disappearing in groups of 2 or 3. Of the soldiers that deserted singularly, only two did not return in time for the report, while 3 voluntarily returned and 2 were captured.

Below is a table of the 16 returned deserters, with their places of birth and their supposed reasons for deserting. 219

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place of birth</th>
<th>Reason given for desertion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Szölosy, Stephan</td>
<td>(Simonthurn), Hungarn</td>
<td>“weilen Er sehr betrunken ware”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horvath (Jung), Stephan</td>
<td>Patack, Hungarn</td>
<td>“Es ware ih(me) auf einmal in Kopf gekommen”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leczel, Johann</td>
<td>Uýhelý, Hungarn</td>
<td>“ist durch ih(ons) bewusstlos worden”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uczelics, Adam</td>
<td>Packý, Hungarn</td>
<td>“kann keine Ursache beybringen”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevels, Franz</td>
<td>Csaný, Hungarn</td>
<td>“ist ebenfalls durch seinen Kameraden Uczelics dazu verleitet”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadics, Xtián (Christian)</td>
<td>(Lipohs), Hungarn</td>
<td>“ist von schon gedachten Uczelics zur Desertion verleitet worden”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hervagen, Xtián (Christian)</td>
<td>(Gigerek), Sachsen</td>
<td>“ohne Ursache”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivanov, Simon</td>
<td>(Altzahl), Moscaw</td>
<td>“hat nacher Huß geben wollen”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svona(p), Joseph</td>
<td>(Verovitiza), Selavonien</td>
<td>“So er zur beurlaubung nicht qualificiret, und weil man ihm nicht beurlauben wolte”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagy, Mathias</td>
<td>Keský, Hungarn</td>
<td>“weilen Er keine Erlaubnuß erhalten zu Heimathen, dazu Er nicht die gehörige documenta hatte”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Csismadia, Stephan</td>
<td>(Sabun), Hungarn</td>
<td>“weilen Er von Bukacs bis Lemberg in Arrest gewesen, und verdächtig (ge--ßen)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peck, Jacob</td>
<td>Kasza, Hungarn</td>
<td>“ohne aller Ursache”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hegedus, Stephan</td>
<td>Ocsard, Hungarn</td>
<td>“wegen Trunk, und kinder die Er zu Haus verlassen hat”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egri, Johann</td>
<td>(Erlau), Hungarn</td>
<td>“ware betrunken ist durch seinen Kameraden Glaser dahin verleitet worden”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glaser, Jacob</td>
<td>(Teutschendorf), Czipsen</td>
<td>“ohne Ursach”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horvath, Mathias</td>
<td>Mohacs, Hungarn</td>
<td>“wegen Betrunkenheit”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

218 Przezany could also refer to modern-day Brzeżany in south-west Poland, though this is doubtful given its distance from the other garrison locations. For a sense of the distance covered by the regiment, Lviv to Sniatyn by road is just over 170 miles.

219 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306, 1781-14-1, table.
For the soldiers that were returned to the regiment, there are several patterns worth noting. First, an overwhelming majority of the soldiers list the land of their birth as Hungary: 12 of the 16. The other four returning soldiers gave their land of birth as: Sachsen (Saxony), Sclavonien (in modern-day Croatia), Mosau (Russia), and “Teutsche[n]dorf”\(^{220}\). Four of the soldiers cited their desire or inability to go home or see their families, perhaps suggesting that those soldiers were not wholly of a mind to join the regiment in the first place. Several soldiers blame the influence of other soldiers, in particular Adam Uczelcis or Jacob Glaser, both of whom were captured and returned to the regiment—the report provided no indication as to whether these ‘instigating’ soldiers received stiffer punishments. Four of the soldiers did not give any excuse and one thought it was a good idea at the time.\(^{221}\) The rest blamed drunkeness, a common thread in these types of reports—outside of declared states of war, garrison life for members of the standing army could breed a type of boredom—and low pay—against which soldiers would fight back with alcohol and other activities.

With a range of reasons for deserting, it is worth noting the statistics on how these returning soldiers found themselves back with the regiment. Of the 16 returning soldiers, six returned voluntarily ("sich selbst gemeldt") and eight were captured and forced to return ("attrapirt"). The remaining two were also involuntarily returned to the regiment, though they were part of a prisoner exchange with Turkish subjects ("von Türkische Unterthanen ausgeliefert"). For the two soldiers captured by the Turkish subjects, both soldiers were from the same company and, as far as the report states, were found missing from approximately the same location at the same time: August 12 near Tismaniez. One, Jacob Glaser, was one of the soldiers that provided no excuse while the other, Mathias Horvath, cited drunkeness. Unfortunately,

\(^{220}\) Potentially a reference to the modern-day city of Poprad in northern Slovakia or a generic reference to a German city outside of Galicia.

\(^{221}\) In the column for Stephen Horvath Jung, it states: “Es ware ih[me] auf einmahl in Kopf gekommen.”
amongst the Hofkriegsrat files surveyed, there were no follow-up reports provided by the Baron Preysacische Infanterie Regiment regarding the punishments and dispositions of the soldiers that deserted during the period in question.

It is also of interest to look at the length of time that the returned or returning soldiers were on the run. The dates given on this table tell “where and when [he] deserted” and “whether and when [he] was captured or returned.” Though companies were generally required to keep daily tabs on soldiers, the possibility that a soldier was not immediately noticed as missing cannot be discounted—whether through collaboration with other soldiers or out negligence by the supervising officer or NCO. In this sampling of soldiers, the soldiers 1) returned of their own volition, 2) were captured by another military force, 3) were captured by a non-military force, or 4) were captured by a non-Habsburg entity. For the 6 soldiers that returned of their own volition (“sich selbst gemeld”), only one, Christian Dadics, was gone for more than a week, having been marked as a deserter on August 13 and returning voluntarily on September 4. The rest returned after less than a week, with one (Stephan Hegedus) returning after only one day—he claimed that he deserted out of drunkenness and the children that he left. Hegedus’s story is likely validated by the fact that the definition of desertion could include men found in places they were not supposed to be, such as straying too far from camp or beyond the city’s walls: a state of being not uncommon for people under the influence of alcohol.222 Only one soldier, the Hungarian Jacob Peck of the Sallisch Compagnie, was captured a Habsburg military force (“vom Milit[…] Attrapirt”), one day after he was found to have deserted from the area around Snyatin (Sniatyn). Gemeiner Peck did not give any excuse for his desertion.

222 Frederick the Great made numerous recommendations for how generals and officers should control the movement of their soldiers so as to prevent desertion, including: keeping officers and cavalrymen on the edges of formations to prevent straying, using natural boundaries to keep men line, and avoiding night marches. See Luvaas, Frederick the Great, 121-122.
Seven of the soldiers were captured and returned to the regimental command by non-military actors—the report does not state whether these non-military actors (“vom Land Attrapirt”) were dedicated bounty hunters or Habsburg subjects doing the duty expected of them by the military authorities and as explicated in the published ordinances throughout the Monarchy. Of this group, three (Johann Leczel, Adam Uczelics, Franz Kevels) deserted on the same day (August 11, 1780) from Obertin, but the first two were captured within four days, while the last (Kevels) would not be captured until 14 days later. Simon Ivanov deserted from Lemberg on August 14 and was also captured within 4 days. Three others from a different company (Joseph Svonak, Mathias Nagy, and Stephan Csismadia) all deserted from Lemberg on August 9 and were captured after 8 days and returned to the regiment. And, as mentioned above, the two soldiers that were returned as part of an exchange with Ottoman subjects (Jacob Glaser and Mathias Horvath) were on the run for only less than two weeks (13 days). They were part of a group of four soldiers from the Apfaltrern Compagnie found to have deserted on August 12, 1780 from around Tismaniez. Glaser provided no excuse for his desertion, while Horvath claimed drunkenness—of the other two soldiers in that group, Johann Egri voluntarily returned and blamed drunkenness and Glaser for leading him astray, while the fourth, Sava Kovacsovich, was not captured.223

The regimental investigators were not able to question the 12 soldiers that did not return. Instead, they relied on the statements of the soldiers’ companions, bunkmates, and supervising non-commissioned officers to provide insight into the deserter’s actions. The table below outlines the supposed reasons as to why these soldiers deserted.224

---

223 “ware betrunken ist durch seinem Kameraden Glaser dahin verleithet worden.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306, 1781-14-1, table.
224 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306, 1781-14-1, table.
**Table 2-2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place of birth</th>
<th>Supposed reason for desertion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raiser, Michael (Grenadier)</td>
<td>Rothwirth, HRE</td>
<td>&quot;da diese zwey Mann Auslaender sind so d(aer)fnten selbe aus dieser Ursache Desertiret seyn um in ihr Vatterland zu gelangen&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besozi, Andreas (Tambour)</td>
<td>Campara, Venetian lands</td>
<td>&quot;da diese zwey Mann Auslaender sind so d(aer)fnten selbe aus dieser Ursache Desertiret seyn um in ihr Vatterland zu gelangen&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathovics, Mathi</td>
<td>Dembevich, Sclavonien</td>
<td>&quot;daerfften, da selbe nahe an der Moldau in quartier gestanden von den Moldovanern debouchiret, und zur Desertion verleithet worden seye&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulver, Lorenz</td>
<td>Pinzely, Hungarn</td>
<td>&quot;daerfften, da selbe nahe an der Moldau in quartier gestanden von den Moldovanern debouchiret, und zur Desertion verleithet worden seye&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grabovsky, Michael</td>
<td>Presoff, Gallicien</td>
<td>&quot;da das Regiment nach Ungarn Marchiren beorderet gewesen, und sie als National Pahlen lieber in diesem Land bleiben, so daerffte dieses die Ursach ihrer Desertion seyn.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saffran, Johann</td>
<td>Dankczig, Groß Pahlen</td>
<td>&quot;da das Regiment nach Ungarn Marchiren beorderet gewesen, und sie als National Pahlen lieber in diesem Land bleiben, so daerffte dieses die Ursach ihrer Desertion seyn.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krenovsky, Lorenz</td>
<td>Jannov, Gallicien</td>
<td>&quot;da das Regiment nach Ungarn Marchiren beorderet gewesen, und sie als National Pahlen lieber in diesem Land bleiben, so daerffte dieses die Ursach ihrer Desertion seyn.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novak, Sebastian</td>
<td>Lemberg, Gallicien</td>
<td>&quot;da das Regiment nach Ungarn Marchiren beorderet gewesen, und sie als National Pahlen lieber in diesem Land bleiben, so daerffte dieses die Ursach ihrer Desertion seyn.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laskovics, Joseph</td>
<td>Partfeld, Hungarn</td>
<td>&quot;diese seye dem vermuthen nach von dem Andreas Stubewsky zu Desertion verleithet worden da solches schon der Republic Pahlen gediinet hatte, wie es in dem verhoer des (Hegedus) erhoben worden&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stupevsky, Andre</td>
<td>Raszove, Pahlen</td>
<td>&quot;diese seye dem vermuthen nach von dem Andreas Stubewsky zu Desertion verleithet worden da solches schon der Republic Pahlen gediinet hatte, wie es in dem verhoer des (Hegedus) erhoben worden&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureck, Martin</td>
<td>Szedlicka, Gallicien</td>
<td>&quot;diese seye dem vermuthen nach von dem Andreas Stubewsky zu Desertion verleithet worden da solches schon der Republic Pahlen gediinet hatte, wie es in dem verhoer des (Hegedus) erhoben worden&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Amongst the soldiers that did not or were not returned to the regiment, one noticeable trend is that they were more likely to have deserted as a group. Of the 12 soldiers, 10 soldiers deserted (or were found to have deserted) at the same time and from the same location as other soldiers, indicating that they might have worked together or taken advantage of the same circumstances to desert—though this is not confirmed in every case. The remaining two soldiers deserted from the same location, but separated by almost three weeks. Both of those soldiers were foreigners, “Ausländer”, supposedly hailing from Rothwirth (“aus dem Römischen Reich”) and Campara (“aus der Venetianischen”) and were believed to have returned to their homelands. These foreigners, Michael Raiser and Andreas Besozi, deserted from Lemberg (the former on July 24 and the latter on August 10) and were the only two soldiers that were not merely enlisted soldiers—Raiser was a grenadier and Besozi was a tambour (drummer).

Two soldiers from the 1te Major Compagnie, Mathi[as] Mathovics from Hungarn and Lorenz Pulver from Sclavonien, deserted from Snyatin on July 25 and were believed to have been corrupted (“debouchiret”) by nearby Moldovans and encouraged to desert (“zur Desertion verleithet worden seye”) in the direction of Moldova. Similar to the cases of Raiser and Besozi, a soldier’s ethnicity could potentially have played a role in the desertion of four soldiers of Polish descent. Michael Grabovsky (“aus Gallicien”) and Johann Saffran (“aus Groß Pohlen”) were found to have abandoned their duties with the 2te Major Compagnie in the vicinity of Przezany on July 27—the investigating officers attributed their desertion to their Polish heritages and a desire to not leave their homelands with the regiment. In the area around Snyatin on July 25, two soldiers of the Sallisch Compagnie “aus Gallicien”, Lorenz Krenovsky and Sebastian Novak,
were noted as deserters—both were also noted as not wanting to leave their homelands. The remaining four soldiers were supposedly enticed into deserting by the influence of other soldiers that deserted, though the Polish ethnicity of two of the soldiers likely played a role. Four soldiers of the Candiani Compagnie near Lemberg absconded from their posts on July 17. One of the soldiers, Stephan Hegedus (Hungarian), returned the next day and claimed drunkenness and homesickness as his excuses. Based on his interrogation, the officer writing the report concluded that Hegedus and two others, Joseph Laskovics (“aus Hungarn”) and Martin Bureck (“aus Gallicien”) were led astray by a fourth soldier. According to his story, Andre[as] Stupevsky (“aus Pohlen”) had previously served in the military in Poland and convinced the others to run away to Poland with him. The final soldier, Sava Kovacsovich (“aus Hungarn”), was part of the 4-soldier group in the Apfaltrern Compagnie that deserted on August 12 from near Tismaniez and was the only one of that group that had not been recovered at the time of the report’s submission.

While no information about subsequent punishment was included in the HKR file, the backgrounds of the deserting soldiers provide some interesting points regarding the motivations to desert. Similar the group of returned soldiers, one finds the existence of a desire to leave the service, whether as a result of the influence of other soldiers (often with ‘poor characters’) or a desire to return to a faraway home. Furthermore, in the case of the Galician or Polish soldiers, the order from the General Commando for the regiment to relocate brought a desire to not leave their homes (“lieber in diesem Land bleiben“). In the case of two soldiers, (R)aiser and Besozi, neither claimed an area of the Habsburg Monarchy as home and purportedly found themselves unable to legitimately leave their posts.
2. Case Study II – The Oroszischen Infanterie Regiment

Unlike the previous case of the regiment in Galicia, where many of the desertions were precipitated by an order from the General Commando to relocate, the late 1780 case of the Oroszischen Infanterie Regiment was not precipitated by a change in status. Rather, being stationed close to the border in Siebenbürgen, the officers of this regiment found that their location provided a plethora of reasons and opportunities for soldiers to desert. In a report sent after September 1780, this regiment alerted the Siebenbürgisches General Commando to the desertion of 25 soldiers in a single month. The General Commando ordered an inquiry by the regiment’s officers into the status of each deserter. The results of these inquiries were summarized in a table sent to the General Commando—for each soldier, the following information was provided: company assignment (“Compagnie”), rank (“Chargen”), name (“Nomina”), nation, the terms of their original enlistment (“Freywillig angeworben”, “Als Maleficant”, “Als Vagabund”, “Wegen anderen Liederlichkeiten”), whether he served had been punished by any other regiment (“Von anderen Regimentern Vermög Sentenz anhero abgegeben”), whether or not he was allowed to leave (“Ob, und wa seiner Beurlaubung im Weege gestanden?”), character (“Conduitte”), how many times he had deserted (“Wie offt deserteuret?”), supposed motive for desertion (“Motiva, warum solcher anjetzo deserteuret?”), and what type of punishment the soldier received (“Verbrechen und Bestraffungen”).

Of the 25 deserters, 21 soldiers found their way back to the unit (voluntarily or involuntarily) and were interviewed, while four of the soldiers not return or were not caught by the time of the report between November and December 1780—the table was dated December 31, 1780.

The deserters hailed from 14 different units in the regiment and less than half of them were listed as having joined the regiment voluntarily: 11 soldiers were “Freywillig angeworben”,

---

225 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306, 1781-14-18, table.
1 was “Als Maleficant”, 5 were “Als Vagabund”, and the final 8 were “Wegen anderen Liederlichkeiten.” As expected with a regiment in Siebenbürgen, the majority of the soldiers appear to have been recruited from the local ethnicities, with the vast majority being of Wallachian descent: 16 were described as “Wallach”, 5 as “Hungar”, 3 as “Siebenbürger Sachs”, and 1 as “Teutsch Soldaten Kind.” Most of the soldiers (21) that deserted during this period were of the lowest rank in the regiment, Gemeyner (private). One soldier was rated Gefreyther (a private first class), two other soldiers were Tambours (drummers), and the last soldier was a Grenadier. As far as the investigators could determine, the majority of this group of soldiers (15 out of 25) were repeat offenders when it came to desertion. This occasion marked the second known desertion for 11 soldiers, the third known desertion for 3 soldiers, and in one particularly egregious case, the sixth desertion (“in 5 years”) for one soldier.

The following table shows the pertinent information for the soldiers that did not return. As in the case of the Baron Preysacische Infanterie Regiment, the investigating officers of the Oroszischen Infanterie Regiment had to rely on the interrogations of the returning soldiers and, for those that had not returned to the regiment, the statements of the soldiers’ companions, bunkmates, and supervising non-commissioned officers. Unfortunately, the Oroszischen table does not provide specifics for the vast majority of the soldiers regarding the circumstances surrounding their desertion or return. All insights regarding the manner of each soldier’s desertion is derived from the descriptions of their motives and punishments. Below is a table of the information for the two soldiers that had not returned to the regiment in time for the report, including their names, ranks, ethnicities, and reasons for desertion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (“Name”) and Rank</th>
<th>Ethnicity (“Nation”)</th>
<th>Reason for Desertion (“Motiva, warum solcher anjetzo deserteuret?”)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friss(t), Joseph: (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>Weile er vom Urlaub deserteurt, daher ist dessen Ursach unbewust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gavrilla, Vaszil (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>ist dem Regmt unbewust, weil er von letzteren Recroutten ware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagy, Steph: (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Hungar</td>
<td>Alß Betrunckener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Díán, Andr: (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>Weilen er vom Urlaub deserteuret, und über die zeit ausgeblieben ware, die Ursach seiner Desertion ist sonsten Regmt unbewust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Joseph Friss(t), a Wallach Gemeyner from the Diotale(v)i Compagnie, was described by the investigating officers as having a mittelmässig (moderate) character who joined the regiment because of an undisclosed proclivity for licentiousness. If the report is to be believed, this occasion marked his first desertion and occurred while he was on furlough (“vom Urlaub deserteuret”). Since no further information about the timing or circumstances of his desertion was given, it is not known whether or not anything happened during his furlough that would have caused his desertion.

The case of Gemeyner Vaszil Gavrilla, a Wallach with the Vitali Compagnie, is the same as that of Joseph Friss(t). Gavrilla also joined the regiment because of “anderen Liederlichkeiten,” was described as mittelmässig, and deserted for the first time while on furlough. Both soldiers were listed as never or not yet punished: “niemahlen” and “niemahlen weder in Arrest gewesen, noch bestraffet worden,” respectively. Andr(eas) Díán, another Wallach Gemeyner with the Obrist Lieut(enant’s) Compagnie, was recruited into the regiment for “anderen Liederlichkeiten” and noted as having an evil character: “Übele.” It was noted that he had only been with the regiment a short period of time, but that he had reprimanded ‘some times’
for his licentious or undisciplined behavior. However, despite these seeming strikes against him, according to the reporting officer, Dián was given an opportunity to go on leave—one which he took to desert, leaving the regiment to guess as to his whereabouts or reasons for deserting.

The fourth deserter, the Hungarian Gemeyner Stephen Nagy, was apparently a simpler case. He was recruited into the regiment as a vagabond and would not have qualified for furlough based on his character, so he did not apply for or request one. He was, by their account, a heavy drinker (“ein starker Sauffer”) that had not previously attempted to desert until this occasion—which the officers attributed to his drunkenness.

While three of the soldiers were found to have deserted while on an approved form of leave, 21 soldiers returned or were returned to the regiment based on the information provided in the table. These soldiers were interrogated by the regimental officers and, to varying extents, assigned punishments for their having deserted from the regiment. The information provided by the officers gives a glimpse into the many different circumstances under which a soldier would desert and, in some cases, why these soldiers might voluntarily return to their unit. Below is a table of the 21 soldiers believed to have returned or been returned to the regiment, including their names, ranks, ethnicities, and reasons for deserting.

---

226 “Weilen er alß recroutt eine kurtze zeit beym Regiment ware, ist er etliche mahl nur mit reprimandiren wegen liederlichkeiten geahndet worden.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306, 1781-14-18, table.
## Table 2-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (“Name”) and Position (“Chargen”)</th>
<th>Ethnicity (“Nation”)</th>
<th>Reason for Desertion (“Motiva, warum solcher anjetzo deserteuret?”)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liptsitsán, Simon (Grenadier)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>Seines Camaratens Weib, mit der er beständig gebuhlet, und deserteuret ist hat ihm hierzu verführet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma(j)ti, Barb (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>die freyheit seines liederlichen Lebens fort zu setzen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petro, Boján (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>die freyheit seines liederlichen Lebens fort zu setzen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klein, Joh: (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Teutsch Soldaten Kind</td>
<td>Ein Fluchtes Weibss Bild hat ihm hier zu die anleitung gegeben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salman, Petr. (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Siebenburger Sachs</td>
<td>die Liederlichkeit hat ihn hierzu verleitet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oltyán, Georg (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>die Liederlichkeit hat ihm hierzu anlass gegeben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muntýán, Joh: (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>Unter der Zeit alls er beym Remt [Regiment] ware, hatte er keinen Muth zu den Ehre(n) diensten, und ware alle zeit traurig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marusan, Georg (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>Aus liederlichkeit und Trägheit des dienstes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eckhard, Johan: (Tambour)</td>
<td>Siebenburger Sachs</td>
<td>Wegen Entfremdung 24. Gulden; hat sich gefürchtet bestraft zu werden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buna, Petrus (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>Weilen er keinen Lust gehabt zum Soldaten leben, ist er nächtlicher weil von der wacht deserteurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molnár, Joh: (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Hungar</td>
<td>Wegen Sauffen, stehlen, und Schulden machen dan nachläßigkeit in diensten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piszárul, Onye (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>Weilen er einen mercklichen diebstahl begangen und biss der zeit an ihme einmahlen der gleichen bemercket worden, ist er aus forcht bestraft zu werden desert[euren]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klass, Thom: (Gefreyther)</td>
<td>Siebenburger Sachs</td>
<td>Wegen seiner üblen Conduitt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Csukotan, Dan: (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Hungar</td>
<td>die liederliche Aufführung hat ihme darzu bewogen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertze, Gabr: (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>die liederliche Aufführung hat ihme darzu bewogen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varga, Georg (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>der Muthmassung nach ist er ohnfehlbahr von obigen zweyen [Csukotan and Bertze] verführet worden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valaszi, Vaszil (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>der Muthmassung nach ist er ohnfehlbahr von obigen zweyen [Csukotan and Bertze] verführet worden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Csóry, Joh: (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>Weilen er die beurlaubung nicht hat erhalten könen, ohne authentischer Caution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurutz, Steph: (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Hungar</td>
<td>In der Besoffenheit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katona, Johan: (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Wallach</td>
<td>Weilen von seinem Comitat dem Regmt [Regiment] zu gekommen, dass er zur beurlaubung nicht qualificiret seye. und auch keine Caution hat procuriren könen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szücs, Johan (Gemeyner)</td>
<td>Hungar</td>
<td>Alls er zu T()ertzburg auf Commando (stunde), und mit Briefen nacher Cronstad geschicket wurde hat er bey der Nacht im Trunck einen grossen Excess begangen u. aus forcht bestraft zu werden deserteuret den 3ten Tag darauf wieder attrapiret worden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Without the exact information regarding each soldier’s desertion, we are left to guess based on the information from their interrogation as to whether or not any of the returning soldiers
collaborated or coordinated with each other. In the case of a group of 4 soldiers from the Halleg Compagnie, two of the soldiers (Csukotan and Bertze) claimed to have deserted as a result of their licentiousness while the other two soldiers (Varga and Valaszi) blamed the influence of the first two soldiers. Conversely, some soldiers clearly deserted without collaborating—in the cases of Onye Piszárul or Johan Eckhard, both had committed other crimes or bad acts and deserted out of fear of punishment for their having each committed acts of thievery.

As the table above shows, this group of soldiers gave a variety excuses for their desertion, with several excuses being more popular than others and some soldiers giving multiple or compound excuses. The table provides a column with information regarding the “Motiva” of the deserter and a second column for their crimes and punishments, if they received any. Interestingly enough, the information provided each of these columns did not always match—not every bad act or misconduct was considered a cause for desertion. Captured and returned soldiers were also liable for punishment for any other crimes or infractions they were found to have committed while serving and/or on the run. For example, Georg Marusan, a Wallach that had joined the regiment as a vagabond, was cited as having deserted because of his licentious character (“Liederlichkeit”) and his disdain for the burden of serving in the regiment (“Trägheit des dienstes”). He had previously been allowed furlough, but had returned because of a need for food.227 Under Conduitte, he was also supposedly known for being argumentative and a drunkard. Gemeyner Marusan was punished for his lack of discipline and misconduct, on top of the punishment he was assigned for his second desertion.

227 In response to “Ob, und was, seiner Beurlaubung im Weege gestanden?,” the author of the table wrote: “War bereits beurlaubt ist aber wegen Mangel der Nahrung vor der Zeit ein gerukt.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306, 1781-14-18, table.
Under “Motiva”, the excuses given by (or attributed to) the returned soldiers broke down as follows.°° Seven of the soldiers stated that they were led to desert by their ‘liederlich’ character, making it the most popular excuse. The second most popular excuse was fear of punishment (ex. “hat sich gefürchtet bestraffet zu werden”) for having committed a separate crime. One soldier, a Hungarian volunteer named Johan Szücs, got very drunk while entrusted with official mail and deserted for the first time out of fear of punishment—he was captured on the third day. As previously mentioned, Johan Eckhard stole money and Onye Piszárul was noted for committing a theft (“diebstahl”) and both feared punishment. Three soldiers specifically drunkenness as the cause of their desertion, with two of them placing drunkenness within a larger sequence of events leading to their having left. Two soldiers could not, for whatever reason, get a legitimate pass to go on leave and chose to leave anyway. Two other soldiers claimed to have no love for serving in the army—Johan Muntyán was a voluntary recruit that did not care much for serving (“hatte er keinen Muth zu den Ehre[n] diensten”), while Petrus Buna was brought into the regiment as a vagabond and had little desire for a soldier’s life (“er keinen Lust gehabt zum Soldaten Leben”). Both Muntyán and Buna had previously been caught deserting. Muntyán’s dislike for serving also manifested itself in depression, as he was cited as being “alle Zeit traurig.” The desertion of two soldiers, including the aforementioned Georg Marusan, was attributed to their laziness or indolence regarding their duties, while two soldiers (Varga and Valaszi) claimed that they were led astray by the influence of others. One soldier, Thom(as) Klass, cited his bad character (“seiner Üblen Conduitt”) while another, Joh(an) Molnár, mentioned his debts as a motivating factor. The lure or influence of women played a role in the desertion of at least two soldiers: the grenadier Simon Liptsitsán, who was “steadily courting” (“beständig gebuhlet”) a

°° Several soldiers gave multiple reasons, so the numbers provided in this paragraph add up to more than the 21 that would be expected.
woman, and the tambour (drummer) Joh(an) Klein, who was led astray by a woman: “Ein Fluchtes Weibss Bild hat ihm hier zu die anleitung gegeben.”

Unlike the report for the Baron Preysacische Regiment, the Oroszischen report provided valuable information about the circumstances regarding the soldier’s recruitment and his supposed character (“Conduitte”). The table also provided a description of the manner(s) in which each soldier was punished—and, in some cases, how soldiers were punished for previous infractions and acts of desertion. Based on the information gleaned from the interrogation of the deserting soldier or, in the case of those that did not return, their comrades, the officers provided a short description of the character of each soldier. More than half of the soldiers were given multiple marks or descriptions. Of the 25 soldiers that deserted from this regiment during September 1780, only four of them received the highest marks given: moderate/mediocre (“mittelmässig”). The other 21 soldiers received less-than-flattering descriptions, with most receiving explicitly negative characterizations and being noted for multiple character flaws. The descriptions given were as follows:

- 8 were described as “Sauffer” (drunkard), with 2 classified as “starker” (heavy), 1 as “zuweilen” (sometimes/occasional), and 1 as “incorrigibler”
- 8 were described as “Resoneur” (argumentative), with 1 classified as “starker”
- 3 were described as “Übele(r)” (evil characters)
- 3 were described as “Liederlich(e)” (licentious or slovenly)
- 3 were described as “unwillig im dienst” (unwilling in service)
- 2 were described as “schlechter” (bad characters)
- 2 were described as “nachläßig im dienst” (careless/neglectful of duty)
- 1 was described as a “Hurer” (womanizer)
- 1 was described as a “Dieb” (thief)
- 1 was described as “dem Trunck stark ergeben“ (addicted to drinking)
- 1 was described as a “Rauffer” (troublemaker)
- 1 was described as a “Stenker” (quarreler)

229 ‘Resoneur’ is derived from the French raisonneur and specifically carries a negative connotation. Submission to authority underpinned much of the early modern military-disciplinary regime, making officers far more inclined to come down hard on those that argued with authorities or that specifically questioned orders given.
If the 4 soldiers characterized as “mittelmässig” are discounted, this group provides a cross-section of some of the issues faced by soldiers and officers in an eighteenth-century army. The problems faced by soldiers can be broken down into several groups. By far, one of the most common problems for soldiers was alcohol. Whether because the soldier was a confirmed drunkard or because of the inhibition that alcohol provided, it is clear from this table that the use and abuse of alcohol played a role in the misconduct and desertion of many soldiers—either as a singular cause, as was the case of the Hungarian Gemeyner Stephan Kurutz, or as the proximate cause of other misbehavior, as was the case with Johan Szücs who feared punishment for getting drunk while on official business.

The second group of issues can be described under the rubric of incompatibilities with the system of military discipline. Next to alcohol, the most common complaint lodged by the officers against the deserting soldiers was their argumentativeness. 8 soldiers were “Resoneurs”, with one noted as particularly so, and 2 others being a troublemaker and a quarreler. 9 soldiers were described as being bad characters, ranging from the licentious to the evil and the desirous of doing bad things. Two other soldiers were noted as being a thief and a womanizer—two pastimes that were actively discouraged or banned by military authorities. The third group of issues would fall under the rubric of carelessness or unwillingness to serve. One soldier, Petrus Buna, joined the regiment as a vagabond and was described as sullen and neglectful of his duties—he attempted to run away during the night and it was his second attempt at desertion. Vaszil Valaszi joined the regiment because of unnamed “Liederlichkeiten” and was found to be reluctant to

---

230 ‘Vallen’ = wählen
serve and constantly sad—for his first known desertion, he apparently collaborated with 3 other soldiers and under the influence of alcohol attempted to run away.

While some soldiers shared a supposed disdain for service or a love of alcohol, the officers punished them in a generally-uniform manner, if not in severity. The punishments were generally corporal in their applications, with whipping/caning (*Stock streichen*) and running the gauntlet (*Gassenlaufen*) as the two most common choices. Other punishments inflicted on soldiers by this regiment included: force-marching in chains, imprisonment, being given extra watch duties, and receiving a verbal dressing-down. Out of the 21 soldiers that were punished, 43 separate punishments were handed out—several soldiers were punished multiple times for a multitude of infractions. In the case of the Oroszischen Infanterie Regiment, the punishments for each soldier broke down as follows:

- 8 punished with: running the gauntlet
- 6 punished with: running the gauntlet and caning
- 3 punished with: “Straffwacht”
- 1 punished with: time in arrest and caning
- 1 punished with: running the gauntlet, caning, and imprisonment
- 1 punished with: running the gauntlet, caning, and “Parade wacht”
- 1 punished with: being force marched in chains, caning, and running the gauntlet

Of interest in this punishment list is that, except for a couple of cases, there is no direct connection between the number of times that a soldier deserted and the method of punishment prescribed. Below is a table that directly shows the punishments given to each soldier, including any specific descriptions for why that specific punishment was assigned. The other two columns show the Conduitte (characterization) of each soldier, as well as the number of times each was known to have deserted—including the occasion in question in this case study:

---

231 Corporal punishment was not abolished until 1868 when universal conscription was introduced. See Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 136.

232 The punishment totals broke down as follows: 21 running the gauntlet (with most soldiers sentenced to multiple runs), 14 sentences of canin (with most soldiers sentenced to multiple incidences), 3 “Straffwacht,” 1 forced march, 3 imprisonment, and 1 “Parade wacht.”
Table 2-5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduitte</th>
<th>Desertion Time</th>
<th>Punishment(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zuweilen Sauffer und Hurer</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Marched to Bohemia (for deserting with a woman), 30x Stockstreichen (for selling his equipment), 10x Gassenlaufen (for his manslaughter, “Mord-That”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liederlich, ein Dieb</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Gassenlaufen (for desertion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liederlich</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Gassenlaufen (for desertion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trunck, Rauffer, starker Resoneur</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Gassenlaufen (for striking another NCO), 40x Stockstreichen (for previous desertion), Stockstreichen (for drunkenness), 6x Gassenlaufen (for current desertion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Übler, Resoneur</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>8x Gassenlaufen (for first desertion), Stockstreichen (for quarreling and argumentativeness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liederliche</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Gassenlaufen (for previous desertion), Stockstreichen (for disorderly conduct and neglect of duty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Übler</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Gassenlaufen (for desertion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resoneur, Sauffer, nachläßig im dienst</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>[offtmahls] Stockstreichen (for misconduct and drunkenness), Gassenlaufen (for desertion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallen Lastern zu gethan</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Gassenlaufen (for previous desertions), 30x Stockstreichen (for breaking his drum), Parade wacht (for drunkenness and misconduct), [öffters] Stockstreichen (for repeated laggardness on duty), 10x Gassenlaufen (for current desertion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verdrießlich, nachläßig in diensten</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Gassenlaufen (for current desertion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schlechter</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>3x Gassenlaufen (for desertion), 3x Stockstreichen (for desertion), 25x Stockstreichen (for drunkenness and misconduct), imprisonment (for selling his uniform, breaking his sword, and deserting—returned voluntarily)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mittelmässige</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>6x Gassenlaufen (for current desertion—captured by a military authority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrigibler Sauffer und Stenker, Resoneur</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>25x Stockstreichen (for drunkenness), 10x Gassenlaufen (for resisting capture), 6x Gassenlaufen (for desertions), 3x Stockstreichen (for drunkenness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauffer, Resoneur</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Arrest (for drunkenness), 30x Stockstreichen (for desertion—returned voluntarily)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resoneur, unwilling im dienst</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>1x Straffwacht (for drunkenness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauffer, unwilling im dienst</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>1x Straffwacht (for drunkenness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beständig traurig</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>1x Straffwacht (for drunkenness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mittelmässig</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>6x Gassenlaufen (for desertion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resoneur, Sauffer</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>8x Gassenlaufen (for first desertion), 10x Gassenlaufen (for previous desertion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schlechte</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>4x Gassenlaufen (for previous desertion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resoneur, starker Sauffer</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>3x Stockstreichen (for argumentativeness and drunkenness), Gassenlaufen (for desertion)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the first noticeable trends on this table is that the person that wrote it did not always provide exacting information—in several cases, there is no mention of the number of times that a
soldier was to be caned or made to run the gauntlet. From the information above, it seems that a
greater indicator of the severity or method of punishment is to be found in 1) the description of
the soldier’s character, which may have been cited as the underlying cause of the act of desertion,
2) whether or not the soldier returned voluntarily or was captured, 3) whether or not the soldier’s
deserted was caused by the commission of another crime/misconduct, or 4) if the soldier
committed any other crimes during the period in which he was missing. In the case of Johan
Szücs, a Hungarian soldier, he was described as argumentative and a heavy drinker and this
occasion was his first known desertion. Having running away after getting drunk while on
official business (delivering letters to Cronstadt), Gemeyner Szücs was captured three days later.
For his poor characteristics, the regiment punished him with “several” strikes of the cane. On top
of this punishment, he was also punished for his “current desertion” by running the gauntlet.233

Unfortunately, the Oroszischen report, unlike the report from Galicia, does not explicitly
state whether or not each soldier was captured or voluntarily returned. Based on the information
given, only two of the 21 returned soldiers are explicitly described as returning voluntarily: Johan
Molnár as “sich selbst gemeldt” and Dan[iel] Csukotan as “revertirter Deserteur.” Of the other
19, only one soldier, the aforementioned Johan Szücs, was definitively listed as having been
captured: “den 3ten Tag darauf wieder attrapiret.” For two other soldiers, Joh[an] Csóry and
Onye Piszárul, the author noted that the regiment was notified by the authorities in Hermannstadt
of their presence without proper paperwork, but with no follow-up information as to whether this
specifically led to their capture.234 In the case of the 4 soldiers (Csukotan, Bertze, Varga,
Valaszi) from the Halleg Compagnie that most likely deserted together, Csukotan definitely
returned voluntarily. The report does not provide any specifics for the other three soldiers and the

233 “Wegen resoniren und Sauffereyen zu etlichen mahle mit Stock streichen…und wegen Jetziger
Desertion mit Gassen lauffen bestrafft worden.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306, 1781-14-18, table
234 For Piszárul, “der Hermanstäder Stuhl hat dem Regmt angezeigt, dass er in seinem Heymath (nicht?)
possessionirt seyn.” For Csóry, “der Hermanstäder Stuhl hat dem Regmt avisiret, dass er in seinem
Heimat (nicht?) possessionirt sey, auch nichts zu leben hätte.”
causes for their returns. They were given light punishments—a single ‘Straffwacht’ because of drunkenness—and returning voluntarily could potentially have resulted in the leniency they were shown.

Many of the soldiers caught for desertion, some having previously attempted to desert, were punished multiple times: for the act of desertion, for any other crimes they were found to have committed before or after their desertion, and for their noted character failings. Johan Katona, a Wallach, was recruited as a vagabond and described as “Schlechte” in the Conduitte. Unable to obtain proper permission to go on leave, presumably because he was listed as having joined the regiment as a vagabond, he left anyway and was caught. That occasion being his second known desertion, Gemeyner Katona was punished by being made to run the gauntlet four times.235 Fellow Wallachian, Gemeyner Gabriel Bertze, also failed to properly procure a pass to go on leave. Characterized by the reporting officers as argumentative and loathing of service and having been recruited because of “anderen Liederlichkeiten”, Bertze was a first-time deserter. Being only his first known act of desertion, he was punished for his drunkenness with a single “Straffwacht.” Johann Eckhardt, a drummer (“Tambour”) from Siebenbürgen of German descent, was on his third desertion when he was caught after having absconded out of fear of punishment for his loss (“Entfremdung”) of 24 gulden. During his career he had previously amassed an impressive list of punishments: twice punished with running the gauntlet for desertion, 30 “Stock streich” for selling his drum, punishment watches for drunkenness and argumentativeness, and various “Stock streich[en] for ‘laggardness’ on duty. For his third desertion, he received 10 runs of the gauntlet.236

---

One case, however, stands out above the rest—the case of Gemeyner Johan Molnár, a Hungarian that, according to the information provided by the reporting officers, had voluntary joined the regiment. Under Conduitte, Molnár is described as a “Schlechter” that, due to his having been a vagabond, deserted often and was therefore not able to procure permission to go on leave. Interestingly, in spite of this, Molnár was marked as having joined the regiment voluntarily. He was characterized as apathetic towards his service because of boozing, thievery, and indebtedness—without giving any further explanation, the author of the table marked that Molnár’s desertion was the result of these vices. This incident was his sixth desertion in five years—of the soldiers marked as repeat deserters on this table, Molnár was the only one for which a timeframe was provided to place the number of desertions in context. Unlike most of the others, however, the author of the table mentions specifically that he returned voluntarily. As punishment, Johan Molnár received: three runs of the gauntlet and three strikes of the cane for desertion, twenty-five strikes of the cane for his aforementioned character flaws, and, after coming forward, spending time in the regimental stockade (“Stok Haus”) for having sold his pants and intentionally breaking his saber.

The author of the table noted that only two of the 25 soldiers were led astray by the influence of women. Joh[an] Klein, a tambour of German heritage in the 2te Major Compagnie, was noted for his proclivities towards drinking and argumentativeness. He had voluntarily joined the regiment but did not obtain a proper leave pass. The report stated that he was seduced and led astray by a ‘damned/cursed woman’: “Ein Fluchtes Weibss Bild hat ihm hier zu die anleitung gegeben.” For his desertion, Klein was sentenced to 6 times running the gauntlet, on top of other punishments his drunken misconduct: numerous Stockstreichen and an extra running of the gauntlet.

---

237 “Öfftere Desertion konne keine Caution procuriren, weil er ein Vagabund war.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306, 1781-14-18, table.
gauntlet. The case of Simon Liptsitsán was a little different. A Wallach grenadier with the 2te Grenadier Compagnie, Lipsitsán had voluntarily joined the regiment and had not deserted before this occasion. Known as an ‘occasional’ drinker and “Hurer”, Liptsitsán had previously come to the attention of the regiment for an undisclosed “Mord=That” (murder), which was cited as a reason for his not being allowed a furlough. Other than its effect on his furlough eligibility, there was no mention of whether he had been previously punished for this “Mord=That.” Grenadier Liptsitsán deserted because of a woman, with whom he was quite taken, that “seduced” and “led him” astray.239 There is no mention of whether he voluntarily returned or was captured—though, from the list of his punishments, it is more likely that he was caught. Lipsitsán’s punishments were as follows. He was put in chains and marched to Bohemia—where he was either given hard work or imprisonment.240 For selling his equipment he was to receive 30 strikes of the cane. In light of his desertion, he was punished for his “begangener Mord That” with “10 mahligen” running the gauntlet.241

C. Analysis and Conclusion

In sum, the two cases presented here deal with two regiments that over a month period had 53 soldiers desert, with 16 of those soldiers not returning (or being returned) in a timely manner to share their stories. Quantitatively, this sample would be considered too small to be wholly representative of the experience of most soldiers in the eighteenth century. For perspective, the strength of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1780 was estimated to be 214,273

239 “Seines Cameratens Weib, mit der er beständig gebuhlet, und deserteuret ist hat ihm hierzu verführet.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306, 1781-14-18, table.
240 The Habsburgs maintained a large fortress and prison in Bohemia at Olmütz (Olomouc), now in the Czech Republic.
soldiers, spread out over 57 infantry regiments and 32 cavalry regiments: on paper.\footnote{The 57 infantry units were broken down as: 39 German regiments, 11 Hungarian regiments, 2 Italian regiments, and 5 Belgian regiments. The 32 cavalry units were broken down as: 9 cuirassiers, 7 dragoons, 8 hussars, 6 Chevauxlegers, and 2 carabiniers. See Dickson, \textit{Finance and Government} 2, 343-357. See also Hochedlinger, \textit{Austria’s Wars of Emergence}, 300-301.} There is also the potential that the information provided in these reports is insufficient. Some of the soldiers listed as still missing could have been 1) caught at a later date 2) caught by another unit and not yet returned or 3) for whatever reason have become lost with no intention of deserting. These two cases came from two files in the \textit{Hofkriegsrat} correspondence with distinct signatur number: 1781-14-1 and 1781-14-18. In comparison, there are over 1,100 folios spread out over 57 cartons—over 10,000 pages of archival material—related to desertion between 1753 and 1801. Qualitatively, however, these two case studies provide remarkable insight into 1) the causes of desertion 2) the administrative reactions to deserters and 3) the punishments meted out for misconduct and desertion in the mid-to-late eighteenth century.

As both case studies are from before the French Revolution, national pride and conscientious regarding the purpose of war—phenomena that often affected desertion rates in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries—generally did not play a role in the reasons why soldiers deserted. Both units in question were infantry regiments, meaning that they drew recruits from the same general classes of people—artillery and cavalry units tended to attract different classes and consequently had different rates of desertion. The Oroszischen and Baron Preysacische regiments were also both assigned to garrison positions on the border of the monarchy during a period of nominal peace. Both units faced similar circumstances and the acute fear of death brought on by assignment to the battlefield did not play a specific role in causing desertion amongst the ranks. These two regiments provide a window into the daily life of the sometimes-volunteer, sometimes-conscripted soldier in the 1780s and the personal struggles they faced when confronted with military discipline.
Soldiers in the eighteenth century were required to: be proficient in the use of firearms, react quickly to sets of commands, and engage in complex parade maneuvers. To stand and maneuver in formation and fire a muzzle-loading weapon repeatedly in the face of a (potentially more determined) enemy firing back were difficult skills to learn, let alone master to levels that raised one above all of the rest. The infamous Prussian king Frederick the Great once commented “he needed two years to turn a peasant into a soldier.” The deserting soldiers from these regiments were generally adult volunteers and/or forcible conscripts. Soldiering was not the career, presumably, for which most of them trained or spent their formative years working towards. As such, commanders and NCOs were often fighting an uphill battle in regards to instilling military discipline into men that were previously tradesmen or farmers. Military administrators had generally low expectations for the character of their soldiers and, in the case of Prince Charles de Ligne, some exploited this in their recruitment schemes. Of the 25 soldiers that deserted from Oroszischen Regiment, 14 of them explicitly joined because of delinquency, vagabondage, or misconduct. Though 11 of the soldiers were listed as “freywillig angeworben”, it should be remembered that, outside of the officer class, military service could be as much about escape as it was about service. Jacob Cognazzo, noted eighteenth-century observer of armies in central Europe, held no illusions regarding what motivated soldiers to volunteer for military service:

We should not allow ourselves to be blinded by delusions about 'love of country' or 'inclination towards military service.' If we take the trouble to investigate the most important impulses which bring the lads to the free recruiting table, we shall find that they are things like drunkenness, a frenzy of passions, love of idleness, a horror of any useful trade, a wish to escape from parental discipline, inclination towards debauchery, an imaginary hope of untrammeled freedom, sheer desperation, the fear of punishment

after some sordid crime, or however else you care to define the motives of worthless people like these.\textsuperscript{244} 

Oftentimes, recruiters would position themselves to be an acceptable last resort for peasants to volunteer. The aforementioned Charles de Ligne, an Austrian field marshal (from Brussels) and friend of Joseph II, recommended setting up a recruiting table at county fairs and to wait several days as, with the passage of time, people had time “to run out of money and get into fights” or otherwise become “only too keen to escape justice by enlisting in the army.”\textsuperscript{245} 

While freedom from prosecution, signing bonuses (bounties), and pretty uniforms could initially attract soldiers, the average pay for an enlisted soldier was generally on par with that of servants and less than most apprentices could earn in the middle of the eighteenth century—far less than needed to support a family and “scarcely an attractive proposition” for anyone that was not just looking to escape from other difficult circumstances.\textsuperscript{246} Furthermore, salaries were subject to deductions (stoppages) to defray the costs of food, units, and kit, which sometimes added up to more than 50 percent of the original amount.\textsuperscript{247} For the average enlisting soldier, the possibilities for advancement were not very expansive, as most commoners or peasants could only reach the level of an NCO after a lifetime of service.

The soldiers that deserted from these Habsburg regiments were not much different from the soldiers that deserted from other state armies in the eighteenth century. In the case of the Baron Preysacische Infanterie Regiment that was ordered to leave Galicia, a handful of Galician and Polish soldiers refused to be moved from the areas they called home, while one group saw their opportunity to jump the border to Poland and others to Moldavia. Some soldiers wanted to go home, whether out of a dislike for military service or homesickness, and took the opportunity

\textsuperscript{244} J. Cognazzo, \textit{Freymüthige Beytrag zur Geschichte des österreichischen Militairdienstes} (Frankfurt & Leipzig, 1789), 91. As quoted in Duffy, \textit{Army of Maria Theresa}, 48-49. 
\textsuperscript{245} C.J. Ligne, \textit{Mêlanges militaires, littéraires et sentimentaires}, vol. I (Dresden, 1795-1802), 205. See Duffy, \textit{Army of Maria Theresa}, 48. 
\textsuperscript{246} Wilson, “Violence and the Rejection of Authority,” 22. 
\textsuperscript{247} Christopher Duffy, \textit{Army of Maria Theresa}, 48.
to run when it presented itself. Others found themselves running away with or because of 
women. Yet still more refused to abide by military discipline and the fear of punishment could 
not stay their impulses to engage in misconduct. A group of soldiers feared punishment for other 
offenses, such as thievery, official misconduct, and robbery. Then there were the drunks and the 
men who loved to drink. Many of the soldiers were the victims of their own proclivities for 
intoxication—like soldiers in the British army, “they were drunk and either fell asleep, got lost, or 
were enticed away because of their being ‘in liquor’."

Yet, in spite of all of the potential reasons that might cause a soldier to desert, not as 
many as has generally been thought actually made the move. In the last 30 years, through the 
work of scholars like John Lynn (regarding the French Army) and Peter H. Wilson (regarding the 
German states), the assumption that soldiers deserted in droves to escape the “harsh discipline” of 
the military has been reevaluated and, in many circumstances, disproven. The number of 
soldiers that deserted from each of the regiments in question represented quite a low percentage 
of the total (nominal) strength of an infantry regiment in the late eighteenth century—and, in both 
cases, the majority of these deserters returned or were caught.

Furthermore, the eighteenth century saw the relaxation of the death penalty for desertion. 
Not a single one of the deserting soldiers in these case studies was assigned the death penalty for 
desertion, in spite of the fact that the majority of deserters from the Oroszischen Regiment in 
Siebenbürgen were repeat offenders. Most of the soldiers also had at least one other problem that 
caused or prolonged their desertion. One conclusion to be drawn from these specific case studies 
is an affirmation of the assertion that, while officers and administrators may not have valued the 
specific humanity of each soldier, they certainly showed a willingness to relax the death penalty 
in the interest of recouping losses. While the quality of each was seen to vary, soldiers

249 Wilson, War, state and society, 81.
represented a large investment in time and money that, as several scholars of Austrian military
history have pointed out, were too valuable to just execute. This is not to say that the
punishments were not harsh and could not potentially be fatal. Too many blows from the cane or
too many passes through the gauntlet could kill a man just as easily as hanging or the firing squad
could—and, as Christoph Tepperberg pointed out, assignment to hard labor or a prison fortress
was fraught with danger and often equivalent to a death sentence.250

Another factor that bears consideration in the discussion of desertion is the value of a
person’s word and his honor. When a soldier, for whatever reason, unlawfully left service,
officers and administrators took it as an offense against the soldier’s honor. For example,
Frederick the Great was of the belief that his budding army of soldiers provided exemplars for
civic duty for the general populace. From that point of view, a soldier who deserted was seen as
an oath-breaker and one without honor.251 As some states, like the Habsburgs, relaxed their use
of the death penalty, particularly for repeat deserters, there were notable examples of
commanders going the other way—in the case of British Generals Amherst and Gage in the
American colonies during the Seven Years’ War, both were known to condemn repeat offenders
as untrustworthy and unfit for service.252 While there is certainly a differentiation for soldiers
conscripted or impressed into service, as opposed to those who volunteered or enticed into
joining, a soldier was seen as having given an oath (“Eid”).253 Indeed, as previously mentioned,
one of the enticements provided in general pardons of the time was that, on top of protection from

250 Tepperberg, “Rechtsnormen,” 110.
251 Service and loyalty to the crown were viewed as promises that could not be broken. Furthermore,
members of the nobility that left the country were to be treated on par with deserters to Frederick II.
Büsch, Military System and Social Life in Old Regime Prussia, 52-53.
252 Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service,” 967.
Jahrhundert (Berlin: Duncker & Humboldt, 1996), 129.
prosecution for desertion, they would not receive “consequences to their honor or good repute.”  

Desertion was, and still is, a universal phenomenon in the armies of the eighteenth century. The army of the Habsburg Monarchy was not a ‘national’ army by modern standards, unless one takes the Prince de Ligne’s assertion that it was the “the sole national army, although made up of several nations.” The Habsburg Monarchy had large, and in some places disconnected, borders with numerous belligerent states that needed constant guarding—and the forces called upon to do this job were as diverse as the lands that comprised the monarchy. The Habsburgs needed a large army, larger than could be personally paid for by the emperor, meaning that it was built from units that often had no ethnic or regional connections. This army was also larger than could be filled out solely with volunteers in a time when the conditions of military service were dangerous and degrading. The Habsburg Monarchy was a “predominantly agrarian, coercion-intensive but capital-poor state”, in a time before the advent of the French Revolution and nationalist recruiting, meaning they were reliant as much on the good graces of their provincial estates as they were on their creditors—a trend with which the Habsburgs would struggle through the nineteenth century and the end of the monarchy. However, as will be explained in the next chapters, this did not mean that the Habsburgs did not actively attempt to improve their financial, legal, and administrative situations so as to better their military state.

---


255 Ligne, Mêlanges militaires, 156. As quoted in Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 17.

Chapter 3

“Die gantze Ursach der Desertion wäre die nahe Gräntze”: The Habsburg Monarchy in the Eighteenth Century and Case Studies in Desertion, Part II

A. Introduction

The story of desertion in the eighteenth century—from the actions of individual soldiers and the command decisions of unit leaders, through to the actions and reactions of civil and military administration officials—is part of these larger trends in the Habsburg Monarchy. The reigns of Maria Theresa and Joseph II saw efforts to organize and reorganize the state military apparatus and its supporting structures. The great changes of their combined reigns (along with that of Maria Theresa’s other son, Leopold II) were, indeed, not territorial, but rather: “Bedeutende Weichenstellungen erfolgten in der Regierungszeit…die für die Habsburgermonarchie wesentliche Modernisierungs- und Zentralisierungsimpulse setzten.” It is, therefore, not surprising that the reigns of these monarchs also saw the development of the symbiotic relationship between military organization, including its impulses and needs, and centralizing civil administration, with its attendant needs and outcomes. Scholars for the last two hundred years, both within and without central Europe, have discussed the seemingly two-sided coin that was eighteenth-century Prussia: characterized on the one hand the ‘militarization’ of Prussian society and, on the other hand, by the ‘socialization’ or ‘civilianizing’ of their military. With so much focus on Prussia—the result of its success in dominating the central European sphere by the late nineteenth century—where does one place the Habsburg Monarchy and the changes wrought in it by both external and internal forces?
The Habsburg Monarchy would also see many of these changes, with developments in
the military building off of developments in the civil sphere. As Michael Hochedlinger noted in
his 2005 study regarding the Hofkriegsrat and the Habsburg military administration, the
reorganization of recruiting systems starting in the 1760s, part of the “…Ausweitung des
inländischen Rekrutierungsreservoirs,” heightened discussion of “…die verstärkte Verschränkung
von Militär und Gesellschaft.” Similar to the case of Prussia, increased state control and
intervention in the organization and administration of the military meant that military objectives
and procedures would begin to bleed into the modes of civil administration: “Die Verstaatlichung
des Militärs erzeugt notwendigerweise bis zu einem gewissen Grad auch eine Militarisierung des
Staates.”257 For example, in response to the increased need for soldiers from the Erblande during
the 1750s and 1760s, “the growth of the military paralleled an equally dramatic increase in the
army of civil officials…” as “…the central bureaucracy nearly doubled from 6,000 (1740) to
10,000 (1762)…” and, within twenty years, “it would approach 20,000.”258

It is this connection, between expanding military and civil institutions, which “In Service
of the State” is concerned with and that which it attempts to flesh out. To delve into this topic
deeper, this chapter will examine some of the international crises faced by Maria Theresa and
Joseph II. To further develop the analysis of desertion cases provided in Chapter 2, which
focused on two infantry regiments from 1780—Oroszischen Infanterie Regiment and the Baron
Preysacische Infanterie Regiment—this chapter uses the case of two dragoon (mounted soldiers)
regiments from the mid-1770s. Similar to the previous chapter, both of these regimental case
studies are centered on regiments serving on (or near) major borders. In the case of the Coburg
Dragoon Regiment, the border in question was between Bohemia and Bavaria, while the
Zweýbrück Dragoon Regiment was located near the border with Saxony. Furthermore, the period

257 Hochedlinger and Tantner, …der größte Teil, II.
258 Ingrao, Habsburg Monarchy, 165.
under consideration in each of these cases is during a relative peace for the Habsburg Monarchy. By 1763, the major conflict between the Habsburg and Prussia over the possession of Silesia had been settled—in Prussia’s favor, though it was not the ‘killing blow’ that an observer may have been led to believe based on Prussia’s early successes in 1740—and Habsburg international relations were marked by a general peace that, with the exception of the partitions of Poland, would carry through until the outbreak of the War of Bavarian Succession (1778-1779). Finally, both of these cases studies were bundled together as a single folio in the archival record: KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189. In choosing these particular instances, we get a glimpse of the ways in which the Hofkriegsrat dealt with desertion cases, while providing insight into how instances and patterns of desertion—at the regimental level—were reported to the military administrative bodies.

B. The Monarchy in the Eighteenth Century: Contextual Information

The history of the Habsburg Monarchy during the eighteenth century was dominated by the ebbs and flows of its administration, both civil and military. However, while some hugely-successful personalities brought the Monarchy to great heights—for example, riding the coattails of the Prince Eugene of Savoy’s battlefield victories against the French and the Ottomans—the Habsburgs would also find themselves in many precarious positions during the 1700s. The Habsburg Monarchy’s place in Europe, or more exactly, its standing in the balance of power and alliance system that guided the shape of European conflicts, seemed to be as much a result of its own inertial developments as it was the result of external forces. The eighteenth century saw the crowning of the first female Habsburg monarch, Maria Theresa, and, as such, witnessed the beginning of the split between Habsburg monarchs in what was seen as their traditional role, as Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire—as Maria Theresa was barred from being crowned
Emperor by her sex—and as rulers of a state in their own right. This shift in authority—and eastward geographic shift in focus and power—began around the time that the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) came to end and culminated with the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 during the Napoleonic Wars.

Maria Theresa came to the throne in 1740. The ascension of the first female to the Habsburg throne resulted from the prolonged diplomatic effort by Charles VI to ensure that all of Europe recognized her succession. This Pragmatische Sanktion was designed to regulate “succession once and for all…” and would therefore, in some intended ways and some unintended ways, contribute “to the [Habsburg] Monarchy’s long-term transition from personal to real union, from a conglomerate of territories to a unitary state.”

Maria Theresa, however, would need to not only take her place on the throne, but also defend her claim to it against (m)any and all comers upon her accession in 1740. The trustworthiness of the other European monarchies to uphold the terms the Pragmatic Sanction—particularly the Kingdom of Prussia—was doubtful. To paraphrase the ‘prophetic’ words of Prince Eugene of Savoy, “…eine starke Armee sei nützlicher als dieser Vertrag….”

While many powers paid lip service in agreeing to the Pragmatic Sanction while Charles VI still lived, the result of his death, nevertheless, was the outbreak of war as other powers, in particular Prussia, moved to take advantage of what they perceived to be weakness in the Habsburg Monarchy.

Such was the situation inherited by Maria Theresa in 1740 and such a situation would influence the long-term political, economic, and social consequences that Joseph II would (fully) inherit after her death in 1780. With the benefit of hindsight, we know that the effects of the

---

259 Hochedlinger, Austria’s Wars of Emergence, 207. A large part of Charles VI’s reign was spent on using the Habsburg’s political capital to secure the cooperation and agreement of the other European powers to protect the Pragmatic Sanction. For Prince Eugene of Savoy, the most-dominating military and political character of the Habsburg Monarchy in the early eighteenth century, Europe’s penchant for instability meant that “[he] deemed a strong army and full treasury [as] much the best way to enforce the Pragmatic Sanction.” Hochedlinger, Austria’s Wars of Emergence, 208.

European conflicts faced by Maria Theresa and Joseph II—ex. the rise in prominence of both
Prussia and Russia—carried into the nineteenth century and, ultimately, played a role in the
seemingly ‘inevitable’ collapse of the Monarchy at the end of the First World War. Though
much ink has spilled over the decades as scholars have battled over the value of comparing the
historical trajectories of the various European monarchies and states, it is worth taking a moment
to remember some of the traps laid by scholars using the present to frame the past, however
laudable their intentions. As the allies and enemies of the Habsburg Monarchy rose to
historiographical prominence throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, “[the] historical
durability of the Habsburg Monarchy lend[ed] itself to literary caricatures of decline-and-fall
because [it] makes [for] a convenient story” when looking for a way to conceptualize “a jumble
of ethnicities, identities, and jurisdictions over the course of several hundred years.”261 Regarding
the trap of teleology, noted scholar of the Habsburgs T.C.W. Blanning remarked in his 1994
history of Joseph II:

…this is history with a sense of inevitability built-in. It necessarily stresses problems and
failures at the expense of assets and achievements. Not only does it distort the eventual
collapse by exaggerating its inevitability, it also leads to a misunderstanding of the nature
of the past, especially by the application of anachronistic concepts taken from a later
period.262

Blanning goes on to point out that removing concepts, analytical frameworks, and policy
decisions from their historical contexts unjustly allows an author to assign the tags of “winner”
and “loser”—or success vs. failure, right vs. wrong, brilliant vs. short-sighted—to decisions and
policies after the fact. In doing so, a historian oftentimes finds himself or herself providing little
regard to the efficacy of policies or decisions as products of their original context—prizing the ex

261 Patrick Houlihan, “Review of Cole, Laurence; Hämmerle, Christa; Scheutz, Martin, eds., Glanz-Gewalt-
Gehorsam: Militär und Gesellschaft in der Habsburgermonarchie (1800 bis 1918) and Übergügger, Oswald,
Erinnerungskriege: Der Erste Weltkrieg, Österreich und die Tiroler Kriegserinnerung in der
262 Blanning, Joseph II, 2.
post facto over the ‘at the time’ and committing a sin of 20/20 hindsight.\textsuperscript{263} It is therefore incumbent on any historian of the Habsburg Monarchy (or any part of Central and Eastern Europe, for that matter) to keep his or her eyes on these biases. It is not to say that this is always a conscious effort as many of these biases reflect, in the words of Derek Beales, the “inevitable differences of approach among historians arising from their emotional, national, political and religious attitudes.”\textsuperscript{264} The difficulty comes when, as Beales continued, a historian’s focus is guided “wayward development[s] of historiography, and to some degree from sheer ignorance and error.”\textsuperscript{265} For the historian looking at the Habsburg Monarchy in the eighteenth century, how are the actions of a few rulers to be weighed against the import of their actions? In particular, were there actions by Maria Theresa or by her children that ran counter to the traditional narrative—a narrative that, in the words of noted francophone Habsburg historian Jean Bérenger in his seminal history of the Monarchy, is rife with “the clichés depicting the House of Austria as obscurantist and reactionary?”\textsuperscript{266}

C. Riders of the Habsburg Standing Army: the Dragoons

Until the advent of what would be recognized as universal service across the entirety of the Monarchy in nineteenth century, the Monarchy was generally at the mercy of its constituent parts regarding the number and quality of soldiers that it could recruit and use. The number of soldiers provided depended on the specific constitutional relationship that each area had with the

\textsuperscript{263} Blanning, \textit{Joseph II}, 2.
\textsuperscript{264} Beales, \textit{Joseph II}, vol. 1, 7
\textsuperscript{265} Beales, \textit{Joseph II}, vol. 1, 7. In this case, Beales was referring the differences between two groups of scholars on the nature of Joseph II’s rule. In particular, the tendency of Anglophone and Francophone scholars to focus on the framework of “enlightened despotism,” while German and Central and Eastern European scholars tended to use the framework of “enlightened absolutism.” This distinction, one based as much on mutual misinterpretation as it was based on legitimate differences in interpretation, created a historiographical distraction.
\textsuperscript{266} Bérenger, \textit{History of the Habsburg Empire}, 62.
Habsburg Monarchy. The dynastic state could exert greater control and demand more from many of its older possessions than it could from others, though Tyrol managed to be an exception to this rule. In the case of Hungary, it also mattered whether or not the sitting Habsburg was on good enough terms with the estates—Maria Theresa managed to remain on good terms with the Hungarians for the most part during the major conflicts with Prussia. For example, the tight personal and constitutional binds between the Habsburg dynasty and the *Erblande* meant that the Monarchy could demand higher per capita tax and recruitment quotas than was possible in Hungary, where a historically-tempestuous relationship, often marked political maneuvering and outright rebellion, led to protracted negotiations and resulted in lower per capita quotas than other areas of the Monarchy. The estates would often use the Landrekrutenstellung as an opportunity to offload their least useful or most obstreperous subjects on the military—“…nützen die Landrekrutenstellung lieber, um Landstreicher und Kleinkriminelle loszuwerden, oder aber sie stellten aufsässige Bauern zur Strafe *ad militam*.” Recruiting for the central Habsburg military authorities allowed local lords and potentates the opportunity to simultaneously remove undesirable elements from their own domains while fulfilling their obligations to the dynastic state. As a result of this tendency, the Monarchy’s military administrators had little control of this process and, rather than being able to focus on the “Vorgeschichte” and ‘suitability’ of individual recruits, would have to concern themselves with each soldier’s basic health and appearance. Eighteenth-century military equipment was heavy and cumbersome—including weapons, ammunitions, provisions, and possessions, the marching soldier had much to carry: muskets and ammunition could easily weigh more than 7kg.267 The Habsburgs were not the only state to be rightly concerned with a soldier’s Bertillon measurements, with there seeming to be a

---

267 For more information on the standard uniform, kit, and weapons of the Habsburg army in the eighteenth century, see Duffy, *Army of Maria Theresa*, 69-75.
never-ending battle between “die Tauglichkeit und die Körpergröße” of each soldier. While on the one hand regiments and commanders were at the mercy of the estates for the provision of soldiers, some high-ranking members of the Habsburg military would take it upon themselves to secure the necessary number of soldiers, regardless of their Vorgeschichte.

Beyond the crowning of the Habsburg’s first (and only) female monarch in 1740, Europe was changing as a result of 1) the ascendancies of the Hohenzollern and Romanov dynasties and 2) the increasingly global interests and conflicts of Great Britain and the kings of France. The Habsburgs had long relied on an alliance system with the Dutch and British to counterweight the actions and ambitions of the Bourbon kings of France, yet the early- to mid-1700s saw a shift in this consideration. The rise of the overseas British mercantile and colonial empires came at a price to the Dutch—though the Dutch were still a force to reckon with on the field of battle and in the trade arena, they were “…clearly a spent force.” Increased mercantile competition between the British and the French would come to a head during the Silesian Wars of the mid-18th century: the Seven Years War. While the support of the mercantile powers could not be discounted, the landlocked nature of the conflict between the Hohenzollerns and the Habsburgs meant that there was oftentimes not much direct action that could be taken by the maritime powers in support (or opposition) of the continental powers.

Conflicts in central and eastern Europe were, for better and worse, a distraction from the main conflict in western Europe, in the opinion of the French and the British—a lesson put on display during the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714) as the concomitant Great Northern War (1700-1721) was waged across the entirety of the Baltic Sea. With the Hohenzollerns

268 Hochedlinger and Tantner, ...der größte Teil, IV. Prussian monarchs were well known for their love of a unit composed entirely of tall soldiers (‘giants’) and recruiters would be on the lookout for men that fit the requirements.

269 As previously mentioned, Charles de Ligne was not above recommending that recruiters take advantage of potential discord and activities at county fairs. See Ligne, Mêlanges militaires, 205. As quoted in Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 48.

270 Blanning, Joseph II, 31.
growing in both prestige and power and the British and Dutch less-and-less capable of providing
direct support, the Habsburgs needed “at least the benevolent neutrality and preferably the active
assistance” of France. This would become the thrust of Kaunitz’s foreign policy and the result
“was the ‘diplomatic revolution’ consummated by the first Treaty of Versailles…1756, which
terminated two-and-a-half centuries of hostility between France and the Habsburgs.”271

One specific region where Habsburg authority waxed and waned across the entirety of
the eighteenth century was the Italian peninsula. As holders of the Holy Roman imperial and the
long tradition of German and Italian suzerainty, the relationship between the Italian states and the
Habsburg Monarchy would change with the passage of each conflict: the Italian peninsula acting
as both a cause for conflict and a peace-table bargaining chip, a circumstance exacerbated by the
connection between Maria Theresa’s husband, the Lorraine family, and the Grand Duchy of
Tuscany. A second region worth noting for the eighteenth-century Habsburg Monarchy is its
possessions in Bohemia—in particular, the province of Silesia. Silesia today encompasses parts
of the modern-day states of Poland, the Czech Republic, and the southeastern parts of Germany,
being a region centered on the city of Wrocław (Ger: Breslau). The land and cities of Silesia
provided incredibly valuable contributions to the overall economic health of the Habsburg
Monarchy. It possessed a relatively large population and was the site of many burgeoning
industrial activities in the eighteenth century, including parts of proto-industrial development, as
well as agriculture and textile industries. In particular, Silesia was known for its wealth of
mineral and mining resources with an abundance of—in the eighteenth century—profitable coal
and iron mining operations. This region, possessed of an affluent population and large natural
resources, became the site of numerous conflicts between the budding Prussian state, the long-
reigning Habsburg Monarchy, and the slowly-degrading Polish monarchy during the eighteenth
century.

271 Blanning, Joseph II, 31-32.
D. CASE STUDIES USING DRAGOON REGIMENTS IN 1774

Figure 3-1

Map of the western half of the Habsburg Monarchy, focusing on Bohemia, Moravia, and the border with Bavaria. Map courtesy of Christopher Duffy, *Instrument of War*.  

---

1. Introduction to Dragoon Regiment Case Studies

In a group of documents submitted to the Hofkriegsrat (the highest military administrative body in the Habsburg Monarchy) in Vienna in 1774, officers of both the Zweybrückischen and Coburgischen Dragoner (Zweybrück and Coburg Dragoon) Regiments provided narrative and descriptive reports to the high command regarding recent acts of indiscipline and desertion. The documents submitted to the Hofkriegsrat dated from between 18 July 1774 to 26 August 1774, with various aspects of the reports and correspondence going back and forth between the investigating officers of each regiment, up through the Bohemian General Command (Böhmischen General Commando), to the ‘most august body’ of the Hofkriegsrat, and, eventually, to the archives. The two regiments in question, the Zweybrück and Coburg Dragoons, were not co-located in 1774. The Zweybrück Dragoons were located in the vicinity of the Bavarian border, while the Coburg Dragoons were located in the area of the Saxon border. Responsibility for the information provided to the Hofkriegsrat came from the Oberfeldwachtmeister of each regiment—in the case of the Coburg Dragoons, this was one Graf von Kinsky and, in the case of the Zweybrück Dragoons, this was one Graf von Wurmser.273

During the 1770s, the hierarchy of correspondence for the Habsburg military outside of Vienna was generally funneled through either the Bohemian General Commando (for points north and west of the capital) or the Hungarian General Commando in Bratislava (for points east and south of the capital) before passed on to the Hofkriegsrat in Vienna. In both of the case studies referenced in this chapter, the correspondence first passed from the regiment to the Bohemian General Command and from there then to the Hofkriegsrat in Vienna. The case file of paperwork produced for these reports adds up to almost 70 pages, including: summations, lists of incidences, incident reports, and general reports on issues related to the disposition and welfare of the

273 In other contexts spelled Oberfeldwachtmeister. The modern equivalent of this rank is a senior major or lieutenant colonel position.
regiment. On top of the paperwork copied or submitted by each of the dragoon regiments, the staff of the Hofkriegsrat created a summation folio to wrap all of the paperwork together.

While the regiments were not co-located, their general assignments and composition make them good examples for points of comparison. First, with one regiment assigned to the vicinity of the Saxon border in Bohemia and the other assigned to the Bavarian border, both regiments were likely serving the same ostensible reason: reinforcing and protecting Habsburg interests in Bohemia and the northern and eastern parts of its of Erblende, as well as keeping an eye the growing power of the Kingdom of Prussia in regards to the Holy Roman Empire. A second reason, and related to the first, is that neither regiment would have been classified as a reserve, militia, or fortress garrison unit—both units carried the historic name of a regimental Inhaber (proprietor) and the reporting officers were both counts (Graf). The Zweybrück and Coburg Dragoon regiments, while not actively involved in combat operations at the time of the 1774 reports, were both intended and trained for front-line combat activities. As a result, both units would have attempted to draw upon the same pool of recruits: those found to be most possessive of desirable qualities, such as equestrian abilities, size, marksmanship, etc. In the case of Austria’s great rival, Prussia, cavalry regiments “were drawn principally from the best material regimental canton – sons of well-set-up peasants who would take their cavalry horses back to their native farms when they were released on leave.” Furthermore, to be able to control a horse while swinging a sword or operating a firearm, cavalrymen needed to be able to taller and stronger than the average soldier.\(^{274}\) Third, the focus on having the most-capable of recruits was a result of their shared regimental purpose: the specialized tactics that dragoons were often called upon to execute.

\(^{274}\) Duffy, *Army of Frederick the Great*, 93.
2. Dragoon Regiments: Characteristics and Organization in the Eighteenth Century

During the eighteenth century, the Habsburg Monarchy generally fielded only three types of horse-mounted units: cuirassiers, dragoons, and the hussars or Cheveauléger. Cuirassiers, cavalrymen named after the heavy armor breastplate (cuirass) that they wore, “were biggish men, mounted on heavy horses, and they bore the brunt of the fighting in formal battles.” Dragoon regiments in the eighteenth century were composed of cavalry soldiers trained to ride and retain mobility en route to (and on) the battlefield, yet they were armed and also trained to dismount during combat and fight as infantry. These regiments were intended to fulfill the roles of both light and heavy cavalry—they “were a slightly lighter breed of cavalry, capable of taking their place alongside their heavy brothers [cuirassiers] in the line of battle, but also suitable for more widely-ranging enterprises,” such as reconnaissance-in-force missions and infantry support operations. The third type of unit, the light cavalrymen, generally consisted of smaller men on horses specifically chosen for their endurance and speed. The hussars, specifically those drawn from the lands of Hungary, were infamous for their speed, battlefield prowess, and their brutality. The Cheveauléger (lit: light horse) units of the eighteenth century were an attempt by both the Prussians and Habsburg Monarchy to “combine the lively virtues of the hussars with the more solid qualities of the ‘German’ cavalry.” In other words, they were supposed to fill the same role as the hussar units, while being more professional and efficient (like the dragoon and cuirassier units) without the wild-card element of the majority Hungarian and Croat elements.

275 Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 91.
276 Contemporary commenter on the state of the Habsburg Monarchy Honoré Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau, had this to say about the Hungarians: “The Hungarian has an inborn spark, and a natural inclination towards stratagems. He lives in a country which abounds in horses. He learns to be a horseman in his childhood, and, having nothing better to do in that half-savage land, he teaches his horse all sorts of tricks, and acquires a peculiar mastery of that kind of equitation.” Mirabeau, Système Militaire de la Prusse (London, 1788), 25. As cited in Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 96.

Regarding the penchant of Hungarian soldiers towards ‘disorder,’ Duffy cites a 19th-century history of the Seven Years War, stating that the Hungarian soldiers: “…attacked all the travellers they found on the road. They presented their pistols and asked their victims whether they were Catholics or
When engaged in mounted operations, the dragoon (though not as heavily armored as the more robust cuirassier units) served at least three different roles: 1) many times serving as part of the main cavalry battle line, 2) dragoons were mobile enough to participate in mobile warfare as heavier support for lighter cavalry or hussar units, or 3) dragoons could dismount and augment infantry combat units, providing much-needed mobile reserve support to infantry units. Dragoons provided extra firepower and support to lighter mobile cavalry units, while still retaining the capability of supporting both heavier cavalry charges and the fighting formations of line infantry units. Dragoons were “expected to learn foot drill with muskets and fixed bayonets to almost the same standard as the infantry proper.” This stands in contrast to the heavier cuirassier cavalry units, who were only expected to fight dismounted “to win the time to mount up if they came under unexpected attack in their posts or quarters.”

As such, these dragoon units were reliant on soldiers being both well-trained soldiers and cavalrmyen. Cavalry and dragoon regiments tended to draw from different socioeconomic classes than either the infantry regiments or artillery battalions. Beyond the requisite equestrian skills for being a dragoon, these types of soldiers and officers were also generally required to maintain a level of uniform appearance that, while expected of the common infantryman, was not enforced to the same extent. Regulations were in place for the type and style of uniform, from boots to headgear, as well as for personal appearance, from the use (and style) of one’s wigs to facial hair. As the case studies provided in this chapter show, these sartorial requirements became points of discontent for some soldiers in the eighteenth century and were cited in the

Lutherans. If they were Catholics, they were merely relieved of their money and otherwise spared. If they happened to be Lutherans, they were robbed, badly beaten up and carried away as prisoners.” K. Alexich, “Die freiwilligen Aufgebote aus den Ländern der ungarischen Krone im ersten schlesischen Krieg,” in Mittheilungen des K.u.K. Kriegs-Archivs (Vienna, 1889). As cited in Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 97. Duffy, Army of Frederick the Great, 108-109.
278 Duffy, Instrument of War, 253. Regarding hair, cavalry and dragoons were required to keep their hair well-combed, “but never curled up with papers or powdered.”
disciplinary reports as potential causes desertion: in particular, the required use of a mustache-trainer and the quality of items used.

Furthermore, the common concerns of infantry officers in regards to desertion involved tracking the soldier and his equipment: uniform, firearm, and, in some cases, edged weapon. Administrators and officers of dragoon and cavalry regiments were also required to account for the unit’s horses and the extra pieces of necessary equipment: saddle, spurs, etc. Each horse represented a significant investment of time and resources: stable hands, stabling, fodder, blacksmithing, farriers, etc. A large portion of the horses used by Habsburg horse regiments were purchased or requisitioned from contractors and horse-traders across the Monarchy, though some regions were more-readily known for the quality of their horse breeders.279 As the middle of the 1770s represented a period of relatively peace, it is also worth noting that the conditions under which cavalry units performed garrison duty were often different from those of infantry regiments and (particularly) artillery units. Using the Prussian cavalry as an example of eighteenth century organization, noted military historian Christopher Duffy states that:

Unlike the infantry, who were herded together in the fortress towns, the cavalry were scattered by squadrons in villages where they could find stabling and fodder on the lavish they required…. The squadrons came together for the spring review, and the autumn manoeuvres, but many of the troopers were released with their horses soon after the first of these assemblies was over. The winter time was not very much more strenuous, being devoted to the care of the horses and training of the recruits.280

On the occasion that cavalry and dragoon troops were brought together for the purpose of engaging in exercises, maneuvers, or combat, many of the logistical considerations that went into finding them quarters would follow them out into the field. One of the persistent complaints seen in the disciplinary reports at the hearts of these two case studies regarded the quality and availability of equipment, food, and lodging. On top of the needs of the soldiers and troopers, the horses also needed food and proper care if they were to be an effective force multiplier on the

279 Duffy, Instrument of War, 258-260.
280 Duffy, The Army of Frederick the Great, 104.
field of battle. Another persistent complaint or issue for dragoons—and soldiers in general in the eighteenth century—was the issue of furlough and the length of one’s service obligations. In a perfect world, many of the troops would have been released after their first assemblies, only to be called back in a time of need for offensive or defensive maneuvers. Yet, as documents analyzed in the case study for these two dragoon regiments will show, these soldiers had concerns about their time in service. The length of the period called to duty was a very real concern for soldiers that may or may not have influenced decisions to desert.281

Horse-equipped military forces in the eighteenth century were effective in several specialties: attack, reconnaissance, and support. These forces were also expensive to recruit, train, equip, and employ in great numbers. With this being said, dragoon and cavalry regiments may have had some problems unique to them—ex. the additional equestrian training necessary to participate in horse-based combat maneuvers. Yet they nevertheless were also susceptible to many of the same recruiting, administrative, and disciplinary issues faced by the other types of regiments in the eighteenth century. As the following case studies from the Coburg and Zweybrück Dragoon Regiments will show, the indiscipline seen with two infantry regiments in the case studies of Chapter 2 (from the border regions of Galicia and Siebenbürgen) was also prevalent 1) in two separate dragoon regiments and 2) along the borders that the Habsburg’s Bohemian possessions shared with Bavaria and Saxony.

3. Case Study III – The Coburg Dragoon Regiment

In the case of the Coburg Dragoon Regiment, the report’s author provides several conclusions and suppositions regarding the prevalence of acts of desertion by members of the

---

281 The language used here specifically hedges any claims, as without proper documentation from specific soldiers, it is difficult to discern specific motivations. The analysis in this chapter rests almost solely on the written accounts of officers and not the personal statements of the soldiers who deserted.
unit. According to the author, it was “the opinion of the interviewed staff, officers, non-
commissioned officers, and veteran soldiers [that the] main reason for the significant [amount] of
desertion” was the unit’s deployment to a location so close to the Bavarian border. For many
dragoons and soldiers of the eighteenth century, the adjustments necessitated by a life of military
discipline were not to their liking and the unit’s proximity to one of the Monarchy’s borders
provided an easy way to escape. The officers noted that, as a result of the large number of
exercises and training that they required dragoons to participate in, the men of the regiment had
“…des Tages kaum eine Stunde vor sich hätte….”

This focus on training and the monopolization of a soldier’s time provides a good reflection of Frederick the Great’s opinion that it was good to keep soldiers busy during peacetime. Increased training and contact hours allowed officers to avoid the pitfall, as noted in J.A. Houlding’s analysis of the eighteenth-century British army, that “…it was always at the eleventh hour that the best training was done”—a particularly important point for a unit dependent on the ability of horsemen to work in unison, as they would not want to rely on last-minute training. In spite of this consideration, there was certainly some recognition on behalf of the officer corps that not every soldier reacted in a wholly positive manner to such a system of Disziplinierung. Whether this recognition spurred a change in policy or merely the application of punishments for the policy, the report did not make any explicit statements.

As an attachment to the summary and narrative report provided to the Habsburg
Generalkommando, the folio for the Coburg Dragoon Regiment included a list of desertion
incidences. Specifically, the report provides narrative details from interviews with self-returning
(revertirt-) and captured (attrapirt-) deserters from the unit, as well as commentary from the
reporting and interviewing officers. The information provided in this section generally does not

---

282 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189
283 Houlding, Fit For Service, x.
give specific voice to each soldier, but rather provides several sentences regarding the particular circumstances surrounding his desertion and, in some cases, gives insight into what motivated him to desert from the regiment in the first place. As this information regarding personal motivation is filtered through the reports of commanding officers—rare are the instances in this report when a clear “he said” can be found—the specific veracity of each statement attributed to a deserting soldier must be carefully tempered by five potential caveats. In the form that it was presented, the given statements might reflect: 1) the views of the officers doing the interrogation, 2) what the soldier believed was most likely to result in the lightest punishment, 3) what the interrogating officers believed that the soldier was attempting to convey as most plausible, 4) the truth, or 5) some combination of the other four circumstances. On a final note regarding the structure and analytical utility of this report, there must be mention of the punishments meted for the disciplinary issues cited. Unfortunately for the historian, this section of the report does not uniformly provide descriptions or statistics regarding the punishments meted out to these soldiers.

a. THE REPORT FROM THE COBURG DRAGOON REGIMENT

PART I - Desertion

In an entry dated January 7, 1773, the report gives the story of a soldier by the name of Carl Pausch. According to the report, Pausch’s desertion stemmed from fear of punishment for failure to complete his duty. More specifically, Pausch failed to complete assigned paperwork for the regiment’s chief administrative officer. Rather than complete the paperwork, Pausch instead chose “sondern 2. Täge anderwärts lustig gemacht.” Unfortunately, no mention is made of the

284 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189, 9.
fallout that he received for this action. On March 10, 1774, the reporting officers describe an incident with a soldier by the name of Johan Finck. In the case of Johan Finck, his desertion regarded mistreatment at the hands of a superior during an incident while on a maneuver. While marching on a field near the camp, Finck was apparently “not quick enough to jump over a ditch.” As a result on his inability to jump over the ditch, the Wachtmeister, a soldier by the name of Mally, struck Johan twice and angered him greatly. According to the regiment, Finck’s desertion specifically resulted from his treatment during this incident.

In a similar situation, also from March 10, 1774, there was the story of one Michel Lobermaïer. For Mr. Lobermaïer, the reporting officers wrote that he “did not desert but rather had gone over to another squadron.” Lobermaïer claimed to have been the subject of much physical abuse and punishment by an UnterLieutenant by the name of Schaurodt. He stated that he was hit “nearly every day” by Schaurodt and received many brutal strikes (“to the hands, feet, chest, and head”) from the UnterLieutenant’s cane (or baton), both during exercises and during deployments. He went to claim that he was also struck numerous times off the field while in quarters. The author in charge of the report was dismissive of Lobermaïer’s claims of abuse at the hands of Schaurodt, stating: “…he is incapable of providing a truthful statement.” No specific mention was made regarding the beliefs or opinion of UnterLieutenant Schaurodt on these incidences. In an undated entry regarding the case of one Johan Hillerich, one also finds

286 “Johan Finck, Er habe bey den Exerciren, da er (w)ährenden Marchiren auf einer na(s/h)en Wiesen nicht geschwind über den Graben springen konnte, vom Wachtmeister Mally 2 (-ieb) bekommen, und sonst habe ihm den Wachtmeister aus (gemacht).” ÖSTA KA-Zst-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189, 4th inclusion, 1.
288 “Michel Lobermaïer, er habe nicht desertiren sonder zu einer andere Escadron gehen wollen; (K)a(n) er nur einen falschen Schrift gethan, seyß er geschlagen worden, besonders bey den Exerciren; Es wäre den (--) UnterLieu[ten] Schaurodt nichts recht, er hätte öffers gesagt, wann Constitut zum Teufel (gie)nge, man würde ihm k(aum) in Menschen noch schi(ck)en. Er habe ihm selbst mit seinen Rohr, oder mit einem Corporals Stock bey (den) Exerciren über die Hände, Füße, Bauch, oder Kopf geschlagen. Auch im Zimmer habe er fast alle Tage von den (HLen) UnterLieutenant Schaurodt Schläge bekommen.” ÖSTA KA-Zst-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189, 4th inclusion, 1.
mention of physical abuse at the hands of a superior. The description for the case of Johan Ullerich—the text of which was rather short—provided very little detail as to the proximate causes of Ullerich’s desertion. According to the written report and for reasons unknown, Ullerich was the recipient of “3 blows from Rittermeister Wiedeck.” The incident included a verbal altercation between the two, in which the following was said: “[Wiedeck]…gesagt wann es gehen wolle, würde der Kaýser doch Kaýser bleiben.”

In another incident noted on March 10, 1774, we are given the case of one Paul Sieber. On this occasion, Sieber requested permission from Rittmeister Fleischer to leave his quarters to visit an Evangelical church for confession. Fleischer denied him permission—no mention is made whether this decision was the specific result of religious discrimination (inherent in the disciplinary codes and laws), an issue between the two soldiers, or because Sieber was not allowed to go on leave. Regardless of Fleischer’s reasoning, Sieber chose to ignore Rittmeister Fleischer’s order and deserted, with no word of his whereabouts entered into the report. Later that year, on May 7, 1774, the report introduced the case of a soldier by the name of Thomas Czischeck. Thomas Czischeck was marked a “Raisoneir” (argumentative, troublemaker) by his superiors for altercations that he had during riding training, with no specific indication as to whether these incidences had resulted in anything more than poor character marks for Czischeck. The Rittmeister, a man by the name of Wiedeck, gave Thomas two cane strikes for wearing an unclean shirt (“Röckel”) during training. When Czischeck protested that the garment was “old” and “nothing but rags,” the Rittmeister called him “ein Raisoneir” and gave him more cane strikes for his indiscipline and argumentativeness.

---

289 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189.
In one of two cases dated in the report as August 7, 1774, a soldier named Carl Wildawský saw his situation as hopeless, having spent 14 months “im Cassarnen.” Rather than continue in such a state, Wildawský chose to desert. Before deserting, however, Wildawský influenced the actions of two other soldiers. In a separate entry for August 7, 1774, the report states that the deserter Jacob Schedina had spoken to Wildawský about deserting before he himself deserted. Beyond the argument that Schedina was influenced by Wildawský, no other comment was given regarding Schedina’s specific circumstances or potential motivations for desertion. In a final, undated entry, the report provides the story of Johann Duscheck. Just as in the story of Jacob Schedina, Duscheck had apparently spoken to Carl Wildawský and been influenced to desert. Unlike the case of Jacob Schedina, Duscheck had a story that involved run-ins with a non-commissioned officer and other disciplinary elements. In particular, Duscheck did not appreciate being on the receiving end of corporal punishments from Vice Corporal Schifner.292

PART II – General Disciplinary Issues

A second section of the Coburg Dragoon Regiment’s attachment included an August 1774 breakdown of the punishments meted out by the regiment (\textit{Straf Protocollen}) since November 1773 for all types of indiscipline, not limited to just desertion. This list of disciplinary issues and punishments provides further insight into the life and motivations of soldiers as, included on the list, are: several cases of desertion, one case of attempted desertion, and numerous cases of soldiers found outside of their assigned areas or away from their posts. For

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item laß, und gesagt: Er renne ihm, verfluchten (Kerl) die F(uc)htel durch den Leib.“ ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189.
\item “Johann D(u)scheck, währenden Exerciren habe er zu Haus im Stall bleiben müssen. Der ViceCorporal Schifner habe ihm nach dem Einrucken Exerciret und gestoßen. Er könne sich auch in Cassarnen nichts anschaffen, und es hätte gehrissen, daß die Escadron nach dem Lager wieder in Cassarnen kämme. Der Wildowsky habe ihm auch zur Desertion verführt.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189, 4\textsuperscript{th} inclusion, 2.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
organizational purposes, some incidences were listed as concurrent and are shown as such in the table in APPENDIX F. As the tables of APPENDIX F clearly show, there was not much variation in the type of punishment meted out by officers to soldiers for engaging in illegal or immoral behavior. The most common punishments for non-desertion-related indiscretion was caning (Stockstreichen) or whipping. The severity of the punishment meted out varied greatly, depending on both of the severity and the circumstances of the indiscretion(s) involved. The use of caning as a punishment ranged from the May 3, 1774 incident of Gemeiner Steinbach (Obrist Division, 2nd Squadron), who received 10 cane strikes for showing up to muster with an unclean uniform and equipment, to the March 18, 1774 case of Gemeiner Blass, who received 15 cane strikes for spending the night with a ‘woman of ill-repute.’\textsuperscript{293}

Two other examples from the ObristLieutenants Division of the 1st Squadron further highlight this variation. In an entry dated December 15, 1773, the report provided information on one Gemeiner Siebert, who received 6 cane strikes for leaving his post during the night (“von der Stallwacht des Nachts weg gegangen”). It did not state where exactly Siebert went, under what circumstances, or whether alcohol—a common peripatetic aid to soldiers, not just those of the eighteenth century—was involved. Gemeiner Siebert provides an excellent point of comparison for the May 6, 1774 case of one Gemeiner Schwesinger. Schwesinger received 25 cane strikes for going to another village without permission (“weile er des Nachts ohne Erlaubnüß in einen andere dorf”). Both men were found to have been in places where they should not have been, yet the commanding officer dispensed punishments that did not match. Without a follow-up report, one is left to fill in the blank—that the circumstances of each case or, at the minimum, the details ascertained for each case, differed enough to justify a difference of 19 cane strikes. This lack of uniformity in the handing out of punishments could also be seen in an entry from November 27,
1773. As regards to the punishment for fighting, three individuals—two soldiers listed by their last names, Zindel and Kummer, and another named Thomas Skala—were punished on November 27 for engaging in “Raufhandel” (brawling) and all three of them received different punishments. Thomas Skala received 25 caning strikes for his brawling while the soldier named Kummer received 1 hour of “Gewehrtragen” as punishment. Zindel, however, received the most caning strikes as his punishment for Raufhandel—48—though the report provides potential insight into this disparity. In an entry dated August 8, 1774 in the same list, one finds that a soldier named “Zindel” received 25 Stockstreichen for having been found away from the unit’s quarters: “nächtlicher weile in andere Ortschaften….” Though very few first names of soldiers were provided in this specific report, there is a possibility that the Zindel cited for desertion was the same “Zindel” punished for wandering almost a year later, potentially indicating a) a pattern of undisciplined behavior, b) a soldier that escalated from one offense to another, or c) that officers in “Zindel”/Zindel’s unit believed him to be a known offender, characterized as one looking for a fight.294

Of the 64 separate incidences in the report from the Coburg Dragoon Regiment of soldiers being disciplined November 1, 1773 and August 8, 1774, there are several other trends worth noting. As already stated, the predominant forms of punishment were corporal in nature, with caning or whipping being the most common. Furthermore, the seeming maximum number of Stockstreichen given to the punished soldiers was 25, with only two exceptions. The aforementioned case of Gemeiner Zindel’s November 1773 incident of fighting (“Raufhandel”) that resulted in 48 cane strikes was one of them, while the other involved a Gemeiner Keller, who the reporting officer marked as having planned to desert; he received 50 “blows.” The lowest number of Stockstreichen assigned was 6 and, in those cases, there was no predominant infraction—some examples included uncleanliness, being argumentative with one’s corporal,

294 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten, 1774-20-189, 11.
fighting, and being away from an assigned post. There was, however, one exception to these numbers. In an entry dated August 8, 1774, a Gemeiner by the name of Beranecz was punished for being away from quarters—in the words of the report, “nächtlicher weile in andere Ortschaften”—and received only 3 Stockstreichen. The reason given was that Beranecz had come down with sickness (“wegen behafteter hinfallnieder Krankheit”) and there were no other instances listed in the Coburg report of similar extenuating circumstances leading to the mitigation of a punishment.295

The punishment for theft, whether regarded as a “Diebstahl” (theft/larceny) or “Entfremdung” (robbery/theft/alienation), was similarly enforced on a sliding scale, with the severity of the punishment dependent on the circumstances of incident and the general character of the soldier that committed the offense. For example, the record that Gemeiner Schatten received only 15 strikes for a Diebstahl on December 15, 1773, while a Gemeiner by the name of Mickschick (ObristLieutenants Division, Erste Escadron) received 25 cane strikes for a Diebstahl specifically committed against another soldier: “wegen diebstahl 15. Stockstreich” versus “wegen einen an seine(n) Cammeraden (v)erübten diebstahl, 25. Stockstreich.” In another case, Gemeiner Daupmann received 12 cane strikes for taking a handkerchief from a cadet and Gemeiner Kellner received 25 strikes for having stolen from a fellow soldier. Unfortunately for the historian, this written report does not provide any more details on the specific circumstances of each of these cases.

However, as also shown in the case studies in Chapter 2, this variation in the punishments handed out was often the result of extenuating circumstances. In the examples mentioned above regarding the punishment for theft, three of the four situations included contextual (though not detailed) information regarding the circumstances of the incident. Furthermore, when meting out corporal punishments, eighteenth-century military officers considered it relevant whether or not

295 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189.
the soldier was considered ‘a bad apple’ or—frequently when dealing with garrison units—whether or not the soldier was a repeat offender. For example, on February 8, 1774, Gemeiner Müller of the Major Division, 2te Squadron received 25 strikes of the cane for “immoral behavior” and for having illegally sold forage goods: “…wegen verkaufter Fourage und liederlichkeit.” This level of punishment was not out of line with what the regiment was dispensing for the commission of multiple or simultaneous infractions. Just over a month later on March 12, however, the report listed a second entry for Gemeiner Müller as having been punished for a “begangene diebstahl.” In and of itself, this infraction would have received anywhere from 12 to 25 cane strikes—however, as Müller was a repeat offender against military discipline, the regiment assigned him (at least) one run of the gauntlet, with no mention of the number of men “vom Regiment” that should participate in the disciplinary process.296

For the period between November 1, 1773 and August 8, 1774, the Coburg Dragoon Regiment recorded 64 different disciplinary cases, spread out across the squadrons of each of its divisions.297 The vast majority of these cases (59) were examples of non-desertion-types of military indiscipline, with only five cases relating specifically to desertion: two voluntarily-returning deserters, two captured deserters, and one attempted deserter. It should be noted, however, that the reporting officer already provides for the differentiation between a soldier who deserted and a soldier that had merely been ‘away’ from where he was expected. This nebulous term covered a wide range of offenses, including: 1) being away from one’s quarters, 2) being away from one’s assigned locality (Ort), 3) being found away from quarters with a woman, 4) being found in a forbidden area, 5) being found without proper permission in a non-forbidden area, 6) being gone for a night without permission, and 7) not being found at one’s assigned duty

297 There were 64 discrete cases listed in the regiment’s report. The number of offenses listed in the following paragraphs will add up to more than 64, however, as 11 of the soldiers were cited for multiple offenses—giving a total of 75 cited offenses.
site when one should have been there. While there were many ways for a soldier to be “away,” the simple definition was that a soldier was required to be in certain places at certain times and, if he was to not be there, he required specific permission from his superior officers to avoid being punished.

For all of the soldiers cited or noted for having committed infractions worthy of discipline, there were 79 total infractions: as numerous soldiers were cited and punished for having committed multiple or compound infractions. For example, of the three soldiers punished for drunkenness, drunkenness was noted as a multiplying, compounding, or incidental element in each of the noted indiscretions: drunkenness and being away from quarters, drunkenness and fighting, drunkenness and wanton/forbidden hunting. As previously stated, the most common offense for which soldiers of the Coburg Dragoon Regiment were punished during this period was the one of the varying degrees of AWOL (“absent without leave”), with 22 soldiers being punished. The other 55 punishments broke down as follows: 12 for violent behavior or fighting (both towards other soldiers and presumed civilians), 11 for arguing or being argumentative with a superior, 7 for theft or robbery, 6 for uncleanliness of themselves or their gear, 5 for desertion (including planned attempts), 3 for immorality or licentiousness, 3 for engaging in illegal forms of trade, 3 for gambling, and 3 for drunkenness. Furthermore, there were four individual counts against four different soldiers: one for disobedience, one for “wanton” or “forbidden” hunting, one for the mistreatment of subordinates, one for the giving of “unimportant orders.”

For this analysis, it is of particular interest how few alcohol-related cases are to be found in this report. Or, more accurately, how few of the 79 specifically cited infractions were “drunkenness” or directly attributed to alcohol. Only three of the disciplinary cases for this period were for drunkenness—though it would likely not be unfair to assume that alcohol played at least a role in some of the other cases. As previously shown in Chapter 2 and in the works of

298 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189.
military historian Arthur Gilbert, alcohol played a well-documented role in the daily life of eighteenth-century military forces. The relatively low number of alcohol punishments should not necessarily be construed as a sign that the Coburg Dragoons were not as susceptible to the eighteenth-century military culture of alcohol. Rather, it would most likely be a sign of how the infraction was categorized or described to the officers in charge of discipline. It is possible that the role of alcohol was taken as a given for some types of indiscipline or, in situations where corroborating statements were lacking, as a factor not worth mentioning in the report. As Frederick the Great noted, one of most important things a commander can do is control the movements of subordinates so that they are not likely to disobey or desert. Alcohol, with its disinhibiting effects, could lead to soldiers finding their way into places they were barred from entering. As the cases for the Baron Preysach Infantry and Oroszischen Infantry showed in Chapter 2, alcohol could just as much embolden soldiers to engage in immoral or illegal behavior that they might not otherwise have engaged.

Some other trends can be readily discerned from this data. Outwardly physical behavior or violence played a role in a fair number of disciplinary incidences listed by the Coburg Dragoon Regiment. Twelve soldiers were specifically cited for acts of physical violence, with the predominant charge being “Raufhandel” (fighting/disturbing the peace) or “Rauferey” (tussling/fighting). If not specifically noted, these incidences presumably involved soldier-on-soldier violence, as not every case involved soldier-on-soldier violence. Some of the noted cases involved incidences of fighting with local farmers or residents of the area garrisoned by the regiment. Other charges relating to charges of physical violence included: fighting with one’s host/innkeeper (“Schlägerey mit seinen Wirth” or “seinen Hauswirth geprügelt”) and, in one particularly interesting incident, the mistreatment of one’s subordinates. While further details are generally not provided regarding the circumstances of many of these incidences, beyond who was involved and (potentially) whether or not they were also a soldier, it is worth noting that the
punishment for engaging in physical violence varied greatly. The punishments ranged from 6 to 48 cane strikes or anywhere from one-quarter to one hour of “Gewehrtragen.” Gewehrtragen is a punishment that had several variations, with the most common being that a soldier was forced to either 1) stand at full attention for prolonged periods of time or 2) march around the parade field while carrying heavy objects—generally muskets, multiple muskets, or a heavy log—over one’s head. Gewehrtragen, and similar forms of punishment, could be further strengthened by increasing the weight of the object carried or requiring the soldier to hold the object straight out.299

This differentiation in the level of punishment assigned appears to signal a level of discernment involved in the process of meting out punishments, with either 1) the history (or personal character and reputation) of the involved soldier influencing the decision or 2) the circumstances surrounding the incident being weighed in the officer’s deliberations. In either case—or, for that matter, any other case—commanding officers had a fair amount of discretion regarding the meting out of punishments. As previously mentioned in the case of Gemeiner Skala, Gemeiner Zindel, and Gemeiner Kummer all of the parties were punished on November 27, 1773 for “fighting with the peasants” (“wegen Raufhändeln mit den Bauern”), yet their punishments were all different: respectively, 25 cane strikes, 48 cane strikes, and one hour of Gewehrtragen. Conversely, on December 24, 1773, the regiment Corporal Hanslick and Vice-Corporal Richardt assigned both men one quarter hour of “Flinte[n]tragen” (Gewehrtragen)—a punishment involving various forms of making a soldier carry or hold up heavy objects for long periods of time—as punishment for engaging in the same behavior: “wegen Raufhändeln mit den Bauern.”300

299 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189.
300 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189.
There are also the cases of how the Coburg Dragoon Regiment dealt with cleanliness—both in regards to a soldier’s weapons and armaments ("Rüstung"), a soldier’s possessions ("Sachen"), and the soldier himself. In the case of Gemeiner Steinbach of the ObristLieutenants Division, Erste Escadron, the regiment assigned 10 Stockstreichen on May 5, 1774 for showing up at muster with his armaments in an unclean manner. Gemeiner Maschek of the Majors Division, Erste Escadron received the same punishment on May 21, 1774 for the same infraction. The regiment assigned Gemeiner Steinbach’s squadron-mate, Gemeiner Hess, only 6 Stockstreichen for having not cleaned his gear ("Sachen") after having previously been warned twice to do so.301 A slightly earlier entry dated November 22, 1773 stated that a Gemeiner by the name of Kallioth (Obrist Division, 2te Escadron) received 12 Stockstreichen for general uncleanliness of his person after having been warned three times.302

In regards to the actual business of deserters, the Coburg Dragoon Regiment reported four cases regarding the punishment of actual deserters and one case regarding the punishment of a potential deserter. The punishments broke down as follows. Gemeiner Heinrich Treiber, who deserted at an unknown point and was later captured, received four runs of a 100-man gauntlet as punishment—the report did not state who captured Treiber. The regiment punished Gemeiner Wedleiselig, a soldier that deserted at an unknown point and who voluntarily returned, in a notation stating: “von Regiment mit lauf zettel expedirt.” Gemeiner Siebert, who deserted and was later captured, received nine runs of a 100-man gauntlet as punishment—the report made no mention of who captured Siebert. Gemeiner Lobermeyer deserted at an unspecified point and later voluntarily returned to the regiment—he received a punishment of six runs of a 100-man gauntlet as punishment. Gemeiner Keller, who was noted as of January 2, 1774 as having

301 “weile er noch zweýmaligen Ermahnen seine Sachen nicht geputzt.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189.
planned to desert the regiment, received fifty blows from the regiment: “50 Prügel vom
Regiment.” In a later notation in the same file, the reporting officer provided insight into the
character of these deserters—as well as providing information on other cases not previously noted
in the report. In this notation, the officer stated that Gemeiner Wedleiselig had previously
deserted from an unidentified artillery unit, which explains why his noted punishment was that he
was sent from the regiment back to his unit of record. The notation went on to describe Gemeiner
Heinrich Treiber as a “known scalawag,” “always depressed,” and “neglectful” of his assigned
duties as a soldier. While not noted as a scalawag like Treiber, Gemeiner Siebert received the
same characterization from the reporting officer: depression and apathy towards duty.

In a supplementary section on the Obrist Division, 2te Escadron, the reporting officer
also mentions five previously-unmentioned deserters, while also potentially providing more
information on the case of the aforementioned Thomas Czischeck. The reporting officer provided
the following information on the characters and actions of these men:

In betref der Deserteurs von dießer Escadron sagten die alten guten leüte, daß der
Gemeine Dietrich liederlich gewesen und mit ein Weibsbild fortgangen seÿ….Die
Officiers sagten, vermög Conduite Liste wäre der Corporal [Girschabek], Czischek und
Liebel sehr liederlich und Schuldenmacher geweßen, die 2. Gemeiner Banal und Blass
unwillig und Raisoneurs. …

As this notation makes clear, with its references to the “Conduite” of the soldiers involved—
Dietrich, Girschabek, Czischeck, Liebel, Banal, and Bliss—the officer did not consider the
deserters to be either good soldiering material or men of high moral character. Gemeiner Dietrich
supposedly possessed an immoral (liederlich) character and ran off with a ‘woman of ill-
repute’—though, as in similar cases, there is no further information given on the nature of the
relationship between Dietrich and this woman, with both being painted with a broad brush.

303 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189.
304 “…der Treiber ein schon gewöhnter lauser; Und die 2. Attrapirten Sieber und Heinrich Treiber wären
immer verdrüßlich und nachlässig im dienst geweßen.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189.
305 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189.
In the cases of Girschabek, Czischek, and Liebel, each was characterized as being licentious and a debtor, though no specific connection was given that might connect these two assertions. For example, the report did not specifically mention other factors that might connect the soldier’s character to indebtedness: such as gambling, whoring, or drinking. The report describes the final two, Gemeiner Banal and Gemeiner Blass, as being disciplinary problem cases—both characterized as ‘averse’ or ‘indignant’ to their positions and prone to being argumentative and disobedient. All of these incidences share the common factor that the reporting officers did not have a high opinion of the quality of personnel cited in the regiment. Whether this lack of esteem stemmed from social, economic, or (potentially) religious differences between the officers and the dragoons, the report does not make clear. What was made clear, however, was that desertion was either a) not considered to be an unforeseen consequence of soldiers (viewed as) incompatible with military discipline or b) considered to be the result that soldiers could and would take advantage of opportunities presented to them to avoid further burdens of duty.

4. Case Study IV – The Zweybrück Dragoon Regiment

Though separated by some distance, the Zweybrück Dragoon Regiment shared an experience similar to that of the Coburg Dragoon Regiment. In the case of the Zweybrück Regiment, the author of the summation report did not mince words regarding the status of the desertion problem with the regiment. The “significant” amount of desertion reported was primarily the result of the closeness of the regiment’s encampment to the Saxon border: “die Ursach der so beträchtlichen Desertion ebenfalls von der nahen Lage der Sächsischen
He went on to argue that, in spite of efforts by the regiment to contain its members or control their movements, the large border with Saxony provided far too many opportunities for dragoons to slip away and desert. Building off of the locational explanation for a ‘significant’ issue with desertion, the author of the report went on to enumerate five other potential issues relating to desertion and the ways that each affects the regiment’s status. In making the statement that desertion was more than the inevitable result of geographic or locational opportunism on the part of the offending soldiers, the Zweybrück Regiment provides insight into the daily quotidian details of garrison life in an eighteenth-century dragoon regiment, and similarities can be seen between this report and those provided by the officers of the Siebenbürgisch and Oroszischen Infantry Regiments in Chapter 2.

The role of women, often portrayed in military reports as the causes of licentious behavior by soldiers, takes a front-and-center role in the Zweybrück report. Women, whether as wives or servants, provide valuable services to encamped regiments and to those on the move: “they washed the laundry, kept the barracks and billets clean, and helped to tend the sick and wounded on campaign.” In the 1740s, Christopher Duffy noted that “a regiment on the march…had something of a horde of the Völkerwanderung, with all the attendant women and children….” While large numbers of women (and children) were common in camps and on the march, Habsburg military regulations would eventually ban them. In 1756, the Habsburg military decided that women and children should be left with their feudal lords and, in 1775—just one year after the reports in question were written—it came to be that “…the general rule was established that no wives were to follow” units into the field or to their encampments. Despite the many valuable services provided by women connected to military units, the author of the Zweybrück report cites the role of “liederlichen Weibsgesind” (immoral/depraved women) in

---

306 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189, 1st inclusion, 5.
307 Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 57. See also Hochedlinger, Austria’s Wars of Emergence, 132-134.
enticing men to desert or engage in other illegal or immoral behavior—particularly when they are allowed into the camps. In the report’s closing materials, the author stated: “…jedoch nun mehro nachlassende desertion am allermeisten durch die Weibs=bilder im Lande veranlasset, deren Umgang in dem Quartier die Mannschaft zur Liederlichkeit, Schulden mach, und endlichen sich vereh[e]ligen zu kommen zur desertion verleitet worden.”

While women provided valuable services to the armed forces of the eighteenth century—whether as part of a support service (ex. cooking, laundry, etc.) or as part of the merchant groups that followed an army providing needed provisions and materials, and not necessarily in the implied ‘immoral’ ways—the Zweýbrück report makes apparent that there was still hesitation on the part of officers in regards to allowing women to be in or near a garrisoned force. In this case, the reporting officer specifically cited the pernicious influence of woman as causes of: immorality, indebtedness, and, perhaps most significantly, the increased susceptibility to desertion stemming from a desire to be married or to build a family.

As administrators of the military, it is worth noting their preoccupation with the role of women in causing desertion—where women “verleiten” (to induce, to entrap, or to inveigle) men into engaging in specific illicit behaviors—oftentimes to the exclusion of other possible reasons, such as those that might place the burden fully on the soldier rather than on an outside, immoralizing force acting beyond the control of the soldier in question. By focusing so heavily on the male-female dynamic in the eighteenth century, the report also highlights the artificial limitations placed on the number of soldiers within a unit that could be married. In specific, marriage was a right for which soldiers were required to pay and, in many cases, pay quite heavily.

As administrators of the military, it is worth noting their preoccupation with the role of women in causing desertion—where women “verleiten” (to induce, to entrap, or to inveigle) men into engaging in specific illicit behaviors—oftentimes to the exclusion of other possible reasons, such as those that might place the burden fully on the soldier rather than on an outside, immoralizing force acting beyond the control of the soldier in question. By focusing so heavily on the male-female dynamic in the eighteenth century, the report also highlights the artificial limitations placed on the number of soldiers within a unit that could be married. In specific, marriage was a right for which soldiers were required to pay and, in many cases, pay quite heavily.

308 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189, 6th inclusion, 1.
309 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten, 1774-20-189, 3.
target single men in their recruiting efforts and it was not just a result of the perception that a single, childless soldier might be more likely to go into battle fearlessly. Financial considerations played a role as, if a soldier were to die in their service, “[i]t was…the sovereign who, as employer, ultimately had to provide for impoverished soldiers’ wives and widows together with their children if he wanted to prevent this military proletariat from overrunning his country.” Therefore, the number of soldiers allowed to marry was often strictly limited and recruiting preference was given to young, single men. Officers were not excluded from these unofficial regulations as, by 1750, “permission to marry had to be specifically granted…additionally, this permission had to be bought.” A so-called “Heiratskaution,” or marriage deposit, had to be paid by an officer wishing to obtain permission to marry. The “Heiratskaution” was often “many times his annual pay” as the deposit functioned as a prepaid pension “on which [his] widow could live in the event of his death.”

Beyond the financial considerations for the Habsburg Monarchy, the marriage deposit and its attendant actions were a legacy of the patronage system that marked early modern military enterprises. Regimental leaders most definitely considered the marriage of one of their soldiers (and, consequently, the potentiality of children) to be a matter of financial and military importance by the officers and, therefore, subject to both official and unofficial regulation. Conversely, the importance of sex, marriage, and child-rearing regulations to soldiers, some of whom volunteered and some of whom were in various ways impressed into service, should not be underestimated for this time period.

Beyond issues regarding marriage or the presence of women in or around the dragoon camps, the Zweybrück Regiment report highlights many of the logistical issues faced by early modern armies. In particular, the author notes that, resulting from the length of the exercises and time in the field, the regiment faced such a shortage of straw—as both a source of bedding and

---

310 Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 133.
fodder for the horses—that the riders were forced to sleep “on the bare floors.”

Furthermore, on top of the eventual shortages of straw and other items of necessity, it was believed by soldiers and officers that the goods received from the main quartermaster administration of the Habsburg Monarchy’s military, the Oeconomie-Commission, were of such “terrible quality” that the men were ‘compelled’ to pay for replacements out of their own funds with no expectation of reimbursement: “twice yearly a pair of pants, two shirts, two pairs of stockings, a pair of shoes, including a re-soling, in addition to forage items, field axe, hair powder, pomade, leather mustache-trainers, boot black….” Soldiers found themselves forced to deal with the difficulty (“Beschwerlichkeit”) of equipping themselves with hair powder and pomade. Forced to provide some of their own supplies and sleep “on the bare floors,” another common complaint for soldiers to offer was that there was a “growing” problem with vermin in their quarters and workspaces.

Given the possibility that the logistical apparatus of the standing army was insufficient to handle all of the requirements of regiments spread across the entirety of the Monarchy, it was not beyond the realm of possibilities that regiments called upon individual soldiers to put forth partial payments for their service equipment and goods. As a potential legacy of the commander-proprietor military culture often found during the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648), high-ranking field officers—company, battalion, and regimental commanders—were not immune from the possibility of having to front the expenses incurred by a unit, whether it be payroll or the

---

313 “4to der Mann bey der Adjustirung von dem Haarbuder, und Pomade einer grossen Beschwerlichkeit ausgesetzt seye, und um sich des wachsenden Ungeziefer zu entübrigen, auf scharffe, und schädliche Mittel verfalle, wordurch sich bereits Geschwulsten zuge(zohen) worden; und das endlichen der Mann....” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten, 1774-20-189, 3.
acquisition of necessary supplies and equipment.\textsuperscript{314} Or, in other circumstances, officers and administrators would have the pay of the soldiers docked to defray (partially or wholly) to cover the costs of providing equipment and provisions to the troops. The concept of a unit’s equipment and material being provided by a centralized military administrative or quartermaster body, rather than solely through the resources of its leader or sponsor (\textit{Innhaber}), was a relatively novel concept for the standing army in the eighteenth century.

In the case of the Zweybrück Dragoon Regiment, however, it is worth noting that the quality of the equipment and goods, rather than just the specific quantity or paucity, of the provided goods—combined with the circumstances of how replacements were procured—that the reporting author cited as the cause of the desertions by the dragoons. A final observation provided by the report’s author was of a more quotidian nature, regarding the grooming practices of dragoon soldiers in the eighteenth century. Regulations required that dragoons maintain properly kempt facial hair. Dragoons found the required use of a mustache trainer—known as a \textit{Bartbinde} and generally made of leather—to be “a gross inconvenience.” They cited two specific problems regarding the use of the \textit{Bartbinde}: 1) the trainer was required to be worn for so long during the night and 2) that it was susceptible to moisture issues which would cause “injury to the gums [to such an extent] that the teeth would hang loose.”\textsuperscript{315}

In spite of these issues regarding faulty materials, pay, the lack of creature comforts, and uniform complaints, the unit’s location was still cited as the number one cause of desertion by the Zweybrück Dragoon Regiment—and, for the matter, similar statements were made regarding the actions of dragoons in the Coburg Regiment. The report argued: “Woraus in Zusammenhaltung

\textsuperscript{314} Regarding the commander-proprietor culture of early modern armies, the best starting reference remains Redlich, \textit{German Military Enterpriser} (1964).

\textsuperscript{315} “\textit{Sto von dem schwanz gewichsten in die Runde gepasten Bart, welcher mit einer lderinen Binde des Nachts bis Fruhe nach dem Pferdputzen über die obere Lippen gebunden getragen werden muss, ein so grosse inconvenienz zu empfinden habe, dass bey anhaltenden Dauer gemeiniglich Geschwulst, und zuweilen Verwundung des Zahnfleisches, und die Zähne waklend werden.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten, 1774-20-189, 3.
beeder Untersuchungs_Relationen sich veroffenbahren, dass bey einem, wie bey dem anderen
Regimente die all zu nahe (B)equartierung an der...Sächsischen Gränze an dem eingerissenenen
Desertions=Übel die eigentliche, und Hauptursach seye."316 The unit’s location near the border
was the major concern and, in spite of its best efforts and the presumed aid of soldiers of the
Deserter’s Cordon, the regiment could not guard the entire border with Electoral Saxony. The
border provided too broad of an avenue for the Zweÿbrück Regiment to cover all possible routes
of escape. He states: “Ob nun zwar das Regiment zu Verhüthung dieses Übels alle mögliche
Vorkehrungen angewendet, selben jedannoch wegen anliegended Chur Sächsichen Gräntzen
nicht gänzlich vorbeigen konnte.”317 The detrimental effects of womenfolk in a military camp
also ranked highly on the regiment’s list of concerns—though, as stated later in the report, the
regiment’s location—not that far from the comforts of non-military society and, furthermore, not
that far from the Moanrchy’s border—played a large role in the unit’s inability to prevent the
supposedly-deleterious effects of regular contact with women

E. Conclusion

Both regiments highlighted in this chapter’s case studies were dragoon regiments serving
the Habsburg Monarchy during the years of 1770 and 1771. They were stationed on the borders
of Saxony and Bavaria, not too far from each other in Bohemia. This region saw the Habsburg
Monarchy and the Kingdom of Prussia—as well as their allies and proxies—fight two major wars
over the previous 35 years that had rearranged the borders in ways not seen again until after
Napoleon’s final defeat in 1815. The time period under consideration was one where the

316 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten, 1774-20-189, 3.
317 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten, 1774-20-189.
Habsburg Monarchy was not engaged in active conflict with the states neighboring the Saxony-Bohemia and Bavaria-Bohemia borders. Placed in similar circumstances, the reporting officers in both the Zweÿbrück and Coburg regiments wrote extensively on the perils of being close to the border. This border region was large enough and the number of troops few-and-far-enough-in-between that, in one officer’s estimation: “Ob nun zwar das Regiment zu Verhüthung dieses Übels alle mögliche Vorkehrungen angewendet, selben jedannoch wegen anliegenden Chur Sächsichen Gräntzen nicht gänzlich vorbeigen konnte.”

318 This officer did not see how it would be possible to completely prevent soldiers from being able to cross into foreign territory and desert. As such, efforts to prevent, ameliorate, and rectify the effects of desertion focused on: 1) maintaining mutual exchange agreements with neighboring states, 2) controlling and regulating the movement of soldiers within the confines of their designated camp or garrison site, or 3) creating internal border controls through the use of “Deserter’s Cordon” troop patrols and incentivizing the cooperation of the populace and local governments—generally through the payment of bounties for the capture of deserter or the threat of punishment to persons for knowingly providing material support to deserters they have identified.

While the importance of border proximity should not be downplayed—especially in the opinions of the reporting officers for these two regiments—there were several other factors regarding the circumstances of these units that influenced the issue desertion. In summarizing some of these factors, the Zweÿbrück Regiment investigation into the prevalence of desertion found complaints regarding: the use of faulty materials in required equipment (e.g. the leather used in moustache trainers, the cloth used in uniforms), pay irregularities, inadequacies in the food supply for both the dragoons and their horses, and deficiencies in the quartering provided to soldiers. The Coburg Regiment provided a large amount of data regarding discipline issues in general, including desertion, and, in doing so, drew connections between a soldier’s proclivity for

318 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten, 1774-20-189.
misbehavior and his potential for engaging other acts of misconduct, up to and including desertion.

In the desertion cases mentioned by the Coburg Regiment, there are several patterns worth noting for this study. Of the nine deserters noted for the period, specific circumstances regarding a soldier’s position influenced his decision. In the case of Paul Sieber, who requested permission in advance, his furlough request was denied and he chose to go anyway, while Carl Wildawský saw his position in the regiment as “hopeless” after 14 months. Carl Pausch feared the punishment that might stem from his failure to complete assigned duties, while five other soldiers deserted supposedly as a result of physical punishments they received at the hands of the superior officers and noncommissioned officers: Johan Finck, Michel Lobermaýer, Johan Ullerich, Thomas Czischeck, and Johann Duscheck. In these cases, the reporting officers also had issues with these soldiers regarding general discipline, inability to perform duties, and proclivities for argumentativeness. In the case of Thomas Czischeck, when confronted for wearing an unclean shirt during an exercise, he defended himself by arguing that the shirt was old, almost rags, and could not (presumably) be cleaned to the Rittmeister’s standards. As found in the previous case studies of Oroszisches and Siebenbürgisches infantry regiments, fellow soldiers could potentially (in the minds of officers) exert great influence over a soldier’s decision to desert. The reporting officer cited the influence of another soldier in the cases of Jacob Schedina and Johann Duscheck, both of whom supposedly were influenced by the soldier Carl Wildawský.

For this study regarding the administrative treatment of and reaction to desertion, the example of the Coburg Regiment lends further credence to the supposition that, during peacetime, soldiers were rounded social beings—they had personalities, lives, and families—that, for various reasons, could not bear (or chose not to bear) the burdens placed on them by their commanding officers and non-commissioned officers. Whether it was a personality conflict or physical abuse
at the hands of their superiors that played a role in a soldier’s decision to desert, the lesson to be learned from the Coburg Regiment’s cases was that the elimination of peacetime (or garrison) desertion was not a necessarily simple proposition. Reforming administrative practice to allow for greater ease in furlough/leave policies could have helped in the case of Sieber, while changes to the terms of a soldier’s service might have prevented Carl Wildawský from viewing his situation as hopeless. Changes to the regulations governing the use of corporal punishment—something that would not happen until the latter part of the nineteenth century—might have prevented the desertion of the five deserters who mentioned physical violence as a motivator to desert.

Yet, like one of the leading generals of the time period (Frederick the Great), Habsburg officers chose to focus on how to prevent desertion by controlling the ability of soldiers to escape first and the desire of soldiers to escape second. As the report stated: “Die gantze Ursach der Desertion wäre die nahe Gränzte.” Desertion, beyond any connections to a soldier’s \textit{Conduite} or honorable standing, could have been just as much a matter of opportunity as it was a reflection of a soldier’s circumstance or moral character. In viewing desertion as such, historians can look back and judge these officers harshly for their lack of understanding, but to do so invites accusations of anachronism and bias. Military administrators and army officers were products of an environment that saw explicit connections between a person’s ability to engage in right and moral behavior and the level of monitoring and control that could be brought to bear: physical discipline and social discipline often went hand-in-hand.

Another motivation for desertion in both regiments was the role of discontent with military discipline and the regulations considered necessary to maintain it. From the report of the Zweybrück Regiment, we are given a picture of some of the issues considered most important by Habsburg soldiers: ranging from inadequate necessities, such as food and hay, to the overbearing (and sometimes physically abusive) presence of noncommissioned officers. Istvan Deak, noted
scholar of the Habsburg Monarchy and author of one of seminal texts on Habsburg military
history, provides cautious context in regards to the regulations placed upon eighteenth-century
soldiers and their superiors:

Countless regulations prescribed the proper way to treat, educate, discipline, and train the
men, as well as the quantity and quality of the food, drink, and tobacco they were to be
given, and the space they were to occupy in the barracks. Some of these regulations read
to us now as if coming from a bureaucracy gone mad, yet we must consider that when the
military bureaucracy formulated in minute detail, and in the name of the emperor, the
precise way to prepare the soldiers’ morning soup or the number of floggings that officers
of various ranks were permitted to dispense..., it was attempting to prevent unnecessary
brutality, corruption, and theft.319

For Deák, while it is fair to note the brutality of some factors and the paucity of others, he argues
that the regulatory and disciplinary system that underpinned the Habsburg’s military organization
was intended to prevent many of the abuses cataloged in both the Zweybrück and Coburg reports.
Deák went on, stating: “Since the days of Maria Theresa and Archduke Charles, military
regulations stipulated that the rank and file be treated with dignity. It does not seem that the rule
was very much respected.”320 If the system, and the spirit of the regulations that underpinned it,
was supposed to be oriented towards the preservation of dignity and the prevention of excess, to
where should scholars look for the causes for desertion?

The case studies of the Coburg Dragoon Regiment and Zweybrück Dragoon Regiment
point to a multitude reasons for disciplinary issues in an eighteenth century military unit, up to
and including desertion. The reports make explicit that officers and military administrators
viewed a unit’s location as a leading cause of desertion, with other excuses being subordinate to
that factor. The common soldiers, if presented with the opportunity to desert from their unit, will
take said opportunity to run, according to Habsburg military leaders. On the other side, it appears
from the little information provided on the cases of individual soldiers that personality and
circumstances played the largest roles. Some of them would be motivated to take advantage of the

319 Deák, Beyond Nationalism, 103-104.
320 Deák, Beyond Nationalism, 107.
situation because of long-standing ‘personal’ issues: homesickness, a general dislike of military service, or proclivities for chasing women and gambling. Other soldiers will be motivated by more-acute reasons: peer pressure, the influence of fellow soldiers, in reaction to an argument or confrontation with another member of the regiment, or as the result of the consumption of large amounts of alcohol.
Chapter 4


A. Introduction

In his seminal 1990 work on the evolution of the Habsburg officer corps after 1848, noted historian of the Habsburg Monarchy István Deák commented on the ‘special case’ that the Monarchy’s heterogeneity provided. In a state focused on a unifying monarchy, heavily influenced by certain ethnic groups, and dominated by a specific religious confession, Deák noted that:

…it[ro]bably only one major army, that of the Indian Republic, could be said truly to resemble the Habsburg. It, too, is a multinational force, with no dominant ethnic group and a barely dominant religion; it uses a language, or, rather, several languages of convenience; it suffers from the overrepresentation in its officer corps of certain confessional and ethnic groups, such as the Sikhs; and it preaches a supranational all-Indian ideology designed to override all ethnic, religious, and local considerations. 321

It was a ‘dynastic’ state, with the loyalties of its disparate elements sometime sharing little but a connection to the Habsburgs themselves. This dynamic—multilingual, multi-confessional, multi-ethnic—could at times show itself in the ways that the Monarchy’s governing institutions and administrative bodies came together. The Habsburg Monarchy, the “mildly centripetal agglutination of bewilderingly heterogeneous elements” remembered by history, managed to function—for better and worse—at a level that allowed it to sustain itself for many centuries.322

One cannot adequately discuss the nature of the Habsburg military in the early modern period without delving into the story of the Hofkriegsrat, the Aulic War Council, which operated

321 Deák, Beyond Nationalism, 5.
322 Evans, Making of the Habsburg Monarchy, 447.
as the supreme military advising, administrative, and command body for the Monarchy from 1556 until 1848. With the monarch, both male and female for a better part of the eighteenth century, sitting at the top of the command apex, the Hofkriegsrat bridged the gap between the military’s chain of command—from the general officers in charge of specific regions down to individual unit and garrison commanders—and the civilian authorities that gave the military its orders and provided its personnel. The council also was charged with coordinating with (and, in some cases, controlling) the agencies and persons that provided recruiting, financial, procurement, and logistical support to the standing army. The extent to which the Hofkriegsrat fulfilled this mission varied greatly throughout the course of its existence, from its inception in 1556 to its dissolution and replacement with the Kriegsministerium in 1848, with its importance and relative power oftentimes dependent on the importance and relative power of its chief office holders. For several presiding officers of the Hofkriegsrat, the quality of their relationship to each of the individual Habsburg Monarchs could determine the quality of the funding, support, and latitude they received to accomplish their goals.

This chapter is an attempt to answer two major questions regarding the Hofkriegsrat. First, what was the Hofkriegsrat? Using a mixture of primary and secondary sources, this chapter synthesizes the most up-to-date information on the history of this military administrative body and its roles in Habsburg history. The second major question to be addressed by ‘In Service of the State’ is: why was the Hofkriegsrat significant to the Habsburg Monarchy. Furthermore, what role did the Hofkriegsrat play in matters of desertion? Through the use of primary source correspondence to and from the Hofkriegsrat during the eighteenth century, this chapter shows that the Aulic War Council in Vienna played a vital role in the administration of the Habsburg’s large standing army: providing guidance, acting as a go-between between those “on the ground” and those at court, and handling the multitude of administrative, financial, and civil decisions necessary.
B. History of Hofkriegsrat

1. Historiographical Survey Regarding the Hofkriegsrat

As a topic of historical study, the Hofkriegsrat has not been studied to the same extent as the monarchs that it served, nor has it been the recipient of the same degree of historiographical analysis as other institutions of the Habsburg Monarchy. To date, only one major monograph-length work has been published focusing solely on this particular piece of the Habsburg administrative body: Oskar Regele’s *Der Österreichische Hofkriegsrat 1556-1848* (Vienna 1949). Regele spent a large portion of his career working as the director of the *Kriegsarchiv* and the *Österreichisches Staatsarchiv* in Vienna during the post-World War II era. His *Der Österreichische Hofkriegsrat* provided a general overview of the operations and history of the Hofkriegsrat from its predecessor organizations rooted in the wars of the sixteenth century through to its replacement by the *Kriegsministerium* in 1848—a feat made all the more noteworthy given that Regele’s work is less than 100 pages long. This monograph, while providing invaluable information on the history of the Hofkriegsrat, as well as numerous potential secondary source and historiographical leads, is described by one eminent Habsburg Monarchy historian and Austrian state archivist (ca. 2015) as to “be used with great caution.”323 In a different article, which focused on the importance of social prestige and customs in the Hofkriegsrat published in a 1964 edited volume, Martin Reif—late professor at Wichita State University—had this to say in regards to Regele’s *Hofkriegsrat*: “Neither the archivists presently [ca. 1964] in charge of this section of the Kriegsarchiv nor the writer [Reif] could discover the material cited by Regele. Until this can be done, the study does not warrant serious consideration.” Reif would go on to recommend two earlier histories as the best attempts (as of

---

323 Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 147. Hochedlinger does not provide any other details regarding his specific claim on the usefulness of Regele’s *Hofkriegsrat* in historical research.
1964) to describe the council’s history. The first was Thomas Fellner and Heinrich Kretschmayr’s *Die Österreichisch Zentralverwaltung 1. Abteilung, von Maximilian 1. bis zur Vereinigung der Österreichischen und Böhmischen Hofkanzlei, 1740* (Vienna 1907) and the second was Friedrich Firnhaber’s article “Zur Geschichte des Österreichischen Militärwesens; Skizze zur Entstehung des Hofkrieggrathes,” published in the *Archiv für Öst. Geschichte*, XXX (Vienna, 1863), 129-99. Given the age of these two works, it should be noted that they can provide starting points for a historical review of the Hofkriegsrat and the Habsburg standing army, with the caveat that both predated the collapse of the Monarchy: and one predated the *Ausgleich* (Austro-Hungarian Compromise) by approximately four years.

There have, since Regele’s publication in 1949, been several other article-length works that expanded on elements of the Hofkriegsrat’s history. There is the aforementioned 1964 article by Martin Reif. Reif’s article, while providing a general overview and narrative for the early history of the Hofkriegsrat, focused somewhat narrowly on the role of social prestige and the political dynamics of the Aulic War Council in relation to its station in the Monarchy’s power structure. Rainer Egger, the late former director of the Kriegsarchiv in the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, published an article in 1993 that focused on the Hofkriegsrat’s role as a central administrative authority for the territories collectively known as the *Militärgrenze*, the Military Frontier originally separating the core Habsburg lands from those of the Ottoman Empire. The addition of this administrative purview, managing the military and civil needs of a massive swath

---

324 Reif, “Dignity and Obedience,” 3.
325 For a modern take on the organization of the Habsburg Monarchy and the attempts it made to improve and adapt itself during the nineteenth century, see John Deak, *Forging a Multinational State: State Making in Imperial Austria from the Enlightenment to the First World War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).
326 See Reif, “Dignity and Obedience,” 1-16.
of territory facing potentially constant threats, aided greatly in the expansion of the Aulic War Council in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly after its subsuming of the War Council in Graz and the Militärdirektorium in Innsbruck. In a similarly-narrow scope, a special issue of the journal Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchiv from 2005 featured the combined research of Michael Hochedlinger (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv) and Anton Tantner (Universität Wien) that used Hofkriegsrat reports from 1770 to 1771 to analyze and narrativize the social and economic conditions of the Habsburg Monarchy in the late eighteenth century. Tantner and Hochedlinger found strong connections between prevailing social and economic conditions and the motivations and capabilities of the early modern bureaucracy and standing army.328

Beyond these specific monographs and articles focusing specifically on the history of the Hofkriegsrat, the Aulic War Council’s story has been covered partially as part of general histories of the Habsburg Monarchy. Historiographically, this coverage is often episodic at best and incomplete at worst. István Deák’s Beyond Nationalism (1990) treats the Hofkriegsrat—referring to it as the ‘Council of War’—as a generally nameless actor in the history of Habsburg standing army, one that is referred to in the third person and, in the end, replaced by the Kriegsministerium in 1848. Deák does, however, rightfully note that one of the great struggles faced by the Hofkriegsrat, as well as its successor body, was “with provincial opposition to the concept of a centralized military bureaucracy to its authority,” a recurring theme for most Habsburg institutions up until their later dissolution. One particular sticking point in this battle between two (of the six) pillars of the Habsburg state—the centralized bureaucracy and the estates—was the Hofkriegsrat’s authority regarding recruitment quotas for the army. As monarchical authority grew in the Erbländer (the historical Habsburg heartlands) and Bohemia in the wake of the Thirty Years’ War, so too did the authority of the Hofkriegsrat to set policy. Meanwhile, in areas where

328 See Hochedlinger and Tantner, ...der größte teil (2005).
the Monarchy was relatively weak, such as in Tyrol and the Kingdom of Hungary, the Hofkriegsrat was also weak in dictating policy to the local estates.329

For Gunther Rothenberg (b. 1923, d. 2004), one of the most important twentieth-century historians of the Habsburgs (in general) and their military (in specific), the Hofkriegsrat was an administrative body that was, for the most part, a representation of the state that it served—sometimes capable, sometimes inefficient, but unmistakably part of the Monarchy. While he never wrote an entire manuscript on the Aulic War Council, his general history of the army of the latter parts of the Monarchy and his two-part history of Militärgrenze provide insight how the council operated as part of the latter-day Monarchy’s machinery: in the case of the Militärgrenze, as its administrative and governing body and, in regards to the 19th-century army, as its formative body.330

Gunther Rothenberg stated in 1976 that a large issue faced by the Hofkriegsrat was its oftentimes general lack of control over its own financial matters—“[f]unds for the army came from the estates, the imperial diet, and cameral revenues, but generally they were insufficient to meet requirements.”331 This funding program affected the equipment, staffing, personnel, and recruitment for the army and, especially during the earlier parts of the eighteenth century, also its

329 Deák, Beyond Nationalism, 27. Gunther Rothenberg held a similar sentiment in describing the entire process regarding the establishment of a central military authority by the Habsburgs, stating: “Throughout this long process, the evolution of a strong Habsburg military establishment was hampered by opposition from the party of the estates in each of the various lands, while in Hungary resistance to military policies of the dynasty, as well as to the administrative and fiscal ones, persisted to the very end of the monarchy.” Rothenberg, Army of Francis Joseph, 1. Regarding Tyrol, see Miriam J. Levy, Governance & Grievance: Habsburg Policy and Italian Tyrol in the Eighteenth Century (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1988).


331 Rothenberg, Army of Francis Joseph, 4.
fortunes on the battlefield and its effectiveness as a fighting force.\textsuperscript{332} Rothenberg, however, went on to argue that, “[a]lthough its machinery was cumbersome, frequently inefficient, and always slow, and although there was a schism between the soldiers and the civilians, the agency somehow managed…” to complete the many duties placed under its charge.\textsuperscript{333} The army was not wholly effective against the Ottomans from 1737 to 1739, nor was it successful in completely fending off the advances of the Prussians and others during the War of Austrian Succession. Yet, in spite of these events, the Habsburg Monarchy had not entirely collapsed and, with some large exceptions (i.e. Silesia), had generally maintained its territorial integrity. On the monetary front, army finances were not consolidated until after 1747 and, even though they were greatly resented, Maria Theresa persisted in the reform program she began upon ascension.\textsuperscript{334} By the late 1750s it could be argued that Maria Theresa and her advisors had made the army “again…an effective fighting instrument, quite different from the collection of disparate units before 1740.”\textsuperscript{335}

The bureaucracy of the Hofkriegsrat—and, on the whole, of the Monarchy—could oftentimes find itself surprised by either the level of compliance or noncompliance in response to its orders from local commanders and the estates. Christopher Duffy tells the story of the seeming shock on behalf of the Council when, in an incident from 1753, one colonel reacted instantly to an order changing the uniform dress regulations, complying with its mandate without waiting for any further clarification. For those serving in the War Council, Duffy stated: “The Hofkriegsrath felt that the precipitate colonel ought to have waited until (as almost invariably happened) the government had had time to change its mind.” Where this colonel showed immediate compliance, the council had grown to expect over the preceding two centuries a “habit

\begin{footnotes}
\item[332] The most important work regarding finances and war for the Habsburg Monarchy remains Dickson, \textit{Finance and Government under Maria Theresia 1740-1780} (1987), particularly the sections of Volume II dedicated to the financing of war and wartime subsidies: 114-184.
\item[333] Rothenberg, \textit{Army of Francis Joseph}, 3.
\item[334] For overview regarding Maria Theresa’s relationship with the Habsburg officer class, from the highest generals down to the lowest officers, see Duffy, \textit{Army of Maria Theresa}, 18-46
\item[335] Rothenberg, \textit{Army of Francis Joseph}, 5.
\end{footnotes}
of regarding a prescription from above as an expression of intent rather than a mandate for action.”

2. Historical Survey Regarding the Hofkriegsrat

While the standing army of the Habsburg Monarchy traced its roots to the portions of Thirty Years’ War-era armies retained after the conflict’s conclusion, the Hofkriegsrat goes back to 1556 when it received its first instructions from the Emperor. Before 1556, various war and political advisory councils of differing names and organizational types fulfilled the Hofkriegsrat’s role—the oftentimes ad hoc nature of the armies fighting for the Habsburgs did not necessitate the type of permanent bureaucracy into which the Hofkriegsrat would eventually grow. From its inception the Aulic War Council in Vienna existed as a supplementary body to the government’s authority, oftentimes working closely with the Hofkammer (the Court Chamber), which the Monarchy had vested with supreme authority in financial matters. At the same time, there was the Inner Austrian War Council, located in the city of Graz (approximately 190 km southwest of Vienna in Styria), which was specifically charged with the handling of matters regarding the Croatian-Slavonian Military Border, starting as early as 1578. Furthermore, the territories of Tyrol and Vorderösterreich were not originally included under the authority of the Aulic War Council in Vienna. Rather, these regions of the Monarchy came under various institutions that, after 1700, were consolidated into a Militärdirektorium—which answered not to the Hofkriegsrat, but rather to the (administrative) Privy Council in Innsbruck, and focused on matters of “home defence.” As Michael Hochedlinger explained, the Inner Austrian War Council reported to the Privy Council in Graz and the Militärdirektorium in Tyrol reported to the Privy Council in

[337] Vorderösterreich is colloquially referred to as “Anterior Austria” in English secondary sources and encompassed modern-day Vorarlberg, Bregenz, Konstanz, and parts of modern-day Alsace.
Innsbruck—both institutions, in turn, reported to the Court Chancellery in Vienna as of (respectively) 1619 and 1665 and neither “had nothing to do with the Vienna War Council or the standing army” for well over a hundred years. This arrangement, where the Viennese War Council went through political channels to deal with the other war councils, changed after the turn of the eighteenth century and in 1705 both of these institutions were made subordinate to the Hofkriegsrat in Vienna.  

The Hofkriegsrat began its life in mid-sixteenth century as an advisory body for the Habsburg Emperor on military matters, composed of the monarch’s trusted officials. The prevalence of mercenary-based armies during this period meant that the Habsburgs—or any late-medieval or early-modern state—did not require a large military bureaucracy. Rather, military enterprisers handled the organization, recruitment, funding, and training of a required number of soldiers: ranging in size from those in charge of several hundred men to the magnates like Albrecht von Wallenstein, who raised armies in the tens of thousands for the Habsburgs during the Thirty Years’ War. Over the course of the one hundred years after its inception, the Hofkriegsrat’s responsibilities grew steadily. This was particularly true after 1649 when the Hofkriegsrat became responsible for the Habsburg’s first major standing army: the remnants of the armies raised by the Habsburgs to ensure victory during the Thirty Years’ War. With this growth in responsibility, there was also a commensurate growth in the size of the council:

…by 1659, one president, one vice-president, eight councillors and eight secretaries. By 1740 the Hofkriegsrat contained no less than three times this total, 36 councillors and 28 secretaries as well as numerous other staff.  

---

338 Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 118.
339 Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 120. Manfred Rauchensteiner, in his work on the Archduke Charles and Emperor Francis I, highlighted the size of the bureaucracy at the end of the eighteenth century by using the example of the Lower Austrian General-Militärkommando putting in a request to purchase a cat for the express purpose of hunting mice—before permission was granted, the request went by 48 persons. See Rauchensteiner, *Kaiser Franz und Erzherzog Carl: Dynastie und Heerwesen in Österreich 1796* (Vienna, 1972), 62. As quoted in Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 28.
The enlarged Hofkriegsrat of the eighteenth century—responsible as it was for the standing army—was an arm of the expanded state bureaucracy that marked the transition of the Habsburg Monarchy from a medieval state to an early modern one: from a state centered on monarchy, the church, and the nobility to one also based on the standing army, the civil and military bureaucracies, and the managed economy.  

This shift from a three-pronged state to a six-pronged state apparatus drew its impetus roots from the reforms of Maria Theresa, her son Joseph II, and their advisers Haugwitz and Kaunitz, falling under the rubric of ‘Enlightened Absolutism.’ In the words of noted Austrian historian Michael Hochedlinger:

…die Stärkung der habsburgischen Kriegsmacht durch Stabilisierung und Verstaatlichung der Staatsfinanzen stand im Zentrum der maria-theresianischen Staatsreform von 1748-49; die Ausweitung des inländischen Rekrutierungsreservoirs – und damit die verstärkte Verschränkung von Militär und Gesellschaft – war ein wesentlicher Diskussionspunkt seit den frühen 1760er Jahren. Die Verstaatlichung des Militärs erzeugt notwendigerweise bis zu einem gewissen Grad auch eine Militarisierung des Staates. Von den beträchtlichen Auswirkungen dieser Problematik auf eine andere brennende Frage der Ära des Aufgeklärten Absolutismus...  

In the 1720s and early 1730s, the twilight of Prince Eugene of Savoy’s years, the Habsburg army had declined in its position as one of a powerhouse force—one that earned fame across Europe for pushing back the Ottoman Empire from the gates of Vienna all the way to Belgrade—to one that found itself at the mercy of its neighbors in conflicts in the 1730s (against a resurgent Ottoman Empire) and after Charles VI’s death in 1740 (against a rising Kingdom of Prussia). As Maria Theresa developed in her role as monarch, a driving concern of her reforms was the strengthening of the army to defend her patrimony from those sought to undo the Pragmatic

---

340 Evans Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs, viii. Based on its role maintaining cohesiveness across the numerous ethnic, religious, and national groups in the Monarchy, Gunther Rothenberg argued that the “…army was one of the most important, if not the most important, single institution in the multinational empire…..” Rothenberg, Army of Francis Joseph, ix.
Sanction; the first years of her reign were marked by seemingly-unceasing warfare with neighboring countries, including a fair number of losses against the forces of Frederick’s Prussia. In seeking to strengthen the military, the Hofkriegsrat further grew from its original standing to be the executor of Maria Theresa and Joseph II’s ambitions to reform both the military and the state. These two processes (military reform and state reform), while often separable in analysis, can be viewed, as Hochedlinger argued, as two sides of the same coin—that the professionalization or civilianizing of the army happened concurrently with a militarization of the Monarchy as a whole.342

a. ‘Serving the State’: The Hofkriegsrat and its Presidents

Over the course of its almost three-hundred-year history, from 1556 to 1848, many august and famous personalities of Habsburg history presided over the Hofkriegsrat. The mid-seventeenth century saw the tenures of Fürst Wenzel Lobkowitz (1649-1665), Fürst Annibale Gonzaga (1665-1668), and Reichsgraf Raimondo Montecuccoli (1668-1681), one of the fathers of early modern military science.343 For over thirty years in the early part of the eighteenth century, Prince Eugene of Savoy, one of the titans of Habsburg history, presided over the Hofkriegsrat until his death: through the War of Spanish Succession, wars with Turkey, and a major rebellion by Rákoczy in Hungary. In the period when the Hofkriegsrat’s archive’s organizational rubric was first in place, the following men served the Habsburg state as presidents of the Hofkriegsrat:

343 Oskar Regele, who may have been slightly biased to favor a Habsburg personality, described Raimondo Montecuccoli as “Der erste moderne Militärklasiker.” See Regele, *Der Österreichische Hofkriegsrat*, 75. For a deeper analysis of Montecuccoli’s value to the Habsburgs and the study of military science, see Barker, *Military Intellectual and Battle* (1975).
1738-1761 – Graf Johan Philip Josef Harrach zu Rohrau. Graf Harrach was at times assisted by the Vizepräsident, Graf Browne, and Feldmarschall Graf Khevenhüller.

1762-1766 – Leopold von Daun
1766-1774 – Graf Franz Moritz von Lacy
1774-1790 – Graf Andreas Hadik von Futak
1791-1796 – Graf Michael Joseph Wallis
1796 – Graf Friedrich Moritz Nostitz-Rieneck
1796 – 1801 – Graf Ferdinand Tige
1801 – 1809 – Erzherzog Karl

After 1809, as part of the reorganization of the military and its administration, the rubric system that had been in place since 1753 was replaced with a more expansive system that remained in place until the Hofkriegsrat was dissolved in 1848.

Throughout its history, the position of the Aulic War Council was, for better and worse, dependent on the relative position of authority of the men charged with its supervision, as well as the council’s specific relationship to the sitting Habsburg monarch. Considered the supreme authority in some military matters (e.g. standing army management, wartime strategies), yet also considered subordinate or auxiliary in other matters (e.g. financial and administrative management), the presidents of the Hofkriegsrat would have to balance their own duties as head of the army with the critical political tasks that made the work of managing an army possible. In the seventeenth century, this balancing act was exemplified by Wenzel, Prince Lobkowitz, who found it necessary to be a consummate statesman and diplomat, as well as a personnel manager of his subordinate military experts. As Habsburg historian Martin Reif explain about Lobkowitz:

[…] he concerned himself primarily with diplomacy, foreign affairs, and overall Habsburg policy decisions. To his councilors at the Hofkriegsrat, who were doing the detail work of experts in military affairs and in diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire, he was their all-important connection at court. To Lobkowitz, however, their reports were only part of this general concern with the affairs of the state.

At an earlier period, one finds an example of the difficult position that the early Hofkriegsrat (and its leaders) found itself. Under Emperor Matthias (r. 1612-1619), one fight centered on the

---

344 Regele, Der Österreichische Hofkriegsrat, 73-78.
345 Reif, “Dignity and Obedience,” 16.
allocation and disbursement of funding, particularly regarding how the government doled out financial assistance to veteran soldiers, officers, and in support of their families.

In general, the Hofkammer held supreme authority in financial matters for the Monarchy, yet there were areas where the argument was made that the Hofkriegsrat should not be made to submit to the authority of the Hofkammer, particularly where the financial authority was part-and-parcel of an expressly military policy: in this case, the disbursement of pay. As Martin Reif explained, military taxes (contribution) were considered officially separate from the general taxation funds collected by the Monarchy, yet the administration of the entire tax system was left to the Hofkammer: including the Contribution military taxes. In regards to the disbursement of support funds for soldiers and their families, the Hofkriegsrat, working in concert with Emperor Matthias, could have asserted greater authority in its discussions with the Hofkammer if the requests the Hofkammer received and processed carried automatic approval authority from Matthias. Yet this was not a power that Emperor Matthias would grant. The requests would still require his approval, as he—and, potentially, his personal councilors—“would decide each case on its merits,” in turn creating the perception for the Hofkriegsrat that they were not the supreme authority in these matters. This perceived weakness of the Hofkriegsrat meant that:

…[a]s a result of this provision [monarchical approval of each request], the Hofkriegsrat actually earned more ill will than praise. As interpreted by the public, a request granted was a sign of the generosity of the king and the merit of the petitioner. A request denied, on the other hand, invariably was regarded as evidence of internal politics and dishonesty in the ranks of the Hofkriegsrat.  

In those circumstances, the developing Hofkriegsrat needed to rely on the strength of its leaders, particularly the strength of their relationship with the Emperor and his inner circle to influence policy decisions so as to avoid such confusion. Starting in the seventeenth century, presidents of

---

346 Kriegsarchiv, Feldakten (1668), Raimundo Montecuccoli to Leopold I on the effects of the practices which began with the decree issued by Mtthias, Nov. 7, 1668, =XIII, 4. As cited in Reif, “Dignity and Obedience,” 16.
the Hofkriegsrat were generally also members of the Habsburg Privy Council. Henry Schwarz, in his 1943 history of the Imperial Privy Council during the 1600s, had this to say:

Ramboldo di Collalto and Heinrich Schlick appear in Court lists of 1627-1628 and 1637 respectively as members of the Privy Council in full standing, and Wenzel Eusebius v. Lobkowitz had, according to the Venetian Ambassador Giustiani, a great part in the Council, more by reason of his office as President of the Hofkriegsrat than for any other cause. The presence of the President of the Hofkriegsrat in the highest Council of the government was indispensable, and, indeed, in (45) the critical years between 1672 and 1674, Raimondo Montecuccoli often joined in the deliberations of the Privy Conference though not a member of it—a clear indication of the importance of his office.347

In practical terms, the balance of being both the senior military official and a court politician required both proximity to power and the prestige to take advantage of it, a process made easier for council presidents by their sitting also on the Privy Council.

Changes in the presidency of the Hofkriegsrat could stem from: changes in the ruling monarch; the failure of a sitting president to properly execute his role as chief military councilor and administrator; from political and/or personal differences between the president and the monarch; or, as happened on several occasions, the president’s death while in office. In general, the men chosen to serve in this position already had long-established careers in the Habsburg military and noble society. This factor, combined with the other political and administrative pitfalls of being the Hofkriegsrat Präsident, meant that most men did not serve for very long in the position. During the Hofkriegsrat’s 292 years of existence (1556-1848), there were 37 different tenures of Hofkriegsrat—though only 36 men served in the office, as Heinrich Graf Bellegarde served two non-consecutive terms in the early 19th century. This meant that an average term of office was approximately 7.9 years. If the two longest terms—Eugene of Savoy’s 33 years straddling the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Count Harrach’s 23 years—are removed from this calculation as outliers, the average goes down 6.7 years. Four

presidents had tenures that did not span more than a single calendar year: Nostitz-Rieneck, Frimont, Ficquelmont, and Baillet de Latour. The little more than a century bracketed by the end of the Thirty Years’ War (1648) and the end of the Seven Years’ War (1763) saw some of the longest tenures by a Hofkriegsrat Präsident: Count Raimondo Montecuccoli spanned 13 years (1668-1681), Prince Eugene of Savoy spanned 33 years (1703-1736), and Count Harrach spanned 23 years (1738-1761). Later in the nineteenth century, Count Ignaz Hardegg’s tenure spanned 17 years from 1831 to 1848, with two others following him before the Hofkriegsrat was dissolved and replaced by the Kriegsministerium.348

Before Harrach’s tenure, the long-serving president was the infamous Prince Eugene of Savoy, who served as Präsident for thirty-three years. Count Harrach held the office for two years before Maria Theresa ascended to the throne and, upon her ascent, she did not dismiss Harrach—an octogenarian—in spite of the difficulties faced by the Habsburg armies during the War of Austrian Succession and the Seven Years’ War. Instead, Harrach was assisted by Field Marshal Neipperg—himself a septuagenarian—until their faculties became too frail to lead. Leopold von Daun, who “abdicated so much of his responsibilities” to Maria Theresa and Prince Kaunitz (one of her important advisors), had only four more years left in him before he died. Moritz von Lacy became the youngest president of the Hofkriegsrat and brought a much-needed infusion of command responsibility and leadership to Habsburg military affairs, building off the reform programs that came before him.349

As the case studies of infantry and dragoon regiments in (respectively) Chapter II and Chapter III showed, there was no singular, monolithic reason for desertion by the ranks. While the regiments served at different times (a decade apart), in different places (different provinces),

---

348 See Appendix B for a complete list of the Hofkriegsrat presidents and the years of their terms.
349 Duffy, *Army of Maria Theresa*, 19. Duffy had a dim view of the leadership capabilities of both Neipperg and Harrach during their tenure with the Hofkriegsrat, stating: “Thus for most of the Seven Years’ War the machinery of military administration was encrusted with two layers of senile incompetence.”
and in different types of units (infantry versus dragoon), they shared the common characteristics of serving in the era (the eighteenth century) for the same dynasty (the Habsburgs). One of the examples for this was the wide variation in the type of soldiers serving the Habsburg Monarchy. Some soldiers would be considered volunteers by today’s standards—subjects that had no better prospect of sustaining or advancing themselves—and some volunteered insomuch as they saw an opportunity for financial gain or protection from the law. Some men volunteered because, in their view, it was their only opportunity, particularly if they had numerous older siblings blocking the possibility of an inheritance. Others serving in the army, however, were impressed or drafted into service by their landlords, local estates, or local commanders. This impressment could be as straightforward as a landlord being called to raise x-number of soldiers and him turning to his tenants to provide their labor on his behalf for this task. Or, this impressment could be far more confrontational with the possibility of a ‘recruit’ being forcibly brought into service. In the mid- and late-1770s, the Hofkriegsrat did not have complete control of military financial matters, nor did it have complete control of recruitment. The council could set standing force numbers, but the quotas of recruits from each land was part of a larger exchange between the estates, the Hofkammer, and the crown regarding rights and taxation. As such, the types of recruits sent by the estates were often not of the highest caliber:

Verständlicherweise gaben die Grundherrschaften niemals ihre besten und produktiven Untertanen zum stehenden Heer des Kaisers ab, sondern nützen die Landrekrutenstellugen lieber, um Landstreicher und Kleinkriminelle loszuwerden, oder aber sie stellten aufsässige Bauern zur Strafe ad militam.

350 Christopher Duffy cites a story of Charles de Ligne, an Austrian field marshal (from Brussels) and friend of Joseph II, who recommended setting up a recruiting table at county fairs. Recruiters should then wait several days before actively seeking men out as, with the passage of time, people had time “to run out of money and get into fights” or otherwise become “only too keen to escape justice by enlisting in the army.” Ligne, Mêlanges militaires, 205. As quoted in Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 48.
351 Hochedlinger, “Auf dem Weg,” IV.
The Kriegskommissare, faced with being on the receiving end of unwilling, incapable, and potentially criminal recruits, would have to make do—and, as this research project shows, adapt leadership, disciplinary codes, and administrative responses to deal with these potential issues.352

b. Records Left Behind, Records Never Kept, and Records Lost: The Hofkriegsrat’s Papers

In tracing the activities of the Hofkriegsrat in the period roughly spanning from the Seven Years’ War to the War of Bavarian Succession, the available records make it difficult to provide a complete picture of the Hofkriegsrat’s activities in regards to manpower maintenance and desertion. The problems can be categorized as: 1) lack of organization in the files, 2) lack of adherence to organizing principles, and 3) the attrition of time and destruction of files in the intervening two-hundred-plus years. Before 1753, there was little in the way of an organizing principle to the office’s paperwork and correspondence, other than when an object was first received or filed by the Hofkriegsrat’s staff of clerks. Even more crucial than the use of a rubric was the preservation of such an organization system, with its myriad of numbering systems and subject headers, by the staff and, years later, by the archivists of the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv. So any study of desertion before 1753 relying on the files of the Hofkriegsrat would require a scholar to scour all of the files—hundreds and potentially thousands of files per year—for references to desertion. The Hofkriegsrat produced a prodigious amount of paper and

352 In regards to this tension between finding those best suited for service and those actually available for military service, Hochedlinger had this to add: “…sahen ohnedies weniger auf die “Vorgeschichte” der Rekruten als vielmehr auf ihren Gesundheitszustand und ihr Äußeres; aber selbst hier bestand wenig Grund zur Zufriedenheit. Endles scheinen die Konflikte über die Tauglichkeit und die Körpergröße der “Landrekrute,” die auch als desertionsanfälliger galten als die von den Regimentern in freier Werbung um viel Geld aufgebrachten Söldner.” Hochedlinger, “Auf dem Weg.” IV.
embodied, as the 20th-century Habsburg historian Andrew Wheatcroft noted, “the Habsburg passion to get everything down on paper.”

Yet, the lack of an organizational system was not the only problem, as, when the first rubric system was introduced in 1753, two separate issues arose and combined to make the record incomplete. First, those charged with maintaining the Hofkriegsrat’s file system may not have always properly organized the paperwork. Some indices and sections can be found incomplete, with the possibility of correspondence being mislabeled—particularly given the overlap between categories relating to deserters, prisoners, and other judicial matters—thereby unintentionally decreasing the number of desertion-marked files. Second, there is the possibility that not all of the administrators and commanders submitted all of their paperwork to be organized, reviewed, and/or archived. It was not until well after the halfway point of the eighteenth century that units were required to submit regular muster lists and reports. A third and final consideration regarding the completeness of the Hofkriegsrat’s record is the passage of time and historians cannot discount the possibility that, over the intervening two-hundred-plus years, many of the files were lost, destroyed, misplaced, or removed to other archives.

As cited in Duffy, *Army of Maria Theresa*, 22. Duffy went on: “[A] Colonel Hiller posed the question ‘How is it possible to ensure a proper management of military affairs from a Hofkriegsrath with consists…of civilian officials who are skilled only in devoting the most enormous correspondence to the most insignificant items, as the one means they have of making themselves indispensable?’”

For one of the most extensive discussions of the holdings of the Kriegsarchiv and the historical role played by the Hofkriegsrat in managing these items, see Rainer Egger, “Kriegsarchiv,” 39-66.

Further related to this is the possibility that one piece of correspondence may have dealt with multiple issues and the archivists were forced to choose one specific rubric to place it under (to the exclusion of others). If the administrators chose to replicate a file, there also remains the possibility of misfiling, damage, or misplacement during the intervening centuries.

By and large the Austrian State Archives (ÖSTA) was able to maintain control over records that dealt specifically with central institutions, including the Hofkriegsrat. Rainer Egger explained that the situation during World War I was one where “large field-record collections were sent to the archive, and with the collapse of the monarchy and the liquidation of the old army, another enormous mass documents was acquired. Within a few years the Kriegsarchiv took possession of the archives of all central military offices as well as those of a large number of lower military authorities, commands, and institutions.” With the massive influx of documents and the development of agreements with the successor states, “the archive…had to deliver considerable archival materials to the Successor States. However, since the origin of the documents was the basis for determining which documents were to be surrendered, the Kriegsarchiv was able to retain all the archives of the central authorities.” Egger, “Kriegsarchiv,” 44.
The result of these three circumstances was that from 1753 until 1762, when the rubric system for Hofkriegsrat correspondence included a discrete heading for “Desertion”, there are only six extant files in the ÖSTA collection from the years 1753, 1757, 1759, 1760, and 1761—there were no files for 1754, 1755, 1756, and 1758. Difficulties continued into 1762, as from 1762 to 1766, the period encompassing the end of the Seven Years’ War, there was no rubric system whatsoever for Hofkriegsrat correspondence. Broader acceptance and use of the rubric organization system for Hofkriegsrat files did not begin again in earnest until 1767 with twenty-three files marked “Deserteure.” The per-year number of files would fluctuate greatly over the following decades. The number of records marked as relating to desertion from 1753 to 1801 broke down as follows:

---

356 From 1753 to 1761, rubric number 36 referred to “Deserteure.” There was no rubric system for 1762 to 1766. For 1767 to 1768, rubric number 14 referred to “Deserteure,” with the addition of rubric number 12 for “Criminalia.” For 1769, rubric number 27 referred to “Deserteure” and number 24 referred to “Criminalia.” From 1770 to 1776, rubric number 20 referred to “Deserteure und Deserteurs-Kordon” and number 17 referred to “Criminalia.” Then, from 1777 until the rubric system was completely overhauled after 1801, rubric number 14 referred to “Deserteure.”
As the chart shows, the number of correspondence pieces marked desertion by the Hofkriegsrat administrators varied greatly over the course of the selected forty-eight-year period, though there are several outliers worth noting. The number of rubric-marked desertion files for 1753 to 1801 totaled 1111. After the early period when very few documents were marked as relating to desertion, with numerous years having 0, there was only a single year after 1767 when there were 0 files filed under the desertion rubrics: 1779. Though the 1780s and 1790s generally had more rubric-marked files than the 1760s and 1770s—all three years with more than 50 documents happened during the later decades—there were three years in those latter decades (1794, 1797, and 1799) that had less than 10 desertion files each. Three years during the period from 1753-

---

357 The numbers used were derived from direct observation and resulted from hand counts of the cartons and files available from September 2011 to June 2012. For a complete breakdown of the file counts, see Appendix A.
1801 had more than fifty documents, though one year (1781) was an outlier with 309—during the preceding year there were only 10 and in the year following there were only 15. If all of the years from 1767 to 1801 are included, the yearly average was 31.6 files. If the extremes—the 0 from 1779 and the 309 from 1781—are not included in the count, the yearly average of marked desertion files for this period was 24.2: a monthly average of approximately 2 pieces.

The organization of desertion files is particularly interesting when the yearly file totals are placed in the context of the time periods during which the Habsburg Monarchy was actively engaged in a state of war. Underlying this statement are two assumptions:

1) *That during a war more soldiers, faced with a greater possibility of combat-based mortal danger, would desert than during a period when they were less likely to face combat.*

2) *That this uptick in the number of deserters would be reflected in an increase in the amount of correspondence received by the Hofkriegsrat and placed under a desertion-specific rubric.*

Major points of reference include the Seven Years’ War, the War of Bavarian Succession, and the early stages of the French Revolutionary Wars: 1756 to 1763, 1778 to 1779, and 1792 to 1802, respectively. At the outbreak of the Seven Years’ War, the rubric system was only three years old and, during the first six years, only five files were organized under the headings for desertion. The final year of that war fell within the range when no rubric guided the organization of the Hofkriegsrat’s paperwork. In the case of the War of Bavarian Succession, which ran from July 1778 until May 1779, those years saw (respectively) 10 files and 0 files marked under the “Deserteure” rubric. After this war and until the advent of major involvement by the Habsburg Monarchy in the French Revolutionary Wars, the number of desertion-marked files followed a pattern of staying within a range: going as low as 10 in 1780 and reaching as high as seventy-one in 1784, but generally between 20 and 30. 1781, as previously mentioned, was outlier with some 309 desertion-marked files. After 1792, the numbers varied greatly, rising to sixty-four in 1793
before dropping to 7 in 1794, rising again to thirty-seven in 1798. The number of marked files decreased again in 1799 to 5 going back up to 17 in 1800 and 12 in 1801.358

Even considering the caveats previously mentioned regarding potential issues with a sample set drawn from the Kriegsarchiv-held records of the Hofkriegsrat, there is a small correlation between the outbreak of war and an increase in the amount of correspondence received regarding deserters, desertion agreements, or other desertion-related administrative issues. The outbreak of war with the French state in 1792 saw a discernible increase in the amount of correspondence in 1793, with the numbers then fluctuating over the next eight years. The outbreak of the War of Bavarian Succession in 1778 saw no increase in the number of desertion files and actually decreased to zero in 1779. The years after the war saw a steady increase in the number of files from 1780 to 1786: peaking at 33 in 1786, with two earlier peaks of 309 in 1781 and 71 in 1784. As a result of the break in the use of the organization at the end of the Seven Years’ War and the years immediately following the end of the conflict in 1763, the available information is too sparse to make a judgment regarding correspondence flows during that period. Insight is provided by looking at the period between the end of the Seven Years’ War and the beginning of the War of Bavarian Succession. During that period, from 1767 to 1777, correspondence over the decade ranged quite a bit, generally not going above 30 and only going below 10 for one year (1769) and averaging 22.9 correspondence files per year.

This statistical analysis of the flow of correspondence to the Hofkriegsrat provides only part of the picture that is needed to understand this institution in the eighteenth century. The numbers of files provides little insight into the importance of each file. What types of issues did these files address and what, if anything, can be learned from them? Are there discernible trends in the topics covered to illuminate the Hofkriegsrat’s role as the administrator of the standing army and policies relevant to desertion in the eighteenth century? The next section addresses

358 See Appendix A.
these questions through the use of primary source material mined from the collections of the Austrian State Archives.

C. Stories from the Hofkriegsrat: A Primary Source Document Analysis

The following section of this chapter deals with specific actions by the Hofkriegsrat between 1753 and 1780 and the conversations that its members had with: each other, subordinate military commanders, individual deserters, noble politicians, members of the Monarchy’s other administrative bodies, and with the monarch him/herself. Making use of the Hofkriegsrat’s correspondence with other elements of the Habsburg administration and military commanders, this section uses historical vignettes to explain some of the most common issues faced by this eighteenth-century central European early modern state. By the middle of the eighteenth century, German had supplanted Italian and French as the standard languages of correspondence for the Hofkriegsrat and the Habsburg administration—with the major exception of the Hungarian lands, where Latin was the language of the state until the middle of the nineteenth century. This specific period was selected for the reasons that have been enumerated in other sections of this chapter: the availability of records and its inclusion of periods of peace as well as periods of great conflict.

Furthermore, during this period, there were only four presidents of the council: Harrach, Daun, Lacy, and Hadik. Each of these men brought a different leadership style of the Habsburg army in the eighteenth century and, as a result of their relationships with other military leaders, Maria Theresa, and Joseph II, these four presidents presided over a wide variety of peacetime and wartime situations. For example, Harrach, though quite old during much of his tenure, stayed in the position far longer than his record, in the eyes of the occasional court observer, might have recommended. He was succeeded by Daun and, after his death, the much-younger Lacy—Daun died just shy of age 61 and Lacy was twenty years younger—took over the reins. Lacy was the
son of Irish immigrants and born in Russia to a field marshal that gained notoriety serving Peter the Great during the Great Northern War and he brought a different energy to the position, as well as a different background. The successor to Lacy was Andreas Hadik, a Hungarian nobleman that fought in most of the Habsburg’s wars in the eighteenth century as a hussar. Included on Hadik’s resume was his infamous deep raid of Prussia, leading to the capture and ransom of the Prussian capital, Berlin, early in the Seven Years’ War for some 300,000 thalers (and, reportedly, two dozen pairs of women’s gloves stamped with the city’s crest), “for he wished to make a present of them to the Empress.” Hadik was in charge of a force of some 5,000 hussars and, as Frederick the Great’s armies marched to the south, he took advantage of a weakness in the Prussian defenses and exploited it.

Desertion cases and the reports generated by military officials regarding desertion can be broken down into several distinct categories. In one category, correspondence from unit commanders regarding deserters could come in response to a demand signal from a higher authority for information on a unit’s status. An example of this category can be found in the large reports cited in the case studies of Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, which came in response to requests for status updates from units. In another category of report, military officials or unit commanders would solicit advice and guidance from a higher authority to seek clarifications for a particular case or cases. The materials used in this section cover a wide range of topics and show that the Hofkriegsrat fulfilled a dual role as 1) the leading military authority in the land and 2) the intermediary between military action and civil authority. In doing so, this institution made actionable the directives of the civil authorities and provided military guidance to the state that it served.

---

359 Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 183.
1. Analysis and Explanation of the Trends in the Primary Sources

This section provides a basic analysis of the general subject matter of correspondence dealt with by the Hofkriegsrat. As a sample set, this section uses the collected Hofkriegsrat correspondence preserved in the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv and it focuses specifically on the years 1753 through the middle of 1772. It is limited by the organizational system used by the council and the archive. So while chronologically this period covers almost twenty years, the correspondence is more scattered and is not nearly as comprehensive as implied by the range. As previously mentioned, the years 1762 to 1766 did not use any rubric organization system, so no samples were pulled from that period. To compensate for this, the sample set was expanded to include a random selection of documents from the years after 1772, as far forward as 1780: with the exception of 1779, which had no desertion-marked files at all to use.\(^{360}\)

In total, 167 correspondence files from 1753 to 1780 were analyzed for their content, out of an available total of 285 correspondence files for that period. These 167 files were assigned to one of ten separate categories: 1) General inquiries regarding punishment or disposition of deserters, 2) Inquiries regarding punishment or disposition of specific deserters, 3) General inquiries regarding procedures for handling deserters, 4) Inquiries regarding the procedures for handling specific deserters, 5) Requests for information regarding general pardons, 6) Requests for pardons for specific deserters, 7) Correspondence and inquiries regarding deserter exchange protocols and matters pertaining to foreign entities, 8) Information or inquiries regarding the desertion and Invalid cordon, 9) General military administrative matters regarding desertion and Hungary, and 10) All other military, administrative, and disciplinary-related inquiries from subordinate commands regarding desertion. To avoid confusion when a particular file contained

\(^{360}\) As a bookend year, 1780 provides excellent information on the handling of the military in the aftermath of the War of Bavarian Succession (1778-1779). Unfortunately, a number of documents marked as relating to desertion were (at an unknown point) damaged by moisture and mold, rendering them imperfect and not wholly usable: in particular, documents 1780-14-216 and 1780-14-231 from the carton marked ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1272 1780 9/186-16/346.
pieces of correspondence related to more than one category, designations were assigned to the correspondence file based on what was considered the most important topic—both in the eyes of the document creators and in the opinion of the members of the Hofkriegsrat staff that read and summarized each piece of writing.

The ten designations used are by no means comprehensive or entirely determinative of the content of each individual file. Many of the files selected could readily be placed into two (or more) categories. The dividing line in such cases was two-fold. What was the impetus for the person to write to the Hofkriegsrat on that occasion? And, while potentially being asked for guidance or information regarding two or more categories, which category was seen as the most important by the people receiving the letters, reports, and memoranda? As an example of this process at work, there is file number 1769-27-167. This file regards dealing with the Polish state and dealing with cross-border desertion situations—which could place it in Category 7—while also devoting a fair amount of space to dealing with a specific deserter by the name of Krokowsky—which could place the file in Category 3. In the end, the focus of the correspondence appeared to be needing guidance with the cross-border aspects of desertion, so that filed was binned under Category 7 rather than Category 3.361

The correspondence broke down into the ten categories in the following amounts. Each total is also presented as a percentage of the 167 selected correspondence files.

Category 1 (Gen. punishments) = 8 (4.8%)
Category 2 (Spec. punishments) = 26 (15.5%)
Category 3 (Gen. procedures) = 14 (8.4%)
Category 4 (Spec. procedures) = 12 (7.2%)
Category 5 (General pardons) = 7 (4.2%)
Category 6 (Specific pardons) = 3 (1.8%)
Category 7 (Exchange & foreign issues) = 50 (29.9%)
Category 8 (Cordon issues) = 29 (17.4%)
Category 9 (Hungarian issues) = 6 (3.6%)
Category 10 (Other, miscellaneous issues) = 12 (7.2%)

---

As the list shows, no single category provided a majority of the files; the single largest concentration of files was Category 7 (Exchange, Cross-border, and International Issues) with 50 pieces for 29.9% of the total. However, a group of three categories (specific punishment inquiries, exchange & foreign issues, cordon issues) made up 62.8% of the correspondence from the selected period. Correspondence relating to the exchange of deserters with other states included both those that discussed specific desertion cases, as well as those that contained general correspondence between senior Habsburg military officials and foreign states was by far the most expansive group. A large number of the files in this category regarded negotiations for the formation of legal exchange procedures (Deserteurs Cartel) and deals: for example, extensive correspondence went back and forth across the border regarding the details of a desertion agreement between the Hofkriegsrat and the state of Poland. A second batch of correspondence regarding a Deserteurs Cartel with neighboring Electoral Bavaria represented another major part of the selected correspondence for the period.

It is not surprising that the correspondence relating to the administration of the Invalid and Deserteurs Cordon represented the second largest category in this analysis, as the cordons were an important part of the Hofkriegsrat’s purview: providing security, an extra layer of protection, and an apparatus for controlling deserters beyond the reach of other unit commanders. The Cordons saw soldiers both near and away from the borders, including those who were (for various reasons) no longer able to serve on the front line, acting as internal security forces. Correspondence in this category often focused on matters common to eighteenth-century military units across Europe. The inadequacy of supplies given, the need for more soldiers to serve in the units, and letters about the shuffling of officers and staff topped list of items regarding the

\[362\] For example, see ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1127 1776 19/281-20/200 file 1776-19-316; or ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1060 1775 19/301-23/233 files 1775-20-39, 1775-20-42, 1775-20-48.

\[363\] For example, see ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588 1767 11/Jan/273-14/Dez, file 1767-14-(05)-275 or ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #897 1772 19/206-23/270 file 1772-20-42.
cordons brought to the attention of the council from the 1750s through the 1770s.\footnote{364} Though strong discipline was an integral part of maintaining unit integrity outside of the field of battle, an argument expounded by Prussia’s infamous King Frederick the Great, the Invalidene and Deserteurs Cordons represented one of the most-proactive efforts by the Habsburg Monarchy to contain, control, and, perhaps a bit naively, prevent acts of desertion.\footnote{365}

The third largest group of letters and files was the one relating to specific cases and incidences of desertion. Given that the largest correspondence groups regard large-scale policy issues—relating to foreign policy and domestic administration—it is not wholly surprising that correspondence that the next largest group of desertion files focused on the special circumstances and guidance necessary to deal with actual incidences of desertion. As found in the earlier chapters’ case studies of regimental muster lists and desertion reports (See Chapter 2 and Chapter 3), there were common themes and trends to be discerned in the motivations behind each case of desertion: peer pressure from other soldiers, distaste for serving in the army, drunkenness, or homesickness. A look at the topics covered in these 26 files show that, in spite of these common military service themes, the individual nature of each desertion oftentimes necessitated intervention or guidance of higher authorities. As many of those files contained preliminary lower-level correspondence, we can infer that requests could work their way up the chain of command through regimental commanders and the staffs of the relevant General Commando.

Whether it was 1) clarifications regarding the disposition of goods confiscated from a deserter, 2) the roles played by individuals when groups deserted, or 3) the severity of a punishment to be

\footnote{364} For example, see ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588 1767 11/Jan/273-14/Dez files 1767-14-(06)-400 and 1767-14-(09)-202; or ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #686 1769 26/46-30/395 file 1769-27-214.

\footnote{365} Regarding Frederick the Great, Geoffrey Parker used the story of Hadik’s raid on Berlin in 1757 to illuminate Frederick’s mentality regarding discipline, stating: “[Even after the Hadik raid], Frederick the Great refused to follow suit. Instead, obsessed by the fear that his expensively trained infantry would seize every available opportunity to desert, he surrounded his camps with fences, avoided marches through forests, and even forbore to send out scouting parties more than 200 metres ahead of the army for fear that his men would run away.” Parker, \textit{The military revolution}, 150.
administered, regimental and mid-level commanders often turned to the war council for guidance and leadership, as well as adjudication when there were differences at the local level.

Inquiries regarding general procedures for dealing with desertion were the fourth largest file group in the sample. This category included those instances where an individual case may have caused the discussion, potentially spurring the need for correspondence, but where the purpose was to clarify the general applicability of a rule. These 14 files represented 8.4% of the total. In a related vein, Category 1 files asked for information on the general execution of punishment decrees—such as the extent of a confiscation penalty or the suitability of choosing one punishment over another (and under which circumstances). Category 1 represented another 4.8% of the selected sample. On the other side of the scale, Category 4 inquiries regarding the most appropriate procedures rooted in specific cases—or directly relating to a specific/finite set of circumstances—comprised 7.2% of the sample set. In these types of correspondence, a specific unit commander would ask for guidance about the specific circumstances of a soldier’s (or group of soldiers’) desertion.

Two separate catchall categories provided the remaining 10.8% (18 pieces) of correspondence in this sample set. As the previous chapters of “In Service to the State” have shown in concurrence with the majority of scholarship, the Habsburg Monarchy of the eighteenth century did not generally have uniform relationships with each of its constituent parts. The strength of the Monarchy and the methods through which it exerted power over its subjects could vary greatly due to the differing nature of its constitutional and dynastic relationships with each region. Hungary, as one of the largest parts of the Monarchy, was always a special case and, given its history of rebellious behavior and the strength of its estates, was sometimes treated with comparative kid gloves. Particularly for this analysis, this was oftentimes made quite clear with the handling of military administrative matters. Whether it was the necessary deal-making to secure the availability of Hungarian troops to fight the Prussians during the War of Austrian
Succession or the Seven Years’ War or the handling of desertion matters, these circumstances influenced the decision to move the Hungarian-related correspondence—3.6% (6 pieces) of the sample—into a separate category for review by the Hofkriegsrat, as well as for the purposes of this analytical sample.\footnote{366 For more information on the history of Hungary and its sometimes contentious relationship with the Habsburg Monarchy, see Peter F. Sugar, Péter Hanák, and Tibor Frank, eds., \textit{A History of Hungary} (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990). In particular, there are the contributions of Horst Haselsteiner, “Cooperation and Confrontation between Rulers and the Noble Estates, 1711-1790,” 138-173 and George Barany, “The Age of Royal Absolutism, 1790-1848,” 174-208).}

The final catchall category of correspondence, Category 10, is the category for various miscellaneous administrative decisions and inquiries. This category provides a fair amount of insight into the management of an eighteenth-century military service through a number of interesting stories. For example, one file from May 1760 delves into the issues of providing provisions to prisoners—some of whom were deserters—at the prison fortress of Ölmütz.\footnote{See ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #415 1760 32/Jul-60/Feb, 1760-48-(05)-588. Ölmütz is modern-day capital of the province of Moravia in the eastern part of the Czech Republic.}

Another file from 1767 dealt with theft and the confiscation of uniform goods and accessories, as well as the disposition of such goods after confiscation.\footnote{See ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588 1767 11/Jan/273-14/Dez, files 1767-14-(09)-111, 1767-14-(09)-245, 1767-14-(09)-670, and 1767-14-(12)-299.}

A trio of files from the middle of 1773 dealt with matters specific to the \textit{General Commando} in Brussels: the Niederländisches General Commando.\footnote{See ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #953 1773 19/186-23/237, files 1773-20-72, 1773-20-103, and 1773-20-119. Specifically, document number 1773-20-72 addresses the amounts to be dispensed for pensions for those that served in the capacity of cordon duty.}

Much of what was encompassed by this miscellaneous category was financial in nature. An eighteenth century army was oftentimes more susceptible to ups-and-downs of funding support than it was to the deprivations of its stated enemies.\footnote{For more information on the role of finance in the governance and society of the early modern Habsburg Monarchy see Dickson, \textit{Finance and Government under Maria Theresia 1740-1780} (1987). Michael Hochedlinger provides further insight into the nature of military finance and the Habsburg state economy during the middle of the eighteenth century. See Hochedlinger, \textit{Austria’s Wars of Emergence}, 280-288.}

Out of the sample set, correspondence directly relating to the granting of pardons, whether in response to 1) a direct request for an individual or discrete group of soldiers or 2) as
part-and-parcel of a General Pardon, represented only a combined 6%: 4.2% (7 pieces) regarding
general pardons and 1.8% (3 pieces) regarding specific requests for a pardoning or exemption
from certain desertion-related punishments. With the exception of the category devoted to
Hungarian desertion-related issues, files and correspondence regarding pardons ranked at the
bottom of the count.

2. The Hofkriegsrat and Desertion

While an analysis of the in- and outflow of correspondence shows how frequently a topic
may have been discussed, it does not provide any insight into the import of the conversations; the
analysis is an objective look at a potentially subjective discussion of issues. The following
section examines specific files from the sample set to show how issues were broached to the
Hofkriegsrat and, where available, what guidance the Hofkriegsrat provided.

A correspondence file from March 1770 speaks to the case of a single deserter named
Joseph Rögler. Gemeiner (Private) Rögler was born in Vienna, where he grew up, and in 1770
served in the Obrist-Esquadron of the Zweybrück Dragoon Regiment. In a letter dated March 13,
1770, the colonel of the regiment wrote to his superior in Prague asking for guidance regarding
this case and, not being able to provide a specific answer, the letter was forwarded to the
Hofkriegsrat for consideration on March 17th. Gemeiner Rögler, as a result of an unexplained
relationship with a “liederlich Weibs=Person”, deserted and fled to Saxony.371 After fleeing to
Saxony, Rögler moved on to other pursuits and, after some undisclosed amount of time, was
found as a “Peruquier zu Berlin in Condition.”372 Joseph Rögler’s mother, a widow by the name

371 Gemeiner Rögler is also later referred to as a “liederlichen Weibelmensch.”
372 “Peruquier” is a reference to a wigmaker, or, in the parlance of the times, a maker of perukes.
of Maria Anna Rögler, managed to contact the regiment’s colonel to ask for his intervention or mediation on behalf of her son with a proposal. The proposal, as reported in the file, was:

Euer Excellenz und…Hohes General Militar Commando geruhen dahero die Sach in gnädige Erwegung zu nehmen, und meine gehorsamste Anfrag, ob erwehnter Deserteur Rögler al sein ohndem zu allerhöchsten Herrendiensten untauglicher Mensch gegen [Ertrag] 30. Ducatten der Militarl: Pflicht entlaßen werden dürfe?

In exchange for 30 ducats to pay for the hiring of another soldier—“zu Stellung eines anderen diensttauglichen Manns”—the Habsburg military administration would give Joseph Rögler an “unfit to serve” designation to relieve him of service and, presumably, provide a possible reason to lessen or eliminate any potential penalties that he could face for having deserted Habsburg service.\(^{373}\) In a notation folio dated March 28, 1770, the administrative workers summarized these circumstances for the Hofkriegsrat and asked that a ruling be passed along to the Zweybrück Regiment.

A correspondence cataloged from early 1768 speaks of the desertion cases of two individuals, brothers by the name of Anton and Johann Neüzner. The author is concerned with and specifically inquires about whether or not these two men should be sent to the Moltke Regiment or to the Ölmutz district administrative headquarters.\(^{374}\) In another correspondence file from March 15\(^{th}\), 1770, a letter from a commander in the city Znaym (Znojmo, modern-day Czech Republic) serving with the *General FeldMarschall Gr[af] Lacy Infanterie Regiment* reported on the condition and story of two deserters: a *Corporal* Ludwig Kümmel, who the report stated was originally born in the land of Pfaltz, and a *Gemeiner* by the name of Andreas (T)rinckfals. In the words of the reporting officer, Kümmel and “sein Schwieger Sohn” Trinckfals went on a 2-month furlough starting in September of the previous year supposedly to the home of Trinckfals in Purchheim, located in Oberösterreich. Rather than abide by the terms of their furlough, the two at some point ‘showed their disloyalty’ to the army by instead running

\(^{373}\) ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #738, 1770-20-59, innermost letter.

\(^{374}\) See ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #633, 1768-14-02-517.
off to Bavaria. Both of their wives, their combined six children, and their effects were supposed to follow them to Bavaria and, along the way, “they” were taken into custody and brought to the city of Linz. For the General Commando and the Hofkriegsrat, the reporting officer provided an itemized list of the confiscated goods and possessions, breaking down both into the types of cash (“Anbaaren Geld”) and personal effects (“An Effecten”) for their information. In total, the confiscated goods and possessions had an estimated worth of 77 florins and 15 kreuzer. The questions and notations from the Hofkriegsrat went on to deal with what to do with the women and children in this case, as the local authorities were saddled with the responsibility of providing provisions, shelter, and care to these persons—and importantly, in their eyes, the costs of such “aerarial Verpflegung” would continue to add until a final decision was reached regarding the disposition of the named parties. Given the ongoing expense, they turned to the Hofkriegsrat to provide a timely response.

1770 also saw correspondence to the Hofkriegsrat regarding two deserters in Wallachia and the role of local farmers and residents in influencing (Debauchanten) soldiers to desert. As was laid out in the previous chapters and the works of other military historians, while soldiers were capable of making decisions regarding self-preservation (i.e. whether to take a bounty, whether to desert or not, etc.), many soldiers of the lower ranks were illiterate and oftentimes lacking in the education necessary to formally advocate for themselves when in trouble. Therefore, those soldiers had to rely upon officers, chaplains, or other personal benefactors to intercede on their behalf—that was, of course, if they had such a person to advocate for them, as

375 For the context of the text, it is not specifically spelled out how many of the actors in this story are to be encompassed by “they.” The full text reads: “…Corporal Ludwig Kümmel, und sein SchwiegerSohn Gem(einer) Andreas Trinckfals unteren 1ten Sept a: c: auf 2 Monath mit Urlaub in das Heimath des Trinckfals unter das Land-Gericht Kirchheim gehörig sogenannte [...] Güttel ins Ö:Öest(erreich) abgegangen, beede meineydig in das Baÿerische davon desertiret, ihre 2 Weiber, 6 Kinder aber, welche dennen Männer(en) mit Sack, und Pack dahin nachfahren wolten, an der Gräntz handvest gemacht, nacher Lintz, und sodann weiters anhero zuruck transportiret worden.” See KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #738, 1770-20-73, second inclusion.

376 For the entire story, see ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #738, 1770-20-73.

377 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #738, 1770-20-54.
not everyone had a widowed mother like the aforementioned Joseph Rögler. This led to cases where the status or rank of a deserter mattered less than the status and rank of his benefactor. For example, contained within a correspondence file dating to January 1770, there is the case of a deserter named Alexander Schmidt that served in the Wiedischen Infanterie Regiment. In a letter addressed directly to the “Allernädigste Kaÿserin Königin und Frau Frau” [directly to the Empress, Maria Theresa], the deserter’s father, a Hauptmann by the name of Heinrich Schmidt, appealed for clemency for the son’s transgressions and crime. According to the letter, the younger Schmidt had deserted from his unit and headed to Augsburg. He spent at least 8 months away from his unit and, according to the father, he had returned willingly and was “again in the Monarch’s service.” In the words of his father: “Zumahlen er aber sich dadurch straff-fällig gemacht daß er seine gehabte Urlaub bis in die 8 Monath lang überschritten hat, und derowegen allbereits bey dem Löbl: Wiedischen [Regiment] als De[s]erteur in Abgang wird gebracht worden seyn.”

In spite of his son’s transgressions, which could have been punished with severe corporal punishment, Hauptmann Schmidt appealed directly to the Empress and begged for clemency and a pardon for his son, stating:


Vor welche allerhöchste Gnade und Barmhertzigkeits Ubung, ich Gott im Himmel, nebst den armen [m]einigen um allereicheste Belohnung unablässig [anrutschen] werde.378

Hauptmann Schmidt’s letter was wrapped by the Hofkriegsrat in an outer notation folio containing its summation and important questions regarding the matter, as well as follow-up instructions. In particular, to render a decision as to whether or not the younger Schmidt should

---

378 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #738, 1770-20-26, interior correspondence piece.
be held liable for greater punishment, there was the consideration as to whether or not the Hauptmann’s word could be fully trusted. As the father of the accused, it mattered to the authorities whether he was truly repentant for Alexander’s decision, abhorrent of his son’s actions, and genuinely looking to protect him. Or, had Hauptmann Schmidt helped his son evade service, provided material support to his son while he was away from his unit, and, now faced with punishment, looked to use his reputation and position to help spare his son? On top of the circumstances surrounding his disappearance from and return to his unit, there was the question of Alexander Schmidt, his reputation, and, quite importantly, his record with the Wiedischen Infanterie Regiment. The Hofkriegsrat wrote back to the Moravian General Commando to inquire the following: “Da nun zu wissen notwendig ist, ob nicht vielleicht dieser Alexander Schmid außer der Desertion [sich] noch eines anderweitige schweren Verbrechen dem R[egiment] schuldig gemacht habe.”379 Presumably Schmidt’s character and potential criminal or administrative records could influence how he would be treated for the act of desertion in this case. Unfortunately for the record, it is not readily clear whether or not the Hofkriegsrat ever received clarification to its inquiry.

3. The Hofkriegsrat, Desertion, and Neighboring States

The Hofkriegsrat’s purview regarding desertion extended well beyond the borders of the Habsburg Monarchy and governed the interactions that officers had with foreign deserters, as well as Habsburg deserters returned by foreign entities. Referred to in the previous quantitative analysis of the Hofkriegsrat’s correspondence, files referring to these issues were the most common, with topics ranging from: the negotiations necessary to create or maintain a desertion Cartel to the specific conditions of incidences of prisoner exchanges and the need to extract

379 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #738, 1770-20-26.
military intelligence from those individuals. For example, several files of correspondence to the Hofkriegsrat from the records of 1771 dealt specifically with the issue of groups of Habsburg deserters returned from Russian captivity. In mid-1771, a Russian general by the name of (Ludovics) extradited a number of deserters and captives from Wallachia (Wallacheý) to Siebenbürgen. One of the items included in the correspondence was a set of the questions to be used for debriefing or interrogating the soldiers that had crossed the border. Of particular importance, in a debriefing sense, was the ability of these soldiers to provide intelligence on the state of the Russian military and political system. Correspondence from the Hofkriegsrat instructed officials to ask questions such as the following: “Wie es in der Wallachey aussehe?” or “In was für einen Standt die Russischen Trouppen sich befänden?” Soldiers deserting across the border into another state provided an opportunity to garner insight into the workings and status of the neighboring military. Other questions ran more along the lines of an interrogation, focusing on how much information that soldier could provide regarding the other deserters or captured Habsburg soldiers in Russian captivity—or, of potentially greater concern, any Habsburg deserters serving in the Russian army. Officials asked: “Ob ausser ihnen noch mehrere K:K: [Kaiserlich-Königlich, i.e. Habsburg] deserteurs unter denen Russen diensten? Sollten sie namentlich, und die Regimenter zu welchen sie gehörten anzeigen?” Other portions of the questioning focused on the processes behind the prisoner exchange, in particular how one specific soldier came to be traded or released instead of another soldier: “Warum man dann nur sie herüber geschicket, und die übrigen bey behalten habe?” Subsequent correspondence back to the Hofkriegsrat from the Siebenbürgen General Kommando in Hermannstadt, sent on July 24, 1771 and received on August 3, asked for clarification and further information regarding the

---

380 The correspondence on file with the Hofkriegsrat for this incident dates from May 24, 1771.
381 In response to the last question—why certain soldiers were sent home and others not—the files provides the following: “…dieß wüßten sie nicht, hätten aber gehört, d(as) [man] auch die übrigen ausliefern würde.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #811 1771 19/211-23/334, 1771-20-97, 5.
disposition of the group of deserters and prisoners—ranging from the circumstances necessary for a deserter to incur the death penalty (“Todes-Straf”) to what to do with those that did not rise to the level of the death penalty.  

The Hofkriegsrat, often working in close relation with the Hofkanzlei and the sitting monarch, would also provide advice to local commanders and officials regarding the procedures for dealing with deserters in foreign lands. Whether it was providing guidance for the execution of cross-border communication or the development of an agreement with a foreign power, councilors received and responded to correspondence from the field. The border with Russia was the site of other deserter exchanges in 1771 and the generals along the border kept the Hofkriegsrat apprised throughout these developments. In a file related to the above-cited incident of May 1771, correspondence crisscrossed the Habsburg Monarchy as ‘General Major Baron v. Mathesen’ received 25 deserters from a Russian general, ‘FeldMarschall Grafen v. Romanzow.’ What makes this particular deserter return noteworthy was what the Russian side received in return for the 25 deserters. In return for sending these deserters back, Russia received one officer—a general by the name of “Ludovits”—and a sum of money equivalent to 85 rubles and 84 kopeks “for the lodging and provisions” of the deserters. The deserters came from eight

---

382 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #811 1771 19/211-23/334, 1771-20-156, 3.
383 For example, two correspondence files from the end of 1769 and the early part of 1770 show a discussion between member of the Hofkriegsrat and border commanders regarding how to deal with the “Polish Confederation” to ensure the proper exchange of deserters. See ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #738 1770-20-5 and 1770-20-7.
different Habsburg units and were captured over a period from December 1770 to March 1771: 12 deserters from the Büllow regiment, 2 from the Moltke, 1 from Hildburgshausen, 1 from the Torgacs regiment, 1 from Gyulay, 3 from the Ersten Garnisons Regiment, 4 from Anspach, and 1 from the Kalnocky regiment.386

From correspondence in 1771, we are also introduced into an ongoing issue of dealing directly with foreign governments in regards to the transfer and return of deserters. In mid-1771 the Hofkriegsrat found itself going back and forth with the ducal government of Parma in regards to a group of 69 “Ausreissern” found to be in service of the Parmese military. Of particular interest was the issue of money—as seen in the case of the Russian prisoner exchange—to deal with: the expenses incurred in caring for soldiers, reimbursing any parties involved in the process for debts incurred by the soldiers, and, in some cases, repaying the costs of transporting any soldiers back to where they belong.387

The disappearance of Habsburg soldiers and the issues attendant to securing their return were by far not the only issues faced by the Hofkriegsrat regarding desertion. Hofkriegsrat correspondence from 1771 shows that the administrative body dealt with requests regarding the standing of foreign deserters, including those claim sanctuary or protection in the Habsburg Monarchy.388

4. The Hofkriegsrat and General Pardons

Habsburg civil and military administrators had numerous potential tools at their disposal to both prevent desertion and ameliorate its effects. A fair number of ‘preventative’ measures regarded the manners in which officers and administrators deployed troops during marches and

387 See ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #811 1771 19/211-23/334, 1771-20-96.
388 See ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #811 1771 19/211-23/334, 1771-20-95.
organized them while in bivouac or garrison—as shown in the infantry case studies of Chapter 2 and the dragoon case studies in Chapter 3. Beyond the authority of each garrison administrator or unit commander to control the movements of the soldiers under him, through formation control or the deployment of guard patrols, desertion prevention and control were also parts of both the military and civil administrations.

A common tool at the Monarchy’s disposal was the use of general pardons—official proclamations that laid out terms under which a deserting soldier could return to the fold without potentially facing the full weight of the Monarchy’s justice. While correspondence regarding general pardons was not the most common category of paperwork categorized under the desertion rubrics of the Kriegsarchiv during this period, the general pardon played an important role in managing desertion in the eighteenth century. The following section looks at the text of several of these proclamations and the specific language used to answer questions regarding the significance of these proclamations. For example, were they motivated by a desire to increase the number of available soldiers by decreasing the number of soldiers that had run away, or were there other discernible factors at play that could speak to shifting views of civil, social, or military discipline in the eighteenth century?

In the middle of 1759, as the Habsburg continued their struggle against the Prussians, they had the aid of the Russians and Swedish in attempting to control the military operations of Frederick the Great. By June 1759, the Russians had advanced as far as the Oder River and on their way to defeating a Prussian force at Kay in on July 23, before having a 20,000-man force of Austrians join them and defeat Frederick’s Prussian army at Kunersdorf.389 Regarding military matters on the homefront, on June 30, 1759, in the name of Empress Maria Theresa and over the signature of then-President of the Hofkriegsrat Joseph Graf von Harrach and Wilhelm Graf von Neipperg, the Hofkriegsrat issued a pardon to the Monarchy to those that:

---

Soldiers that returned to service would have their mistakes and disloyalty forgiven if they returned to Habsburg service: “begangener Fehler und Meineid ohne einiger Bestraf-und Ahndung, oder Nachtheil ihrer Ehren und guten Leymuts allergnädigst vergeben, nachgesehen, vergessen, und aufgehoben haben.” While pardons, both general and specific might be decreed by the monarch and endorsed by the Hofkriegsrat to encourage the return of deserters, that did not mean that there were not potential issues for returning deserters when they came back. The terms of this 1759 were more complicated than the above statement implies, as it was not as simple as ‘come back and all is forgiven’ for deserters. For example, while the June 1759 decree offered the possibility of “merciful forgiveness” to a deserter, there were limits. First, the soldier needed to return on his own volition—“freywillig zurück kehren”—rather than being captured and turned in: a feat made all the more difficult given the Monarchy’s use of defensive cordons, bounty hunters, and the ability to deputize subjects for the purposes of expanding the dragnet, as well as incentivizing the whole process with rewards for the capture of deserters. To take advantage of the general pardon, soldiers needed to return within 6 weeks of the publication of the decree and, furthermore, needed to return to the unit in which they had been serving at the time of their desertion.390 Once a soldier was in the custody of the military, whether as a result of having turned himself in or having been captured, local commanders sought advice from their chain of command as to the disposition of the deserters. Should they return them to their units, hold on to them, or send them someplace else, such as one of the prison fortresses? In these cases, commanders turned to the Hofkriegsrat for clarification regarding the issuance of general pardons

390 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #402 1759 30-48/Apr, 1759-36-(06)-299.
and it was up to the council to provide the necessary information, guidance, and clarifications to the subordinate commands.391

Anti-desertion decrees and edicts often included language speaking to the penalties for desertion. For example, the June 1759 decree states that any soldier that persisted in his desertion from service would suffer the full consequences available under the Articles of War: penalties to be applied “with all stridency, without any relief and clemency.”392 There was also the distinct possibility that one general pardon—such as a 1767 general pardon for emigrants of the “gesammten teutsch- und hungarischen Erblandn”—would not apply to all classes of persons fleeing the Monarchy’s bounds and, in this case, military deserters were treated as a separate class from those merely considered to be emigrants.393 Deserters, as explained earlier in Chapters 1, 2, and 3, were liable for the possibility of being captured by persons seeking the bounties that were offered for their return, as well as by the cordon forces operated by the Habsburgs. When non-military forces captured deserters, whether only suspected or confirmed, it was common practice to offer the capturer a bounty for the deserter, as well as to provide reimbursement for some of the expenses engendered in capturing, feeding, and transporting a deserter. In a 1768 file of correspondence, the Hofkriegsrat provided instructions in response to inquiries regarding just how many Kreuzer (unit of currency) could be paid out for a deserter captured in part of the Monarchy far away from his home unit: “…und was für eine Ätzung seine attrapirten in dene n deutschen Erblanden zugeben seye, deren [Regiment] in Hungarn liegen?”394 In another case, the Hofkriegsrat forwarded instructions from a December 31st, 1768 letter signed by Maria Theresa to  

391 In one particular case from 1768, a Baron von Zorn wrote to his superior, Marquis von Bournonville, seeking guidance after his unit had 14 deserters to deal with. On April 14, 1768, Bournonville did not have an answer for von Zorn, so the correspondence was forwarded along with the following note: “…bey gelegenheit des Lezthin publicirten General-Pardons gemeldten 14. Deserteurs eingeschicket worden um solches Einem Hochhöhl[ichen] Kay[serlich]-Königs[lích] Hof-Kriegs-Rath zur weiter gnädigen Decision einzusenden. Ich solle mich also disem anverlangen fügen, und gewärtige gehorst, was in sachen entschlossen werden wolle.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 0633 1768, 1768-14-(04)-528.
392 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #402 1759 30-48/Apr, 1759-36-(06)-299.
393 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588 1767 11/Jan/273-14/Dez, 1767-14-(12)-552.
394 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #633 1768 13/Jan-18/Mar/331, 1768-14-(02)-363.
the Hungarian General Commando, wherein she commended an unnamed Hungarian resident of the town of Felegyhaza for having captured a deserter. In compensation for the costs incurred by the farmer to pay for the maintenance and care of the deserter until he could be turned over to the military authorities, Maria Theresa ordered a payment of 24 Kreuzer. It is also worth noting that, in the eyes of the Habsburg administration, it was also a serious offense for a civilian to hide the presence of a deserter or to provide material aid to a deserter. Decrees relating to desertion empowered officials to punish those that helped deserters avoid capture.

On top of the possibility of capture, execution, imprisonment, hard labor, and various degrees of corporal punishment—ranging from the mild to the severe and potentially deadly—deserters and those that aided them could have their possessions and/or wealth confiscated by the civil or military authorities. When pardons were issued, local commanders wrote to the Hofkriegsrat for clarification of specific circumstances and their applicability to these administrative decisions. For example, in a file from 1761, Maria Theresa and the Hofkriegsrat responded to an inquiry regarding the applicability of confiscation punishments to returning deserters: “Wie es mit dem Vermögen der revertirenden Deserteurs zu halten, auch ob in denen publicirenden General=Pardons die Nachsicht der Confiscations=Straffe zu (Versprechen) seye?” Unfortunately for the record, it is not readily clear whether or not Maria Theresa or the Hofkriegsrat ever received clarification to its inquiry.

The focus on the confiscation of goods and personal property from deserters indicates that, in dealing with deserters, there was always concern for more than the actual manpower represented by the person. Standing armies of the eighteenth century (or any century for that matter) invested great amounts of effort and money into the training and recruitment of a soldier,

---

395 “Felegyhaza” is likely a reference to a town north of Szeged, in the central/southern part of modern-day Hungary.
396 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #686, 1769-27-2, interior letter.
397 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #428, 1761-36-(11)-300, corner notation of interior rear file cover.
as well as vast sums of money into the outfitting of military units: food, uniforms, weapons, and the other accoutrements of war. In the cases of dragoon, hussar, or cavalrymen that desert, units were faced with the added concern (and expense) of dealing with horses. Horses were, in general, valuable and horses trained to work with cavalry even more valuable still. Their value inevitably created situations requiring the guidance and intervention of the Hofkriegsrat when dealing with deserters. Should men that take horses with them when deserting be punished to a greater extent as a result of their theft of a valuable resource? Conversely, should men that, upon receiving word of General Pardon, bring horses with them—be it a horse originally taken from a Habsburg regiment or one acquired from another source during the desertion period—be rewarded? Or, at a minimum, should they be punished to a lesser extent? In regards to those that brought horses from another service when returning to a Habsburg unit, as in a 1768 case dealing with horses from Poland, the Hofkriegsrat instructed the local commanders to be pragmatic in dealing with the situation. They were instructed to pay the soldier four ducats for any usable horse they brought (“mitgebrachte taugliche pferd”) out of the funds used for remounts and that the horse should be inspected and accepted.398

Regarding one of the pro-active actions taken by the Monarchy, it was common practice for the Habsburg Monarchy to deploy an “Invalid Cordon” or “Deserters Cordon.” These units were often composed of troops considered unfit for frontline duty—whether because of their quality or because their physical (dis)ability—and, though it was not unheard of, it was not as often that dragoon, cavalry, or hussar units could be assigned such duties. Responsibilities for soldiers assigned to Cordon Duty varied, but their general duty was to provide a general line of security within the borders, oftentimes tasked with catching runaways or deserters. Among the

398 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #633, 1768-14-(09)-484, outer file cover. In other cases, the Hofkriegsrat provided guidance as to how to deal with the varying circumstances, including those that would not result in a soldier being paid for the horse or, greater still, even reimbursed for the expenses of caring for the horse.
paperwork remaining in the files of the Hofkriegsrat, there are copies of reports submitted from cordon commanders to the council regarding their accounting and the soldiers assigned to them. For example, the colonel (Obrist, by the name of von Kirchheim) of the Cordon Mannschaft for the border of Moravia and Silesia received a gage (pay) of 118 florins and 24 ¾ kreuzer, while a general soldier received a combined pay and bread portion of 3 florins and 23 kreuzer. In other cases, commanders would report to superiors on the status of their cordon forces and their capabilities: for better and worse. Ever-enterprising commanders oftentimes seized the opportunity provided by such reports to: 1) point out whether or not they required greater resources, 2) more men (such as more officers), or 3) to lobby for the reassignment of an officer—to ensure the proper execution of their roles.

As the administrative body charged with caring for the Invaliden- and Deserteurs-Cordon, it was the Aulic War Council’s responsibility to respond to correspondence dealing with matters ranging from command structure to the payment of soldiers. In 1767, one file of correspondence with Count Neipperg related to a group of one hundred soldiers assigned to the “Invalidene Cordons” for the “prevention of desertion” that had received defective firearms from the armory: “feuer gewöhr ohne Bajoneten.” The report requested that this situation be rectified to keep the Cordon effective. If a soldier were to desert from his unit, escaping from any guards and patrols set up by his unit or garrison commander, he would still have to contend with the possibility of being caught by Cordon soldiers monitoring internal borders, transportation, and trade routes. In this way, Cordon soldiers also played valuable roles in “the prevention of

400 For example, see the correspondence contained in ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #633, 1768-14-(06)-427. For an example of the mixed correspondence type, with the general notes for multiple pieces of correspondence to go out over the signature of the Hofkriegsrat—including a discussion regarding the assignment of particular officers to cordon positions—see the notes contained in ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #686, 1769-27-214.
401 See ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #686, 1769-27-220 for questions regarding payments.
402 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588, 1767-14-(06)-91, outer file cover.
customs fraud, as well as [in] the disruption of the [illicit] export of goods. Without proper arms, cordon soldiers would not be able to properly fulfill their roles and it would take a level coordination between local forces, the Hofkriegsrat, and other relevant offices to ensure the completion of these tasks.

D. Conclusion

The history told by this combination of documents and secondary sources is by no means an exhaustive or comprehensive accounting of the Hofkriegsrat’s story, desertion, or that of the Habsburg standing army during the eighteenth century. It does not stand as a replacement to the many histories of the Habsburg military written by: authors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Habsburgs own General Staff members, and current authors. What these primary source-based stories provide is insight into areas of Habsburg history—desertion AND the Hofkriegsrat—that have been historiographically underserved and, in doing so, provide further insight into a burgeoning field: the relationship between states and the people that serve in their military forces: specifically in a transforming eighteenth-century state, as well as in states with standing armies in general.

Earlier in this chapter, it was asked whether senior Habsburg military officials pursued policies—in particular, the use of general pardons—in the Hofkriegsrat designed to increase the number of available soldiers by a) decreasing the number of deserters (as opposed to training new ones) or b) decreasing the number of deserters (as a result of a paradigm shift regarding military service). While this chapter makes no definitive claim regarding the motivations of these officials during this period, it is possible to discern elements of both sides. Desertion represented

403 “...daß die Cordons=Mannschaft nicht zu abhaltung der Desertion allein, sondern zugleich zur Verhütung der zoll Defraudationen, und dermalen vorzüglich zu Verhinderung der Früchten exportation gewidmet, und hiebeÿ allenthalben die Cavallerie Mannschaft nötig ist.” ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 0811 1771-20-205, 1.
a drain on the Habsburg military budget and capabilities: two things that they could the Monarchy could ill-afford during the mid-eighteenth century. If policies or initiatives could lessen the effects of desertion, they (within reason) bore consideration. On the other side, with the number of files bearing on logistical and financial questions (i.e. confiscations and pay) in mind, it is worth remembering that the death penalty was almost entirely absent from the Deserteure-marked files of the Hofkriegsrat. The death penalty was, in earlier periods and in contemporary European states, the standard punishment for desertion. Yet, by the period between the Seven Years’ War and the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars, there was an “appreciation that a trained soldier was a valuable resource, too valuable simply to be hanged by his own employer.”404 This is not a ringing endorsement for a paradigm shift in how soldiers were viewed in regards to their human worth, but it was part of a greater trend towards a more ‘humane’ disciplinary regime—though 1) ‘running the gauntlet’ would not be banned until 1855, 2) the general use of corporal punishment not until the 1860s, and 3) other states and militaries continued to view the use of the death penalty as a standard response for deterring and punishing deserters.405

A study of the Hofkriegsrat seen through the lens of the correspondence that it sent and received opens up new avenues and questions for scholars to answer in future studies regarding early modern military administration. For example, why was it that in 1781, a period when the yearly numbers of archived files ranged from 10 to 50 files and when the Monarchy did not find it itself engaged in a major land war with its neighbors, did the number of desertion-marked files spike to over 300 for only one year? Future historical inquiries by scholars into the social, political, and economic conditions of the post-Bavarian Succession war period might provide insight into this military phenomenon. What is to be learned from the other trends in the number

404 Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 135.
405 For references to the British perspective on desertion in the middle and later parts of the eighteenth century, with particular references to George Washington and General Jeffery Amherst, see Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service” (2007).
of archived files? In general, it means that there is no hard-and-fast correlation between amount of correspondence generated and the likelihood of battle.

This source-based analysis and narrative provides one extra piece of the military history puzzle that is necessary to understand the Habsburg Monarchy in the eighteenth century. In 1994, one historian stated after surveying two major works in the field: “This aspect [the Habsburg army as an integral pillar of the state] of Habsburg policy…is one of the least explored…. [These works] yield little on the army as an institution of state.” By framing within this argument, this chapter picks up on the scholar’s call that Michael Hochedlinger stated in 1999, defending the study of early modern military history, drawing on the influence of R.J.W. Evans’ works on the field:

The most urgent need now (to return to and stress Robert Evans’s hint) is for full-scale studies of the armed forces not as an executive instrument of foreign policy but as a multifaceted institution of the state, fully integrated into the administrative, social, economic, and intellectual context and thus perfectly inseparable from the civilian’s world.

Desertion, its prevention, and its mitigation were military problems that required the cooperation and intervention of civilian authorities on occasion. Desertion could be, and in many cases was, the result of a soldier’s fear of death in combat. During peacetime, however, a soldier’s decision to desert could be, and in just as many cases was, the result of a multifaceted individual, integrated within overlapping social, economic, and political systems. Whether it was to provide funding for necessary equipment for soldiers or to create a system that allowed for deserted soldiers to return, civilian and military officials cooperated—to varying degrees—to deal with desertion.

---

Chapter 5

Proclamations from the Habsburg Monarchy: Legal Structures, Political Frameworks, and “das schädliche Üibel der Desertion” During the Eighteenth Century

A. Introduction

The history of the Habsburg Monarchy’s standing army is replete with examples of the value of seemingly small gestures in efforts to control and prevent desertion. Soldiers of the eighteenth century “would desert…if not furnished with a tolerable standard of living, since to make a living, not to fight or die for a cause, was the chief aim of the professional soldier.”\(^{408}\) For those men looking to make a living as soldiers, that ‘tolerable standard of living’ might come from a promotion or the prestige inherent in serving with a particular type of unit. As contemporary observer Jacob Cognazzo noted, experience taught that: “it does a man good simply to give him a grenadier bearskin. Just because he is treated with a little distinction he is less inclined to desert, and he fights better.”\(^{409}\)

One could make an argument for including the use of legal vehicles and official declarations regarding desertion as part of these ‘small’ moves to control and prevent desertion: a mix of some carrots with many sticks to entice and encourage specific behavior patterns. The proclamations themselves may have only been as strong as the force placed behind them in the form of military administrative and legal structures, as well as in the form of ‘policing’ forces like the Cordon. Yet a look at the text of these documents and the circumstances under which they were created provides an excellent opportunity to evaluate the Habsburg Monarchy’s priorities


\(^{409}\) Cognazzo, *Freymüthige Beytrag*, 106. As cited in Duffy, *Army of Maria Theresa*, 64.
regarding military, administrative, organizational, and social issues during the eighteenth century: an epoch characterized, in the words of noted 20th-century historian Franz Szabo, by “two phases…the era of the army as state enterprise, and the era of the army as national enterprise.” Official proclamations regarding desertion, particularly those focused on the granting of pardons to those that had already deserted, often stated the reasons for such action and provide modern historians insight into the circumstances precipitating changes in desertion trends and policy—whether it be to grant a general pardon to those that had deserted or to inform the wider populace that the rewards for turning a deserter in had gone up.

This chapter will examine the text of proclamations that cover the following range of topics: from the granting of pardons to the posting of rewards for the capture of a deserter, as well as the notification of changes to Monarchy-wide desertion policy, such as the use of official passes for traveling or furloughed soldiers within the lands controlled by the Habsburgs. In doing so, it seeks to answer questions regarding the primary motives of the Habsburg monarchs to control and prevent desertion. To what extent was the Monarchy focused on capturing or returning deserters to decrease recruitment costs and/or bolster the number of available soldiers? Was the primary focus of anti-desertion efforts to punish those that broke the rules? Was the purpose didactic for the wider populace, regarding the potential rewards for complying with Monarchy’s decrees or the pitfalls of providing aid and comfort to those committing “das schaeddiche Uibel der Desertion”? This chapter is broken down into two major sections, starting with two sections examining the political and legal framework of the Habsburg Monarchy in the eighteenth century and the general structures under which the standing army operated. Within each of these major sections—political and legal frameworks—is an analysis of a selected sample set of Habsburg proclamations, decrees, ordinances, and papers from the

---

410 Szabo, Kaunitz, 258.
411 ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 240.18, 1779-06-17.
various archival collections of numerous Habsburg administrative bodies of the Monarchy preserved by the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv in Vienna, Austria. While this study is by no means a comprehensive accounting of the standing army in the eighteenth century, it is a necessary corrective to the gap in the historiography providing primary source-based research on the relationship between the army and the state.

**B. Die Politik: The Framework of the Habsburg Monarchy**

It was once argued by noted historian of the Habsburgs Grete von Klingenstein that it is too narrow a view to delineate studies of monarchies solely by the reigns of each individual monarch. The period encompassed from the end of the reign of Charles VI through that of his grandchildren in the eighteenth century could, to paraphrase T.C.W. Blanning’s interpretation of Klingenstein, “be regarded as a unity” and as the many arms of a single familial continuum. In the case of Maria Theresa and Joseph II, this is particularly salient—for a long period, the two acted as co-rulers generally handling different aspects of the Monarchy’s duties. It was not until her death that Joseph II began to fully rule the Monarchy in his right and according to his own will and whim. Maria Theresa, especially early in her reign, was likely to leave appointed persons in their positions far longer than her son believed that they should have been. Whether out of loyalty or belief in their abilities, some of these cases became readily apparent in the relative ineffectiveness of her choices to lead military affairs during the War of Austrian Succession, as well as early in the course of the Seven Years’ War. Maria Theresa was described as attached to a motto of ‘*Justitia et clementia*’ and known for her adherence to her Catholic faith.

---

In Jean Bérenger’s words, she was “anxious to ensure respect for the authority of the state she was creating, she proved opposed to tyranny and despotism in any form.”413

For Joseph II, his relationship with his mother provided an area of contention, with differing styles of political management being the crux of the arguments. In biographer Blanning’s opinion, this made Joseph more likely to “personalise the nature of political power…[and make him] too inclined to overlook the structural nature of his problem and to believe that a change of personnel at the top was what was needed to solve” the problem. There was no doubt that Joseph was an intelligent man, eminently familiar with some of the Monarchy’s deficiencies due to his early travels throughout the land. His parents also provided some of the best scholars available in the Monarchy. Yet his personality was one where “only his word of command was to be heard and all hands would have to jump to it.”414 One Count Zinzendorf was quoted in another biography, in regards to Joseph II’s view of his officials, as saying: “…it looks as though the emperor believes, or would like to make us believe, that he alone loves his country and knows what is right and that all his officials are knaves and fools.”415 For those that might have thought Joseph’s willingness to solve problems would lead to an expansion of the role of governance, there was some amount of disappointment. He was, in Blanning’s words, an “autocratic populist,” one “to esteem The People but not like people, nor would he be the last to fail to consider that those he esteemed might be worth consulting.” In response to a quote from a contemporary French ambassador that there was only one source of power in Austria, one historian sardonically noted that “[there] were several central organisations able and willing to offer advice, if Joseph had been prepared to listen.”416

413 Bérenger, History of the Habsburg Empire, 62.
414 Blanning, Joseph II, 51.
416 Blanning, Joseph II, 64.
The political framework of the reigns of Maria Theresa and Joseph II is often viewed or
categorized as ‘Enlightened Absolutism’ by political scientists and historians: a term meant to
balance two seemingly at-odds concepts that historians and political theorists saw in the
eighteenth century. On the one hand, a rising centralization or consolidation of authority within a
state’s specific regime is compared and contrasted with the use of guiding principles of rationality
and the support of certain (sometimes limited) freedoms of religion, speech, and art. Yet the
processes related to the expansion of central authority were not always smooth and, due in some
ways to the often unique constitutional relationships that bound the parts of the Habsburg
Monarchy together, often created major struggles for the Habsburgs. One need look no further
afIELD from Vienna than the lands of the Kingdom of Hungary, where multiple major rebellions
against Habsburg authority took place from the late seventeenth century through the middle parts
of the nineteenth century. Within the more ‘traditional’ lands of Habsburg domain, the case of
Tyrol provides a quote from 1790 from a nobleman (Count Lodron) which speaks to the
resistance to centralization:

What does it matter to the Tyroleans what is happening in Bohemia, Moravia and in other
states [Staaten]? The Tyroleans have their own laws, their own constitution, their own
country [Land]. It is merely accidental that their prince rules other states as well. It is
certainly flattering for them that they should have as their protector such a great monarch,
a ruler of so many provinces [Provinzen], but they do not wish to pay so dearly for this
honour, especially they do not wish to pay with the loss of their fundamental laws, which
are guaranteed by God and the Estates.417

Attempts to improve the efficiency and expanse of central institutions and the authority of the
Habsburgs—like the efforts of so many other monarChies in so many other states—faced (at
varying times and varying levels) resistance from the estates, church, the rising bourgeoisie, and
the populace at large. Some of the personal and policy goals of Maria Theresa and Joseph II,

577. As quoted in Blanning, Joseph II, 18.
from religion to taxation to military administration, were successful, while others faced immediate or overwhelming resistance leading to their abandonment.

Before Maria Theresa sat on the Habsburg throne, there were well-established concerns both within the Monarchy and its neighbors regarding the process of succession from her father to her. The star of Prussia had been rising since it arose from the ashes of the Thirty Years’ War and culminated with the elevation of the Hohenzollern dynasty from ‘mere’ electors, with the Habsburg Monarch’s blessing for Hohenzollern support during the War of Spanish Succession, to “King in Prussia” in 1701—a statement meant to appease the Kingdom of Poland, to which the Hohenzollerns owed partial fealty for its nominal control parts of Prussia and, as such, styled themselves “Kings of Prussia.”

**Figure 5-1**

Map depicting the partitioning of Poland at the end of the 1700s. Map courtesy of Paul Magocsi *Historical Atlas of Central Europe.*

---

418 This became a moot point when the territories in question were generally annexed by the Hohenzollerns as part of the First Partition of Poland in 1772.

The Prussian rise represented one of the greatest threats to the integrity of the Habsburg Monarchy near the end of Charles VI's reign: one that would become manifest soon after his death and his daughter’s assumption of the Habsburg throne. The Prussian threat—along with the concomitant arrival of a powerful Russian state to the east under Peter I (the Great) and his children starting in the 1690s, not to mention a temporarily resurgent and powerful Ottoman Empire to the south and east—also brought about a general change in the political framework of Europe as the traditional (that is to say, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century-centric) alliance system linking the Maritime Powers (the Netherlands and England) with the Habsburgs to contain the ambitions of France underwent a major change. The move away from battles focused on the North Sea coast of Holland. Silesia was completely landlocked and, as T.C. Blanning explained, even “if the maritime powers had been prepared to put their best feet forward, there was little they could have done to have helped....” This meant that it was imperative for Habsburg security, in the view of one of its most influential governmental official (outside of the Queen), Kaunitz, to “obtain at least the benevolent neutrality and preferably the active assistance of...France.”

Beyond the value of securing the cooperation or non-engagement of the French state and the adjusting to the shifting sands of European diplomacy, the Habsburgs faced changes in the realm of military matters: some technological, some strategic, and others tactical.

C. Das Recht: The Legal Framework of Desertion Proclamations and Pardons

Within the collections preserved by the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv in Vienna, Austria, there are three general places where one can find copies of decrees from the eighteenth century, particularly if one is focusing on issues surrounding desertion. One of the major departments of

---

420 Blanning, Joseph II, 31.
the archive is the *Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv* (FHKA). The other major departments include: the *Kriegsarchiv*, the *Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*, the *Archiv der Republik*, and the *Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv*.  

The Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv focuses on the financial and fiscal history of the Habsburg Monarchy, combining the records of two related offices: the Hofkammer and the later Finanzministerium. The Hofkammer (Aulic Chancellery) was the central financial and fiscal authority for the Habsburg Monarchy, from its earliest high point in 1527 until the large-scale reforms of the nineteenth century after the revolutions in 1848. This Aulic Chancellery was replaced by the Finanzministerium (Finance Ministry) in 1848 and maintained its position until the end of the Monarchy in 1918. The records of the Hofkammerarchiv dated back to the sixteenth century, with first mention of the council archive being found in a text in 1578. The succeeding Finanzarchiv was founded in 1892 and included the records of the *k.u.k. Finanzministerium*. The Österreichisches Staatsarchiv absorbed both of these Monarchy-era archives after World War II and, in 2006, they were organizationally combined into one collection.

The second potential source is the collected papers of the Hofkriegsrat, where copies of decrees and proclamations can be found scattered amongst the other files saved as addendums to other correspondence by the Hofkriegsrat’s staff. Copies of decrees and proclamations, particularly when relevant to a larger discussion or desertion-related issue, were occasionally included in the paperwork sent by persons to the Hofkriegsrat and these copies were retained as part of the entire file. A third potential source for copies of Habsburg decrees is the various cartons and bound paperwork held by the *Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv* (HHStA), which focused on the paperwork of the Habsburg family itself. The idea for such an archive is owed to none

---

421 The other major departments include: the *Kriegsarchiv*, the *Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*, the *Archiv der Republik*, and the *Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv*.  

other than Empress Maria Theresa, who founded it in 1749. This archive collection focused on
the role of diplomacy and foreign correspondence, as well as the paperwork generated by the
Habsburg monarch—or, in Maria Theresa’s case, that of her husband and son—in their ‘other
role’ as the Holy Roman Emperor and their attendant households. Copies of official decrees can
be found in the papers of the Kriegsakten and other collections. One particularly useful aspect of
this archive’s collection is the occasional retention of correspondence from foreign parties,
including copies of proclamations and decrees from other monarchs. One example of
exchanged correspondence regarding foreign affairs held by the HHStA is a twenty-plus-page file
of correspondence from 1763—the year the Seven Years’ War came to an end—between the
president of the Hofkriegsrat, Count Daun, and the Austrian representative to the Prussian court,
“Feldmarschall Lieutenant Freyherrn von” Ried, regarding the exchange (“Auswechslung”) of
prisoners-of-war. An example of the official paperwork preserved paperwork includes a file in
the Kabinettssakten containing a large printed proclamation dated August 23, 1760 regarding the
capture of Prussian prisoners or deserters from the Habsburg army: each worth a standard
payment of 24 florins for a reward and to cover costs.

The main resource of information for this section comes from the records preserved in the
collection of the Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv. For a period ranging from 1733 through 1781,
there are 48 proclamations regarding desertion and desertion-related issues.

---

423 A statue of Maria Theresa stands in the entryway to the Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv location on
Minoritenplatz in the first district of Vienna, Austria.
424 For example, the document marked ÖSTA HHStA-KA-StR Patente und Zirkulare 8 1763-1764, “26
Novembr 1763” is actually declaration from the Polish king regarding deserters from Poland-Lithuania.
425 See ÖSTA HHStA, Kriegsakten 331, #384 (on outer folio)
426 “So wollen wir zugleich gnaedigst verwiligen, dass fuer einen solchen eingebracht werdenden
Preussischen Fluechtling, wie fuer einen von Unserer Miliz desertirten Mann, die Patentmaessige Taglia pr.
24. fl. abgereicht werden solle.” See ÖSTA HHStA-KA-StR Patente und Zirkulare 6 1758-1760, No. 250.
427 The Patente used from the collections of the FHKA are identified by a number with a decimal. The full
list of used documents from that collection in this chapter includes: 66.9, 76.21, 76.23, 76.25, 78.3, 78.16,
78.24, 79.4, 80.19, 81.8, 81.13, 81.19, 89.22, 90.23, 91.4, 91.19, 92.9, 92.11, 92.16, 95.18, 95.31, 96.21,
97.5, 97.16, 108.6, 108.22, 114.39, 124.2, 130.8, 135.11, 136.6, 139.1, 139.24, 140.4, 140.11, 143.26,
149.12, 149.29, 152.22, 169.6, 169.9, 171.5, 211.11, 233.20, 234.18, 234.19, 240.18, and 250.11.
To supplement this group of papers, there were also nine files of correspondence used. These files were drawn from the collections of Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv and the Kriegsarchiv.

Eight of those files came from the HHStA’s Kabinettakten and the remaining file came from the ‘Kriegswissenschaftliche Memoires’ section of the Feldakten. Rather than being random, these files are used to fill in gaps left by the large cache of files from the FHKA.

A second source that provides excellent coverage of the legal and political development of the Habsburg Monarchy during the eighteenth century are the “grand” works of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. Starting with the oldest and most relevant of works, one is the collected work edited by Joseph Kropatschek, published in the 1780s. These works collected all of the important legal documents and decisions of the Monarchy from 1740 to 1780 into eight volumes: Sammlung aller k. k. Verordnungen und Gesetze vom Jahre 1740 bis 1780.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁸ The full title and citation is: Joseph Kropatschek, ed., Sammlung aller k. k. Verordnungen und Gesetze vom Jahre 1740 bis 1780, die unter der Regierung der Regierung des Kaisers Joseph des II. theils noch ganz bestehen, theils zum Theile abgeändert sind, als eine Hilfs- und Ergänzungsbuch zu dem Handbuche
Kropatschek provides a useful collection for comparing the development of legal structures and concepts under Maria Theresa and Joseph II. From the nineteenth century, further insight can be drawn from the monumental works of two authors: Alfred Ritter von Arneth and Alphons Freiherr von Wrede. Arneth’s mammoth ten-volume history of the reign of Maria Theresa still stands as one of the most useful starting points for any scholar of the eighteenth-century Habsburg Monarchy.\textsuperscript{429} Furthermore, Alfred Arneth also provided a large cache of information for future scholars by collecting and editing a large amount of the correspondence of the mid-century monarchs.\textsuperscript{430} With a focus more specifically on matters military, one can turn to the five-volume \textit{Geschichte der k.und k. Wehrmacht: Die Regimenter, Corps, Branchen und Anstalten von 1618 bis Ende des XIX. Jahrhunderts} by von Wrede, published between 1898 and 1905, for both specific information about units (or personages), as well as policy issues. While these classic multi-volume works provide a wealth of information, the research study’s intervention for the field is to go directly to a small portion of the sources used in these master works of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There is still more to be learned both 1) directly from the primary sources available in archives and 2) in light of the research that developed in the decades and centuries that have followed their publication.\textsuperscript{431}

\textit{aller unter der Regierung des Kaisers Josephs des II. für die k. k. Erbländer ergangenen Verordnungen und Gesetze in einer chronologischen Ordnung}, 8 Vols. (Vienna, 1786; 2\textsuperscript{nd} printing 1787). There are not many full sets of these collections available in hard copy, but the collected volumes are generally available through the online offerings of the Hathi Trust.


\textsuperscript{430} For example, see Alfred Ritter von Arneth, ed., \textit{Maria Theresia und Joseph II: ihre Correspondenz, sammt Briefen Joseph’s an seinen Bruder Leopold, Zweiter Band 1773 – Juli 1778} (Vienna: Druck und Verlag von Carl Gerold’s Sohn, 1867).

\textsuperscript{431} The full citation for von Wrede’s work is \textit{Geschichte der k.und k. Wehrmacht: Die Regimenter, Corps, Branchen und Anstaltet von 1618 bis Ende des XIX. Jahrhunderts} (Vienna: Verlag von L.W. Seidel & Sohn, 1898-1905). Unfortunately, von Wrede was not able to fully finish the project and it “remained unfinished and [did] not cover the central military institutions.” Hochedlinger, \textit{Austria’s Wars of Emergence}, 145.
D. The Primary Source Documents: Sample Set, Organization, and Analysis

The following section will analyze the publications and holdings of the Austrian State Archive regarding proclamations and decrees in the eighteenth century. There are many ‘patente’ preserved in the records of the FHKA, but, of those total records, there are 48 that specifically pertain to desertion between the years of 1733 to 1781 for the sample set used here. To further supplement this group of documents, eight documents were drawn from the Patente und Zirkulare of the HHStA for the years 1758 to 1763. On top of those two groups of documents, two proclamation copies are drawn from the collections of the Hofkriegsrat paperwork held by the Kriegsarchiv: one from 1759 for the whole Monarchy and a 1772 proclamation written in Italian. A copy of an ordinance held in the Feldakten collection of the Kriegsarchiv from August 1760 is also included in the sample set used here. In total, 59 documents, proclamations, and decrees from the various collections of the Austrian State Archives were analyzed regarding desertion and the measures taken by the Habsburg Monarchy in response to desertion. In general, these documents are broadsheet folios, printed in a ‘Fraktur’ (Gothic) script, though there were several preserved in a handwritten form.

The earliest patent regarding desertion in the collection dates to Maria Theresa’s father, Emperor Karl VI, in 1733. This specific announcement focuses at first on the specific incident of ten men that deserted from the ‘Printz Friderich Wuertenbergischen Regiment’ with four horses during that unit’s march out of Schlesien.\(^432\) One way to organize and analyze these proclamations is to broadly place them under subject headings and investigate which topics were

---

most frequently addressed for possible patterns: both in similarity and dissimilarity.

Chronologically, the documents in question cover a period from, at the earliest, 1733 to 1781 at the latest: a little less than 50 years of Habsburg history. With 59 documents in the set, that does not make for a large number of documents per year. Given that there were years when the records of the Hofkriegsrat were not fully kept and that there was the possibility of documents being lost, destroyed, or (accidentally) transferred to one of the successor states after 1918, this still provides a representative group of documents. This document collection lent itself to a total of ten subject headings for 55 of the documents, with an (unused) eleventh category comprised of four documents that did not fit into any of the other categories and/or were otherwise unusable in this analysis. Of those four documents: two documents turned out to be word-for-word copies of one June 1759 proclamation of a general pardon preserved in separate collections of the Austrian State Archives, while a third document was only tangentially related to desertion, regarding “lost” or “wandering” persons. The fourth ‘outlier’ was actually not even an official Habsburg decree or document, but rather a desertion decree from 1763 for the kingdom of Poland-Lithuania. The categories used for the remaining 55 documents broke down as follows: 1) Pardon Information or General Pardon, 2) Regarding Desertion Punishments, 3) Announcements of policy changes, 4) Regarding the Aiding and Abetment of Desertion, 5) Protocols for Exchanging Deserters, 6) Rewards and Capture Protocols for Deserters, 7) Information and Protocols Regarding Confiscation Punishments, 8) Regarding Furloughs and Passes, 9) ‘General Desertion’ or Reminder Proclamations, 10) Special Case and Miscellaneous Information.

On top of how these documents broke down thematically, there is the interesting geographic breakdown of the documents. In general, it could be assumed that the information being promulgated in each declaration came as the result of some sort of communication with

---

433 See ÖSTA HHStA, KA-StR Patente und Zirkulare 6, 227.
434 See ÖSTA HHStA, KA-StR Patente und Zirkulare 8, 1763-1764, “26 Novembr 1763.”
either Maria Theresa herself or an official empowered to speak on her behalf. As a result, a fair number of the documents—or, the originals upon which those that were copies were based—originated from Vienna, including closing language along the lines of this 1760 proclamation: “Hieran beschiehet Unser ernstlicher Will und Meinung. Geben in Unserer Stadt Wienn den 23.ten Monats=Tag Augusti im siebenzehen hundert und sechzigsten, Unserer Reiche im zwanzigsten Jahre.” Some of the documents were sent out over the name and signature of Maria Theresa or Joseph II’s regional representative, whether in Graz, Innsbruck, or another important city. Of the 55 documents from the sample set, 15 of them went even further to include region-specific language or instructions. This regional specificity could be as superficial as the place and signature over which the document was sent, or the ‘title’ which the document might have been given by the records keepers. In other, deeper cases, the specificity could be drawn from a problem centered on that region, such as was the case with a November 1749 piece of correspondence focusing on known deserters and issues in the Tyrol. In a February 1772 document sent out in Maria Theresa’s name, the entire document is written in Italian and addressed to the people of the Habsburg’s Italian-speaking lands. Representing a little less than quarter of the total sample set, ‘localized’ or region-specific documents provide valuable insight into issues that may not have been addressed by a generalized proclamation originating in Vienna—for example, in the aforementioned 1749 Tyrolean, the authorities included a list of known deserters and persons to be brought to the attention of the general populace.

The distribution of the documents broke down as follows, with the number of documents for each category listed, as well as its percentage of the total documents surveyed—55, as the 4 outliers are not included—in parentheses:

---

435 See ÖSTA HHStA, KA-StR Patente und Zirkulare 6, #250.
436 This document suffered minor fire damage at some point and included an appended list of deserters. See ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente Kt. 92.16, 1749-11-15.
437 See ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #897 1772, 1772-20-56.
The most prevalent type of document found could be characterized as a “general” proclamation regarding desertion, a not-unsurprising conclusion given the broad nature of the topics covered under this ‘umbrella’-style rubric. Of the sample set, one quarter of the documents fit this description. A general proclamation regarding desertion followed a basic pattern: state the issue at hand (as well as any antecedent events), lay out the punishment for desertion, provide a reminder to others to abide by the rules, set a timeline for effect and compliance, and, in some cases, provide instructions for the further distribution or communication of the message.

The second most common type of document was one that, rather than focusing on the general issue of desertion, focused on reminding subjects of the dangers of aiding and abetting the desertion or continued flight from justice of a deserter: of the sample set, 18.2% of the documents. From providing material (albeit temporary) aid to providing long-term shelter or continued employment to a deserter were some of the actions that fell under this rubric, to name a few. The crime was called many things in the documents (ex. *der Vorschub*, which literally means ‘abetment’ in the legal sense), but this group shared a common didactic element for subjects of the monarchy regarding the dangers of helping others break the law. Documents regarding the rewards available for turning in deserters and the recommend protocols and regulations for capturing such individuals tied for the third largest group in this sample set: 10.9% of the total. Rewards could be a powerful motivator in ensuring compliance with the rules regarding desertion, as well as potentially playing a role in any cost-benefit analyses for the
recruiting of troops. These types of documents served to either 1) lay out the levels of reimbursement available (as well as through which mechanisms) to those that capture or returned deserters or 2) provide guidance regarding the treatment of suspected deserters during the process of turning them into the military or civil authorities. Category 1 (General Pardons) contained announcements of general amnesties for deserters, the terms under which they could return to the army, and guidance for military authorities on how to handle these men. This category had 6 documents representing 10.9% of the total. The granting of general pardons was an accepted practice for states in the eighteenth century and, as the documents analyzed in this dissertation show, were an important part of manpower maintenance and the administration of military justice by the Habsburg Monarchy.

Two categories tied for fifth-most documents in the sample set, each with 5 documents representing 9.1% of the total. Category 5 (Exchange Protocols) contained announcements of so-called Deserteurs-Cartels, exchange agreements, between the Habsburg Monarchy and other states, addressing the terms of the exchanges: from which men were eligible for exchange to the reimbursements that should be provided for the sustenance of captured deserters, including the reimbursement rates for equipment or horses confiscated from the soldiers.438 In general, these documents were applicable during time of peace, as wartime negotiations could take on a different tone to match their differing circumstances: the difference between an exchange agreement as a general protocol for interstate interaction on the one hand and a negotiated settlement for the exchange of a specific group of personnel, prisoners, or deserters. Category 7 (Confiscation Information) is actually a major subset of Category 2 (Regarding Punishments), but, for the purposes of this analysis, deemed important enough to have been broken off into its

438 See ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente Kt. 78.16 (1743-09-25) / 78.24 (1743-11-22) / 81.8 (1745-02-08) / 108.22 (1753-07-01) / 234.19 (1778-08-11).
These documents dealt with the terms and conditions of the confiscation punishment, a punishment whereby the worldly goods of a deserter (or a person found to have aided one) would become property of the state. Under this rubric, barring a deserter from inheritance was also a form of confiscation punishment and the documents/proclamations were often distributed by the monarchy to lay out the terms for the disposal of any confiscated goods or monies: whether to provide rewards or to become part of the general recruiting fund to increase the number of available soldiers.

The last four categories (8, 2, 10, and 3) represented less than one-fifth of the total documents and, combined, equaled the number of documents in Category 4 (Aiding & Abetting): 10 documents or 18.2% of the total. Category 8 (Regarding Furloughs and Passes) was the seventh most common type of document in the sample set, with 4 documents (7.3%) predominantly focused on the regulations regarding soldier furloughs and travel passes. Furlough was an organized system of allowing soldiers to spend time away from a unit to either 1) decrease the costs of maintaining him in garrison or 2) allow soldiers to maintain roles in the family or workplace. These visits or terms away from the army provided opportunities for soldiers so inclined to desert to make a getaway without having to potentially worry about sentries, pickets, or other watchmen. Many of the documents regulating the participation of Habsburg subjects in the control of desertion recommended treating any soldier found away from a military unit as a potential deserter, so “pass” and verification systems were necessary to ensure that those on official or accepted leave would not be subject to sanction and potential incarceration—and, conversely, that those engaging in illegal activities would be held and the proper authorities alerted to their presence and status. In a related vein, Category 2 (Punishment Information) represented 5.5% of the total with 3 documents. While all of the desertion documents surveyed

---

439 Category 2 combined with Category 7 would have been the third-largest group of documents: 8 documents or 14.5%.
could claim to be focused on punishment information to a certain extent, these 3 documents focus on the details of punishment application to the general exclusion of other concerns. One of the documents a “Verordnung betreffend Deserteure” from February 1765 harkened back to an earlier declaration from 1751, reminding subjects of its continued validity while updating and clarifying the terms of applicable punishments, such as the length of time that a person could be sentenced to hard labor for helping or inciting desertion: 8 years for inciting or causing a sworn soldier to desert through “advice or action” or death, depending on the circumstance. Or, if the person involved in not turning over a deserter or shielding a deserter was of a high or noble birth, they faced multiple potential punishments, but the 1765 refresher of the 1751 patent decreased the potential financial punishment from 1,000 florins to 500 florins.440

The last two categories (Category 10 and Category 3) provide the final two documents and 3.6% of the sample set. The zero documents in Category 3 (Policy Adjustments) was a bit of an outlier, though not the because of anything inherent with the document, but rather with the category system used to organize the documents in the sample. To a certain extent each of documents analyzed dealt with a policy adjustment of sorts—as they called for change or a new understanding of an existing precedent—it was in many cases a stretch to be able to discern adjustments (as opposed to overall course changes) to policies as the primary concern of any given document sample. While this category may have contributed 0.0% of the total that does not take away from its significance to this analysis, as it provided an important lens for critically evaluating what topic was most central to each of the documents. Category 10 (Miscellaneous), with 3.6% of the total, contributed two documents to the total and, similar to Category 3, provided a crucial lens for evaluating the contents of the documents placed under the other eight discrete rubrics. Each of these documents had elements from the other groups, but was just different enough to justify separating it from that group. As an example, a 1778 document,

described by the organizers of the FHKA paperwork as “Patent betreffend die preussischen Deserteure die Inländer sind”, had elements of the exchange protocol category, as well as the furlough and pass category, yet the circumstances that it addressed—organizing ‘Prussian’ deserters into three separate groups (based on their birth and living circumstances), with the treatment of each governed by a different set of rules—lent itself to being separate from both Category 5 or Category 8. The same can be said for a 1760 declaration from Maria Theresa to her lands regarding the disposition of Prussian prisoners-of-war and Prussian deserters, which touches on both the general punishment category and the exchange protocol category. Yet, given that this proclamation was distributed during a period of conflict between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Kingdom of Prussia, it was a sufficiently differentiated set of circumstances to justify moving to the miscellaneous category.  

1. Primary Source Documents Regarding Desertion and Analysis

In 1748, political changes to the constitutional relationship of the Austrian core lands and Bohemia led to changes in recruitment policy, with a shift to increase the reliance on ‘voluntary’ recruitment: the results of which were not entirely intended or desired. As one noted historian of the Monarchy has stated:

…Immense amounts of money were spent to recruit mostly unreliable soldiers, particularly in the [Holy Roman Empire]; desertion rates soared and a deluge of decrees against deserters flooded the Monarchy threatening collaborators with severe punishment and promising handsome rewards for informers.”

One important distinction worth noting is one that earlier historians of the Habsburg Monarchy drew out in their works: the definition of a deserter versus the definition of a turncoat. In his

---

441 See ÖSTA HHStA, KA-StR Patente und Zirkulare 6, #250.
442 Hochedlinger, Austria’s Wars of Emergence, 292.
necessary work on the history of the army during the reign of Maria Theresa, Christopher Duffy
made sure to note the following regarding Austrian cases of desertion and policy:

General pardons periodically wiped the slate clean and invited the deserters to return, and in any case the Austrian articles of war established a useful distinction between the Deserteur, who simply ran off, and the treacherous Ueberlaeufer who actually went over to the enemy.

The distinction between those who run off and those that go over to an opposing army is a valuable one from a political and legal standpoint—it was not uncommon for pardon proclamations to make reference to ‘other crimes’ or ‘indiscretions,’ so whether or not a soldier took up arms with another state would be valuable information any officer receiving a returning deserter. Yet, the value of this statement by Duffy must be weighed with what came before it, where he directly compared the disciplinary regimes of the Habsburgs with that of the Hohenzollerns: “…Austrian soldier[s] did not feel quite the same compulsion to desert as [their] Prussian counterpart, who was subject to a very harsh discipline.”443 While there is an essentialization of the experiences for soldiers from each state—one that military historians have debated quite vociferously—this focus on disciplinary regimes (as opposed to drilling regimens, organization, or social composition of the officer corps) does not wholly detract from Duffy’s input regarding the different legal standpoints of each state in regards to deserters.444 Each state had different priorities in war and was at a different stage of military and political development: particularly regarding recruiting mechanisms, population size and density, and the availability of natural resources to support its respective war apparatus.

Desertion proclamations were generally blunt in their characterizations of deserters and worded so as to leave little-to-no room for debating their meaning. For example, dated August

443 Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 57.
444 For a starting point regarding the nature of the Prussian military system, see Büsch, Military System and Social Life in Old Regime Prussia (1997). Other necessary works to understand the state of scholarship of disciplinary regimes in early modern militaries include: Gorski, Disciplinary Revolution (2003); Sikora, Disziplin und Desertion (1996); and Houlding, Fit for Service (1981).
22, 1742, an “Erfrischungs-Patent” was sent out to the Habsburg hereditary lands under the title, “Verbot den eigenen Deserteuren irgendeine Hilf zu gewähren in Österreich ob und unter der Enns.” This proclamation was to serve as a reminder to the subjects of the Monarchy that, under no circumstance, were they to provide “material aid” or be helpful to deserters, nor were they allowed to trade or traffic in the goods and weapons of deserters or wandering persons. Subjects should instead arrest, bind, and bring any deserters or suspected deserters to the nearest government authority for processing.\footnote{“...daß niemand einem Deserteurs unter keinerley Vorwand Unterschleif geben / oder demselben zu seinem weiteren Fortkommen verhülflich seyn / weniger dessen Montur / und Gewöhr an sich handlen / sondern sothane Deserteurs mit gesamter Hand anhalten [to bind/halt/arrest/bring to an end] / und in das nächste Land=Gericht wohl verwahrter überbringen sollet....” ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 76.21.} To drive home the necessity that subjects securely bring soldiers to the competent authorities—“auch durch anstellende vertraute Persohnen der Aufbring=und folgliche Handfestmachung veranstaltet werden solle...”—a 1749 proclamation addressed to those in the sphere of influence of “Ynsbrugg” (Innsbruck) reminded subjects of the benefits of compliance and the perils of disobedience:

Wir versehen Uns demnach / der Unterthan werde sich um so williger darzu finden lassen / als nicht nur der einlifferende Deserteur dessenthalben keine Lebens=Straff zu befahren: sondern auch derjenige / welcher solchen an seine Gehörde übergibt / noch besonders die in denen Intimirten Allerhöchsten Rescripten Allergnädigst=ausgemessene Belohnung richtig zu empfangen hat.\footnote{ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 92.16.}

As a carrot, the Monarchy generally offered the prospect of a reward for those that captured and returned a deserter. Yet, as the patent make clear, there would be consequences to those ignored the rules and those that abetted rule-breaking by others. The terms under which deserters could return to their units might change—as pardon announcements generally contained a time limiter—and the same went for the terms under which a subject could claim a reward for the return of a deserter. An October 30, 1749 proclamation was written to act as a clarification about which office would provide the rewards and changes to the amounts for the return of a deserter
and the requisite support (i.e. per diem) incurred by the subject for returning the deserter to the
“naechst=gelegene Militar-Commando.”

A common characteristic of desertion-related proclamations was the reiteration that
desertion was under no circumstances an acceptable practice for soldiers, with deserters being
called “Meineidige Fluchtling.” Nor was the protection or concealment (“verhehlen”) of
deserters by any subject of the Habsburg Monarchy an acceptable practice. A patent dated
August 27, 1750 specifically addressed this topic: “Strafpatent gegen die Vehehler von
Deserteuren.” This patent reaffirmed the information from earlier proclamations on the same
subject, such as one from May 26 and another from July 24, 1749: “…als auch zu
Habschaftwerdung deren selben unter eben so grosser Belohnung anzufrischen gnädigst
pupliciren lassen.” In seven points, the patent lays out the necessary course of action for dealing
with deserters by civilians. The first dealt with the applicability of the ‘Kriegs-Articuln’ to the
concealment of deserters, while the second explained that exemptions are made for those that turn
over deserters either the appropriate military or civil authorities—in other words, having a
deserter under your care was not illegal if such care was part of the process of bringing them to
the proper authorities. Third, each deserter was worth a reward/payment (“Belohnung oder
Taglia”) of 24 florins and, fourth, that captured deserters once processed should be sent in chains
to either of the fortress prisons of Temeswar (Timișoara, Romania) or Peterwardein
(Petrovaradin, Serbia) to serve ten-year labor sentences. The fifth point related to the
circumstances under which a deserter was liable for other crimes, up to and including the use of a
stolen (“entfremdet”) firearm to kill a subject of the Monarchy. If that were the case, the deserter

448 “Quartò: Dass die von denen Landes=Inwohnern eingelieferte Ausreisser noch (ferers) / und bis auf
anderweite Ermess=und gnadigste Verordnung an Platz der sonst verdienten Lebens=Straf / auf Zehen
Jahr zum Festungs=Bau nacher Temeswar oder Peterwardein in Eisen und Banden abgeschicket / und
daselbst angehalten werden.” ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 95.31.
would also face murder charges, be turned over to authorities, and have any military privileges revoked during that process.\footnote{\[449\]}

The sixth and seventh points dealt with verifying the information of a deserter, particularly if he claimed to not actually be a deserter, but was rather on furlough or that he had been granted permission to be away from his unit or garrison post. In that case, the\textit{ patent} recommends that the alleged deserter should be held while a message is sent to his commander to determine whether or not he was actually on an approved furlough or leave. If it is determined that he is not acting under proper authority, he should be taken as a deserter and, if known, be returned to the correct authorities to be dealt with by them.\footnote{\[450\]} It was standard practice during this period for the order to be given that all persons of a questionable background be held until or unless they could be proven to not be a deserter or criminal of any other nature. In a related declaration regarding to the detention or holding of deserters from several months after the conclusion of the Peace of Hubertusburg in 1763, the authorities made sure to refer to previous\textit{ patente} from 1750 and 1762 in calling for a broad approach to deserter apprehension, stating:

\begin{quote}
...dass in Folge der sub dato 14ten Novembris 1750s. und 12ten Aprilis 1762. ergangenen Patenten alle diejenige Soldaten, welche numehro ausserhalb denen Festungen, oder ihrer Quartiers=Stationen, und Compagnien ohne Ober=Officiers irgendswo angetroffen werden, und keinen Militar-Pass oder Abschied vorzeigen koennen, sogleich als
\end{quote}

\footnote{\[449\]} “Die Ausreisser so weit sich vergehen wurden / dass sie mit dem entfremdten Gewehr eine Landes=Unterthanen toedten... sollen auch als Moerder angesehen / und mit ihnen solcher Gestalten in flagranti ihrer Habschaftwerdung standrechtmaessig durch das naechste Land=Gericht fuergegangen werden / und also durch diese ihre Missethatt deren Militar-Privilegien sich unwuerdig und verlustiget machen....” ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 95.31.

Deserteurs angesehen, sofort angehalten, und an das naechste Militar-Commando abgelieferet...  

Addressed to all officers and competent officials, any soldier found without a pass or proper authorization was to be considered a deserter and handed over to the nearest military command for questioning and processing. In general, the goal of desertion-related measures, for those that deserted and those that aided in desertion, was two-fold. They were to punish those that specifically committed a wrong and influence the rest into compliance by making criminals into examples; for example, a supplemental punishment was to have the person put on a platform, with a sheet of paper hung on the their chest “on which their crimes and punishment were listed in large, legible letters” to serve “as a warning and deterrent to others.”

In the realm of personal and familial connections, deserters risked much—beyond the possibility of, depending on the time period, the death penalty—and they could not always rely on the availability of clemency through the granting of a pardon. Beyond the physical dangers they faced—capture, assault, starvation, or death to name a few—deserters faced potentially-serious financial penalties for their actions, up to and including the legal disallowance of any inheritance to which they might have otherwise been entitled, as a Patent from 1781 made clear.

Dated January 8, 1781 and, in this form addressed directly to Oberösterreich by Graf Christoph von Thuerheim, this document followed up on a 1761 proclamation regarding desertion and announced that deserters were disallowed from receiving inheritances. It stated that, “…da sie Deserteurs vom Tage der Desertion aller Erbschafts=Anfaelle verlustig erklareten.” Desertion resulted in the forfeiture of an inheritance and, furthermore, a deserter was considered, for the purposes the estate law, non-existent, stating: “…eigentlich zu erben unfahig sind, derley- ihnen

451 Italics added. ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente Kt. 143.26, “30 May 1763.”
452 “…auf eine Buehn zu jedermanns Wahrnung und mehreren Eindruck auch Abschroeckung von sothanen Verbrechens öffentlich ausgestellet / und ihnen ein Zetul worauf ihr Verbrechen und Straffe mit grossen wol lesslichen Buchstaben enthalten / auf die Brust gehaenget werden solle.” ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 95.31.
nach den gemeinen Rechten zukommen sollende Erbschafts=Anfaelle, als ob sie Deserteurs gar
nicht existireten, den uebrigen Erben zukommen sollen.”453 The potential financial and familial
repercussions of deserting were high and a sign that the Monarchy took the crime seriously.

2. Pardons: Forgiveness of the Crime of Desertion

In a patent dated January 30, 1744 and entitled (by the archivists and record-keepers)
“Generalpardon fuer Deserteure”, Leopold Graf von Windischgratz, in the name of Maria
Theresa, called for the granting of a general pardon to returning deserters for a period of three
months. This patent sought to build off of the lessons of a previous three-month general pardon
from 1743 and continue to bring soldiers back into the fold, rather than allowing them to fall
under the influence of enemies or foreign powers. The pardon was for, in the words of the
Monarchy, those that “ihre geschworne Pflicht ihre Fahnen / oder Estandarten verlassen” to
provide that “ein General-Pardon auf drey Monat lang allermildest angedeihen solle.” Unlike the
1743 granting of a pardon, this pardon sought to go further in encouraging deserters to return—
and, in an extended way, encourage non-deserters to return any deserters they might happen to
find in the course of their normal business. Rewards and bounties were to be offered for the
return of deserters or the bringing of recruits to help fill up regiments, as, in the words of the
patent, returning deserters would not only be free of punishment:

...sondern auch bey was fuer einem Regiment selbe wollen / wann sie freywillig zu ihrem
vorhingigen sich nicht zu begeben gedaechtten / sich zu engagiren ihnen frey stehen / und
annebst / soferne sie sich befeissen d(erglei)chen Deserteurs / oder andere Recruten mit
sich zu bringen / auf jeden Mann vier Gulden / dem mit sich bringingen aber das
Hand=Geld à parte abgereichet werden solle...

453 ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 250.11, 1781-01-08.
In offering to provide rewards of four gulden for each soldier brought in, the pardon announcement also needed to remind the Habsburg subjects of the punishment for continuing to ignore the offer of a pardon:


This 1744 proclamation follows the aforementioned pattern of 1) reiterating the necessity of a pardon, 2) laying out the terms of the pardon, and 3) reiterating the potential consequences—being liable for “the strongest punishments”—of continuing to engage in behavior characterized as that of the “meineidig entwichene Deserteurs.”

A subsequent general pardon patent from June 30, 1759 followed a similar pattern of laying out the reason for the pardon, followed by a statement that, while it was within the monarch’s purview to provide no clemency, “Clemenz, Gnade, und Guete” has led the monarch to issue a “General-Pardon-Patent” so that: “ihren begangenen Fehler und Meineid ohne einiger Bestraf=und Ahndung, oder Nachtheil ihrer Ehren und guten Leymuts, allergnaedigst vergeben, nachgesehen, vergessen, und aufgehoben haben.” While the 1744 pardon was good for a period of 3 months, the 1759 pardon was only good for soldiers that returned within six weeks of its publication. The General-Pardon-Patent would then conclude with a reminder that an officer should treat a returning soldier without hindrance or complaint. However, just as with the 1744 proclamation, a soldier that deserts again, or one that refuses to acknowledge the general pardon offered, would be liable for all punishments under the Articles of War, “with all stridency,

---

454 ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 79.4, 1744-01-30.
without any relief and mercy. “455 A 1768 commentary on the terms of a general pardon adjusted the language slightly and instead referred to the actions of the monarchy, in response to continued illegal behavior, as being “without any hoped-for mercy and leniency” in assigning the requisite punishment.456

In a later general pardon patent from May 1778, the text of the 1759 patent is echoed, with many parts matching almost word for word in regards to the terms of the monarchy’s forgiveness and its requirements for treating those that continue to ignore the laws regarding desertion and military service. It did make sure to include language regarding the applicability of the patent to present or future cases of desertion. The general amnesty granted in the 1778 patent “is understood to apply only to the deserters that escaped from service before the announcement of this amnesty declaration.”457 A patent from September 7, 1764 distributed over the signature of Hofkriegsrat Präsident Graf Leopold Daun also used the same language regarding the terms of forgiveness and the pardon’s requirements. This iteration of a General-Pardon drew out the part regarding the necessity that a soldier, in order to claim a pardon, must return to his original unit. The text stated that a deserter must “within three months of the publication date of the Patent

455 “…dann zugleich all=und jeden Generalen, Obristen, und anderen Officiers zu dem Ende anerinneret wird, um alle und jede obgedachte Deserteurs, welche sich binnen der ausgesetzten sechs=wochigen Zeit=frist anmelden, und unter ihre vorige Fahnen und Estandarten zurück kehren, ohne einzige Wider=rede, Bedenken, Hindernuss, oder Ahndung wieder anzunehmen, und in die gewoehnliche Pflicht neuerdings zu setzen, auch bey ihren Untergebenen darob zu halten, damit denenselben besagt=ihres Fehlers halber nichts vorgeworfen, sondern alles diesfalls in die ewige Vergessenheit gestellet werde; Gleichwie aber diesen zurueck=kommenden Ausreissern ob=versprochene Kaiserl. Koenigl. allerhoechste Gnade und Pardon ohnehelbar und gewiss wiederauffahren solle, also bleibt hingegen denjenigen, so in ihrem Meineid verharren, und darinnen, wann, und wo es immer seyn mag, betretten werden, die in denen Kaiserl. Koenigl. Kriegs=Articuln ausgemessene Straffe allerdings vorbehalten, welche auch an ihnen mit aller Schaerfe, ohne einzigen Nachlass und Gnade, vollfuehret werden wuerde.” ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 130.8, 1759-06-30. This proclamation is also preserved in the records of the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv as: ÖSTA HHStA-KA-StR, Patente und Zirkulare 6, 241.


457 Italics added. “…es verstehet sich jedoch diese Gnad nur auf jene Deserteurs, die vor erfolgter Kundmachung dieses Patents entwichen sind.” ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 233.20, 1778-05-03.
voluntarily return to the previous unit in which one served.” In recognition of the possibility that this might not be physically possible for deserters, the text included the provision that:

...auch führhin bestaendig dabey zu beharren angeloben, oder falls ihre Regimenter zu weit entlegen waren, dergestalten, dass sie zu rechter Zeit bey solchen nicht mehr eintreffen koennten, sich hierwegen binnen den obberuehrten 3. Monaten bey anderen Kaiserl. Koenigl. Regimentern melden, in ein= wie andern Fall ohne einziger Widerred, Bedenken, Hindernuss, oder Ahndung angenommen...

Deserters incapable of reaching their original units within the time prescribed by the General-Pardon could, before the pardon period expired, turn themselves in and register for a pardon with another Habsburg regiment without fear of “obstruction or penalty.”

3. The Audience for Pardons

For each proclamation, there were several potential audiences for the Monarchy to be addressing. Many of the Patente surveyed in this analysis, promulgated by the offices and representatives of Maria Theresa and Joseph II, were seemingly intended for two types of audiences. The most direct audience for proclamations was soldiers on the run and deserters, particularly when the content focused on how such men could return to the fold. Assuming the information was conveyed to deserters—either by reading or hearing it read in a town—proclamations served the function of helping bring information to those that need fear the reach of the state. A second potential audience for desertion-related proclamations was the rest of the Monarchy’s subjects. In that case, they could serve a dual purpose: 1) provide information about current opportunities (e.g. the availability of bounties for the capture of deserters) and 2) provide lessons and reminders to the populace as to what activities the Monarchy considered verboten and what the likely consequences of engaging in such activities were.

458 ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 149.29, 1764-09-07.
For example, in a September 28, 1768 proclamation from the *Landeshauptmann* of Oberösterreich in Linz, Graf Christoph v. Thuerheim, to the people of the area, broached the subject of soldiers overstaying their furloughs. In the eighteenth century, during periods of peace and inactivity, soldiers could be temporarily released from their duties to return home to support their families or engage in a trade: a system of furloughs.\(^{459}\) In this announcement, the governing body reminded the public that soldiers on furlough or leave would have a proper pass brought with them. If a soldier could not produce one or was found to be operating outside the bounds of its terms, an employing ‘*Meister*’ should report this person and, if possible, arrest him and deliver him to the proper authorities. The announcement then specifically addresses the extent to which the state expected non-military persons to aid in the prevention of desertion, as well as in the apprehension of deserters:

> Euch Eingangs beruehrten Herrschaften, Obrigkeiten, und Beamten, wie auch Fabriquen=Innhabern, Zunft und Meisterschaften wird dahero diese allerhochste Anordnung hiemit zur nachrichtlichen Wissenschaft und genauesten Nachverhalt hiemit bedeutet, annebst auch anbefohlen, dass ihr solche eueren Untergebenen behoerig bekannt machen sollet, damit jedermann sich hiernach pflichtschuldigst zu achten, folgbar vor Schaden und Nachtheil zu hueten wissen moege.

Persons likely to provide employment and aid to furloughed (and, potentially, deserting) soldiers—such as mill owners, guildsmen, master craftsmen—were to be aware of the damages and penalties related to desertion.\(^{460}\) The notion that a soldier found outside of specified bounds was to be considered a deserter did not originate with that announcement, as other earlier

\(^{459}\) The increased use of “furlough” systems by early modern militaries owes much to the influence of the Prussians. The Prussian state, with a smaller population than many of its rivals in the eighteenth century, saw the virtue in having trained soldiers upon which they could rely in times of need but that would not, for most of the year, cost the state much. In Prussian fashion, there was also the perceived benefit that military-trained individuals embedded within the populace provided positive ‘social disciplining’ influences. Regarding this system, Hochedlinger stated: “Soldiers on furlough no longer received bread and pay, thereby reducing the cost, but continued to remain under military jurisdiction; such leave-men would also help, it was hoped, to promote a more positive attitude towards the army among their fellow civilians and were therefore allowed to wear their uniforms on Sundays and holidays.” Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 294.

\(^{460}\) ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 171.5, 1768-09-28.
announcements made use of similar language. For example, in April 12, 1762 proclamation to the lands of Niederösterreich stated:

...dass alldiejenige Soldaten, welche ausserhalb denen Armèen, Festungen, oder ihren Quartiers-Stationen und Compagnien ohne Ober=Officiers irgendwo angetroffen werden, und keinen Militar=Pass, oder Abschied vorzeigen koennen, als Deserteurs angesehen, sofort angehalten, und an das naechste Militar-Commando abgelieferet, zu dem Ende mittelst gegenwaertigen Patents allen Vasallen, und Unterthanen eingebunden werden solle... [emphasis added]

Any soldier 1) found outside of his assigned unit or area, 2) without the supervision of a superior officer, or 3) without official permission—regardless of where he was found—was to be considered a deserter and returned to the proper authorities for judgement. The subsequent text made clear that all subjects were bound by these terms.461

Regarding the importance of carrying proper documentation, the June 17, 1779 proclamation version sent to Oberösterreich further highlighted the importance of carrying a proper pass and the role to be played all members of the Monarchy: “all Unsere Beamten, Obrigkeiten, Gerichter, Gueter=Besitzer, Landes=Insassen, Unterthanen und gesammten Inwohnern.”462 To combat “the harmful evil of desertion amongst [their] troops,” the Habsburgs sought to regulate the behavior of those troops, their officers, and the general populace with the use of a military pass system. The announcement stated that:

...Zu Verhuetung der Desertion bey dem Militari der ernstliche Befehl seye, dass alle auf dem Land hin= und hergehende commandirte, auch einschichtig beurlaubte, und mit Briefen oder sonst verschickte Ordonanzen, oder wie die Ursache ihres Marsches oder

461 ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 139.1, 1762-04-12.
462 By 1779, Maria Theresa’s titles, as listed in proclamations, had expanded to: “Wir Maria Theresia, von Gottes Gnaden Roemische Kaiserinn, Wittib, Koeniginn zu Hungarn, Boeheim, Dalmatien, Coratien, Slavonien, Glaizen, und Lodomerien u. Erzherzoginn zu Oesterreich; Herzoginn zu Burgund, zu Steyer, zu Kaernten, und zu Crain; Grossfuerstinn zu Siebenbuergen; Markgraeffin zu Maehren; Herzoginn zu Brabant, zu Limburg, Luxenburg, und zu Geldern, zu Wurtemberg, zu Ober=und Nieder=Schlesien, zu Mayland, zu Mantua, zu Parma, zu Placenz, zu Guastalla, zu Auschwitz, und Zator; Fuerstinn zu Schwaben; geferstete Graeffin zu Habsburg, zu Flandern, zu Tyrol, zu Henneburg, zu Kyburg, zu Goerz, und zu Gradisca; Markgraeffin des heiligen Roemischen Reichs, zu Burgau, zu Ober=und Nieder=Lausnitz; Graeffin zu Namur; Frau auf der Windischen Mark, und zu Mecheln u. verwittibte Herzoginn zu Lotharingen, und Barr; Gross=Herzoginn zu Toscania, u. u.” See ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 240.18, 1.
Gehens benennet werden mag, allemal mit roth oder schwarz gedruckten authentischen Paessen....

These passes were to be produced by soldiers upon request by any competent authority or person—“ja jede Civil=Person und Landes=Inwohner”—in any “Stadt, Markt, Dorf, und Ort” through which a soldier passed. On the pass, basic information on the soldier was provided to aid in their identification: name, age, religion, hair, eyes, face, and other distinguishing facets, such as what he might be carrying with him. The assumption was that a soldier—a military-aged male—found without a proper escort or pass, in a place where such a person ‘should’ not be, was to be considered a potential deserter until/unless information to the contrary could be provided.

The proclamation went on to enumerate the circumstances under which a deserter found, discovered, or encountered should either be turned over to the state’s representatives or, at the minimum, that such authorities should be notified. It went on to stipulate the reward to be paid for each deserter brought back. Authorities were to pay more for deserters perceived as having a higher value. A single soldier was worth 24 florins as a reward, regardless of whether or not he was actually a cavalryman, dragoon, or regular infantry foot soldier. If the soldier was brought back with a horse then the reward went up to 40 florins. Interestingly enough it did not specify the type of horse or, if that horse had to have previously been a Habsburg horse. On the flip side, the punishment for desertion could still be serious as well as the potential punishments that a subject could face for aiding and abetting a deserter (“Deserteurs=Befoerdere”). Depending on the severity of the person’s actions—or inactions—potential punishments could include 1) the payment of a fine, 2) various corporal punishments, including captivity, and 3) death—with the exact mode of execution dependent upon the sex of the offender, as it stated: “…mit der

463 ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 240.18, 2.
464 The packet of the papers for the proclamation included a rough exemplar on its rear: “…gedruckten authentischen Paessen nach dem hier am Schluss dieses Patents beygedruckten Formulari versehn werden sollen.” A full-text transcription of this exemplar is provided in Appendix C.
In other contexts, such as a 1772 renewal proclamation—enforced “con gli Editti del primo Maggio 1758, e del 5. Guigno 1764 siansi confermate tutte le provvidenze date nel tempo addietro”—sent out to the Habsburg’s Italian possessions, aiding and abetting could take the form of purchasing arms and equipment from a deserting soldier. In that case, when a person knowingly purchased equipment, arms, or a uniform from a deserter, they would be sentenced to the penalty of two years of labor. The 1779 proclamation makes clear that actions made in support of a deserter (including the purchase of black market goods) were punishable, yet incitement and inaction could also be punished, as was made clear in latter sections. If a subject were to “agitare or aid” a not-yet-serving soldier—“einen noch nicht assentirten Recrouten”—the announcement stated: “sollen nach Verschiedenheit der Umstaende poena arbitaria und zwar mit oeffentlicher Arbeit, die geist= und weltliche Obrigkeit aber, wie auch hoheren Standes= und adeliche Personen mit der Haelfte obgedachter Geldstrafe beleget werden.” If a person “could have captured [a deserter], did nothing, or failed to notify the authorities” they were liable for up to three years of punishment. A second-time offender could face a “doubling” of any already-assigned fine and, if not already included in the punishment, “hard or other public labor.” The proclamation closed with the statement that authorities were to enforce the declaration’s tenets, republish it at least every quarter, and announce it to the people in a public manner. Ignorance of the regulations was to be no excuse for failing to comply with the rules; the authorities were to

465 ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 240.18, 1779-06-17.
466 “Secondo: Chiunque comprerà scientemente, o riterrà presso die se Monture, Armi, Vesti die Soldati Disertori, vogliamo, che sia punito irremissibilmente con la pena di due anni pubblici Lavori.” The punishment for knowingly hiring a deserter could be as high as being sent to the galleys and, in general, permanent sentencing to the galleys was a potential punishment for abandoning the Habsburg’s military service: “In primo luogo (proibiamo) a qualunque Persona di qualunque grado, e condizione elle sia, di prestare ajuto, consiglio, o ricetto ai Soldati, che disertano dalle Milizie di Sua Maestà sotto pena corporale estensibile fino alla Galera perpetua, seconda le circostanze de’ casi, e delle Persone.” See ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #897 1772, “1772-20-56.”
not accept such excuses and to apply the punishments for the subject’s responsibility, whether
‘known’ or ‘unknown.’

The requirement to remind the populace of the law in order pass along new information
and remind them of their responsibilities can also be seen in a localized—as in, not for the entire
Monarchy—version of a proclamation regarding deserters sent by the administrators in
‘Ynsbrugg’ (Innsbruck) from 1753. This 1753 document begins by referring to the conditions
under which a subject should appropriately act when encountering a deserter—such as not
providing material aid and, where possible, capturing the person in question and bringing them to
the nearest military authority for a reward of 24 florins. It continued to explain that “schädliche
und gefährliche Ausreissung” was a continued danger and issue for the land of Tyrol. The
document then reiterated the necessary terms, as it explained:

So finden Uns verlasset hiemit auf das schärffiste zu befehlen / dass die ehmahlie
hierunter erlassene Mandata neuverdängen an den gewöhnlichen Orten publiciret / auch
den Unterthanen jene auf die Verhelere und Durchhelfere gesetzte Bestrafung / und
dardurch ihnen selbstern zuziehendes Unglück / entgegen für die Einlieferung der
Ausreissere gewiedmete Taglia per 24. fl. neuverdängen begriflich gemacht werden solle...

Subjects of the Monarchy could still claim a reward for their efforts in bringing deserters to the
authorities and, just as importantly, those that aid and hide deserters could be liable for any
prescribed punishment for such behavior. This was not the only time that a preserved patent
represented the instructions to a single area: a 20-page patent from 1775 was similarly addressed
to the lands of Galicia from Lemberg (Lviv) and spelled out the necessary twelve points of
precaution and rules regarding the treatment of deserters and those that concealed deserters.

467 “Sollten sich Unterthanen oder jemand anderer mit der Unwissenheit erweischlich entschuldigen koennen,
so werden die Obrigkeiten und Vorgesetzte die schwereste Verantwortung und Bestrafung auf sich laden.”
ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 240.18, 1779-06-17.
468 ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 108.6, 1753-05-21.
469 ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 211.11, 1755-05-23, “In Betref der Deserteurs, und Deserteurs=Verheler.”
4. International Correspondence and Desertion Agreements with Neighboring States

In 1753, the Monarchy distributed a proclamation over the signature of Maria Theresa, then Hofkriegsrat Präsident Graf Joseph Harrach, Graf Joseph Esterhazy (Generalfeldwachtmeister), and Heinrich von Beckers, Freyherr von Westerstetten. As a result of high-level discussions and negotiations, this proclamation spelled out the terms of an agreement for “the mutual exchange of k.u.k. troops found in Chur-Pfalz and vice versa.” Almost 1,600 words spread over an introduction and twelve specific points, this document covered the possibilities regarding:

...über mutuele Zurückgebung deren von Unseren Kaiserl. Königl. Trouppen in die Chur=Pfälzische Landschaften überlaufenden = und daselbst auf=fangenden Deserteurcn: dann vice versa von denen Chur=Pfälzischen Trouppen durchgehenden=und von Unseren Kriegs=Officieren, oder Landes=Innwohneren hanfest machenden Ausreissern folgender Tractat abgeredet, und geschlossen worden, von Wort zu Wort also lautend...

Desertion exchange agreements were not an uncommon part of foreign relations in the eighteenth century. Ten years before the announced agreement with Chur-Pfalz, the Habsburgs engaged with the representative of both Electoral Saxony and the Kingdom of Poland, in the person of Augustus of Saxony. This agreement provided a similar level of detail, diving down into the proper rates of exchange for confiscated goods or, in regards to cavalrymen and dragoons, the level of financial and material support for captured and exchanged horses, men, and equipment.

It also included language, similar to proclamations regarding desertion solely within the Habsburg Monarchy, which bound the inhabitants of each state to its rule to not provide aid or support to deserters:

---

470 ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 108.22, 1753-07-01.
Another similar cartel between the “Ihro Koeniglichen Majestat zu Hungarn und Boehm, Ertz=Herzogin zu Oesterreich” and the “Loebl. Schwaebischen Creys” from February 1745 is also preserved regarding “…mutueller Auslieferung beederseitiger Deserteurs…” In the collections of the Hofkriegsrat paperwork preserved by ÖSTA, the collected correspondence for the negotiations of several other exchange agreements can be found. For example, there are several files (including a 51-page one) regarding the creation of a similar agreement with Poland around March 1775, as well as other files regarding the negotiation of an agreement with Bavaria.

When it came to dealing with deserters or captives of foreign armies within the borders of the Habsburg Monarchy, a 1778 decree sent from Freyburg im Breisgau provides insight into the procedure for dealing with such persons. The foremost concern was to properly sort any number of found or captured men into three distinctly actionable groups. Those groups were: 1) Habsburg natives or servicemen, 2) men born in the Holy Roman Empire, including those born in areas controlled by the Prussians, and 3) born Prussians and Pomeranians. The decree defined the first group as: “Seyen dieselbe entweder aus diesseitigen Landen gebuertig, oder in diesseitigen Diensten gestandene, und waehrend der preussischen Gefangenschaft zu jenseitigen Diensten gezwungene Leute.” Men born under the Habsburgs or those that, through various means, came to have served with the Habsburgs were to be treated under one set rules. This group even

---

472 ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 78.24, 1743-11-22. Two versions of this cartel between Saxony, the Habsburg Monarchy, and Poland are preserved in the records of the Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv. The other version is cataloged as FHKA-SUS-Patente 78.16, 1743-09-25 and is most likely an earlier draft of the version cited above.

473 The 1,400-word cartel is entitled “Vertrag ueber die gegenseitige Auslieferung von Deserteuren zwischen Maria Theresia und dem schwaebischen Kreis.” See ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 81.8, “8 Febr. 1745.”

474 Regarding the negotiations with Poland, see ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1775-20-39, 1775-20-42, and 1775-20-48. Regarding Bavaria, see ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1775-20-51.
included those that, as a result of capture, the Prussian army had impressed into service. The second group was those “aus dem Reich, oder aus anderen, als aus diesseitig = und preussischen Landen gebuertig” and the third group singled out those men that were “gebohrne Preussen, oder Pommerer.” In general, the second and third groups were to be taken to the border to be sent home or handed over to the relevant authorities.

Those found to be from the first group, if they were indeed a former Habsburg soldier and judged to be “service capable”, were to be returned to their original unit if possible. If that was not possible or if they were “service capable” and had no prior service, they were to be turned out to the competent authority for recruitment. Those found to be unfit for military service were to be sent to “ihr Geburts= oder sonstiges Wohnort.” If their home or birth city was under enemy occupation or otherwise unavailable for a person to return to, they were to be given a pass to stay in another place, “so that they are able to provide for themselves with their own labor until such time that they can return home.”

A similar situation and language are found in another May 1778 proclamation regarding a general amnesty for deserters, specifically those found both within and without the Monarchy that were deserters from the Habsburg army. In that declaration, that all of those that returned and that were found “to be no longer service capable for the Imperial-Royal military service” were to be allowed to remain in the land without punishment.

For the deserters from non-Habsburg lands, they were to be similarly judged for military service with the Habsburgs and, if not, they were to be sent away via prescribed routes— with the exception of Prussian- or Pomeranian-born deserters who were “alsogleich den
The practice of enlisting deserters from other states was one that was well-established within Europe and the Habsburg Monarchy engaged in the practice; for example, during the height of Seven Years’ War, Hungarian regiments were given the authority to “enlist deserters and foreigners of all nations” on January 3, 1758.

5. ‘…shall be forfeit’: Confiscation Punishments

A decree dated August 8, 1778 and addressed to the lands of Niederösterreich referred to an earlier general pardon and the terms under which a returning deserter could be punished. The earlier text referred to the confiscation of a deserter’s worldly inheritance (“Vermoegens”) as punishment and the new text served as a reminder for how such a punishment was to be carried out, as well as to remind lower authorities “that the returning deserters were to be free from all corporal punishment.”

In a decree from over a decade earlier that was distributed from Innsbruck in 1762, the authorities (in this case, Freyherr Ignatz von Enzenberg) sought to remind the public that, while they had a duty and opportunity to turn in captured deserters to the military authorities, they should take care to not go too far in physically abusing or punishing deserters themselves. The announcement was to serve as a reminder that the proper authorities would punish a deserter. The text closed out by stating: “Als wirdet anmit all Ernsts aufgetragen / dass dem Publico und denen Unterthanen wohl=begreiflich gemacht werde / dass jenen / so

---

477 ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 234.19, 1778-08-11.
478 Duffy, *Army of Maria Theresa*, 47.
479 ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 234.18, 1778-08-08.
480 In the introduction of the announcement, there is the following statement: “Es ist anhero verlaesslichen beygebracht worden / wienach all= jene / so die Deserteurs, oder Treubruechige Ausreissere zu Aufheb=und Handfestmachung anzeigen / oder solche von selbsten anhalten / insgemein verachtet / und ihnen die (Schmach)=Wort / als obe sie ihre Haende in fremden Blut wascheten / zugestossen wurden / wo doch (Sc.) Roem. Kays. Koen. Apostol. Majestaeu u. u. allermildest versichert / dass denen durch die Landes=Insassen einbringenden Ausreisseren an Leben verschonet / und nicht einmal eine mutilirende Leibs=Straff ueber solche verhaenget werden solle....” ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 140.4, 1762-08-09.
Deserteurs aufbringen unter schwerer Straff und Verantwortung nichts in Weeg zu legen

[emphasis added] sondern vielmehr zur Einlieferung derley meineidigen Aussreisseren anzufrischen kommen.\(^{481}\) Confiscation was a commonly prescribed punishment for desertion and other similar acts by non-soldiers and was sometimes administered in conjunction with other punishments. In a 1761 patent, the argument was made that subjects that “choose to emigrate/leave from the Habsburg crown lands” will be liable to not only have their Vermoegen confiscated but also face the penalty of having any inheritance to which they were entitled forfeited. The results of any such confiscations or actions should be turned over for use by the proper authorities as part of their recruiting and armament funds.\(^{482}\)

E. Conclusion

Desertion is a multi-faceted military phenomenon that deserves greater attention than to be, in Mark Weitz’s words regarding desertion during the United States’ Civil War (1861-1865), “summarily dismissed as a ‘natural’ consequence of war.” The decision to leave a battlefield, a bivouacked unit, or a marching regiment reflected an ever-changing calculus on the part of the soldier.\(^{483}\) In the cases presented in this chapter, as well as in the official correspondence analyzed, show that the possibility of forgiveness could—though necessarily would—play a role in a soldier’s decision before and after deciding to desert.

\(^{481}\) ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 140.4, 1762-08-09.
\(^{482}\) “…es moegen sich solche in Unseren Erblanden versteckter halten, oder in auswaertige Laender gehen, mit gleichmaessiger Confiscirung ihres Vermoegens, und dem Verlust deren Erbschafts=Anfaellen bestrafet wissen wollen, also zwar dass hierdurch die sonst gewoehnliche Militar=Straf nicht aufgehoben seyn, sondern wann ein solcher Deserteur betretten wird, derselbe damit nach einen Weeg, wie den anderen beletet, und angesehen, das confiscirte Vermoegen deren Ausreisseren aber zum Besten des Recroutirungs=Fundis verwendet, und in die Recrouten=Cassa eingebracht werden solle….“ ÖSTA FHKA-SUS-Patente 136.6, 1761-06-15.
\(^{483}\) Weitz, A Higher Duty, 1.
The files analyzed in this section did not focus solely on one single aspect of desertion, but rather covered a range: the provision of material help to deserters, requirements for soldiers to carry a proper pass, the exchange of deserters, the ransoms for capturing deserters, and various region-specific desertion decrees. Two oft-repeated subjects included the publication of a general pardon for deserters and reiteration of then-current regulations reminding all subjects about the perils of desertion. From the administrative standpoint of the Habsburg Monarchy, in control as it was over a large military apparatus, the issuance of rules and declarations played a major role in the system meant to 1) ameliorate the deleterious effects of desertion on its musters, 2) enforce its authority over civil and military matters, and 3) provide examples of correct behavior to its subjects. Over the almost-fifty year period studied in this chapter, several trends are worth noting.

First, while the issuance of desertion-related decrees had many different topics, there were many commonalities and the most frequently addressed topic regarding the general disallowance of desertion. Other extenuating circumstances, whether driven by circumstance, time period, or geography might bear mentioning in a declaration, the central drive of these documents was that it was illegal, dishonorable, and unallowable for a soldier to ‘abandon the flag’ of his duty without the permission of his superiors. Furthermore, such illegal, dishonorable, and unallowable behavior, if left unchecked by the justice system, could have deleterious effects on the social fabric. It was, therefore, the duty of all law-abiding subjects of the Habsburg Monarchy to not provide aid, sustenance, employment, or succor to any soldier that has foresworn their duties and deserted—let alone engage in any behavior that might entice or elicit such behavior. The manner and extent of the punishments proscribed by these legal declarations could (and did) change over the course of the eighteenth century, but the underlying justification of these documents did not change—desertion is bad for the army and bad for the Monarchy, so it
was the duty of every soldier, officer, subject, and civil authority to ensure that such behavior was not tolerated (when detected) and prevented (when possible).

The issuance of pardons for desertion, and the processes that made it possible or feasible, was intricately intertwined with domestic issues relating to finance. The training of a soldier—whether by the state as part of a standing army in the eighteenth century or by a military enterpriser in the earlier days—was potentially expensive, both in terms of the time committed and the financial resources that backed it. For hundreds of years, from the Middle Ages through the early modern, the necessity of timely and sufficient funding for armies was an ever-present concern of European governments, as the likely results of a failure to properly provide for an army were desertion, mutiny, looting, and pillaging.

In reference to the actions of the Spanish dynasty’s Army of Flanders in the seventeenth century, “mutiny and desertion were the two principal outlets for soldiers’ frustration.” These two actions—one to escape the situation and one to redress specific concerns through potentially destructive behavior—were often related. One of Philip IV’s advisers, Don Sancho de Zúñiga y Monroy, recognized this when he argued that, while undesirable, desertion provided a pressure relief valve to lessen (or potentially prevent) the oftentimes far-more destructive impact of a mutiny:

The oppression, and the impossibility of escaping from it, would therefore lead to a reappearance of the Flanders mutinies. Those would indeed provide [the soldiers] with the freedom of leave – and with the money to do so!\footnote{484}

In the 1660s, King Louis XIV of France, in a statement regarding amnesty for actions by French soldiers during the previous wars, stated: “…we know that, for the most part, the disorders committed by our soldiers have resulted only from the lack of their pay.”\footnote{485} Next to the

\footnote{484}{Parker, \textit{Army of Flanders}, 175-176.}
\footnote{485}{As cited in John Lynn, “How War Fed War: The Tax of Violence and Contributions during the \textit{Grand Siècle},” \textit{Journal of Modern History}, Vol. 65, No. 2 (Jun., 1993): 290. Lynn also stated, in reference to a 1649 incident when a regiment ran amok and pillaged Thorigny and to specifically answer the question of}
availability of sufficient food supplies, “the discipline of an army was a function of the punctuality of wage payments and, as Fritz Redlich pointed out in the (now-standard) history of military enterprisers during the early modern period: “Contemporary public opinion was aware of it [the necessity of regular and sufficient pay], as the pamphlet literature indicates, and Grimmelshausen remarked that in the Dutch army there were regular wage payments and therefore discipline was kept.”

Deficit financing to achieve timely pay—often a result of the rapid growth of expenditures as, for example, they rose tenfold between 1655 and 1695, a trend continued in the eighteenth century—could strain an early modern state’s credit to the breaking point and the resulting breakdown in pay systems left early modern armies, especially those on the move, susceptible to the effects of desertion. In the case of Habsburg armies in the 1730s and 1740s, these circumstances lowered morale and, consequently “it was reckoned that a regiment marching from the hereditary lands would lose a tenth of its manpower to desertion by the time it reached the Netherlands.”

The devotion of appropriate levels of funding for the army was crucial to an army’s maintenance, so any effort made to reduce the effects of desertion was a viable option—including the granting of pardons and empowering subjects to capture and return deserters—and had the effect of preventing, in Don Sancho de Zúñiga y Monroy’s words, the depredations oft visited upon those that soldiers’ discontent no other options for venting. Viewed in this light, extensive

What could explain such barbarity? “It did not stem solely from the depravity of the troops but erupted from something more basic: these soldiers—like many of their peers—robbed and pillaged because the state that employed them lacked the resources to maintain them…. Indeed, in its large army, the Bourbon monarchy had created a monster it could neither feed nor control; the unprecedented growth of French armed forces simply outstripped government capacity.” (286)

Redlich, German Military Enterpriser, 509. ‘Grimmelshausen’ refers to the author of Simplicissimus, specifically Book IV, Chap. 19 of that work.

Hochdinger, “Military-Fiscal State,” 64. A legacy of the seventeenth century and the multifaceted nature of the relationships the Habsburgs had with their subject lands. For example, a yeoman in Bohemia in 1689 paid approximately 19.3 florins in direct taxes, whereas a similar person in Lower Austria paid 8.3 florins and a Hungarian paid 1 florin; the offset coming in the extraordinary taxes or military services that one may have been required to perform. See Winkelbauer, Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht, vol.1, 449-479.

Wilson, German Armies, 240.
efforts made to ameliorate the effects of desertion were crucial in helping maintain the necessary balance that military administrations worked within. The granting of general pardons, the deputizing of subjects to capture deserters, and the offering of rewards were all efforts to apply differing leverage multiple forms of social disciplining and political action to address a problem that crossed the borders between social, political, military, and economic issues.
CONCLUSION

A. Chapter Summaries

The genesis of “In Service of the State” is rooted in four major historical questions. First, what factors brought men to face the risks to ‘give up the flag’ and become a “Meineidige Flüchtling?” Second, once in a state of desertion, what were the actual consequences faced by deserters in a period marked by wide-scale corporal punishment and public execution? Third, how did the Habsburg Monarchy, as an institution, deal with desertion in concrete terms? Finally, what lessons can be learned from the stories of Habsburg deserters regarding military history, the eighteenth century, and the broader human experience? The short answer to all of these questions is that the motivations that drove deserters were as variable as the possible consequences faced for deserting. As such the Habsburgs attempted to deal with desertion, as both a command and a policy decision, with what seems to have been varying degrees of success throughout the eighteenth century.

To begin to answer these major historical questions regarding Habsburg history, this dissertation proposed a simple question regarding the motivations of soldiers who chose to desert from the military in the eighteenth century: should I stay or should I go? On its face and shorn of all contextualizing factors, it seems to be a simple proposition of deciding whether or not to stay in a specific place, in the company of a specific group of people, for a specific amount of time. Yet, as the four major case studies of these preceding chapters and many smaller anecdotes deployed along the way have shown in detail, this supposedly simple choice faced by soldiers could be anything but (simultaneously) simple, safe, and easy. If these chapters have advanced the field in any way, it has been, at the minimum, to secure the continued importance of
evaluating contextualizing factors when studying desertion—regardless of the specific time
period or geographic location. The Habsburg Monarchy in the eighteenth century, particularly
the period straddling the Seven Years’ War and the War of Bavarian Succession (approx. 1753 to
1781), provides an excellent example of the influence that political, social, and economic changes
exert on military policy, whether such results were intended or not—as much for the eighteenth
century as it does for the twenty-first century.

Chapter 2 began with the proposition that the stories told in two desertion reports illuminate part
of the life of the common soldier serving the Habsburg Monarchy in the eighteenth century.
These two reports covered the combined experiences of 37 deserters from two regiments in 1780.
The chapter drew off of these vivid stories to provide insight regarding why some soldiers served
in face of the harsh conditions and why others chose to flee service. The stories told painted a
picture of eighteenth-century military service marked by: personal difficulties, uncomfortable or
unbearable conditions, and, for some, a paucity of hope that their lot would improve or that they
might be able to return home some day. The lives of soldiers were difficult, even during times of
peace, which nominally diminished the potential of dying on the battlefield. Alcohol-induced
perambulation and alcoholism were significant problems for Habsburg soldiers, as they were for
most eighteenth-century military forces.489 The disciplinary regime faced by these soldiers was
corporal nature, with punishments ranging from the moderate to the severe and the potentially
deadly—not including the legal possibility of receiving the death penalty. To cap things off,
soldiering was oftentimes not a career of choice, but rather a choice of (diminished) opportunity
or desperation to escape whatever less-than-ideal circumstances in which a man may have found

489 The consumption of alcohol was a common practice in military service in the eighteenth century and it
was not unheard of for soldiers or recruits to become dependent on alcohol. Many of the soldiers found as
deserters were the victims of their own proclivities for intoxication. As Arthur Gilbert pointed out when
commenting on the relationship between soldiers and alcohol in the British army, “they were drunk and
either fell asleep, got lost, or were enticed away because of their being ‘in liquor.’” See Gilbert, “Why Men
Deserted,” 560.
himself. Yet, in spite of these circumstances, the information provided in the reports from these
two regiments points to desertion not being a monolithic manpower drain on eighteenth-century
armies. This lines up with recent scholarship that has looked at the non-Habsburg German states
during this period.\textsuperscript{490} Rather, the number of deserters, in comparison to the number of soldiers
that a regiment should have under arms, was relatively low. As explained in the case of
Oroszischen Infanterie Regiment around September 1780, the desertion rate, while numerically
substantial (25), represented approximately only 1\% of the regiment’s strength.\textsuperscript{491} The number of
soldiers that deserted from each of the regiments in question represented a rather low percentage
of the total (nominal) strength of an infantry regiment in the late eighteenth century—and, in both
cases, the majority of these deserters returned or were caught.\textsuperscript{492}

Soldiers in the eighteenth century were required to be proficient in the use of firearms, as
well as capable of reacting quickly to preset commands and engage in complex parade marching
maneuvers. Deserters, like the fellow soldiers they left behind were generally either adult
volunteers or forcible conscripts. Combined with the fact that soldiering was generally not a first-
choice career, commanders and NCOs often fought uphill battles regarding military discipline. In

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{490} Peter Wilson, in his research regarding Württemburg, stated: “Contrary to popular perception,
desertion rates in eighteenth-century German armies were not normally above 5 percent per annum. The
idea that the Prussian army lost a fifth of its strength each year between 1713 and 1740 has been
convincingly disproved. The actual rate was about 1.9 percent. Data on the contemporary Württemberg and
Saxon armies reveal comparable rates of 2 to 5 percent. Though desertion often rose amongst units on
active service, the average was still relatively low.” For more information, Wilson recommended: W. R.
Fann, “Peacetime attrition in the army of Frederick William I 1713-1740,” \textit{Central European History} 12
(1978): 323-34; W. Thurn, \textit{Die Rekrutierung der sächsischen Armee unter August dem Starken (1694-
1733)} (Leipzig, 1912); K. Staudinger, \textit{Geschichte des Kurbayerischen Heeres}, 5 vols. (Munich, 1901-9), ii,

Information regarding the Hessian example can be found in Charles Ingrao, \textit{The Hessian
Mercenary State: Ideas, Institutions, and Reform under Frederick II, 1760-1785} (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1987) and R. Atwood, \textit{The Hessians, Mercenaries from Hessen-Kassel in the American

\textsuperscript{491} Even if one operates under the assumption that the regiments in question, operating outside of a war
environment, had only 50\% of its nominal strength in garrison, desertion represented only 2-2.5\% of the
unit’s strength. While this percentage could add up over the course of the year if none of the soldiers were
catched, the records of the regiments examined in all four case studies show that some percentage of
deserters were recovered.

\textsuperscript{492} Wilson, \textit{War, state and society}, 81.
\end{footnotesize}
sum, of the 25 soldiers that deserted from Oroszischen Regiment, 14 of them explicitly joined because of delinquency, vagabondage, or other forms of misconduct. On the flip side, 11 of the soldiers were listed as “freywillig angeworben” (voluntary enlistment). It should be remembered though that this eighteenth-century definition of voluntary would not match up with twenty-first century standards of volunteerism.493

A most-important conclusion from Chapter 2 regards the general non-application of the death penalty to cases of desertion during this period. None of the deserters profiled in this chapter were executed for their actions. This is particularly surprising as the majority of the deserters from the Oroszischen Regiment in Siebenbürgen were repeat offenders. One conclusion to be drawn from these specific case studies is an affirmation of the following assertion: while officers and administrators may not have valued the specific humanity of each soldier, they certainly showed a willingness to relax the death penalty in the interest of recouping losses. Soldiers represented a large investment in time and money that were too valuable to just execute. Such a shift is important for the organization and administration of a large state. For historians, it shows the development of a disciplinary and judicial ideology capable of seeing soldiers (as well as the equipment and training time that went into ‘making’ one) as an investment and valuable resource worth holding on to. This stands in contrast to a disciplinary regime, made famous to

493 In this matter, the words from Chapter 2 of contemporary observer Jacob Cognazzo and those of Austrian field marshal Charles de Ligne bear repeating. Cognazzo noted: “We should not allow ourselves to be blinded by delusions about ‘love of country’ or ‘inclination towards military service.’ If we take the trouble to investigate the most important impulses which bring the lads to the free recruiting table, we shall find that they are things like drunkenness, a frenzy of passions, love of idleness, a horror of any useful trade, a wish to escape from parental discipline, inclination towards debauchery, an imaginary hope of untrammelled freedom, sheer desperation, the fear of punishment after some sordid crime, or however else you care to define the motives of worthless people like these.” See Cognazzo, Freymüthige Beytrag, 91. Charles de Ligne, an Austrian field marshal (from Brussels) and friend of Joseph II, recommended setting up a recruiting table at county fairs and to wait several days as, with the passage of time, people had time “to run out of money and get into fights” or otherwise become “only too keen to escape justice by enlisting in the army.” Ligne, Mêlanges militaires, 205. Both Cognazzo and de Ligne as quoted in Duffy, Army of Maria Theresa, 48-49.
posterity in the character of the harsh, heartless, yet ruthlessly-efficient Prussian drill sergeant of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Chapter 3 built off of the methodology and systematic analysis of Chapter 2 by expanding the scope of the desertion study to include horse-mounted soldiers, providing a point of comparison to see if there were any differences between the life of foot soldier and the experiences of those who rode high to the battlefield. Artillery may have been considered the ‘ultima ratio regum’ of the early modern army, but the artillery and infantry could never compare to allure carried by the cavalry—the many centuries of social status, prestige, and romanticism of the knights of the Middle Ages. The reports used in Chapter 3 differed from those used in Chapter 2 in that there was less direct and indirect input recorded from the soldiers themselves. Whereas Chapter 2 had the words of individual soldiers from their interrogations filtered through the reporting officers, the reports used in Chapter 3 were more indirect. These reports were generally summative in nature, with less focus on the specific narratives of each of the desertion cases. In doing so, the dragoon reports of Chapter 3 bring to the fore an important element to desertion analysis: the roles played by commanding officers and military administrators in the desertion equation.

What parts did officers, non-commissioned officers, and administrators play in how desertion was prevented, controlled, mitigated, or exacerbated? While the individualized reporting from the Oroszischen and Baron Preysacische Regiments pointed to many of the personal difficulties faced by soldiers—from alcoholism to womanizing to depression—the officer reports for the two dragoon regiments highlighted the opinions of officers. For the officers of these regiments, the primary reasons for desertion related to general disciplinary issues and, more readily, the availability of opportunities to desert presented by large, unguarded areas of the border with other states. In one report, they explicitly state that proximity to the border was the biggest reason behind such “considerable desertion”: “Ob nun zwar das Regiment zu
Verhüthung dieses Übels alle mögliche Vorkehrungen angewendet, selben jedannoch wegen anliegender Chur Sächsichen Gräntzen nicht gänztlich vorbeigen konnte.”

From the side of the soldiers—as far as a researcher can go with the documents given—while the opportunities presented to desert certainly played a role, that was by no means the only consideration. The report laid out other important factors for dragoons deciding whether to stay or go: poor living conditions in their quarters, physically-abusive disciplinary measures by superiors, a lack of adequate supplies, and other ‘quality of life’ issues. One gets the sense from the dragoon regiment reports that soldiers of the eighteenth century were ‘rounded’ individuals—as opposed to ‘flat’ or stock caricatures of unthinking peasants—capable of reasoning out the consequences of their actions against the many potentially severe punishments, as well as the potential rewards: a return to their family, the possibility of recruiting bonuses with another army, or freedom from military service. On the administrative side, the dragoon cases highlighted the importance of the furlough system, one of the more effective tools available to armies in preventing desertion, which gained widespread traction in Europe during the eighteenth century. The furlough system, on top of its cost-saving and labor-saving benefits, helped defuse some of the tension created by prolonged periods of serving under a military regime: homesickness, the desire/necessity to support one’s family, and, perhaps, though not specifically mentioned in the report, the boredom of garrison life. This is not to say that furlough systems were completely effective, as desertion continued to be an issue. Rather the claim made by “In Service of the State” is that furlough systems were one of the more-effective tools available to commanders and military administrators in controlling and ameliorating the effects of desertion.

One of the most important lessons to be learned from the Coburg Regiment’s cases was that the elimination of peacetime (or garrison) desertion was not a simple proposition. Reforming administrative practice to allow for greater ease in regularizing furlough or leave policies could

494 ÖSTA KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten 1774-20-189.
have helped in the case of some homesick soldiers, while changes to the terms of a soldier’s service might have prevented others from viewing their situations as hopeless. Changes to the regulations governing the use of corporal punishment, which would not be seriously addressed until the middle of the nineteenth century, might have prevented the desertion of yet more who mentioned physical violence as a motivator to desert. Yet, either of those fixes (furlough or corporal punishment) would have required major changes to the recruitment and retention practices. Furthermore, it would have required reevaluation of the threats faced by the Habsburg Monarchy and what steps were necessary (however loosely defined) to face those threats. This last bit should be of particular interest to scholars of modern military studies: what are the national security threats faced by the state and how much of security apparatus are necessary (or desired) to deal with the threats?

In the end, Habsburg officers and military officials were products of their environment and, as the reports for the Zweýbrück and Coburg regiments show, they chose to focus on how to prevent desertion by (first) controlling the ability of soldiers to escape and (second) influencing the desire of soldiers to escape. For many of them, the opportunity to desert was just as important a consideration as whether or not the soldier was inclined towards indiscipline: as the chapter title, which is a direct quote from the reporting officer, stated: “Die gantze Ursach der Desertion wäre die nahe Gräntze.” Military administrators and army officers for the Habsburgs in the 1700s were products of an environment that saw explicit connections between a person’s ability to engage in right and moral behavior and the level of monitoring and control that could be brought to bear: physical discipline and social discipline often went hand-in-hand. A soldier given no opportunity to engage in bad behavior will instead do the right thing.

The case studies of the Coburg and Zweýbrück Dragoon Regiments point to a multitude of reasons for disciplinary issues in an eighteenth century military unit—from fighting and starvation up to desertion. The reports make explicit that officers and military administrators
viewed a unit’s location as the leading cause of desertion, with other excuses being subordinate to that factor. The common soldiers, if presented with the opportunity to desert from their unit, will take said opportunity to run, according to Habsburg military leaders. On the other side, it appears from the little information provided on the cases of individual soldiers that personality and circumstance played the largest roles. Some of them would be motivated to take advantage of the situation because of long-standing ‘personal’ issues: homesickness, a general dislike of military service, or proclivities for chasing women and gambling. Other soldiers will be motivated by more-acute reasons to desert: peer pressure to make a run for it; in reaction to an argument or confrontation with another member of the regiment; or as the result of the consumption of large amounts of alcohol.

Stepping away from the individual case studies of Chapters 2 and 3, Chapter 4 focused on the history of the Habsburg’s central military administrative body. This chapter shows that the Hofkriegsrat in Vienna played a vital role in the administration of the Habsburg’s standing army from the late seventeenth century until its dissolution and replacement in 1848 by the Kriegsministerium. By virtue of this position the Hofkriegsrat was crucial to the creation, modification, and execution of military policies in the Habsburg Monarchy. As the supreme military advisory body, the Hofkriegsrat was both an actor in-and-of-itself as well as a representative of the Habsburg monarch. The documents and narratives told in this chapter highlighted two important research notes regarding the Hofkriegsrat. First, it focused on how desertion was a military issue that had both civilian and administrative nexuses. The Hofkriegsrat and its local representative bodies and officials served as connections between these different considerations. As the case studies presented in the first chapters showed, soldiers of the eighteenth century were not necessarily the stock characters portrayed by commanding officers—the decision to desert was not always a simple judgment based on opportunity or a soldier’s
proclivities towards *Liederlichkeit*. Desertion was not solely a military phenomenon, but rather the result of confluence of (to varying degrees and levels) social, political, economic, and military issues.

The second important research note regarding the Hofkriegsrat is the level to which it has been historiographically underserved. A body presided over at various times by many of the Habsburg’s most notable generals and military leaders, the Aulic War Council sat at the top of one of the pillars that supported the early modern Habsburg Monarchy. In the over 150 years since its dissolution, not much has been written on its functions and even less has been written on its influence in the Monarchy. In undertaking a short survey of this institution’s structure and roles through the use of small case studies, “In Service of the State” serves as a call for more in-depth research into this vitally-important institution. In the narrowest sense, the Habsburg Monarchy is better served when its institutions are better understood. The many Habsburg successor states across central and eastern Europe are better served when the history they can draw off of is more robust. In a broader sense, this dissertation’s treatment of an eighteenth century army’s central institutions through the lens of case study highlights a necessary balance in military history. Too much small detail loses the big picture and the same can be said for when a study focuses too much on the big picture.

Early in Chapter 4, it was asked whether senior Habsburg military officials pursued policies—in particular, the use of general pardons—in the Hofkriegsrat designed to increase the number of available soldiers by a) decreasing the number of deserters [as opposed to training new ones] or b) decreasing the number of deserters [as a result of a paradigm shift regarding military service]. While this chapter made no definitive claim regarding the motivations of these officials during this period, it was possible to discern some elements of both sides. Desertion represented a drain on the Habsburg military budget and the army’s capabilities, two things that the Monarchy could ill-afford during the mid-eighteenth century. Policies and initiatives could lessen the
effects of desertion, so they bore serious consideration by military administrators. On the other side, it is worth remembering that the death penalty was almost entirely absent from the Deserteure-marked files of the Hofkriegsrat analyzed in Chapter 4. The death penalty was a standard punishment for many illegal activities, including desertion. Yet, by the period between the Seven Years’ War and the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars, there was an “appreciation that a trained soldier was a valuable resource, too valuable simply to be hanged by his own employer.” This is not a ringing endorsement for a paradigm shift in how soldiers were viewed in regards to their human worth, but it was part of a greater trend towards a more ‘humane’ disciplinary regime in the military. It must, however, be remembered that (1) ‘running the gauntlet’ was not banned until 1855, (2) the general use of corporal punishment was not banned until the 1860s, (3) Leopold II undid some of Joseph II’s decisions, and (4) other states continued to view the use of the death penalty as a standard response for deterring and punishing deserters.

Future historical inquiries by scholars into the social, political, and economic conditions of the post-Bavarian Succession war period might provide insight into this military phenomenon. What else can be learned from the other trends in the number of archived files? This source-based analysis and narratives provide extra pieces to the military history puzzle that is necessary to understand the Habsburg Monarchy in the eighteenth century. In 1994, one notable historian stated after surveying two major works in the field: “This aspect [the Habsburg army as an integral part of the state] of Habsburg policy…is one of the least explored…. [These works] yield little on the army as an institution of state.” By framing within this argument—the army as an institution and integral part of the Habsburg state—this chapter has picked up on the

495 Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 135.
496 For references to the British perspective on desertion in the middle and later parts of the eighteenth century, with particular references to George Washington and General Jeffery Amherst, see Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service” (2007).
The most urgent need now (to return to and stress Robert Evans’s hint) is for full-scale studies of the armed forces not as an executive instrument of foreign policy but as a multifaceted institution of the state, fully integrated into the administrative, social, economic, and intellectual context and thus perfectly inseparable from the civilian’s world.\(^{498}\)

Desertion, its prevention, and its mitigation were military problems that required the cooperation and intervention of civilian authorities on occasion. Desertion could be, and in many cases was, the result of a soldier’s fear of death in combat. During peacetime, however, a soldier’s decision to desert could be, and in just as many case was, the result of the competing desires of a multifaceted individual, integrated within overlapping systems of social, economic, and political influence. Whether it was to provide funding for necessary equipment for soldiers or to create a system that allowed for deserted soldiers to return, civilian and military officials cooperated—to varying degrees—to deal with desertion. Historians studying the eighteenth century and military history should take heed of this cooperation to find the common links between political, social, economic, and military history writing.

If Chapter 4 served to highlight the need to study institutions, Chapter 5 took that a step further by focusing on how the institutions highlighted in the earlier chapters—the regiments that organized men and the central military authorities that guided regiments—acted as arms of the most-centralized institution: the Monarchy itself. While the other chapters dealt with desertion as part of the military (re: actionable) side of the equation, Chapter 5 took a broader view of desertion by going to the policy level. What were the Monarchy-wide policy decisions regarding desertion during this time period? Can trends be discerned in the decrees and pardons issued that

mirrored what was seen with the individual cases from Chapters 2 and 3—some localized, specific conditions and concerns? Or were they part of a broader understanding and mission of how soldiers should be handled?

The decision to leave a battlefield, a bivouacked unit, or a marching regiment reflected an ever-changing calculus on the part of the soldier.\textsuperscript{499} In the cases presented in this chapter, as well as the official correspondence analyzed, show that the possibility of forgiveness could—though not necessarily would—play a role in a soldier’s decision before and after deciding to desert. There were commonalities and trends held in the documents analyzed worth noting. Overall, the proclamations, decrees, and announcements spoke to many of the necessities regarding the treatment of deserters and the management of a large standing army. Two issues generally rose to the top: (1) the necessity to assert the monarchy’s control over legal and disciplinary issues and (2) the centrality of recruitment concerns to the ability of the military to retain personnel. For the multitude of reasons shown in the case studies of the first chapters, recruitment was a difficult prospect for standing armies, so monarchs and their agents were not above, to borrow the words of Sanders Marble, “scrapping the bottom of the barrel” in regards to both recruitment and supply.\textsuperscript{500} Whether it was the offering of rewards to turn people in or the use of extra punishments for the theft of military property—or, conversely, the rewards offered for bringing to the authorities both deserters and/or military property (regardless of its provenance)—the documents analyzed in Chapter 5 demonstrate the importance of sufficient financial resources to the proper maintenance of a military force. To paraphrase the previously cited Zuñiga y Monroy from Chapters 1 and 5, a lack or insufficiency in the pay, supplies, and/or quarters provided to an army results at best in discontent and desertion—at worst it results in pillage and rebellion. These

\textsuperscript{499} Weitz, \textit{A Higher Duty}, 1.
deficiencies were historically often the likely result of deficient economic, social, and political support for the military establishment.

The manner and extent of the punishments proscribed by these legal declarations could (and did) change over the course of the eighteenth century, but the underlying justification for each of these documents did not change: desertion is bad for the army and bad for the Monarchy. Therefore, it was the duty of every soldier, officer, subject, and civil authority to ensure that such behavior was not tolerated (when detected) and that all efforts were made to ensure that such behavior was prevented (when possible). The granting of general pardons, the deputizing of subjects, and the offering of rewards were all efforts to apply differing types leverage to ensure the social disciplining of the Monarchy. Furthermore, it highlighted the need for political action to address a problem that crossed the borders between social, political, military, and economic issues.

**B. Concluding Remarks**

One type of previous scholarly work on desertion in the Habsburg Monarchy treated desertion as an individual phenomenon, while some have used desertion as a data point for various broader social or political issues. There are also works on desertion that have tended to focus on desertion’s relationship to broader disciplinary regimes, viewing them as reflections of the states or rulers at their head and using that information to develop points of comparison between the early modern states. One of the most popular and persistent comparisons in the historical imagination of scholars of Central Europe is the contrast and comparison of the Habsburgs (Austria) versus the Hohenzollerns (Prussia). In comparison to this historiography, the case studies and administrative history provided here push the field forward in two specific ways: one regarding the state and availability of the source material and the other regarding the
importance of the Habsburg Monarchy to historical study. By focusing on the role of the military as an arm of the state, “In Service of the State” did not artificially divide the Habsburg Monarchy into its constituent “pillars,” but rather attempted to unite the best elements of social, political, economic, and military analyses of a given phenomenon: desertion. On the other hand, “In Service of the State” serves important historical and historiographical purposes by bringing to the fore the wealth of untapped potential held by the archives: not just the central archives in Vienna, but also the smaller provincial, local, and ecclesiastical archives that dot central Europe like so many beacons to guide future historical study.

The full story of desertion in the Habsburg Monarchy during the eighteenth century remains to be told and the hope is that “In Service of the State” has provided guidance to future scholars and historical projects. There are still many stories that need to be explored further, from desertion to military administration and social organization, if historians are to ever fully understand how the Habsburg Monarchy held itself together for as long as it did. For historians to understand the role played by early modern justice system in influencing social and political decisions, the case studies of desertion presented by “In Service of the State” are only the tip of the iceberg in regards to the functions of the Habsburg civil and military justice systems. A story told about an eighteenth-century hussar provides insight into the complicated, yet fascinating nature of military service in the 1700s. Khevenhüller-Metsch, the court master of ceremonoes for Maria Theresa, recounted an event and parade held in honor of a hussar regiment in Vienna on 1 July 1743. Khevenhüller-Metsch told the story of one specific hussar:

Among the ranks was a private hussar of uncommon strength. Her Majesty [Maria Theresa] at once ordered him to put on a display in her presence. He lifted up a royal chamberlain, the younger Count Wilczec, with his left arm. This gentleman was pretty corpulent, and must have weighed almost three hundredweight, yet the hussar carried him almost playfully up and down the room as if he had been a child, and showed not the slightest strain.
Having earned royal favor at this event and fame in the records of the court chamber, one could plausibly surmise that this hussar went on to do great things—or, at the very least, lived a long and full life based on the notoriety gained that day in July. Christopher Duffy notes, however, that “not long afterwards the herculean hussar was shot for robbery.”

Somewhere between being a darling of the royal court and a criminal, there is a story that encompasses the panoply of experiences faced by eighteenth-century soldiers—a story that needs to be further explored and developed so that scholars can better understand the ties that bind (and separate) the individual elements of the ‘heterogeneous agglutination’ called human society. Not just as a simple chronicle listing of events or a mechanistic statements of specific policy, rather the documents waiting to be exploited and explored by researchers open the door to deep, multifaceted human stories. From the soldier denied furlough status because of an unspecified Mord-That to the interrogation statements of captured deserters, the stories they tell about the eighteenth-century Habsburgs, their allies, and their enemies are waiting for historians to find and share them with the world.

---

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Number of Documents Marked “Desertion”

Number of documents marked with a “desertion” rubric in the collected Hofkriegsrat Akten in the collections of the Kiegsarchiv, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv. 1753 saw the introduction of the rubric system that lasted until 1801, with the archival system being radically overhauled for 1802.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1753</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1754</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1756</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1757</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1758</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1759</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1762</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1763</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1765</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1766</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1767</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1768</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1769</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1776</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1777</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1778</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1779</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1781</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1782</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1783</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

List of Hofkriegsrat Heads

The following is a list of men that served as the President or chief councilor of the Hofkriegsrat from its inception in the 16th century until the Aulic War Council’s dissolution in 1848.

This list is derived from the work of Oskar Regele. See Regele, Hofkriegsrat, pp. 73-78. According to Regele, Hofkirchen (1578-1584) is considered to be the first to carry the title of “Hofkriegsrat-Präsident.” Subsequent presidents of the Hofkriegsrat also carried a military title (ex. General, Feldzeugmeister, Feldmarschall, etc.), as well as personal titles of nobility, and were more commonly known by those one of those titles rather than as the President of the Hofkriegsrat.

1556-1560: Ehrenreich Königsberg
1560-1566: Gebhard Weizer
1566-1578: Georg Frhr Frhr Teuffel
1578-1584: Wilh. Frhr. V. Hofkirchen
1584-1599: David Frhr Ungnad v. Wiessenwolf und Sonnegg
1599-1600: Melchior Frhr. Redern
1600-1610: Karl Ludwig Gf. Sulz
1610-1619: Johann Frhr v. Molart
1619-1624: Johann Kaspar v. Stadion
1624-1630: Rambald Gf. Collalto
1630-1632: John. Christof Frhr. v. Löbel
1632-1649: Heinrich Gf. Schlick zu Bassano und Weisskirchen
1649-1665: Wenzel Fürst Lobkowicz, Herzog von Sagan
1665-1668: Hannibal, Fürst Gonzaga
1668-1680: Raimund Reichsgraf Montecuccoli
1681-1691: Hermann Markgraf Baden-Baden
1692-1701: Ernst Rüdiger Gf. Starhemberg
1701-1703: Heinrich Franz Reichsfürst Mannsfeld und Fondi
1703-1736: Eugen Prinz v. Savoyen
1766-1774: Franz Moritz Gf. Lacy
1774-1790: Andreas Gf. Hadik v. Futak
1796-1801: Ferdinand Gf. Tige
1801-1809: Erzherzog Karl
1809-1813: Heinrich Gf. Bellegarde
1814-1820: Karl Fürst Schwarzenberg
1820-1825: Heinrich Gf. Bellegarde
1825-1830: Friedrich Prinz zu Hohenzollern
1830-1831: Ignaz Gf. Gyulay
1831: Johann Gf. Frimont
1831-1848: Ignaz Gf. Hardegg
1848: Karl Ludwig Gf. Ficquelmont
1848: Theodor Baillet de Latour
APPENDIX C

Transcription of a furlough pass exemplar appended to a desertion declaration for Oberösterreich

The pass would use red or black ink letters to make it distinct. For the entire declaration, see FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 240.18, 1779-06-17.

“Nachdem Vorzeiger dieses ____________________________ aus von gebuertig, des Alters ______ Jahre, Religion, _______________, von Profession, _______________ Standes, _______________ Person, _______ Haaren, ___________ Augen, _______________ Gesichte, am Leibe tragend ________ ein ______________________ von hier ______________________ abgehen will: Also ist ihm gegenwaertiger Pass ertheilet worden, auf dass er dahin frey passiret werden moege. Gegeben Stabsquartier zu Linz, am _____________________

APPENDIX D

Transcription of passes for returned or captured deserters that met certain qualifications based on their land of origin

Originals are found in the text of the following archival document: FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 234.19, 1778-08-11.

“Nro. 1.
Formulare
Des Laufzedels fuer einen preussischen Deserteur, der ein Innlaender ist, und in sein Geburts- oder Aufenthalts = Ort zurueckkehret.

Demnach Vorweiser dieses (Namen) ein preussischer Deserteur, welcher ein Kaiserl. Koenigl. Unterthan aus (Namen) zu seyn bekennet, und sich nacher Haus zu begeben Willens ist; Als wird ihme zu seiner sicheren Rueckkehr gegenwaertiges Zeugniss hiemit ertheilet.

Nro. 2.
Formulare

Demnach Vorweiser dieses (Namen) ein preussischer Deserteur, welcher ein Kaiserl. Koenigl. Unterthan aus (Namen) zu seyn bekennet, sich aber Unsicherheit halber dermalen nach Haus nicht begeben kann; Als wird demselben hiemit erlaubet, sich in die ruckwaerts gelegene diesseitige Lande verfuegen, und allda durch seine Hand = Arbeit die beduerftige Nahrung so lang, bis er wiederum nach Haus in (Namen) zurueckkehren zu koennen sicher seyn wird, suchen zu doerfen.

Nro. 3.
Formulare
Des Laufzedels fuer auswaerts gebohrne Deserteurs.

Demnach Vorweiser dieses (Namen) ein preussicher Deserteur von hier in das Roemische Reich (fuer gebohrne Preussen, und Pommerer addatur: und zwar geraden Wegs, ohne sich in denen kaiserl. koenigl. Erblanden irgendwo aufzuhalten) ueber (hier sind die Orte specifizé zu benennen) dahin abzugehen gewiesen wird; als hat gedachter (Namen) sich nach dieser vorgeschriebenen Route genau zu achten, und deme allen durch die kaiserl. koenigl. Erblande desto gewisser nachzuleben, als im widrigen derselbe ohne weiterem angehalten, und beym Kopf genommen werden wuerde.”
APPENDIX E

Full list of archival documents used by “In Service of the State” from the Austrian State Archives (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv)

FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 66.9, 1733-08-06
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 76.21
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 78.16, 1743-09-25
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 78.24, 1743-11-22
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 79.4 “30 Jaenn 1744”
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 80.19, “12. Oktober 1744”
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 81.8, “8 Febr. 1745”
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 92.11, 1749-10-30
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 92.16
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 95.31, 27 August 1750, “Strafpatent gegen die Verhehler von Deserteuren”
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 108.22, 1753-07-01
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 108.6, 1753-05-21
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 124.2, “27. Jänner 1757”
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 130.8, “1759-06-30”
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 136.6, 1761-06-15
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 139.1, 1762-04-12
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 140.4, 1762-08-09
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 143.26, “30 May 1763”
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 149.29, 1764-09-07
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 152.22, 1765-02-28
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 169.6, 1768-01-30
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 171.5, 28.09.1768
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 211.11, 1755-05-23
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 233.20, 1778-05-03
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 234.18, 1778-08-08
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 234.19, 1778-08-11
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 240.18, 1779-06-17
FHKA-SUS-Patente, Kt. 250.11, 1781-01-08

HHStA-Kriegsakten 331, #384
HHStA-KA-StR Patente und Zirkulare 6 1758-1760, 227
HHStA-KA-StR Patente und Zirkulare 6 1758-1760, 250
HHStA-KA-StR Patente und Zirkulare 8 1763-1764, “26 Novembr 1763”

KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #402 1759 30-48/Apr, 1759-36-(06)-299
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #415 1760 32/Jul-60/Feb, 1760-48-(05)-588
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #428 1761 33-47/Aug, 1761-36-(11)-300
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588 1767 11/Jan/273-14/Dez, 1767-14-(05)-275
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588 1767 11/Jan/273-14/Dez, 1767-14-(06)-91
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588 1767 11/Jan/273-14/Dez, 1767-14-(06)-400
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588 1767 11/Jan/273-14/Dez, 1767-14-(09)-111
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588 1767 11/Jan/273-14/Dez, 1767-14-(09)-202
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588 1767 11/Jan/273-14/Dez, 1767-14-(09)-245
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588 1767 11/Jan/273-14/Dez, 1767-14-(09)-670
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588 1767 11/Jan/273-14/Dez, 1767-14-(12)-299
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #588 1767 11/Jan/273-14/Dez, 1767-14-(12)-552
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #633 1768 13/Jan-18/Mar/331, 1768-14-(02)-363
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #633 1768 13/Jan-18/Mar/331, 1768-14-(02)-517
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #633 1768 13/Jan-18/Mar/331, 1768-14-(03)-265,
  "Zahlungs=Entwurff Pro Mense Februario [1]768"
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #633 1768 13/Jan-18/Mar/331, 1768-14-(04)-528
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #633 1768 13/Jan-18/Mar/331, 1768-14-(09)-484
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #686 1769 26/46-30/395, 1769-27-2
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #686 1769 26/46-30/395, 1769-27-167
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #686 1769 26/46-30/395, 1769-27-214
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #686 1769 26/46-30/395, 1769-27-220
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #738 1770 19/41-23/200, 1770-20-5
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #738 1770 19/41-23/200, 1770-20-7
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #738 1770 19/41-23/200, 1770-20-26
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #738 1770 19/41-23/200, 1770-20-54
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #738 1770 19/41-23/200, 1770-20-59
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #738 1770 19/41-23/200, 1770-20-73
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #811 1771 19/211-23/334, 1771-20-69
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #811 1771 19/211-23/334, 1771-20-97
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #811 1771 19/211-23/334, 1771-20-156
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #811 1771 19/211-23/334, 1771-20-205
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #897 1772 19/206-23/270, 1772-20-42
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #897 1772 19/206-23/270, 1772-20-56 (Italian)
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #953 1773 19/186-23/237, 1773-20-103
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #953 1773 19/186-23/237, 1773-20-119
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1006 1774 19/296-23/109, 1774-20-189
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1060 1775 19/301-23/233, 1775-20-39
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1060 1775 19/301-23/233, 1775-20-42
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1060 1775 19/301-23/233, 1775-20-48
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1060 1775 19/301-23/233, 1775-20-51
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1127 1776 19/281-20/200, 1776-19-316
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306 1781 11/412-14/35, 1781-14-1
KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten #1306 1781 11/412-14/35, 1781-14-18

KA, Feldakten (1668), Raimundo Montecuccoli to Leopold I on the effects of the practices which began with the decree issued by Matthias, Nov. 7, 1668, =XIII, 4
### APPENDIX F

**Coburg Dragoon Regiment Straf Protocollen: 1 November 1773 to 8 August 1774**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Given</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Punishment Received</th>
<th>Description of Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1773/11/29</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Schullen, Frantz</td>
<td>25 cane strikes</td>
<td>Away from quarters (&quot;aus seinen Quartier geblieben...&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773/11/27</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Skala, Thomas</td>
<td>25 cane strikes</td>
<td>Raufhandel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773/11/27</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Zindel</td>
<td>48 cane strikes</td>
<td>Raufhandel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773/11/27</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Kummer</td>
<td>1 hour of &quot;Gewehrtragen&quot;</td>
<td>Raufhandel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773/12/15</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Schatten</td>
<td>15 cane strikes</td>
<td>Diebstahl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773/12/20</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Diebeck</td>
<td>7 cane strikes</td>
<td>Away from quarters (&quot;aus ihren Quartier an einen andere Ort gegangen&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773/12/20</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Stiasny</td>
<td>7 cane strikes</td>
<td>Away from quarters (&quot;aus ihren Quartier an einen andere Ort gegangen&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773/12/20</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Kosack</td>
<td>7 cane strikes</td>
<td>Away from quarters (&quot;aus ihren Quartier an einen andere Ort gegangen&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773/12/24</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Hanslick</td>
<td>¼ hour (Fl---)tragen</td>
<td>Raufhandel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773/12/24</td>
<td>Vice Corporal</td>
<td>Richardt</td>
<td>¼ hour (Fl---)tragen</td>
<td>Raufhandel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/2/12</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Schallen</td>
<td>20 cane strikes</td>
<td>Drunkenness, Away from quarters (&quot;betrunken in andere Ortschaften des Nachts Excessen gemacht&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/4/19</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Stiasny</td>
<td>19 cane strikes</td>
<td>Schlägerey mit seinen Wirth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/5/18</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Wüntsch</td>
<td>15 cane strikes</td>
<td>Smuggling salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/8/8</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Zindel</td>
<td>25 cane strikes</td>
<td>Away from quarters (&quot;nächlicher weile in andere Ortschaften...&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/8/8</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Beranecz</td>
<td>3 cane strikes</td>
<td>Away from quarters (&quot;nächlicher weile in andere Ortschaften...&quot;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Obrist Division, 2te Escadron

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Given</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Punishment Received</th>
<th>Description of Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1773/11/2</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Daupmann</td>
<td>12 cane strikes</td>
<td>(&quot;weil er einem Cadet ein Schupftuch entfremdet&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773/11/22</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Kallioth</td>
<td>12 cane strikes</td>
<td>Uncleanliness after being warned (&quot;Unreinigkeit auf den Kopf nach dreimaligen Ermahnungen&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/1/12</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Hlideck</td>
<td>12 cane strikes</td>
<td>Drunkenness and fighting (&quot;wegen Trunkenheit und Raufhändeln&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/3/18</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Blass</td>
<td>15 cane strikes</td>
<td>Away from quarters with a woman (&quot;weil er über Nacht aus seinen Quartier bey eine liederlichen Weibbild geblieben&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/1/11</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Treiber, Heinrich</td>
<td>4 runs of the gauntlet (100 men)</td>
<td>Desertion, returned by capture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/1/12</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Wedleiselig</td>
<td>&quot;von Regiment mit lauf zettel expedirt&quot;</td>
<td>Desertion, self-returned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/2/5</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Siebert</td>
<td>9 runs of the gauntlet (100 men)</td>
<td>Desertion, returned by capture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Obrist Lieutenants Division, Erste Escadron

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Given</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Punishment Received</th>
<th>Description of Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1773/12/15</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Siebert</td>
<td>6 cane strikes</td>
<td>Away from post (&quot;von der Stallwacht des Nachts weg gegangen&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Offense</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/2/7</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Bayn</td>
<td>Theft (&quot;seiner Cameraden eine (Cartaetschen entwendet&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/3/24</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Bergmann</td>
<td>Away from post and in a forbidden area               (&quot;weil er sich an einen verboten Ort aufgehalten, und zu ExercizZeit vor&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/4/8</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Watzofsky</td>
<td>Away from post without permission (&quot;ohne Erlaubnuß in ein fremden dorf des Nachts geräßen&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/4/18</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Mickschick</td>
<td>Diebstahl from comrades (&quot;wegen einen an seine(n) Cammeraden (v)erüben diebstahl&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/4/20</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Siebert</td>
<td>Diebstahl from comrades (&quot;wegen diebstahl an seinen Cameraden&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/5/3</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Steinbach</td>
<td>Uncleanliness of gear, at muster (&quot;weil er seine Rüstung zu Musterung nicht geputzt,&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/5/6</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Schweginger</td>
<td>Away from post at night (&quot;weile er des Nachts (ohne Erlaubnuß in einen andere dorf ge(wes)ien&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/5/16</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Zanger</td>
<td>Arguing (with Corporal) (&quot;wegen Raisoniren gegen den Corporal&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/5/30</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Salesky</td>
<td>Unceleanliness of gear, after 2 warnings (&quot;weile er n(o)ch zweÿmaligen Ermahnen seine Sachen nicht geputzt&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/6/12</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Hess</td>
<td>Away from assigned post (&quot;von der Stalle(wacht) nächtlicher weile abgangen&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/7/6</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Siebert</td>
<td>Disobedience (&quot;wegen Ungehorsam&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/7/28</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Watzowsky</td>
<td>Disobedience (&quot;wegen Ungehorsam&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/7/30</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Knitschch</td>
<td>Disobedience (&quot;wegen Ungehorsam&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/8/8</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Bickleck</td>
<td>Arguing (with Corporal) (&quot;gegen seinen Corporal raisonirt&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/2/10</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Lobermeyer</td>
<td>Desertion, self-returned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ObrigLieutenants Division, 2te Escadron**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Offense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1773/12/15</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Dessaneck</td>
<td>Arguing (with Corporal) (&quot;gegen seinen Corporal raisonirt&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/3/2</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Heinz</td>
<td>Fighting with (landlord?) (&quot;seinen Hauswirth gepruegt&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/3/25</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Sedig</td>
<td>Refused to go home, argued with Corporal (&quot;von der (Muhi---?) Abends nicht zu Haus gehen wollen, und gegen den Corporal(en) raisonirt&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/3/25</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Peterka</td>
<td>(same as above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/3/25</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Mareck</td>
<td>(same as above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/5/26</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Kellner</td>
<td>Theft (&quot;wegen diebstahl an seinen Cameraden&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/6/12</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Smolla</td>
<td>Licentiousness (&quot;wegen liederlichkeit&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/6/22</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Smolla</td>
<td>Unceleanliness of gear, argumentative (&quot;seine Sachen nicht geputzt, und noch raisonirt&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/1/2</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Keller</td>
<td>Planned to desert (&quot;wegen Vorgehabter Desertion&quot;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Majors Division, Erste Escadron**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Offense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1774/2/2</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Zoubrick</td>
<td>Licentiousness (&quot;wegen liederlichkeit&quot;), after 3 warnings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1774/5/21  | Gemeiner    | Maschek     | Uncleanliness of gear ("weil sie ihre..."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Punishment</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1774/5/21</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Mueller</td>
<td>10 cane strikes</td>
<td>&quot;Ruestung nicht getputzt&quot; (same as above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/6/9</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Wieldt</td>
<td>20 cane strikes</td>
<td>Away from post (&quot;wegen nachtlichen Auslaufen nach dreymaligent Arrest&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/6/12</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Krzischeck</td>
<td>20 strokes</td>
<td>Drunkennes and &quot;wantonly hunting&quot; (&quot;wegen Trunkenheit and muthwillig mit den Pferdt gejagt&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/6/19</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Pfeifer</td>
<td>20 strokes</td>
<td>Rauferey and Spiel (&quot;wegen Spiel and Rauferey&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/6/19</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Kuefel</td>
<td>20 strokes</td>
<td>(same as above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/7/10</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Kafka</td>
<td>6 strokes</td>
<td>Argumentative (&quot;wegen Raisoniren&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/7/20</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Wieldt</td>
<td>25 strikes</td>
<td>Rauferey and Spiel (&quot;wegen Spiel and Rauferey&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Majors Division, 2te Escadron</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773/12/18</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Nemetz</td>
<td>25 strikes</td>
<td>Away from post (&quot;wegen nachtlichen Auslaufen&quot;) and argumentative (&quot;Raisoniren&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/2/8</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Mueller</td>
<td>25 strikes</td>
<td>Selling goods and licentiousness (&quot;wegen verkaufter Fourage und liederlichkeit&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/3/12</td>
<td>(Ebenderselbe?)</td>
<td>Running the gauntlet</td>
<td>Theft (&quot;wegen begangene diebstahl&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/3/25</td>
<td>Gemeiner</td>
<td>Nowack</td>
<td>10 strikes</td>
<td>Running away and argumentativeness (&quot;wegen Auslaufen und Raisoniren&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/6/4</td>
<td>Corporal</td>
<td>Sodmirsky</td>
<td>25 strikes</td>
<td>Mistreatment of subordinates (?) (&quot;sich wieder die Subordination vergangen&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/6/27</td>
<td>Vice Corporal</td>
<td>Hoeldt</td>
<td>15 strikes</td>
<td>Running away and argumentativeness (&quot;wegen nachtlichen Auslaufen und Raisoniren&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774/8/1</td>
<td>Corporal</td>
<td>Krisch</td>
<td>12 cane strikes</td>
<td>For giving unimportant orders (?) (&quot;wegen unwichtig gegebene Befehl&quot;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G

Map of Major Ethnicities in Habsburg Monarchy at the Start of the Eighteenth Century

Map courtesy of Paul Magocsi Historical Atlas of Central Europe. 502

WORKS CITED

Primary Documents

This dissertation relies heavily on the archival collections of the Austrian State Archives (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv) in Vienna, Austria. In particular, “In Service of the State” heavily uses the Akten of the Hofkriegsrat located in the Kriegsarchiv and the Patente collection held by the Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv. Both of these document groups are located at the Austrian State Archives facility in the Erdberg district of Vienna. Various documents are also drawn from the collections of the Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, centrally located at Minoritenplatz near the Hofburg in Vienna.

The major reference designators (including the years for which the archive has coverage in parenthesis) for these groups are abbreviated in footnotes as follows:

1) FHKA-SUS-Patente Kt. ... = Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv / Sonderbestaende, Sammlungen und Selekte (1170-1987) / Sammlungen und Selekte (0963-2006) / Patente, Instruktionen, und Normalien des Hofkammerarchivs und des ehemaligen Archivs des Inneren und der Justiz (ca. 1359-1848) / Patente. “Kt.” refers to the number assigned to each document, with many documents also including a written form of their date of issuance.

2) HHStA-KA-StR Patente und Zirkulare... = Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv / Kabinettsarchiv (1523-1918) / Staatsrat (1761-1848) / Patente und Zirkulare (1576-1848)

3) KA-ZSt-HKR-Akten... = Kriegsarchiv (KA) / Zentralstellen (ZSt) (16th-century – 20th-century) / Wiener Hofkriegsrat (HKR) (1557-1848) / Hauptreihe (HR) / Akten (1557-1848)... These will be followed by: 1) a carton number, which may include date, month, or document range information 2) the document identifier, as written on the document itself, which will include YEAR – RUBRIC # - DOCUMENT #. For several years, a number corresponding to the month of receipt sits between the rubric and document numbers.

A full list of documents referenced by “In Service of the State” is included in Appendix E.

A particularly useful resource for German-speaking researchers is the Archive Information System of the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv. The archivists and staff of ÖSTA have embedded a large amount of incredibly useful historiographical and historical information into the file and section descriptions. Researchers anywhere can access this valuable contextual information via the ÖSTA website. See Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Archive Information System (AIS), available at www.oesta.gv.at.
Publications


VITA: Jeffrey M. Horton

I. EDUCATION

- **Ph.D. in History**, The Pennsylvania State University; May 2016; 3.5 GPA; dissertation chair: R. Po-chia Hsia
- **M.A. in History**, The Pennsylvania State University; August 2009; 3.5 GPA; advisor: R. Po-chia Hsia
- **M.A.T. in Secondary Education**, Quinnipiac University; May 2006; 3.8 GPA; advisor: Susan Clarke
- **B.A. Summa Cum Laude in History**, Quinnipiac University; May 2005; 3.85 GPA; advisors: Ronald Heiferman and Kathy Cooke

II. PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

- **Analyst**, United States Department of Justice (July 2015 – present)
- **Research Intern**, United States Marine Corps, Marine Corps History Division (May 2013 – August 2013, May 2014)

III. PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

- Co-editor with Paul Westermeyer, *U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam War Commemorative Chronology* (tentative title), Marine Corps History Division (forthcoming, 2016)
- “Arnim-Boitzenburg, Hans Georg von (1583-1641),” *Germany at War: An Encyclopedia*, ABC-Clio (October 2014)

IV. AWARDS

- Pennsylvania State University Hill Dissertation Fellowship (2014)
- Pennsylvania State University Edwin Erle Sparks Fellowship (2012 – 2013)
- IIE-ÖAD Fulbright-Mach Award for Doctoral Candidates (2011 – 2012)
- Central European History Society Research and Travel Grant (2011)