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## ***A Soldier of the 71<sup>st</sup>* – a Real Deal? An Ethnographic Approach to Authenticity**

### **Abstract**

A set of models of British Army organizational culture is described, and then applied to a Napoleonic memoir about which doubts have been expressed by Stuart Reid (2000). The fit between the account in the book, *A Soldier of the 71<sup>st</sup>* and the model is examined, revealing that the fit between the text and the army's organizational culture is inconsistent – accurate in some instances but with significant gaps in others. There are also a few instances where the material is unconvincing or militarily inaccurate. On the other hand, there is enough in the text that is consistent with the lived experience of soldiers of the time as captured in the model to suggest that at least parts of it are genuine. The analysis using the set of models therefore suggests that Reid's suspicions are well founded, consistent with his proposal that the text has been edited by a third party. Additionally, it also indicates a possible change of original author from 1810 onwards. The article concludes that the use of the models to enhance ethnographic understanding of the lived experience of British soldiers is feasible, opening new possibilities for the military historian.

### **Introduction**

I published an article in 1988 which proposed an outline of the organizational culture of the British regiments in Wellington's army in the Peninsular War (1808-1814) (Kirke, 1988). This outline took the form of a model of four separate 'social structures' (bodies of rules and conventions that inform behaviour) which I inferred from reading first person accounts (letters diaries and memoirs). Since then I have expanded and refined this model into a group of three separate but interrelated models for use as an ethnographer's tool set for understanding daily practice in the British Army in several historical eras (Kirke, 2009b). One of the possible uses of this tool is the analysis of dubious 'contemporary' texts to assess their likely authenticity. A particular case has arisen in which Stuart Reid suggests that a well-known anonymous British memoir of the Napoleonic period, *A Soldier of the 71<sup>st</sup>* (Anon, 1975) might in fact not be what it purports to be (Reid, 2000). He has since expanded on these doubts and is preparing them for further publication (Reid, forthcoming)<sup>1</sup>.

The memoir, first published in 1819, covers the period 1806 to 1815, and includes the disastrous South American Campaign, the first campaign in the Peninsular War 1808/9 which ended in the death of Sir John Moore and the rescue of the British army by the Royal Navy from northern Spain, the ill-fated Walcheren Expedition of 1809, the much more successful campaigns in Portugal Spain and France (1809-1814) and, finally, Waterloo. It is concisely written (comprising only 113 pages in the 1975 edition edited by Christopher Hibbert, the edition used for this article) but lively and full of dramatic incident. It is an enjoyable read. To give a representative taste of the mood of the text, we join the author as he sits and thinks on the side of a mountain in Spain, in 1808. It is a quiet Sunday,

I was seated upon the side of the mountain, admiring the beauties beneath. I thought of home -- Arthur's Seat and the level between it and the sea all stole over my imagination. I became lost in contemplation and was happy for a time.

Soon my daydream broke and vanished from my sight. The bustle around was great. There was no trace of a day of rest. Many were washing their linen in the river, others cleaning their firelocks; every man was engaged in some employment. In the midst of our preparation for divine service, the French columns began to make their appearance on the opposite hills. 'To arms, to arms!' was beat, at half past eight o'clock. Every thing was packed up as soon as possible, and left on the camp ground.

We marched out two miles to meet the enemy, formed line and lay under cover of a hill for about an hour, until they came to us. We gave them one volley and three cheers -- three distinct cheers. Then all was still as death. They came upon us, crying and shouting, to the very point of our bayonets. Our awful silence and determined advance they could not stand. They put about and fled without much resistance. At this charge we took thirteen guns and one General. (pp. 17-18)

The author identifies himself as a native of Edinburgh, born in 1790, which puts him in his mid teens at the start of his story. Although his parents had paid good money from poor resources for his education he left home, flirted with the acting profession, dropped out of that, fell in with a party of recruits for the 71<sup>st</sup> Regiment and joined them apparently on a whim. Fifteen days later his battalion embarked for South Africa, and was then sent from there to South America, to follow the trajectory outlined above. For reasons of 'delicacy' he forbears to identify himself, using just the initials 'T.S.' and referring to himself in his story as 'Tom'.

Reid's doubts about the authenticity of the Journal arose out of his research on the muster rolls of the 71<sup>st</sup> Regiment during the period covered by the memoir. These muster rolls survive in sufficient detail for a researcher to locate any individual in the battalion on any of the days on which they were taken. The names of those in the recruit draft which 'T.S.' claims in the *Memoir* to have joined are clear to see in these rolls, and nobody with those initials were among them. None of these men was present at all the incidents which 'T.S.' describes in the first person, or was even in the area. Furthermore, the same applies to one of the key characters in the story,

Donald M'Donald, 'T.S.'s great friend. Clearly, there is a case to answer. Can my models help?

## The Models

In the social sciences, 'social structure', is characterized as a body of ideas, rules and conventions of behaviour that informs patterns of behaviour in a human group. It is a way of visualizing customs, practices and norms as a framework for everyday life to which all integrated members of the society or human group in question subscribe. The shape and pattern of this framework can be worked out from observing the things that happen in the regular day-to-day activity of those people. As Max Gluckman and Fred Eggan have put it:

the events which comprise human behaviour exhibit regularities whose forms are mutually interdependent, over and above their interdependence in the personality-behaviour systems of each individual actor. (Gluckman and Eggan, 1965: xviii)

The idea of 'social structure' was first proposed by social scientists in the nineteenth century (notably, for example by Durkheim (1938; 1951), but over the past 40 or so years it has come under attack, notably because of a strong body of thought that questions whether it has any objective existence or whether it is in fact an artificial creation – a convenient way of imposing artificial 'sense' on essentially chaotic data (see, for example, Asad, 1979; Giddens, 1984). Is social structure not so much an empirical entity as a construction to help the researcher gain (or perhaps impose) an understanding of what (s)he sees? In this paper I do not attempt to resolve this debate, which is still ongoing (for example King, 2004) but to treat the idea of 'social structure' as a convenient concept in a model of soldiers' social behaviour.

Models in any sphere can take a wide variety of forms, ranging from a simple analogy to complex mathematical devices, which renders the term 'model' rather vague unless qualified. Indeed, Giddens and Turner have pointed out that the use of the word is 'highly ambiguous in the social sciences' (1987: 164). Some general points, however, are relevant to any consideration of the idea of 'modelling'. Whatever form they take, models are usually needed because the investigator cannot understand the totality of something, and in order to start to make sense of what is apparently overwhelmingly complex information they need to break it down and give it some sort of shape. This process inevitably involves some artificiality or abstraction. Provided that this artificiality is acknowledged and its limits are tested there is no harm in this: as Brian Wilson has put it, 'Models (of any kind) are *not* descriptions of the real world [;] they *are* descriptions of ways of thinking about the real world' (Wilson, 2001: 4).

The models being used in this paper are at the simpler end of the spectrum, eschewing mathematics and comprising a combination of words and diagrams that can be used as shorthand to map, describe and explain social processes and influences within the British Army at unit level. They were derived from examining first hand accounts by British soldiers of all periods between 1700 and 2000, and from participant observation in an extended insider anthropology study from 1974 to 2003, including a number of one-to-one interviews with British soldiers between 1994 and

2003. The models were constructed using the principles of ‘grounded theory’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1968), emerging from the data rather than from some pre-existing framework. Such a framework did, of course, arise from the data but at all times it was open to development and adjustment in the light of further data.

The result is a set of models that can be used as a basis for describing, analyzing, explaining or predicting British soldiers’ behaviour from 1700 to the present day. When combined with specific organizational and relevant wider societal cultural data from a particular period they provide a novel means of reaching the lived experience of the soldiers of the time. In essence, they provide an historian’s or ethnographer’s tool set with which to model the organizational culture of the army in any period<sup>2</sup>.

### *The Generic Model Set*

Rather than a single ‘social structure’ the first of the three models proposes a family of separate *social structures*<sup>3</sup>, representing different bodies of ideas, rules and conventions that inform patterns of behaviour in a human group. Different *social structures* operate in different contexts, accounting, say, for differences between behaviour on the battlefield and in the tavern. In the model, only one can be dominant at any one time, referred to as the *operating structure*.

The model consists of four *social structures*, representing detectably different modes of behaviour. These are:

*The formal command structure*, which is the framework through which a soldier at the bottom of a chain of command receives orders from the person at the top. It is embedded in and expressed by the hierarchy of rank, the apparatus of discipline, and the formal arrangement of the unit into layer upon layer of organizational elements. It contains the mechanisms for the enforcement of discipline, for the downward issue of orders and instructions and for the upward issue of reports, and it provides the framework for official responsibility and accountability. Key themes include commanding, obeying, rank, discipline, drill, orders, reports, and hierarchy.

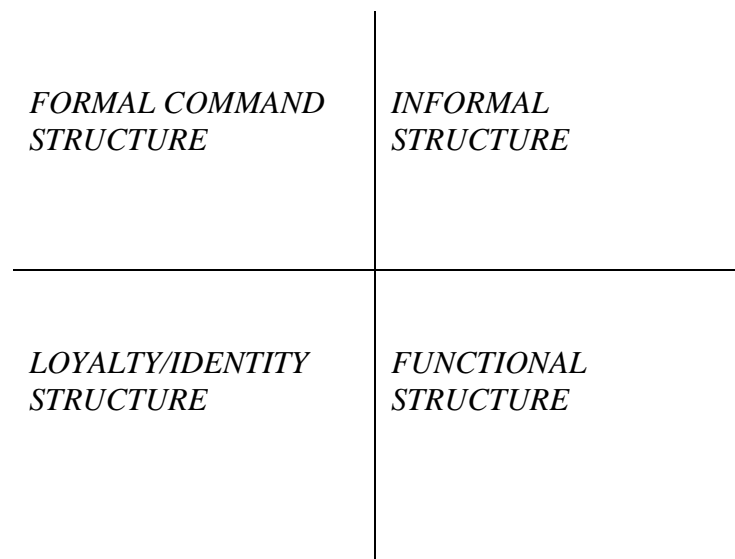
The second is the *informal structure*, which consists in unwritten conventions of behaviour in the absence of formal constraints. It finds particular expression in the patterns of soldiers’ informal behaviour, and especially their informal groupings, and in the web of relationships of friendship and association within the unit, an area described below with a separate model. Key themes include relaxing, laughing, comradeship, the use of nicknames, getting on with fellow-soldiers (of all ranks), and sharing. Behaviour within the conventions of the *informal structure* can be very different from that of the *formal command structure* even if all the people concerned are the same.

The third *social structure* is the *functional structure*, which consists in attitudes, feelings and expectations connected with the carrying out of military tasks and activities, and the concept of being ‘soldierly’. Key themes in this

*social structure* include ideas about being soldierly, and the exercise of military skills.

I have called the fourth *social structure* the *loyalty/identity structure*, because it centres around the meaning and use of the word ‘we’, and who ‘we’ are. It is focused on belonging and group identity. An important manifestation of it in the lived experience of the soldier consists in attitudes and expectations to do with the variously sized groups which are the organizational anatomy of the unit. A soldier belongs to many simultaneously and supports them all, but at any particular moment they only exercise membership of one at any particular time. In a modern infantry battalion, for example, a private soldier may be a member of a fire team of four men<sup>4</sup>, a section of eight, a platoon of about thirty, a company of more than a hundred, or a battalion of more than seven hundred. He will exercise his membership of his platoon in competition or rivalry with other platoons, but his company where the opposition is another company and so on. The result is a highly flexible (and compelling) set of attitudes expectations and assumptions about identity and about group definitions and membership.

These *social structures* can be illustrated in the following diagram, which shows the four bodies of ideas, rules and conventions of behaviour, each separate from each other but together in one overall system,



**Figure One: Four *social structures* – Generic Model**

(Author’s diagram)

This simple diagram makes the point that the four *social structures* are separate, and can be described separately, but they are all part of a single overall social system, and they are connected with one another – they all meet in the middle.

The second model consists in the person-to-person relationships that individuals have with their peers, senior, and juniors. Five different types of

relationship are distinguished in the model, the key variables being the strength of the relationship and the rank differences between the parties:

*Close friendship*, the most intense and powerful relationship in the typology. It consists in a durable relationship that transcends the military environment, where there is a large measure of trust and respect between the parties and few barriers to discussion of highly personal matters. It is the true ‘David and Jonathan’ relationship, ‘passing the love of women’<sup>5</sup>, different in quality from the emotional and physical ties of a deep sexual relationship. In transcending the military environment, this relationship also transcends military rank. It is a very rare and special relationship.

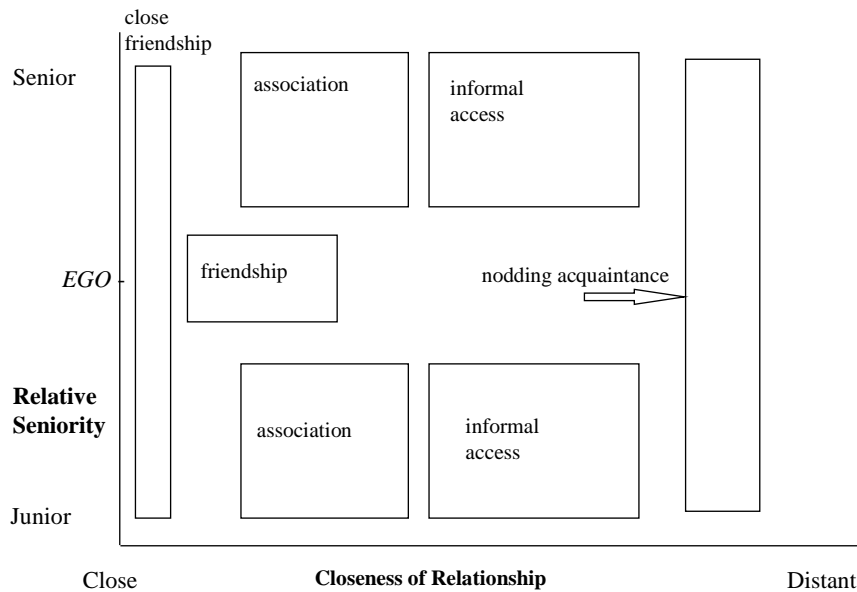
*Friendship* is a much more common strong peer-to-peer bond covering only narrow bands of rank, and marked by mutual support and sharing of many kinds – materiel, encouragement, food and drink and so on. It does not, however, allow the sharing of the deep emotional issues which can be common currency in *close friendship*.

*Association* is another potentially strong bond, but in this case it exists between people so separated by rank that *friendship* is not an option. It best resembles a warm patron/client relationship but that does not say that it need be stiff or formal in any way. In strong relationships of *association* the parties trust each other and will exchange information, opinion, encouragement, and opposition as they think necessary, but largely confined to the professional military context.

*Informal access* is another rank-separated relationship, in which the parties are not as close as in *association* but nevertheless feel they can approach each other without formal appointment. It is usually formed between people in the same chain of command: a soldier might have *informal access* to the officers of their company but not usually to those of other companies. An officer would expect to have *informal access* downwards to those under their command with whom they have not established *association* and upwards to the senior officers in their unit.

*Nodding acquaintance* is that relationships which exists between people who recognize each other and know that they are part of the same organization but do not know each other. Essentially, it is a relationship in waiting to develop further – its next form depending on the relative ranks of the parties and the amount of time they will be in each other’s company.

Again, this model can be depicted graphically,



**Figure Two: The Five Types of Informal Relationship**

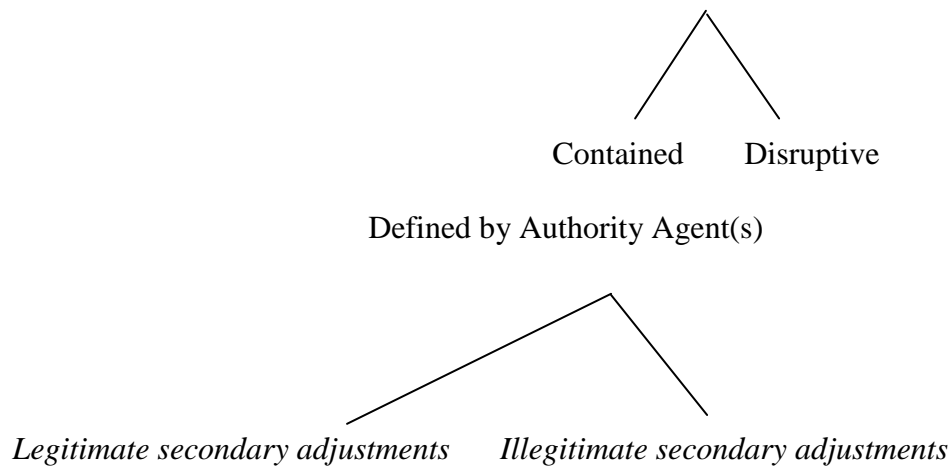
(Author's diagram)

The horizontal axis represents the closeness of the relationship, and the vertical axis represents the relative rank distance between EGO and the other party to the relationship. Thus, for instance *friendship* appears vertically central and horizontally to the left as it is a relatively close relationship of peers or near peers, while *association*, a relationship with potential to be a close one, overlapping *friendship* in intensity, appears further to the right and with those senior or junior to EGO (i.e. it is not appropriate to EGO's peers).

The third model is concerned with behaviour in the apparently rule-bound military context where all rules orders and instructions have the force of law and are enforced through the disciplinary system which is modelled in the *formal command structure*. Although rules are usually clear, they are not always obeyed – indeed, in many cases full strict obedience would compromise not only the quality of the soldier's life but also the informal activity within the unit. Building on Erving Goffman's analysis of 'secondary adjustments' (Goffman, 1968) where those in total institutions bend or break the rules they are under, I have distinguished two types of rule-bending and rule-breaking in British military culture. The first is permitted by the appropriate military agent of authority as 'legitimate' or 'tolerable' and the second is not: it is illegitimate. The legitimacy of a secondary adjustment is informally defined by those in authority, but the influences on this definition are cultural. Thus, this third model distinguishes *legitimate secondary adjustments* as rule-violations that will not be expected to bring censure or punishment, and *illegitimate secondary adjustments* that will. The important contribution of this model is to provide a means to analyze a constant and enduring element of British soldiers' behaviour. It is there now and has always been there.

Figure 3 is a simplified graphic illustration of this model:

## Secondary Adjustments



(Author's diagram, developed from Goffman's characterization)

### *The Napoleonic British Army*

There is not enough space in this short paper to lay out the Napoleonic War version of the model in detail, but in summary:

The *formal command structure* had the same ingredients and was of the same generic shape as the generic model. Authority was formally constituted, there was a body of law in which it was enshrined, and a system of punishment with which to enforce it.

The *informal structure* was also largely as modelled in the generic model, with soldiers informal groupings being based almost entirely within the company, which was their home group both formally and informally. At the smallest level, the 'mess' or group of soldiers who ate together and pooled their rations seems to have been the basic social element. One special ingredient of the *informal structure* was the expectation that an individual had would retain his military reputation and his honour in the eyes of his peers in order to fit in with them. See *functional structure*.

The *functional structure* of infantry battalions was based on the military technology of the time, with the main functional activity in battle being controlled volley fire in line. However, the *functional structure* consisted in more than prowess with the musket and the carrying out of correct drills in the loading and discharging of the weapon (though they were of basic importance). Other military skills were valued by a soldier's peers, such as successful foraging, remaining as dry and warm/cool as the conditions



allowed, the getting and sharing/consuming of alcohol, and the extraction of plunder from the dead. In the case of the 71<sup>st</sup> there were other military skills associated with their role as light infantry – notably the ability to march faster and further than other units and to carry out skirmishing. In the latter case, all infantry battalions had one company of specialist skirmishers, but in the case of light infantry battalions all companies had this speciality when required. An important ingredient of Napoleonic function was demonstrating courage by not flinching or ducking when under fire, which had important implication for an individual's honour and reputation amongst his peers.

The *loyalty/identity structure* had no subdivisions below the company – lower levels of organization were temporary functional groupings only. However, there were very strong levels of loyalty and identity at the unit level – the battalion in the case of the 71<sup>st</sup>. The enduring and most powerful symbol of a soldier's belonging to a battalion was the pair of 'colours' – flags – in which the unit's identity and reputation were embodied. He also carried marks of his membership of the battalion on his clothing in the form of a unique arrangement of buttons, cuff and collar colourings, and appliqué lace.

The first four of the suite of informal relationships are all represented in the contemporary first hand material, even *association* and *informal access* between officers and their soldiers. This aspect has been largely ignored by historians on the assumption that class differences would preclude informal contact, (see, for example, Mills, 1995). Whilst the evidence of these relationships is indeed almost completely absent from contemporary letters, it nevertheless exists at a convincing level in memoirs<sup>6</sup>. I have been unable to find any accounts that match *nodding acquaintance* but this is of little significance given the slight nature of the relationship.

The distinction between *legitimate* and *illegitimate secondary adjustments* can also be seen in Napoleonic first hand accounts, apparently described and experienced much as in the current British Army.

### **Application of the Models to A Soldier of the 71<sup>st</sup>**

The anonymous Soldier of the 71<sup>st</sup> would have been immersed in the British army culture of his day, serving as he did for about ten years. It is reasonable therefore to expect to find signs of this culture in his memoirs. If no sign of these cultural elements were found in the book then it could confidently be declared a forgery. Similarly, if the model fitted the text throughout, then the author was certainly a soldier. So, how does the text compare to the models?

All four of the *social structures* are present in the text. 'T.S.' shows us a rank structure including private soldiers, sergeants, and officers. He tells of orders being given and obeyed (pp. 17, 68, 75, 79, 83). He eats in a 'mess' (pp. 50, 59, 76, 77) he sings and dances in his time off (pp. 79, 82), he forms a *close friendship* with one of the men with whom he joined the battalion (pp. 1-46 *passim*). He gives us an instance of a soldier speaking sternly to a young officer who is showing signs of panic on the battlefield (p. 3), thus maybe exercising *informal access*. He uses technical military terms naturally in his text, and describes battlefield organization and activity in a way that only someone with experience could have done (see for example pp. 7, 68, 71,

87). He describes his own soldierly way of managing a night in a boggy place in intense rainfall – sleeping while keeping himself out of the mud and looking after his firearm (p. 54). He lists the kit he is carrying on page 50, a comprehensive and accurate list of fighting stores of the time which compares well with that of Rifleman Harris's similar account (Harris, 1996: 36). He portrays himself as good at foraging (pp. 59, 76). His membership of the 71<sup>st</sup> is unambiguous, and he notes on being evacuated from Corunna in 1809 that the regiments are all mixed up with parts of seven different battalions on his ship (p. 87).

Some of the ingredients of the typology of informal relationships are also present. *Close friendship*, as we have already seen, is a strong feature of the first part of the book (until his *close friend* dies), and there is indirect evidence in places of the forming of *friendships* (see, for example, pp. 48, 50, 59). *Association*, however, is missing completely, and there is only one (possible) instance of *informal access*, cited above.

*Legitimate* and *illegitimate secondary adjustments* are both represented, if only slightly. 'T.S' and his fellows all indulge in foraging (pp. 59, 76, 77) which was strictly forbidden under Wellington's rules because of the danger of alienating the local population. At times they seem to be indulged in this activity by their superiors as a reasonable alternative to starving (making it a *legitimate secondary adjustment*) and sometimes they are threatened with punishment or have to conceal it (pp. 74-5) indicating *illegitimate secondary adjustments*.

At an overall level, therefore, this anonymous memoir bears all the signs of having come from a soldier, indicating that whatever else it is, it is not a complete forgery. Nevertheless, there are places in the text which seem to sit apart from the organizational culture represented in the model.

The first and most obvious problematic element is the attitude to officers. The book is written with due regard for the aspects modelled in the *formal command structure* – orders are given, punishments threatened, authority is deferred to – but there are no signs of any informal relationship between officers and men. The vast majority of officers who are represented are senior figures, representatives of higher authority with no characterization whose role in the tale is simply to offer exhortation and to give orders. They are no more than icons or cardboard figures (see, for example, pp. 9, 60, 68, 73). The one exception is the 71<sup>st</sup> Commanding Officer who is shown to have a personal side when he prepares to punish soldiers who have been found to have been looting (an *illegitimate secondary adjustment*) only to be betrayed as a looter himself when a chicken he has illegally acquired pops its head out of his pocket (pp. 74-5). The result is laughter all round and no punishment for anybody, but even this incident has no flavour of *association* or *informal access* about it. Non Commissioned Officers (NCOs) are also impersonally treated, and in much smaller numbers. No corporals are mentioned at all, and yet a private soldier would be living with and interacting with corporals on a day to day basis, and 'sergeants' only appear four times (pp. 68, 79 (twice), 73) as faceless characters who variously call the soldiers from their billets, find billets for them, issue them with money, and command a party of men to relieve sentries. Contrast this treatment of authority figures in the battalion, for example, with that of Thomas Morris (1967). He, for instance,

communicates with officers and NCOs from the very beginning, records the nickname of officers (pp. 34, 42) and reports the officers and men playing ball together (p. 66).

Second, the reports of the battles in which 'T.S.' takes part are highly variable. The account of Corunna<sup>7</sup> (pp. 35-6) is hardly from a private soldier's point of view and contains nothing of relevance to the model of the *functional structure* from the lower level of organization. On the other hand, the description of the battle of Fuentes d'Onoro (pp. 59-63) is confused and episodic, just as it would have appeared to a narrator who had a small field of view in a big event. It is also redolent with terms that fit the *functional structure*, such as his description of the counter-attack in which the 71<sup>st</sup> took part, 'We continued to advance, at double quick time [a distinguishing feature of light infantry], our firelocks at the trail, our bonnets in our hands' (p. 60).

As for the features represented in the *loyalty/identity structure*, they are markedly few and low key in the book. We have already noted 'T.S.' remarks that several units were mixed up in the transport which took him from Corunna but this is a rather bland observation. A much stronger engagement with loyalty and identity might have been expected when he describes the recapture of the battalion's colours in Buenos Aires (p. 9) but, surprisingly, nothing much is made of it. He reports that they had been lost some time earlier in the campaign and remarks that they had had a 'disgraceful resting place' in a local church in the mean time. But this is simply told as an incident, with none of the emotional content that might have been expected from their nature as quasi-sacred objects of identity and foci for loyalty to the Regiment and the Sovereign. The retreat to Corunna has the occasional discussion of the excellence of British soldiers compared with the French, and the author makes the point more than once that the British were retiring having won every fight they ever had had during the campaign (pp. 23, 29, 32). However, he never expresses loyalty towards or identity with his immediate organizational level of the company and very seldom with the battalion. In sum, the *loyalty/identity structure* aspects of the book are far weaker than might be expected from a soldier's narrative.

In addition to this patchy relationship with the models there are one or two statements in the book which do not chime with the lived experience of soldiers of the time or are disconcertingly inaccurate. The first example is 'T.S.' relationship with his peers. Throughout the book he portrays himself as a loner, nicknamed a 'Methodist' from the first (p. xiii), subject to teasing and a man apart (p. 37, 48-9). Such a position in the *informal structure* would have been untenable for an extended period in so interdependent a community as an infantry battalion in the field and raises serious questions as to the veracity of the account. On the other hand, although he says in the early part of the book (p. xiv) that he could not associate with his fellows, later he describes himself as a member of a 'mess' as we saw above, and occasionally he shows himself to be part of an informal group, or at least invited to be part of one (pp. 48-49, 79). Can they both be true, or is the 'loner' aspect an addition to the personal account in the text?

There are two inaccuracies that concern functional and organizational matters and would surely have been known to the soldiers of the time to be wrong. On page 78 his battalion square 'opens' to let small numbers of enemy cavalry in, which would have been a serious breach of normal functional practice, and on page 91 he tells how

his battalion is joined by a 'brigade' of Brunswickers. In fact – and he would surely have known this, the only formed units of Brunswickers in Wellington's Peninsular Army were only a collection of individual companies and never a 'brigade'<sup>8</sup>.

Another point at issue appears on page 56. 'T.S.' tells how the discovery of a dead Frenchman in a vat of red wine in 1810 put him off drinking it for life, but he fails to mention that something very similar happened to him in 1808 (p. 15). Should not the first incident have been the one that so upset him and this one simply a repulsive reminder of it?

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of all is the author's account of his experience level as a soldier. On page 53 he tells us that he 'first got any plunder' after the engagement at Sobral in 1810. This is a remarkable statement from a man who had apparently been campaigning for four years, as the getting of plunder was a significant part of a soldier's skill and was a mark of battle experience (which I therefore assign to the *functional structure*). Similarly, on page 59 he says that he 'was now as much a soldier as any of my comrades' when it came to foraging (an important soldierly skill relating to the *functional structure*). According to the text he had been in the army by then for five years and so he would have had much more campaign experience than the many soldiers who had arrived as reinforcements up to that point. He could be expected after that level of time to be setting the standard for this sort of activity. Far from being the expected words of an experienced soldier, these statements sound as if they come from the pen of a comparatively raw young man.

## Discussion

The result of applying the models to *A Soldier of the 71<sup>st</sup>* is therefore a confusion of elements that point in different directions. There is no doubt that some of the material in the book chimes well with the models as an accurate reflection of the lived experience of a soldier of the time. This, combined with the vividness of some of the description argues strongly for the author to have been both an eye and ear witness of what he describes, and fully integrated into the army's organizational culture. On the other hand, the lack of certain elements (particularly the range of informal relationships and attention to the aspects portrayed in the model of the *loyalty/identity structure*) argue for the opposite, particularly when they are added to those parts of the text which appear to be inaccurate.

These observations provide ethnographic support to Stuart Reid's suggestion that the book was probably written by a third party '[who] did not himself serve in the 71<sup>st</sup>, but he may very well have ghosted and heavily "improved" T.S.'s genuine reminiscences' (Reid, 2000). The patchy nature of the organizational cultural content of the book would also suggest that the presumed 'editor' was not himself a soldier. We can then assign the apparent errors and the slanting of the narrative away from certain aspects suggested in the model to that editor's lack of awareness of military culture and detailed military knowledge.

There is one further issue. Although the presumed editor has woven an apparently seamless narrative from 1806 to 1815, there is a distinctive shift in the match with the model in 1810 (the start of chapter 5 (p. 48) in the Hibbert edition).

Although the voice of ‘T.S.’ claims to be that of a loner throughout the book, as we have seen, the text mentions his informal interaction with his fellow-soldiers much more from 1810 than before. Specifically, he is never in a ‘mess’ with other soldiers until page 50, but thereafter he is, consistently. Secondly, the functional content of the text after page 49 is greater and for the most part more detailed than before. I have already contrasted the impersonal account of Corunna (1809) with the immediacy and confusion of that of Fuentes d’Onoro’ (1811), and this is reflected in all the other engagements reported in chapters 5 *et. seq.* Put this together with the apparent rawness of the author in 1810 (supposedly after four years’ service) and the amnesia in 1810 about the gruesome discovery of the wine-drowned Frenchman in 1806, and a case emerges that there are two different authors of the text, one who joined the Army in 1806 and another who was comparatively new in 1810.

## Conclusion

This brief ethnographic analysis using the set of models generated to help historians and ethnographers grasp the lived experience of British soldiers in the Napoleonic era has shown that the complete text of *A Soldier of the 71<sup>st</sup>* is unlikely to have been written by a single individual. On the other hand, some aspects of this text are entirely consistent with the military culture of the time and are most unlikely to have been written by a person without the relevant military experience. Furthermore, there seem to be indications that more than one soldier contributed material.

These observations fit very well with Reid’s analysis of the muster rolls, which shows that no individual was present at all the incidents described by ‘T.S.’. The conclusion of this article is therefore that the book is likely to have been the construction of an editor with no military experience, who probably took elements from more than one source – possibly from two, the one beginning in 1806 and ending in 1809, and the other running from 1809 to 1815. This editor has been faithful to the original texts to a considerable extent, but has added and subtracted material which has made certain parts fail to ring true as a single comprehensive narrative.

Finally, this article has shown that ethnographic analysis of military memoirs is feasible using the models brought forward in this paper, opening new possibilities for the military historian.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal communication, 20 April 2009.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, (Kirke, 1988; 2000; 2004; 2006; 2008; 2009a; 2009b)

<sup>3</sup> Terms with specific meanings within the models are in *italics*.

<sup>4</sup> The infantry are exclusively male.

<sup>5</sup> *Holy Bible*, King James Version, 2 Samuel 1: 26.

<sup>6</sup> See Kirke 2009b: 149-174.

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<sup>7</sup> 1809.

<sup>8</sup> These companies comprised several formed groups of about 80 soldiers deployed individually to brigades or battalions as skirmishers.