

A Patriotic Mercenary? Sir Julius von Hartmann as a Hanoverian Officer in British Service, 1803–1816

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ABSTRACT

Ein patriotischer Söldner? Sir Julius von Hartmann: ein Hannoveranischer Offizier im Britischen Dienst, 1803–1816

Die Autoren lenken den Blick auf überraschende Kontinuitäten von Fremdenlegionen in einer Ära, die gemeinhin mit dem Aufkommen der Nationalheere und der wehrpflichtigen Bürgersoldaten assoziiert wird – die Napoleonischen Kriege. Eine dieser Fremdenlegionen war die King's German Legion (KGL). Nachdem das Kurfürstentum Hannover 1803 durch französische Truppen besetzt worden war, emigrierten zahlreiche hannoversche Veteranen nach Großbritannien, um dort in den Militärdienst der KGL überzutreten. Am Werdegang des Artillerieoffiziers Julius von Hartmann (1774–1856) zeigen Heinzen und Wishon die damit verbundenen rechtlichen, sozio-kulturellen und politischen Zustände des *betwixt-and-between* auf, insbesondere die Stellung zwischen professionellem opportunistischem Söldnertum und Patriotismus. Dadurch konnte sich Hartmann nicht nur zum Vermittler professioneller Expertise entwickeln, sondern auch zum Repräsentanten einer transnationalen europäischen Militärkultur.

The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars are commonly remembered as the birth hour of national armies. Mercenaries and professional soldiers, who had formed the backbone of Europe's *ancien régime* armies, were suddenly swept away by numerically superior conscript levies. This new type of warrior, the conscript, seemed in almost every way the antithesis of the mercenary inasmuch as he was a civilian for whom soldiering did not represent an end on which his living depended but rather the means to defend the fatherland against foreign enemies. Moreover, while service in the old standing armies was associated with low socio-political status in the corporatist systems of the *ancien régime*,

scription came to be regarded increasingly as an ingredient of active citizenship based on notions of equality among members of the national community.¹ Although the British government never went so far as to implement the draft, Linda Colley has argued in her seminal study *Britons* (1992) that the protracted wars against France likewise forged an inclusive sense of Britishness that overarched ethnic, religious, class and political differences.²

Recent scholarship, however, has rightly questioned whether the homogenising effect of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars was as extensive and the introduction of conscription constituted as great a historical watershed as these accounts suggest.³ A telltale sign of continuity in military affairs was the persistence of foreign recruitment after 1789. Even France, the home of the *levée en masse*, opted to raise new foreign regiments like the *Légion franche étrangère* or the *Légion germanique* for Austrian and Prussian deserters. If anything, Napoleon increased the army's reliance on foreign volunteers with the creation of additional German, Italian, Polish, Copt and Greek auxiliary units.⁴ As Napoleon's bid for hegemony in Europe gained momentum, it became more and more difficult for smaller states to maintain their independence and in consequence for soldiers to serve their home country. One of these victims of French expansionism was the Electorate of Hanover in 1803. In that year the First Consul, as Napoleon was then still styled, dispatched an expeditionary force to take possession of the British dependency, which was ruled in personal union by the king of England, George III, from London. Many veterans of the disbanded Hanoverian army subsequently left the Continent to practice their calling in Britain, where several foreign regiments such as the 60th Foot and Chasseurs Britanniques existed already. The British government welcomed the additional manpower for the war against France and therefore readily authorised the establishment of what became known as the King's German Legion (KGL).⁵

1 The historiography is extensive, but for an introduction see A. Forrest, *The Legacy of the French Revolutionary Wars: The Nation-in-Arms in French Republican Memory*, Cambridge 2009; D. Stoker/F.C. Schneid/H.D. Blanton (eds.), *Conscription in the Napoleonic Era: A Revolution in Military Affairs?*, London 2009; T. Hippler, *Citizens, Soldiers and National Armies: Military Service in France and Germany, 1789–1830*, London 2008; K. Hagemann, *Männlicher Muth und teutsche Ehre: Nation, Militär und Geschlecht zur Zeit der antinapoleonischen Kriege Preußens*, Paderborn 2002; C. Jansen (ed.), *Der Bürger als Soldat: Die Militarisierung europäischer Gesellschaften im langen 19. Jahrhundert: Ein internationaler Vergleich*, Essen 2004; U. Frevert, 'Das jakobinische Modell: Allgemeine Wehrpflicht und Nationsbildung in Preußen-Deutschland', in: U. Frevert (ed.), *Militär und Gesellschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1997, pp. 17–47.

2 L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837*, New Haven 1992, p. 18.

3 U. Planert, 'Innovation or Evolution? The French Wars in Military History', in: R. Chickering/S. Förster (eds.), *War in an Age of Revolution, 1775–1815*, Cambridge 2010, pp. 69–84; J.E. Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds: Interpreting the Experience of British Soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars', in: A. Forrest/K. Hagemann/J. Rendall (eds.), *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and French Wars, 1790–1820*, Basinstoke 2009, pp. 23–42; D. Avant, 'From Mercenary to Citizen Armies: Explaining Change in the Practice of War', in: *International Organization*, 54 (2000), pp. 45–48.

4 G. Dempsey, *Napoleon's Mercenaries: Foreign Units in the French Army under the Consulate and Empire, 1799–1814*, Mechanicsburg 2002; J.-F. Brun, 'Les unités étrangères dans les armées napoléoniennes: un élément de la stratégie globale du Grand Empire', in: *Revue historique des armées*, 13 (2009), pp. 22–49; D. Smith, *Napoleon's Regiments: Battle Histories of the Regiments of the French Army, 1792–1815*, London 2000, pp. 216–228.

5 H. Senior, 'Mercenaries in the British Service', in: *History Today*, 20 (1970), pp. 504–510; R.L. Yaple, 'The Auxiliaries:

One of the earliest volunteers to join this foreign corps was the artillery officer (Georg) Julius Hartmann, who later rose to senior command in the Peninsula and Waterloo campaigns under the Duke of Wellington. Hartmann's advancement in the British army suggests few of the pathological personality traits displayed by soldiers of fortune and adventurers elsewhere in this volume, yet closer inspection reveals that his curriculum vitae, too, is representative for the legal, socio-cultural and political state of 'betwixt-and-between' that attracts certain go-getters during periods of historical transition. In Hartmann's case liminality, the acute condition of living in between tradition and innovation, manifested itself in a professional opportunism which perpetuated the mercenary ethos of earlier generations while at the same time showing a keen appreciation for the meritocratic and egalitarian ideals of the Revolution as a means of breaking through the *ancien régime* social barriers that disqualified bourgeois officers for the highest military offices.⁶ Furthermore, despite his cool weighing up of career options, Hartmann was also a Hanoverian patriot and became a self-proclaimed anglophile the longer he served under British colours.

Many objective criteria have been proposed over the years to delimit mercenaries from regular combatants, but what such theoretical approaches often fail to take into account are the multifaceted aspirations of the individuals concerned and the ways in which the motives and self-image of professional soldiers who enter foreign employment can change over time.⁷ The age of the soldier of fortune may have been coming to an end at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but the transnational nature of the soldiering profession, a legacy of pre-modern European militaries, could still open doors for those who had as of yet not affixed themselves solely to their nation of origin. In tracing the negotiation of loyalty and ambition in the biography of Hartmann, the present article puts these neglected themes centre-stage while being mindful of the fact that the life of one individual can tell us only so much about larger historical phenomena. For this reason Hartmann's vita will be examined in combination with ego documents from his

Foreign and Miscellaneous Regiments in the British Army, 1802–1817', in: *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 50 (1972), pp. 10–28. On the KGL more specifically, see N.L. Beamish, *History of the King's German Legion*, 2 vols. London 1838; B. Schwertfeger, *Geschichte der Königlich Deutschen Legion, 1803–1816*, 2 vols. Hannover - Leipzig 1907; J. Mastnak, 'Werbung und Ersatzwesen der Königlich Deutschen Legion 1803 bis 1813', in: *Militär-geschichtliche Zeitschrift*, 60 (2001), pp. 119–142; D.S. Gray, 'The services of the King's German Legion in the army of the Duke of Wellington, 1809–1815', unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Florida State University, 1970. For a discussion of the KGL and other Germans serving in the British Army, see furthermore M. Wishon, *German Units and the British Army, 1742–1815: Interactions and Perceptions*, Basingstoke forthcoming.

6 For a sociological analysis of liminality as the state 'betwixt and between the positions assigned and arranged by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial', see V. Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*, London 1969, here p. 95. On the international orientation and socially stratified composition of the eighteenth-century officer corps, see B.R. Kroener, 'Deutsche Offiziere im Dienst des "allerchristlichsten Königs" (1715–1792): Aspekte einer Sozialgeschichte der Elite deutscher Fremdenregimenter in Frankreich im 18. Jahrhundert', in: J. Mondot/J.-M. Valentin/J. Voss (eds.), *Deutsche in Frankreich, Franzosen in Deutschland 1715–1789*, Sigmaringen 1992, pp. 53–72; A. Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment, 1700–1789*, Westport 2003, pp. 35–88.

7 For an excellent survey of the literature and the pitfalls of definition, consult S. Percy, *Mercenaries: The History of a Norm in International Relations*, Oxford 2007, esp. pp. 50–67; M. Sikora, 'Söldner – historische Annäherung an einen Kriegertypus', in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 29 (2003), pp. 210–238.

mentor, the Hanoverian-born Prussian reformer Gerhard (von) Scharnhorst. Contrasting and comparing their lives sheds interesting light not only on experiences of foreign enlistment in the Napoleonic period but also how their choices were gauged by later generations.

Julius Hartmann was born in 1774 into one of the patrician ‘pretty families’ who ranked second only to the aristocracy in the Electorate of Hanover. His father was a senior administrator, as were many of his ancestors. However, being the third son and considered less intellectually gifted than his brothers, Hartmann’s parents destined the young boy to become an officer. The demotion to a lesser career path than his brothers incited already at this early age a determination in Hartmann to prove his father wrong for the lack of faith placed in him.⁸ After a brief stint as a volunteer-cadet he entered the Artillery School in Hannover⁹, where Scharnhorst was a teacher and librarian. Scharnhorst’s affable intellectualism made quite an impression on Hartmann, according to whom the older man soon became his ‘patron’ and mentor.¹⁰ When war broke out with Revolutionary France in 1792, the pair joined the Anglo-Hanoverian expeditionary corps sent into Flanders to halt the French advance. Their conjoined fates did not end there because it was Hartmann who commanded the artillery in the besieged fortress of Menin (1794) while Scharnhorst rallied his forces to lead the Allied sortie to victory, an action that would earn him promotion to major.

Scharnhorst saw enough potential in his former pupil to offer him a staff position following his appointment as quartermaster-general of Hanoverian forces in northwest Germany. Both officers aspired to get ahead in a profession dominated by the aristocracy and a shared interest in the military sciences. Their professional association lasted for two years (1797-99), during which time Scharnhorst already began gravitating towards Prussia. The reason for his desire to leave the country of his birth had to do with the denial of opportunities for implementing his proposals for army reform, yet personal ambition of a more old-fashioned kind – the lure of better pay, promotion and ennoblement – also played a decisive role.¹¹ With one-fourth to three-fifths of senior ranks across all branches being filled by non-Prussians as late as 1805, the Hohenzollern army provided a congenial environment to realise Scharnhorst’s dreams of promotion, although the royal court proved less open to his programme for reform at the time. As Peter Paret has astutely observed, ‘nothing is more far-fetched than to interpret this tide of ambition and talent [from other states into Prussia] as responses to a feeling – possibly not even consciously

8 J. v. Hartmann (jr.), *Der Königlich Hannoversche General Sir Julius von Hartmann: Eine Lebensskizze*, Hannover 1858, pp. 4-5. Unfortunately few of Hartmann’s personal papers seem to have survived, if the manuscript catalogues of the Lower Saxon state archives, the Public Record Office in Kew and the British Library are a reliable guide. The prime source of information about the general’s life remain biographical sketches written by his son in the mid-nineteenth century, based on then existing family papers and oral communication.

9 The city and the state will be referred to here as Hannover and Hanover respectively for better differentiation.

10 J. v. Hartmann, *Der Königlich Hannoversche General* (8), pp. 7-8.

11 H. Stübig, *Scharnhorst: Die Reform des preußischen Heeres*, Göttingen/Zürich 1988, p. 45.

recognized – that the future lay with Prussia.’ For Scharnhorst and professional officers like him, switching employers was above all a business decision.¹²

Hartmann was no exception. When French troops occupied Hanover in 1803, he first wrote to his former mentor for a Prussian commission, but on receiving an unexpected offer from London for a captaincy in the KGL artillery, he accepted it. Even more so than the Prussian army, the Legion embodied the spirit of the ‘betwixt-and-between’ that characterised European military culture in the age of the French Revolution and Napoleon. The voluntary expatriation of thousands of Hanoverian veterans, which France initially permitted, and their reassembly on British soil under the colours of their sovereign may have been a moving patriotic spectacle, yet the Legion had an undeniable mercenary purpose underneath the propaganda.¹³ As the name implied, the King’s German Legion was never just a Hanoverian corps. While certain contingents, particularly among the officer corps of the artillery and cavalry formations, became notable for their professionalism and close association with the Electorate, the more cosmopolitan infantry regiments were viewed with the same suspicion that dogged most foreign corps.¹⁴ After several years campaigning in the Iberian Peninsula, the KGL even lost its broader German composition, since attrition in the field caused other nationalities to gain entry as well. However, Lieutenant-Colonel Friedrich von der Decken, the co-creator of the Legion and a personal friend of Scharnhorst, was the first to admit the naturalness of these cosmopolitan dynamics in war. He propounded the view that Europeans shared common cultural roots to a degree not seen in any other part of the world. A German soldier who served in Austria, next in Prussia, and finally in some other army changed only the uniform while ‘his lifestyle and way of being remain the same.’¹⁵ Decken concluded that armies did not need patriotic citizen-soldiers to be effective as long as they could draw on a sufficient supply of technicians who combined drill with combat experience.¹⁶

Thus, rather than imitating French novelties, Decken and his sponsors at the English court patterned the KGL on foreign regiments found in some *ancien régime* armies. Like ‘military enterprisers’ of the early modern period Decken received a royal warrant to raise German troops, in return for which he was promised the most senior rank in the Legion and a commission for every signed-up recruit.¹⁷ For Hanoverian enlistees, the presence in the Legion of well-known and respected officers, such as Decken and Hartmann,

12 P. Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, Oxford 1976, p. 59. See also E. Opgenoorth, ‘Ausländer’ in Brandenburg-Preußen als leitende Beamte und Offiziere 1604–1871, Würzburg 1967, pp. 71–74.

13 Cf. N.L. Beamish, ‘History of the King’s German Legion’, *West Kent Guardian*, 6 January 1838.

14 See, for example: J.V. Page, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula: Letters and Diaries of Major the Hon Edward Charles Cocks 1786–1812*, Hippocrene 1986, p. 63.

15 F. v. d. Decken, *Versuch über den englischen National-Character*, Hannover 21817, p. 4. See also R.W. Fox, ‘Konservative Anpassung an die Revolution: Friedrich von der Decken und die hannoversche Militärreform 1789–1820’, in: *Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, 45 (1973), pp. 195–196.

16 D.E. Showalter, ‘The Retaming of Bellona: Prussia and the Institutionalization of the Napoleonic Legacy, 1815–1876’, in: *Military Affairs*, 44 (1980), pp. 57–63, here p. 58.

17 M. Bertram, ‘Der “Mondminister” und “General Killjoy”: Ein Machtkampf im Hintergrund der Ernennung des Herzogs Adolph Friedrich von Cambridge zum Generalgouverneur von Hannover (1813–1816)’, in: *Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, 65 (1993), p. 221. The term ‘military enterpriser’ has been borrowed from

proved a great stimulus for initial recruiting efforts. Officers had their own incentives to join. As one KGL officer recalled, his desire stemmed ‘aside from patriotic reasons, the extraordinary benefits of British service.’¹⁸ A comparably good salary was promised to officers along with the prospect of promotion by merit instead of purchase like the rest of the British army. They enjoyed all the privileges of British officers but remained subject to their own code of military discipline by virtue of their legal status as Hanoverian subjects. Cashiering inept commission-holders remained the prerogative of the Legion’s colonel-in-chief, an appointee of Elector-King George III resident in the United Kingdom. Even in the field British commanders did not dare to infringe on the colonel’s authority.¹⁹ Hartmann was quick to appreciate the opportunities for independent action these terms of service held out. On receiving his captaincy, he assumed the function of a military enterpriser by initially staying behind in Hannover to enlist artillerymen.²⁰ That Hartmann’s entry into the KGL was at least in the early stages of his appointment a strategic professional choice in keeping with pre-Revolutionary traditions of transferrable loyalties can be gleaned from the fact that he contemplated an exchange into the regular British army to secure further promotion shortly after arriving in the British Isles.²¹ Mercenaries, it is often emphasised, differ from national soldiers in that they fight for financial gain without an ideological attachment to the country that pays them. By the same token a regular fighter must then be an individual for whom loyalty to the fatherland and allegiance to one army come first.²² As will have become clear by now, Hartmann and his Hanoverian associates did not fit these neat, ideal-typical distinctions. Even though pragmatic considerations impacted on the choice of employer, there existed unanimity about their disdain for a French commission. Hartmann’s relatives in French-occupied Germany never failed to comment on the ‘fearfulness and lack of character’ exhibited by compatriots who decided to collaborate with the Napoleonic regime.²³ Scharnhorst, too, left no doubt in one telling letter to his friend Decken that he found the thought of serving in an army controlled entirely by France impossible to bear.²⁴ Hartmann and Scharnhorst were mercenaries in the sense that cultural-political affinities with Britain and Prussia respectively were of little consequence, but entering the employ

F. Redlich, *The German Military Enterpriser and his Work Force: A Study in European Economic and Social History*, 2 vols. Wiesbaden 1964/65.

- 18 H. Dehnel, *Erinnerungen deutscher Officiere in britischen Diensten aus den Kriegsjahren 1805 bis 1816*, Hannover 1864, p. 2. See also C.v. Franckenberg-Ludwigsdorff, *Schilderungen denkwürdiger deutscher Zustände vom Jahr 1806 bis zur Gegenwart 1863*, Göttingen 1863, pp. 118-119.
- 19 On this point, cf. report from Sir Arthur Wellesley to the duke of Cambridge, the Legion’s colonel-in-chief, 19 December 1809, Niedersächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Hannover, Hann.38 D Nr.211, fo.24.
- 20 J. v. Hartmann, *Der königlich Hannoversche General* (8), p. 33.
- 21 *Ibid.* pp. 44-45.
- 22 See definition of ‘mercenary’ in the Oxford English Dictionary, online edition (last accessed 17 August 2012).
- 23 J. v. Hartmann, *Der königlich Hannoversche General* (8), pp. 43-44. On Hanoverians in the French army, see J.R. Elting, *Swords around the Throne: Napoleon’s Grande Armée*, New York 1997, pp. 368-69; G. Schnath, ‘Die Légion Hanovrienne: Eine unbekannte Hilfstruppe Napoleons 1803–1811’, in: G. Schnath, *Ausgewählte Beiträge zur Landesgeschichte Niedersachsens*, Hildesheim 1968, pp. 280-329.
- 24 Scharnhorst to Decken, 14 July 1807, reprinted in J. Niemeyer (ed.), *Scharnhorst-Briefe an Friedrich von der Decken 1803–1813*, Bonn 1987, p. 138.

of these two powers was not incommensurate with their patriotic sensibilities. On the contrary, since it became increasingly apparent that Napoleon would only be defeated if all his enemies acted in concert, astute officers with technological expertise and general staff experience began to see their career possibilities in a grander Continental context that remained true to this mission. The presence alongside Hartmann's KGL of German nationals such as those of the Brunswick-Oels corps, or the self-exiled remnants of Ferdinand von Schill's *Freikorps*, was owed predominantly to this same expanded view, that resistance to French hegemony might best be found outside of central Europe in the army of Napoleonic France's perennial opponent, Britain.²⁵

Service abroad opened up avenues for the transfer of knowledge as well as manpower to other allies where it was needed.²⁶ Had Scharnhorst not found a way to evade French demands for his dismissal in Prussia, he would have taken up the inspectorate general of the Royal Military College at High Wycombe, which trained Britain's staff officers, the so-called 'scientifics', for Wellington's war in the Peninsula.²⁷ Several of his most trusted aides, including Carl von Clausewitz, Karl von Grolman and Karl von Tiedemann did exchange into the Russian and Austrian service, however. 'Secondment' to a foreign power benefited not only the host but was also seen as an opportunity to broaden the mental horizons of the officers concerned by familiarising them with other countries and peoples. One would have to look no further than Hartmann's own billets during the Peninsular War for evidence of transnational cultural exchange. His close friend and fellow artillery officer, Simon Frazer, wrote home from one of the abodes they stayed at: 'You would be dinned with the noise of the room in which I write; German, Portuguese, Spanish and English, all talking at once.'²⁸ Such interactions exemplified what Ute Frevert has identified as a key feature of organised violence, namely webs of communication across national boundaries and patterns of involvement that defied the xenophobic excesses of such events as the Napoleonic Wars.²⁹

For Hartmann transnational dialogue was both a virtue and a necessity. It engendered a personal appreciation for the liberal social customs of English society and convinced him that timely adaptation to the rules of the host country was the better part of valour. Being fluent in English, Hartmann took it upon himself to translate military manuals into German in order to help his Hanoverian comrades adjust better to life in Britain.³⁰ This scrupulous adherence to the conventions of British military culture hinted at an ulterior psychological impetus that Hartmann's son-cum-biographer explored in his writings.

25 F. Kircheisen (ed.), *Wider Napoleon! Ein Deutsches Reiterleben 1806–1815*, 2 vols. Stuttgart 1911, vol. 1, p. 292; S. Mustafa, *The Long Ride of Major von Schill: A Journey Through German History and Memory*, Plymouth 2008, pp. 82–83.

26 J. v. Hartmann, *Der Königlich Hannoversche General* (8), pp. 36–37. See also letter from Scharnhorst to Decken, 6 August 1804, in: J. Niemeyer (ed.), *Scharnhorst-Briefe* (24), p. 76.

27 J. Niemeyer, 'Einleitung', in: J. Niemeyer (ed.), *Scharnhorst-Briefe* (24), pp. 28–33.

28 A. S. Frazer, *Letters of Colonel Sir Augustus Simon Frazer, K.C.B.* edited by Major-General E. Sabine [1859], East Sussex 2001, pp. 104–105.

29 U. Frevert, 'Europeanizing German History', in: *German Historical Institute Bulletin*, 36 (2005), pp. 12–15.

30 J. v. Hartmann, *Der Königlich Hannoversche General* (8), pp. 40–41.

Time and again the latter related in glowing terms how much resolve the legionaries displayed in proving to their families at home and, more importantly, the British public that they were disciplined soldiers with ideals and not a mercenary rabble. Their failed attempt to induce a general uprising in Hanover against Napoleon during Lord Cathcart's abortive invasion of the north German littoral in 1805/6 stung them profoundly because it created the impression in London that the Legion lacked the capacity and patriotic credentials to mobilise their compatriots, whether this was true or not.³¹

Hartmann's method of counteracting the damage was by exerting himself in the field while attached to Wellington's forces in Portugal and Spain. He was first given command of three KGL artillery batteries but soon found himself in charge of larger mixed Anglo-Hanoverian contingents, leading eventually to his appointment as commander of the entire British artillery at the battle of Albuera (1811) and siege of Bayonne (1814). Other honours accompanied these elevations. After the battle of Salamanca (1812) Wellington recommended him for promotion to lieutenant-colonel and, after Vittoria (1813), a special lifelong pension from the British government in recognition of his technical accomplishment. To top it all off, he was admitted to a select group of foreigners (and an even smaller party of officers below the rank of major-general) to receive the Knight-Commander-class of the Order of the Bath in 1815.³²

These achievements made Hartmann immensely proud because they bore witness to his and the Legion's acceptance by their British comrades. Fear of social ostracism long haunted Hanoverian officers due to the half-mercenary origins of the Legion and a widespread belief that the British upper classes thought themselves innately superior to Continentals. Decken elaborated on these concerns in a treatise on the English national character first published in 1802 and reissued in a revised edition fifteen years later. Therein he expounded on the courage and patriotism of Britons but also their general intolerance of foreigners, which allegedly forced immigrants from the Continent to adopt British customs quickly lest they face isolation.³³ Decken experienced this first-hand in 1803 when he attracted the hostility of British officers after his promotion to colonel, a reaction attributable to resentment about the speed with which this foreigner climbed the ranks of the British army.³⁴ Since Hartmann had his own encounter with aristocratic snobbism in the person of his one-time commanding officer in Spain, Sir Thomas Graham, he was all the more impressed when the majority of senior officers he served under did not conform to the negative stereotype. Sir Rowland Hill, Lord Beresford and the Duke of Wellington readily recognised foreign merit in general and Hartmann's in particular where it was due.³⁵ Their approval filled him with deepening devotion to the

31 Ibid. p. 48.

32 War Office, List of the Officers of the Army and Royal Marines, on Full and Half-Pay, London 1821, p. 107.

33 F. v. d. Decken, Versuch über den englischen National-Character, Hannover 21817, pp. 64-75.

34 C. v. Ompteda, A Hanoverian-English Officer A Hundred Years Ago: Memoirs of Baron Ompteda, Colonel in the King's German Legion, edited by L. von Ompteda and translated by J. Hill, London 1892, p. 170.

35 J. v. Hartmann, Der Königlich Hannoversche General (8), p. 133; B. v. Linsingen-Gersdorff, Aus Hannovers militärischer Vergangenheit, Hannover 1880, pp. 400-401.

British army in a way that transcended narrow allegiance to the KGL or Hanover. During the period of Hanover's occupation, the Legion, and more broadly the institution of the British army, became the epicentre from which they drew their self-identity, not their far-off fatherland or the nation for which they now served. On the European periphery of the Iberian Peninsula Hartmann felt that he belonged to an Anglo-Hanoverian brotherhood-in arms in which mutual respect and dependence on each other suspended the national distinctions of the metropolitan world. The award of permanent British rank to the Legion officers for their distinguished military performance in 1812 accelerated this development by blurring the legal exceptionalism of Hanoverians in Wellington's army.³⁶ As a result the end of the Napoleonic Wars evoked mixed feelings because the disestablishment of the KGL threatened to pull the brotherhood apart. The heroic welcome given to the legionaries by the liberated fatherland offered limited consolation because officers of the *Landwehr* (militia) regiments established in 1813 considered them unwanted rivals for scarce positions in the reconstituted Hanoverian army.³⁷

Though the *Landwehr* officers took to calling their colleagues 'the English' to undermine their patriotic prestige in Hanover, Hartmann quickly landed on his feet. In 1815 he was appointed colonel and three years later major-general of artillery. A residual unhappiness remained: 'In English services I knew who I was and where I fit in, now in the Hanoverian army I first have to get use to the whims of those who govern.'³⁸ On campaign he had developed valuable skills in leadership, tactics and the practical application of military technology, which necessarily atrophied in peacetime and became 'dead capital'.³⁹ The ensuing restlessness caused friction with fellow ex-legionaries in the army, who, like him, were deprived of a professional outlet for their pent-up energies. Hartmann found some relief in private life, at least, by preserving his preference for things English. As he settled into married life and started a family, he decorated his house with portraits of British generals, ate food in the English fashion, spoke English with his children and corresponded regularly with friends in the United Kingdom. His insistence on being called 'Sir Julius' reflected perhaps most tellingly the extent to which he had come to think of himself as an English gentleman since joining the KGL in 1803.⁴⁰

Prolonged exposure to a foreign culture in combination with progressive estrangement from the home environment remoulded the identities of other officers in different ways, too. Lieutenant-General Charles Count von Alten, the KGL's highest-ranking field commander, mutated into a perfect 'Anglo-Hanoverian gentleman', like his subordinate.⁴¹ Scharnhorst's budding relationship to the state of Prussia added a twist to this theme of 'going native'. Whereas the integration of Hanoverian officers in Britain posed primarily

36 Anon. *Journal of an Officer in the King's German Legion*, London 1827, p. xxiii.

37 J. v. Hartmann, *Der Königlich Hannoversche General* (8), pp. 156-157, 174.

38 *Ibid.* p. 175.

39 *Ibid.* p. 176.

40 J. v. Hartmann (jr.), *Lebenserinnerungen: Briefe und Aufsätze des Generals der Cavallerie Julius von Hartmann*, Berlin 1882, pp. 18-19.

41 J. Runnebaum, *General Graf Carl von Alten: Ein Soldat Europas*, Hildesheim 1964, p. 122.

a socio-cultural challenge because the existence of the Anglo-Hanoverian personal union made a transfer of monarchical allegiance unnecessary, Scharnhorst found himself at the mercy of a new sovereign as well as an alien social environment. That King Friedrich Wilhelm III put his confidence in him cemented a personal obligation to the Hohenzollern monarchy but fostered only in the second instance identification with Prussia. As he explained to an old personal friend in 1810, 'From the beginning till the present I have been showered with indescribable kindness by my king; gratitude kept me in his service, otherwise I would have gone to the England after the peace of Tilsit, where a very advantageous job offer awaited me.'⁴² Beside the support of the king, it was the impact of his reforms on Prussian society and their expected payoff for Germany's liberation from Napoleonic domination, which swayed Scharnhorst to stay. A commitment to the Prussian state only gained the upper hand on the eve of the *Befreiungskriege* when he assured General Ludwig von Yorck that he was now ready to share the uncertain fate of his 'fatherland'.⁴³

Hanoverian officers on the whole adjusted well to soldiering abroad, then, but how did contemporaries and posterity judge their deviation from the new-fangled ideal of the patriotic citizen? In the case of the Legion, the long absence of veterans from Germany and their exotic war experiences in distant parts of Europe did not lend themselves easily to constructions of male valorousness centred around the embeddedness of soldiers in stable family structures and the national *Volksfamilie*, whose protection formed the *raison d'être* of the patriot-in-arms, according to Prussian propagandists of the time.⁴⁴ The positive qualities ascribed to the legionaries necessarily had to focus on different strengths. Instead of being hailed as family men, Hanoverian volunteers gained patriotic legitimacy from the sacrifice of domestic bliss in pursuing the liberation of their fatherland and the restoration of their ancestral ruling house from overseas. Masculine virtues attributed to this conduct included self-reliance, honour, fidelity, courage and a commitment to justice.⁴⁵ The mercenary features of legionary recruitment were conveniently marginalised in media of collective memory such as Hannover's Waterloo Column (1832) or anniversary commemorations since in the end the triumphant returning home of the veterans with foreign medals and other tokens of British admiration counted more than the motives for their emigration.⁴⁶

42 Scharnhorst to General Heinrich von Zeschau, 30 August 1810, reprinted in J. Kunisch/M. Sikora (eds.), Gerhard von Scharnhorst: Private und dienstliche Schriften, 6 vols. Cologne 2012, vol. 6, pp. 601-602.

43 Scharnhorst to General v. Yorck, mid-August 1812, reprinted in: K. Linnebach (ed.), Scharnhorsts Briefe: Privatbriefe, Munich 1980 [1914], p. 438.

44 K. Hagemann, 'The First Citizen of the State: Paternal Masculinity, Patriotism, and Citizenship in Early Nineteenth-Century Prussia', in: S. Dudink/K. Hagemann/A. Clark (eds.), Representing Masculinity: Male Citizenship in Modern Western Culture, Basingstoke 2007, p. 84.

45 See very poignantly Anon. Die Feierlichkeiten bei Beerdigung des Generals Carl Graf von Alten: Blätter der Erinnerung für seine Verehrer und Freude, Hannover 1840, pp. 36-37.

46 U. Bischoff, Denkmäler der Befreiungskriege in Deutschland 1813-1815, 2 vols. Berlin 1977, vol. 1, pp. 111-135; Anon. Die Königlich Deutsche Legion und das Hannoversche Corps bei Waterloo: Ein Erinnerungskranz für das Land Hannover zum 18. Juni 1865, Hannover 1865.

In Anglo-Hanoverian relations the Legion represented a bilateral asset of considerable value, given the persistence of the personal union until 1837 and the still close dynastic connections thereafter. Even though the corps formally disbanded in 1816, prominent officers like Hartmann were instrumental in keeping alive the old friendship between the two countries. They defended the British army wherever possible against criticism from outsiders. In the *Hannoversches Militairisches Journal* Hartmann published his recollections of the war in Portugal and Spain for the express purpose of combating the ‘incurable bias’ with which French military writers evaluated their former opponents.⁴⁷ Moreover, in the year of his promotion to commanding general of the Hanoverian artillery (1836) he spoke up publicly for Wellington when the duke disparaged Prussian discipline at Waterloo in a statement before Parliament.⁴⁸ This partiality to the British side stemmed from Hartmann’s emphatic belief that the victories of the heterogeneous Allied fighting force in the Peninsula, which comprised Britons, Germans, Portuguese, Spaniards and French émigrés, were due to the Iron Duke’s superior generalship. According to this reading of the historical record Wellington epitomised the esprit de corps of the army, making him a projection space for the memories of travails and dangers endured by British and Hanoverian veterans together.⁴⁹

Hartmann’s readiness to help maintain and participate in the transnational space of memory won him respect on both sides of the Channel. The great British military historian Sir William Napier, author of the *History of the War in the Peninsula* (1828–40), promptly agreed to modify his interpretation of historical evidence in the third volume after reading Hartmann’s articles about the Peninsular Campaign.⁵⁰ It was in tribute to the ageing general’s excellent standing in Britain that King Georg V of Hanover selected him for the diplomatic mission to convey the news of his father’s passing to Queen Victoria in 1851. Hartmann died five years later at the age of eighty-two, having been ennobled just one day before his passing. Admirers in the United Kingdom recognised his achievements by noting that he was ‘one of the last – if not the very last – of those able Hanoverian commanders, who held high positions in the English army during the Peninsular War[,] who shared with British soldiers the toils and the glories of that eventful time’.⁵¹

In Germany, the president of the prestigious *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Georg Waitz, set somewhat different accents in his entry on Hartmann in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*. Waitz concurred that Hartmann typified a ‘curiously happy’ combination of German and British socialising influences, but a large portion of the short article dealt with what he had accomplished *after* his return from the Napoleonic campaigns. From

47 J. v. Hartmann, ‘Beiträge zur Geschichte des Krieges auf der pyrenäischen Halbinsel in den Jahren 1809 und 1813’, in: *Hannoversches Militairisches Journal*, 1 (1831), pp. 24–47, here p. 25.

48 Anon. ‘Die Aussagen des Herzogs von Wellington über die Disciplin der preußischen Armee’, in: *Militair-Wochenblatt*, 21 (1836), pp. 97–102; J. v. Hartmann, ‘Der Königlich Hannoversche General (8)’, p. 184.

49 J. v. Hartmann, ‘Der Königlich Hannoversche General (8)’, p. 156.

50 ‘The Peninsular War – Colonel Napier to Sir Julius Hartmann’, in: *United Service Magazine*, 1833, Part II, p. 542.

51 N.L.B. ‘Death: General Sir Julius von Hartmann’, *United Service Magazine*, 1856, Part II, p. 640.

then until his retirement, Waitz explained, Hartmann had used his practical knowledge to modernise drill manuals, test new technologies and extend the scientific training of NCOs and officers in the artillery.⁵² Listing these details implicitly Germanised Hartmann to demonstrate his conformity with the ideals of military professionalism first laid down by his erstwhile teacher, Scharnhorst. When Waitz's article appeared in the late 1870s, overshadowed by Germany's recent victories in the Franco-Prussian War, there was no question of which state 'owned' the legacy of Scharnhorst's great military reforms, namely Prussia and by extension Germany.⁵³ This had not always been the case. After the reformer's death from a wound received at the battle of Großgörschen in 1813, his cherished patron, King Friedrich Wilhelm III, still balked at the idea of honouring the free-thinking 'foreigner' with a public monument.⁵⁴

The ensuing apotheosis of Scharnhorst and Waitz's attempt to de-anglicise Hartmann in German memory mirrored differences of opinion in Britain and Germany about the purpose of land armies. Whereas the states of the German Confederation accepted more or less since the Wars of Liberation that success in battle depended on well-trained standing armies officered by experts skilled in the science of war and patriotic citizen-soldiers on whom governments could rely on for backup, the United Kingdom settled on a small fighting force of under 100,000 volunteers led by men who until the 1860s bought their commissions. Britain could afford to do so because of her strong navy. Manpower shortages arose, however, when the British government was pulled into supplying troops for Continental conflicts, as happened during the Crimean War (1854–56). It was in moments like these that the successful precedent of the KGL resurfaced in favour of foreign recruitment. 'Whenever [...] we are called upon for extra exertions in the way of war', *The Economist* counselled, 'we should use our own heads and purses, but the lives and sinews of others.'⁵⁵ Ideas for the resurrection of a KGL-style foreign corps progressed so far that settlers in New South Wales began advocating a possible deployment to the colonies in order to relieve British soldiers there.⁵⁶ Although the regiments raised under the provisions of the 1854 Foreign Enlistment Act never quite lived up to the expectations set in them, and thus deterred the British government from pursuing the creation of a permanent foreign legion like France or Spain, the KGL stayed a monument to transna-

52 G. Waitz, 'Sir Julius von Hartmann', in: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol.10, n.p. 1879, pp. 690-691.

53 Cf. D. Walter, *Preußische Heeresreformen 1807–1870: Militärische Innovation und der Mythos der 'Roonschen Reform'*, Paderborn 2003.

54 M.-N. Hoppe, 'Beiträge zum Scharnhorst-Bild im 19. Jahrhundert (1813–1871)', unpublished PhD dissertation, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn 1995, p. 282.

55 'Is England to be a first-rate military power?', *The Economist*, 17 February 1855. On the KGL's role in parliamentary debates, see C.C. Bayley, *Mercenaries for the Crimea: The German, Swiss, and Italian Legions in British Service, 1854–1856*, Montreal - London 1977, pp. 44-55.

56 J. Berncastle, 'Suggestions for raising an army for New South Wales', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 September 1855, p. 5.

tional cooperation whose shining example inspired debates about foreign recruitment in Britain into the 1950s.⁵⁷

Wars change societal norms just as societies change the nature of war. Its has become commonplace to argue that the French and Revolutionary Wars ushered in a new kind of warfare built on ideological principles; mercenary armies gave way to the myth of the citizen-soldier because concepts like liberty and nation enabled large segments of the population to see in the state ‘the embodiment of some absolute Good for which no price was too high’.⁵⁸ And yet the life of the Anglo-Hanoverian artillery officer Julius Hartmann throws into relief rather more complicated reasons that guided the career choices of professional soldiers in this age of supposedly ‘total war’.⁵⁹ He and his mentor Scharnhorst remained wedded to the cosmopolitan precepts of the *ancien régime* whereby officers took service in foreign states to receive promotion or simply to broaden their knowledge of other cultures. Patriotism factored into the choice of employer in an only indirect manner. Hartmann’s conscience remained unencumbered for holding a British commission because the United Kingdom and Hanover were connected through a dynastic union. To him loyalty was not something one owed primarily to a territory or a people, but rather the monarch in whom sovereignty resided. His political ideas were thus firmly rooted in the constitutional theory of the eighteenth century. Yet service with the King’s German Legion over time softened the legal and cultural differences that Hanoverians and Britons had to navigate as part of the dynastic union between their countries. The campaigns in the Iberian Peninsula left Hartmann a true frontier runner ‘on the margins of sovereignty and legitimacy’, where allegiance and power were determined more by personal relationships than abstract principles.

Although Scharnhorst showed fewer political scruples than Hartmann in abandoning his sovereign for the greener pastures of another king, the differences between mentor and pupil should not be exaggerated. Both valued personal loyalty to the employers of their choice. There was also a striking parallelism in the fact that they sent their sons into foreign armies, the KGL and the Prussian cavalry respectively, instead of keeping them closer to home. Their own experiences had taught Scharnhorst and Hartmann that the more they devoted themselves to the transnational European military profession, the easier it was for them to make decisions that did not always include immediate monetary gain, or the self-satisfaction (or posthumous commendation) of the citizen soldier fighting exclusively for hearth and family. They knew that under the right circumstances professional self-fulfilment abroad could even evolve into emotional affinities with the adoptive fatherland. Integration in turn depended on reciprocity by way of rewards for merit. According to Hartmann’s son the pursuit of martial and social distinction in the British army was what made his father a typical representative of the Legion: ‘As one of

57 See ‘Man-Power for Defence: Case for a Foreign Legion,’ *The Times*, 25 August 1950, and ‘A King’s German Legion?’, *The Times*, 21 February 1939.

58 M. Howard, *War in European History*, Oxford 1976, p. 75.

59 D.A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon’s Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It*, Boston 2007.

the most decorated and most respected officers, he embodied to an extraordinary degree the spirit which let [the Legion] steadfastly and unchangeably prevail under the most trying circumstances during twelve hard years.⁶⁰ It was this spirit of wanderlust, ambition and professionalism which persuaded governments to establish foreign legions in the nineteenth century, despite or perhaps because of everything that the myth of the citizen-soldier entailed.

60 J. v. Hartmann, *Lebenserinnerungen* (40), p. 12.