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## War and Peace as Profit

On hearing that the emperor has made peace, the character of the soldier in Andreas Gryphius's (1616–1664) *Horribilicribrifax Teutsch* exclaims: 'Friede zu machen sonder mich? a qvaesto modo si! hat er nicht alle seine Victorien mir zu dancken?'<sup>1</sup> Accusations that soldiers prolonged the war for personal gain were common both during and after the conflict. The moral critique has loud echoes in some of the most deep-rooted views about the war: that it was waged by 'mercenaries' who profited at civilians' expense, leaving Germany a wasteland. Consequently, the 'soldiers alone ruled' until mutual exhaustion supposedly finally compelled belligerents to make peace.<sup>2</sup>

The imperial generalissimo, Albrecht von Wallenstein (1583–1634) is frequently presented as exemplifying making war to suit himself, but other generals and arms suppliers are also portrayed as war profiteers. At his death, the Swedish general Johan Banér (1596–1641) was worth between 200,000 and 1 million tlr, including investments in Hamburg banks. Several other senior Swedish commanders amassed similar fortunes, while a good number of imperial generals each had assets worth at least 100,000fl.<sup>3</sup> Guillelmo Bartolotti (1560–1634), born Willelm van den Heuvel who became an arms dealer, had taxable wealth of 400,000fl in 1631 placing him within the ranks of the wealthiest 100 Amsterdammers.<sup>4</sup> He was surpassed by the Dutch arms manufacturer and industrialist, Louis de Geer (1587–1652), who left a fortune of 1.7 million fl. Together with his brother-in-law, Elias Trip (1570–1636), de Geer had a working capital of over 2.4 million fl in 1634 (compared to that of 6.4 million of the Dutch East India Company). The famous Trippenhuys was built in Amsterdam 1660–1662 by his nephews who were, in turn, the sons of his business partner's brother. The house cost 250,000fl and was decorated with symbolic armaments.<sup>5</sup>

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1 *Andreas Gryphius: Horribilicribrifax Teutsch* (published 1663 but written 1647–1650), Act 2.

2 *Cicely Veronica Wedgwood: The Thirty Years War*. London 1957, S. 362.

3 *Theodor Lorentzen: Die schwedische Armee im Dreißigjährigen Kriege und ihre Abdankung*. Leipzig 1894, S. 15.

4 *Julia Zunckel: Rüstungsgeschäfte im Dreißigjährigen Krieg. Unternehmerkräfte, Militärgüter und Marktstrategien im Handel zwischen Genua, Amsterdam und Hamburg*. Berlin 1997, S. 145–158.

5 *Peter Wolfgang Klein: The Trip Family in the 17th Century*, in: *Acta Historiae Neerlandicae* 1 (1966), S. 187–211.

Assessment of such profiteering remains profoundly influenced by mid-twentieth century approaches to social economic history exemplified by Fritz Redlich's (1892–1978) monumental (and still useful) study of 'German military enterprisers.' Profit is quantified in monetary terms in the manner of a balance sheet, though Redlich acknowledged the significance of non-material rewards.<sup>6</sup> This chapter argues that a more nuanced approach is needed to understand how contemporaries understood and pursued profit. It borrows the concept of 'pathways to profit' from Samuel Weber's study of the Borromeo family of contractors and administrators in Spanish service 1620–1680 but, in addition to his emphasis on patronage, adds two further aspects which influenced an individual's likelihood of benefiting personally from the war.<sup>7</sup>

Opportunity was the first factor. What mattered was not just luck (fickle *Fortuna*), but also broader circumstances. The expansion of the state and of warfare created unprecedented opportunities after 1618. The Empire had enjoyed relative peace since the 1550s and though the Habsburgs had waged prolonged struggles against the Ottomans, these had been conducted beyond imperial frontiers with armies which were reduced at the end of each campaign and demobilised almost completely once peace returned. The conflict after 1618 was of an altogether different scale and duration. This not only created employment, but also stimulated a voracious demand for food, clothing, equipment, and armaments.

Infrastructure constituted the second factor which had two dimensions, the first of which was the character of the state and military institutions. It was not simply a matter of new career or business opportunities, as the chances of profit were profoundly influenced by how armies were organised and how war was conducted. Infrastructure's second dimension was the broader capacity of the economy to produce a surplus which could be used for warfare, as well as the availability of credit and the market structures which could be tapped by those engaging in or supplying war.

Patronage was the third factor. Death might have been a great leveller, but the opportunities for profit were not equal. Armies were particularly hierarchical in what was already a stratified social order. There were often significant barriers to entry into what David Parrott has termed 'the business of war' (military contracting).<sup>8</sup> Patrons could open or close doors, and were important at all levels, includ-

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<sup>6</sup> *Fritz Redlich: The German Military Enterpriser and his Workforce*. 2 Bde. Wiesbaden 1964–1965.

<sup>7</sup> *Samuel Weber: Aristocratic Power in the Spanish Monarchy. The Borromeo Brothers of Milan, 1620–1680*. Oxford 2023.

<sup>8</sup> *David Parrott: The Business of War. Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge 2012.

ing for the lowest soldier or camp follower. However, ‘the careers of military entrepreneurs were not simply the personal choice of opportunistic individuals, they were fundamentally pieces of aristocratic family strategies for gaining and maintaining power in a European landscape of interconnected conflicts.’<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, it is necessary to supplement the customary perspectives of the state and the individual, by considering how families and looser groups, like business consortia or cohorts of officers, navigated the vicissitudes of war.

The following looks beyond the question of ‘who won the war’<sup>10</sup> to consider the ‘war profiteering’ of military personnel and those involved in sustaining warfare, such as supply contractors. First, it is necessary to define both ‘war’ and ‘profit’ and consider the prevailing theological, social and moral attitudes. The second section examines the possibilities for enrichment within the formal infrastructure of armies and their logistical support, while the third considers the opportunities beyond – or even contrary to – officially sanctioned practices. The focus then shifts from conventional material gain to consider the opportunities for promotion, before examining the chances of social advancement and other less obviously military benefits. After a short assessment of the impact of profiteering on the conduct of war, the chapter concludes by stressing that war remained an extremely risky business with more losers than winners.

## I Definitions and Attitudes

The terms ‘war’ and ‘profit’ are not as obvious as they first appear. Very few of those who genuinely got rich, did so entirely through direct involvement in the war. Like the Krupp family in nineteenth-century Prussia, Louis de Geer was unusual in depending on arms production for his wealth. Most contractors also dealt in other commodities, like Elias Trip who traded slaves and North American furs. Guillelmo Bartolotti was primarily a grain merchant and speculated in the Dutch West India Company. Arms sales could be a step to other lucrative business, and Bartolotti joined Trip’s company founded in 1628 to trade with Russia through Archangel. Likewise, many officers invested their profits from military contracting in more conventional commerce. Kaspar Jadok Stockalper (1609–1691), a colonel from Valais, had two to four companies at any one time in foreign (usually

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<sup>9</sup> *Suzanne Sutherland: The Rise of the Military Entrepreneur. War, Diplomacy, and Knowledge in Habsburg Europe. Ithaca 2022, S. 61.*

<sup>10</sup> For that issue, see *Peter H. Wilson: Who Won the Thirty Years War?*, in: *History Today* 59/8 (2009), S. 12–19.

French) service, yet was also heavily involved in salt trading 1640–1670.<sup>11</sup> Contractors used family and personal capital to fund their activities as military entrepreneurs. Officers who were rewarded had sometimes performed other functions during their careers, such as serving as civil administrators.

‘Profit’ is also a tricky term which has generally been discussed anachronistically. Political historians have generally interpreted private gain through the modern ideal of the state defined as monopolising legitimate power and exercising a managerial role. This approach makes a sharp public/private distinction. Personal gain in the public sector is interpreted as illegitimate corruption, whereas in the private sector it is legitimate commercial profit. Contractors profiting from supplying or serving the state are, therefore, regarded as corrupt. Yet, private gain was integral to markets and commercial development and profit-taking was general in an era when state officials were expected to finance their own salaries and expenses at least partly from the fees they could charge.<sup>12</sup>

Economic historians have conventionally associated profit with the growth of individualism and capitalism, arguing that these emerged at first only in certain parts of Europe (especially England and the Dutch Republic) and primarily only among merchants before spreading to other sections of society. These developments are contrasted with a supposedly static premodern mentality which prioritised collectivism and was hostile to profit. The older literature is dominated by the influential concept of the *ganzes Haus*, or household rooted in family solidarity, collective decision-making, and autarkic subsistence.<sup>13</sup> Peasants supposedly did not monetise time and were hostile to wage labour, preferring instead payment in kind and to maximise consumption over profit.

More recent research challenges this.<sup>14</sup> The concept of personal profit was already well-established in premodernity, even amongst serfs who wanted to boost personal earnings and minimise costs. The opportunities for profiting were constrained by the underdeveloped character of markets. Most people lacked access to information about markets which functioned badly, lacked state support, and operated in a world still dominated by restrictive feudal practices and guild privi-

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<sup>11</sup> *Hans Steffen*: Die Kompanien Kaspar Jodok Stockalpers. Beispiel eines Soldunternehmens im 17. Jahrhundert. Brig 1975.

<sup>12</sup> *Pepijn Brandon*: War, Capital, and the Dutch State (1588–1795). Leiden 2015.

<sup>13</sup> The classic statement is *Otto Brunner*: Land und Herrschaft. 4. Aufl. Wien 1959.

<sup>14</sup> *Sheilagh Ogilvie*: The Economic World of the Bohemian Serf. Economic Concepts, Preferences and Constraints on the Estate of Friedland, 1583–1692, in: *Economic History Review* 54 (2001), S. 430–453, and her Choices and Constraints in the Pre-industrial Countryside, in: Chris Briggs/P.M. Kitson/Stephen J. Thompson (Hrsg.), *Population, Welfare and Economic Change in Britain 1290–1834*. Woodbridge 2014, S. 269–305.

leges. Nonetheless, despite the considerable barriers to entry, even serfs traded grain, food, cattle, beer, and proto-industrial goods well beyond their home communities.

These considerations should not be construed as arguing that seventeenth-century soldiers and civilians were perfectly ‘rational’ economic actors. Many behaviours that look like profit-seeking are virtually indistinguishable from survival strategies adopted in precarious and violent times. Barely half of peasant households could sustain themselves from agriculture alone, forcing them to access markets for trade and other work. Likewise, soldiers’ plundering often mixed sustaining their immediate existence with the hope for more substantial gains.

Furthermore, there were no fixed understandings of profit and loss. For example, military administrators generally used two forms of accounting: the company roll (collective) and the individual account for each man. The two might not tally, or record entries the same way.<sup>15</sup> The absence of reliable market information inhibited the pricing of labour or goods, while those involved often placed the achievement of other goals above monetary gain. Individuals who amassed vast wealth would not necessarily have regarded this as an unqualified success. Bernhard of Weimar (1604–1639) died with 1 million livres invested in Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Lyons, yet had been driven throughout his career by the desire to secure permanent possession of a principality for himself as he had no prospect of inheriting one from his own family. Ernst von Mansfeld (1580–1626) had similar motives, with the added incentive of overcoming his illegitimate birth.<sup>16</sup>

Gains were also relative. Stockalper made 250,000 livres (about 125,000fl) from military contracting 1632–1680; a sum equivalent to 15,000 years of the pay of one of his soldiers.<sup>17</sup> Wealth was already unevenly distributed throughout society. Between 50% and 92% of wealth was concentrated in the hands of the richest 10% of the urban population, for instance.<sup>18</sup> For most people, even relatively small gains could radically improve their material circumstances.

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<sup>15</sup> *Benjamin Ryser*: Zwischen den Fronten. Berner Militärunternehmer im Dienst des Sonnenkönigs Ludwig XIV. Zürich 2021, S. 83f.

<sup>16</sup> *Astrid Ackermann*: Herzog Bernhard von Weimar. Militärunternehmer und politischer Stratege im Dreißigjährigen Krieg. Berlin 2023, S. 29–32, 41–44, 91–105; *Walter Krüssmann* Ernst von Mansfeld (1580–1626). Grafensohn, Söldnerführer, Kriegsunternehmer gegen Habsburg im Dreißigjährigen Krieg. Berlin 2010.

<sup>17</sup> *Steffen*, Stockalper, S. 207.

<sup>18</sup> *Peter H. Wilson*: From Reich to Revolution. German History, 1558–1806. Basingstoke 2004, S. 72.

The contemporary terms *Profit*, *Gewinn*, and *Vorteil* were ambivalent and how they were judged depended on context. Despite the acceptance of personal gain, collectivist ideals remained strong. Theologians condemned worldly aspirations and wealth, arguing that true rewards would come to the godly in heaven. The prevailing early mercantilist view of the world as a constantly sized cake implied that someone's profit was another's loss. The language of the 'common good' presented collective interests as overriding those of the individual, while the rhetoric associated with the state and especially its royal or princely master also stressed loyalty and service above self-interest. As we shall see, these attitudes were instrumentalised by those who felt cheated, or disadvantaged to criticise those who were more fortunate, or to unseat rivals.<sup>19</sup>

The unequal distribution of opportunities for profit within society and military institutions also fuelled criticism. Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen (1621–1676) expressed an old campaigner's resentment that those at the top were undeserving parvenus by describing the military hierarchy as a tree. The roots represented wider society which sustained the army and provided new recruits. The ordinary soldiers sat on the lowest branches with the non-commissioned officers (NCOs) only slightly above. 'Darüber hatte des Baumes Stamm einen Absatz, ein glatt Stück ohne Äste mit seltsamen Seifen der Mißgunst geschmieret. Kein Kerl, er sei dann vom Adel, konnte da hinaufsteigen, dann der Stamm war glätter poliert als ein stählerner Spiegel.' Then came the ranks of officers in ascending order with those at the top best placed to avoid danger whilst enriching themselves 'wann ein Commissarius daherkam und eine Wanne voll Geld über den Baum abschüttete, solchen zu erquickten, ließen sie den Untersten soviel wie nichts zukommen. Dahero pfligten von den Untersten mehr Hungers zu sterben, als ihrer vom Feind umkamen.'<sup>20</sup>

Grimmelshausen's criticism of those at the top echoed wider perceptions of the war as disruptive of the divinely ordained order. The Empire lacked an equivalent to the concept of the 'world turned upside down' expressed in the British and Irish civil wars (1639–1653) which had a revolutionary undercurrent that the old order was unjust and needed upending to create a better future. These attitudes are not just a subject of study, because we also cannot escape moral questions when we analyse the past: we need to remain mindful not to reduce analysis to a balance sheet of profit and loss.

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<sup>19</sup> Weber, *Aristocratic Power*, S. 10f. Further discussion in Niels Grüne/Simona Slanička (Hrsg.), *Korruption. Historische Annäherungen an eine Grundfigur politischer Kommunikation*. Göttingen 2010.

<sup>20</sup> Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen: *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus Teutsch*. Nürnberg 1668–1669, Book 1, chapters 15–18.

## II Profiting from the Military Infrastructure

While the rapid growth of armies after 1618 expanded opportunities, access to these remained constrained by the hierarchical character of military organisation. Comprehensive data does not yet exist as to how many soldiers served during the war. There were no more than a few thousand under arms in the Empire immediately prior to 1618, but that total soon soared to 70,000 during the conflict's opening years. Numbers reached 140,000 or more after 1625 with Denmark's intervention and the expansion of the imperial army under Wallenstein. That total doubled again as the war escalated after the Swedish invasion in June 1630, but overall strength fell sharply after 1635 and there were around 160,000 combatants when the fighting ceased in 1648. Campaign losses could exceed half an army's initial strength, meaning that the overall numbers serving were far higher than these figures might suggest.

Over 160,000 Swedes and Finns fought in Poland and the Empire 1620–1648, of whom 90% died or deserted. The death rate was around one in four who served. Assuming this ratio also applied to the other belligerents, and that the total estimate for military deaths at 1.8 million is accurate, around 7.2 million men served.<sup>21</sup> The total 'military community' was larger, because each soldier was generally accompanied by one or two noncombatant 'camp followers', who were mostly women and children. To put these figures into perspective, the Empire and the Austrian Habsburg monarchy had about 23 million inhabitants in 1618, and around a fifth fewer by the end of the war.

As Grimmelshausen's metaphor suggests, armies were organised with a broad base of ordinary soldiers, a small body of NCOs and administrative officials, and a tiny elite of officers. The primary institution was the regiment of up to 1,000 men for cavalry and, at least in the early stages, up to three times that number for infantry. Each regiment was headed by a colonel who enjoyed semi proprietorial rights under the overall control of his warlord. The colonel was assisted by a lieutenant colonel and a major, with all three each having subsidiary proprietorial rights over one of the regiment's companies as nominal captains. Most units were supposed to have ten companies, though many regiments had less, and none was usually at full strength. In addition to the captain, each company had

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<sup>21</sup> Jan Lindegren: *The Politics of Expansion in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Sweden*, in: Enrique Martínez Ruis/Magdalena de Pazzis Pi Corrales (Hrsg.), *Spain and Sweden in the Baroque Era (1600–1660)*. Madrid 2000, S. 169–194, at 180–184; Peter H. Wilson: *Europe's Tragedy. The Thirty Years War*. London 2009, S. 786–795; Sabine Eickhoff/Franz Schopper: *1636. Ihre Letzte Schlacht. Leben im Dreißigjährigen Krieg*. Zossen 2012, S. 87, 153.

a lieutenant and ensign (called cornet in the cavalry), as well as between five and ten NCOs. Few officers were promoted to general's rank without having been a colonel, and most of those who advanced higher retained formal control over their regiment, though they handed over actual command to their lieutenant colonel.

Thus, only one in every 300 to 1,000 soldiers held the rank of major or above, while no more than 5 to 10% were NCOs. The opportunities opened and closed as armies increased or contracted. There were around 100 colonels-proprietors active in 1622, with a peak of around 300 during 1631–1634, after which the total fell to the earlier level. Altogether, around 1,500 individuals held colonel's rank in the various armies during the war. Of these around 600 held this rank at some point in the imperial army, compared to about 350 who fought for Sweden.<sup>22</sup> The 207 men who became generals in the emperor's service mostly came from this pool of senior officers.<sup>23</sup> This data underscores that those with dazzling careers remained a very small minority. Giovanni Lodovico Isolano (1586–1640), who came from Görz, was the only soldier to reach general's rank by serving in the emperor's Croatian and Hungarian light cavalry which usually had an effective strength of 7,000 to 8,000 with many more serving overall during the war.<sup>24</sup>

This hierarchy was reinforced by the unequal pay scales which, in turn, provided the most legitimate means of personal gain. The Bavarian and Catholic League commander, Jean Tserclaes von Tilly (1559–1632), was initially paid 2,000fl a month, later increased by 50%, while Field Marshal Karl Gustav von Wrangel (1613–1676) received 17,000tlr annually as Swedish commander in the war's final years. Others might also earn well. Johann Krautt began his career as a scribe in the Bavarian military administration, but accumulated other positions after 1624, including that of paymaster, and earned 49,366fl by 1632.<sup>25</sup>

Such examples were exceptional, especially after the opening years because warlords cut the initially relatively generous rates, even for senior officers. Whereas an imperial colonel was to receive 500fl a month in 1625, his official pay had been reduced to 125fl by October 1634, while that of a captain fell from 100fl to 40fl across the same period. An ordinary infantryman saw his pay slashed

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<sup>22</sup> *Redlich*, *Enterpriser*, Bd. I, S. 205–210.

<sup>23</sup> *Antonio Schmidt-Brentano*: *Die kaiserlichen Generale 1618–1648*. Wien 2022.

<sup>24</sup> *Heinrich Bücheler*: *Von Pappenheim zu Piccolomini. Sechs Gestalten aus Wallensteins Lager*. Sigmaringen 1994, S. 103–122; *Michael Weise*: *Gewaltprofis und Kriegsprofiteure. Kroatische Söldner als Gewaltunternehmer im Dreißigjährigen Krieg*, in: *GWU* 68 (2017), S. 278–291.

<sup>25</sup> *Lorentzen*, *Schwedische Armee*, S. 14f.; *Keito Saito*: *Das Kriegskommissariat der bayerisch-ligistischen Armee während des Dreißigjährigen Krieges*. Göttingen 2020, S. 143, 145.

from about 2.75fl to around 1.5fl.<sup>26</sup> Rations were also unequal, with officers allocated additional ‘portions’ of food and fodder, especially for their horses. Ordinary soldiers were at least given free clothing and weaponry, whereas senior commanders expected to equip themselves, maintain their own staffs, and to pay for some expenses, such as espionage. Pay became increasingly irregular already in the opening campaigns, while its value was eroded by the hyperinflation of 1622–1623.

If it was difficult to get rich from pay alone, officers at least benefitted from their management of the ‘economy’ of their company or regiment. France, for example, paid lump sums to its Swiss officers who could keep the surplus left after they had paid, fed, and equipped their men. Stockalper made around 20% profit this way across his career.<sup>27</sup> Some armies permitted ‘dead pays’ or *Passevolants* who were vacant spaces on the muster roll for which officers could still charge to provide sums to cover the other costs of those men who were present. The spiralling costs encouraged warlords to forbid such practices, though generally unsuccessfully. Bavaria made the mistake of permitting its senior inspector, Hans Christoph von Ruepp (1587–1652), to become colonel of his own regiment, only to suspect him of abusing his dual role to falsify his muster returns.<sup>28</sup>

The large salaries initially offered colonels and generals were, in part, a recognition that these men usually advanced money to recruit their units through what constituted a public-private partnership enabling warlords to leverage ‘private’ credit and resources. Officially, these sums were to be refunded once the unit mustered into service. Ott Heinrich von Fugger (1592–1644) hailed from a family which had entered the imperial nobility in the early sixteenth century thanks to their role as the emperor’s bankers. This background enabled him to raise 50,000fl from numerous investors to whom he promised 5 to 6% interest when he contracted to raise an infantry regiment to fight the Bohemians in 1618. Spain promised to refund this, but had only paid 31,000fl by March 1622, obliging Fugger to cover the costs meanwhile. Some of his investors only received their capital repayment in the 1630s, but he nonetheless made 19,000fl by 1621 through charging more than his actual costs, and thanks to his pay. Gottfried Heinrich Count Pappenheim (1594–1632) pawned his family estate to a neighbouring prince to raise

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<sup>26</sup> Victor Loewe: *Die Organisation und Verwaltung der Wallensteinischen Heeren*. Leipzig 1895, S. 63–68. See additional data in Redlich, *Enterpriser*, Bd. I, S. 306–317.

<sup>27</sup> Ryser, *Zwischen den Fronten*, S. 82f.; Steffen, *Stockalper*, S. 199–207.

<sup>28</sup> Saito, *Kriegskommissariat*, S. 285–288.

the 26,000t<sub>l</sub>r he needed to recruit 3,000 infantry and 500 cavalry for Spanish service in February 1625.<sup>29</sup>

Access to such substantial funds enabled Fugger and Pappenheim to secure colonel's rank by furnishing entire regiments. Others climbed the ladder more slowly but could still achieve wealth and high rank. Lieutenant Colonel Peter König von Mohr (1594–1647) initially collaborated with his half-brother Albrecht Nikolaus (1600–1637) to recruit cavalry for the imperial army in 1627, together earning enough to buy four lordships and a grand townhouse in their native Fribourg. After his promotion to colonel in 1630, Peter König recruited on his own account, using loans from bankers in St Gallen to find and deliver at least 7,000 Swiss recruits for the imperial army over the next four years.<sup>30</sup>

'General contracting' involved raising multiple regiments and offered potentially greater profits. Around 40% of imperial colonels commanded more than one regiment simultaneously at some point in their career, and Lothar Dietrich Frhr von Bönninghausen (1598–1657) owed his promotion to his ability as a recruiter rather than commander, and it made him a fortune worth 200,000t<sub>l</sub>r.<sup>31</sup> However, financial reward was not the sole incentive, since recruitment was one of the most important ways an officer could demonstrate competence and earn his superiors' praise and goodwill.

These opportunities declined as the war lengthened because existing units were increasingly maintained permanently rather than adding new formations. Warlords also tightened the terms, specifying fixed sums to be refunded for each recruit while the emperor banned the simultaneous ownership of regiments in 1642.

Wallenstein was unusual in developing his own arms and logistical industries to supply the army he had raised and commanded. Other officers relied on civilian contractors, merchants, and producers since state arsenals generally only repaired and stored weaponry rather than making it. Arrangements were often complex, especially for forces operating without a stable home base, like those commanded by Mansfeld and Bernhard von Weimar who relied on foreign

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29 *Stephanie Haberer*: Ott Heinrich Fugger (1592–1644). Biographische Analyse typologischer Handlungsfelder in der Epoche des Dreißigjährigen Krieges. Augsburg 2004, S. 335–339, 342; *Schmidt-Brentano*, Kaiserliche Generale, S. 375.

30 *Verena Villiger/Jean Steinauer/Daniel Bitterli*: Im Galopp durchs Kaiserreich. Das bewegte Leben des Franz Peter König 1594–1647. Baden 2006, S. 97–105, 117–122; *Schmidt-Brentano*, Kaiserliche Generale, S. 246.

31 *Redlich*, Enterpriser, Bd. I, S. 270; *Helmut Lahrkamp*: Lothar Dietrich Frhr. von Bönninghausen. Ein westfälischer Söldnerführer des Dreißigjährigen Krieges, in: *Westfälische Zeitschrift* 108 (1958), S. 239–366.

monarchs as sponsors and employers. Bernhard's final campaigns on the Upper Rhine 1635–1639 depended on an extensive network of Dutch bankers, south German and Swiss merchants, and his own subordinates who together arranged the transfer of French subsidies and procured food, weaponry, and other essentials, mainly from neutral Switzerland.<sup>32</sup>

Huge sums were involved. Fugger spent 22,000fl on arms and equipment for his infantry regiment during the 1618–1622 Bohemian campaign.<sup>33</sup> Dutch arms exports totalled 50 million fl across first half of the seventeenth century with naval stores and other vital materials like saltpetre worth an equivalent sum. Combined, these sales represented 5% of the national economy or equivalent to the contribution of the mighty East India Company. It is difficult to disaggregate how much directly related to the Thirty Years War, since Amsterdam was the 'arsenal of the world' and supplied other conflicts, notably the British and Irish civil wars. Dutch arms, powder, and naval stores accounted for 13.7% by value of French imports, while copper, iron, and lead – all primarily used in arms production – constituted another 7% across 1635–1645. Russian arms imports averaged 50,000 roubles annually or a fifth of all imports through Archangel during the 1620s and 1630s.<sup>34</sup>

Arms sales were intermittent and subject to sudden fluctuations, but prices appear to have remained broadly constant, indicating a relatively restricted market. The Dutch specialised in bulk orders, offering package deals to equip entire armies with weaponry, armour, and ammunition. Such bulk orders became much rarer after the mid-1620s, though England continued to make such purchases into the 1640s. It was possible to make large profits on a single bulk order. Caspar van Ceulen (1560–1615) supplied over 400 tonnes of powder, sulphur and saltpetre to Venice 1606–1608 which temporarily accounted for 61% of the total value of Amsterdam's arms sales.<sup>35</sup>

Trip and de Geer operated on an exceptional scale as the arms merchants' equivalent of Wallenstein. Their huge working capital meant they could pay cash in advance to secure large-scale supply, enabling them to monopolise the ex-

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<sup>32</sup> Ackermann, Bernhard von Weimar, S. 290–307.

<sup>33</sup> Haberer, Fugger, S. 337f.

<sup>34</sup> Jan Piet Puytpe/Marco van der Hoeven (Hrsg.): *The Arsenal of the World: The Dutch Arms Trade in the Seventeenth Century*. Amsterdam 1996; *J.T. Kotilaine: In Defense of the Realm: Russian Arms Trade and Production in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Century*, in: Eric Lohr/Marshall Poc (Hrsg.), *The Military and Society in Russia 1450–1917*. Leiden 2002, S. 67–95, at 73.

<sup>35</sup> Michiel de Jong: *Arms Exports and Arms Control of the Dutch Republic 1585–1621*, in: Robert Beeres/Robert Bertrand/Jeroen Klomp/Job Timmermans/Joop Voetelink (Hrsg.), *NL ARMS. Netherlands Annual Review of Military Studies*. Breda 2022, S. 289–309, at 306.

port of Swedish cannon and to sell 2,408 pieces in 1630–1631 alone at a time when it was rare for a field army or a warship to have more than 30 guns. However, Sweden tired of Trip's extortionist practices and cancelled his monopoly privilege in 1634 at the point when the global copper market collapsed. While he escaped complete ruin, he was owed 1 million fl by 1635 which was eventually amortised by the gift of relatively unattractive land to his son in 1653.<sup>36</sup>

The Suhl arms manufacturers were owed 34,483t<sub>l</sub>r by 1632, chiefly by Sweden and its generals. Their workshops were destroyed in a raid by the imperial army two years later, and though production was restored, profitability remained difficult. The average wealth of Nuremberg's arms producers declined by about a third across the war. Though arms production brought cash into the city, it was never sufficient to underpin neutrality, unlike Hamburg which owed its escape from the violence to its new fortifications and its value as a financial and diplomatic centre for all sides.<sup>37</sup>

### III Informal Opportunities

Soldiers also employed violence to extort additional benefits beyond those permitted by their regulations and contracts. Military personnel were organised and armed, giving them a comparative advantage over civilians. Even fortified communities could be prised open by threatening to destroy their property beyond the walls, or through exploiting social divisions because the richer inhabitants were often more willing to cooperate if they could push burdens onto their poorer neighbours.

All armies relied on war taxes known as 'contributions' which were levied directly in areas they occupied or within their operational radius. Officially, these were governed by regulations and usually involved agreements with the local authorities who were obliged to extract payment from the inhabitants. However, commanders were allowed considerable latitude and often demanded far more than needed, or accepted bribes in return for reducing the amount. The Swedish commanders demanded 150,000t<sub>l</sub>r from Olmütz which surrendered to them in

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<sup>36</sup> Klein, Trip Family, S. 197f., 204ff.

<sup>37</sup> Herbert Langer: Army finances, Production and Commerce. The Preconditions for Waging War, in: Klaus Bußmann/Heinz Schilling (Hrsg.), 1648. War and Peace in Europe. 3 Bde. Münster 1998, Bd. 1, S. 293–299, at 297; Arno Schütze: Waffen für Freund und Feind. Der Rüstungsgüterhandel Nürnbergs im Dreißigjährigen Krieg, in: JbWG 45 (2004), S. 207–224, at 221.

June 1642, but settled for 30,000 plus a 4,000 bribe.<sup>38</sup> Christoph Carl von Brandenstein (1593–1640) made enough money by 1633 as Sweden’s contributions coordinator to buy two bishoprics and three counties which his employer had conquered, and was promised further lands and the title of ‘Prince of Konstanz’ against 1 million tlr he was to extort from South Germany.<sup>39</sup>

Though communities suffered from military demands, the urban elite often participated in profiting from contributions. Median household wealth in the imperial city of Nördlingen declined from 190fl (1615) to 90fl (1646), yet the average wealth of the 15 magistrates roughly doubled to 2,151 fl by the end of the war. Though magistrates received only small salaries, they had numerous opportunities for personal enrichment, not least by handling the 2.3 million fl raised in the city across the war to pay contributions to the warring parties. In short, the rich got richer, while the poor became more impoverished.<sup>40</sup>

Bribes were also extracted by threatening to occupy an area for winter quarters or to use it to muster new troops (all at the inhabitants’ expense). Local officials were routinely taken hostage to ensure payments, including those agreed officially, and additional ransoms were often demanded for their release. Ordinary soldiers participated in these practices, though on a proportionately smaller scale. Even if soldiers did not directly use violence, civilians were conscious of the danger they posed and were often willing to pre-empt trouble by presenting commanders with cash gifts (*Douceurs*) to encourage them to keep their subordinates under control. Good behaviour was incentivised by the prospect of additional gifts when the troops left the settlement, or other ‘courtesies’ such as paying officers’ inn bills.<sup>41</sup>

Plunder was not necessarily random or indiscriminate and frequently had a strategic purpose to harm the enemy by denying him resources.<sup>42</sup> Commanders were conscious that too much licence threatened military discipline and sought

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38 Friedrich Flade: *Tagebuch des feindlichen Einfalls der Schweden in das Markgrafenthum Mähren während ihres Aufenthaltes in der Stadt Olmütz 1642–1650*, in: *Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte* 65 (1884), S. 309–485, at 318. Other examples in *Redlich*: *Enterpriser*, Bd. I, S. 359–371; *Christoph Gampert*: *Die Soldatensteuer in Schwaben, Franken und Westfalen. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kontributionswesens im Dreißigjährigen Krieg*. Baden-Baden 2024, S. 103, 105.

39 *Christa Deinert*: *Die schwedische Epoche in Franken von 1631–1635*. Würzburg 1966, S. 152f.

40 *Felix Schaff*: *Urban political structures and inequality. Political economy lessons from early modern German cities*, in: *Journal of Economic History* 84 (2024), S. 517–553.

41 Examples in *Gampert*, *Soldatensteuer*, S. 103–107.

42 Examples in *Peter H. Wilson/Katerina Tkacova/Thomas Pert*: *Mapping Premodern Small War. The Case of the Thirty Years War (1618–48)*, in: *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 34 (2023), S. 1043–1071.

to keep plundering within the broadly accepted limits defined by custom and regulations.<sup>43</sup> Sweden began the systematic plundering of archives, libraries, and cultural items after it captured Riga in 1621, directing its officers to target specific locations. To an extent, this was driven by the need for military and wider strategic intelligence, as well as to expand the country's limited repositories of knowledge, such as Uppsala University library. However, such booty also signalled success, most obviously in Swedish Trophy collection established by Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna (1583–1654) in 1633 to display flags and weaponry captured from defeated enemies.<sup>44</sup> Wrangel filled his new palace at Skokloster with carefully selected books and art works as his own personal 'war museum' showcasing his career to posterity. Less prominent officers also decorated their homes with plunder, like Peter König who had a portrait of the duke of Mantua, together with silverware which he had either taken himself from that city's churches or bought cheaply from soldiers who sacked it in 1630.<sup>45</sup>

Beyond its representational function, booty helped cement relations between military personnel. Gift-giving lubricated the vertical relationships inherent in patronage and clientelism. Swedish officers deliberately targeted Catholic monastic libraries to seize books for their bluestocking mistress, Queen Christina, while imperial soldiers gave clothing plundered from Gustavus Adolphus' corpse at Lützen to their colonel, Ottavio Piccolomini (1599–1656), which he in turn sent to Vienna to magnify his own role in the battle. Loyalty depended heavily on a superior's ability to provide for his subordinates, and it was customary for officers to pay small sums or offer other favours in return for such gifts.<sup>46</sup> Gift-giving also reinforced solidarity amongst comrades. Peter Hagendorf (c.1601–1679), an ordinary soldier, was unable to participate in the plunder of Magdeburg in 1631 owing to injuries sustained during the assault. Confined to the camp, he records that

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<sup>43</sup> *Fritz Redlich*: *De Praeda Militari. Looting and Booty 1500–1800*. Wiesbaden 1956.

<sup>44</sup> *Fred Sandstedt* [u. a.] (Hrsg.): *In hoc signo vinces. A Presentation of the Swedish State Trophy Collection*. Stockholm 2006.

<sup>45</sup> *Emma Hagström Molin*: *Spoils of Knowledge. Seventeenth-Century Plunder in Swedish Archives and Libraries*. Leiden 2023, S. 31–45, 127–165; *Lenka Nemravová*: *The Sack of Mantua and the Looting of the Gonzaga Collection in 1630*, in: Claudia Brink/Susanna Jaeger/Marius Winzeler (Hrsg.), *Bellum & Artes. Central Europe in the thirty Years War*. Dresden 2021, S. 477–488; *Villiger/Steinauer/Bitterli*, Peter König, S. 150. Other examples in *Ackermann*, Bernhard von Weimar, S. 88 ff.

<sup>46</sup> *Barbero Bursell*: *Die Königliche Rüstkammer als Museum. Ein Vermächtnis Gustav Adolfs*, in: Maik Reichel/Inger Schuberth (Hrsg.), *Gustav Adolf. Dösel 2007*, S. 93–104; *Hubert Salm*: *Armeefinanzierung im Dreißigjährigen Krieg. Der Niederrheinsich-Westfälische Reichskreis 1635–1650*. Münster 1990, S. 159 ff.

‘auff den Abendt sindt nun meine gespan kommen, hat mir ein Jeder edtwas ver-ehret, einen tall [taler] oder halben tall’.<sup>47</sup>

We need to recognise that these processes were more complex than simply soldiers stealing from civilians. Soldiers targeted money, consumables, and portable goods as these could be carried easily and were usually of immediate use. Some items might be too bulky to carry far or, like food, could deteriorate if not used quickly. Things which could not be consumed immediately or stored safely had little value unless they could be sold. Sutlers and other civilian camp followers acted as brokers, either buying goods from soldiers for their own stock or use, or for direct resale to civilians. For example, Hagendorf’s wife had risked the conflagration and entered Magdeburg to fetch him bedlinen for his sick bed, ‘so hat sie mir auch gebracht eine grosse Kante, von 4 mas, mit wein, vndt hat benehbens auch 2 silbern gurdteel gefunden, vndt kleider, das Ich habe 12 tall [taler] gelösset zu Halberstadt [...]’.<sup>48</sup> There are many instances of civilians in one area buying goods stolen elsewhere (or indeed their own goods), and they could profit when soldiers needed to move on and sold below market value.

## IV Promotion

The opportunities for profit improved with promotion, but the military hierarchy was more complex than Grimmelshausen’s metaphor implied, because status varied between different kinds of unit. Regiments acquired greater status with each year of existence, partly reflecting the general reverence for age, but also because they were less likely to be disbanded than new formations. Cavalry were more prestigious than infantry, with both outranking the artillery whose personnel were widely considered specialist artisans, rather than true soldiers. Cuirassiers and other heavy cavalry were regarded as more honourable than their lighter brethren who were used to raid and harass opponents rather than attack them directly.

Even where a prospective recruit had a free choice of unit to join, opportunities varied considerably across time and space. France had a large indigenous nobility, increasing competition for officer appointments and promotions, whilst imposing barriers to entry on outsiders. Spain also had a large native nobility but was a composite monarchy and accustomed to employing soldiers from different

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<sup>47</sup> Jan Peters (Hrsg.): Ein Söldnerleben aus dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg. Berlin 1993, S. 47.

<sup>48</sup> Ebd.

parts of Europe. Denmark and Sweden had smaller populations generally, and the latter suffered particularly from a shortage of nobles and educated men, encouraging it to recruit Germans, English, Scots and, to a lesser extent Dutch and southern Europeans.<sup>49</sup>

The imperial army was also relatively open to outsiders, with only a third of generals being the emperor's direct subjects.<sup>50</sup> Of these, 21 came from Hungary and Croatia but, in contrast to later wars, they only served on the Military Frontier, and either did not seek or were excluded from deployment with the field armies fighting in the Empire. Another 25 generals had been born as Spanish subjects, while 48 came from Bavaria, Lorraine, or the Westphalian members of the Catholic League. Twenty-six generals were subjects of other German territories, primarily Saxony and Brandenburg which generally supported the Habsburgs. Another 23 were Italians, mostly from principalities aligned with Austria, while just 14 came from France, Denmark, England or elsewhere.

Nearly half (96 out of 207) had already served another power before entering the imperial army, while 32 held a position concurrently in another army (usually Spain or the League) and 32 subsequently entered foreign service. The majority had either served Spain (45 cases) or the League (47) prior to joining the imperial army. Several had fought for other powers, often progressing through two or three different armies, and 75 had served a hostile power like Sweden (14), the Dutch (11), Denmark (11), Hessen-Kassel (4) or the Bohemian rebels and their allies (20) prior to entering imperial service. Saxony brokered pardons for some like Christoph von Houwald (1601–1661) and Hans Ulrich von Schaffgotsch (1595–1635), who had served the Bohemians but subsequently became senior officers under the Habsburgs. However, Emperor Ferdinand II allowed many to transfer directly to the imperial army after the Bohemians' defeat at White Mountain (6 November 1620), including Heinrich Schlick (1583–1650) and Franz Albrecht von Sachsen-Lauenburg (1598–1642), while others like Klaus Dietrich von Sperreuther (1600–1653) entered imperial service after the amnesty granted in the Peace of Prague (1635). Some experienced officers were admitted after they had demonstrably fallen out with their previous employer, like Charles II of Lorraine (1596–1657) who fled France after involvement in a failed conspiracy against the king in 1631, or Joachim Ernst von Krockow (1601–1645) and Jean-Louis Raduit de

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<sup>49</sup> *Mary Elizabeth Ailes*: *Military Migration and State Formation. The British Military Community in Seventeenth-Century Sweden*. Lincoln, NE/London 2002; *Steve Murdoch*: *Britain, Denmark-Norway and the House of Stuart, 1603–1660*. East Linton 2003.

<sup>50</sup> The following is based on a statistical analysis of the entries in *Schmidt-Brentano*, *Kaiserliche Generale*.

Souches (1608–1682) who both quit Swedish service after quarrelling with senior colleagues.

The emperor also did not regard heresy an insurmountable barrier to appointment, promotion, or reward. Though most of his senior officers shared his Catholic faith, over a quarter of those becoming generals had been born Protestants. Of these, 33 converted, including many who did so either upon transfer into the imperial army, or during their careers. Nonetheless, at least 16 kept their faith, including Peter Melander (1589–1648) who advanced to commanding general in 1647, despite being a Calvinist.<sup>51</sup> Melander's case was exceptional, but the emperor's toleration of Lutherans fitted his adherence to his interpretation of imperial law, as well as supporting his argument that he was fighting rebels and foreign invaders rather than waging a religious war. Other rulers, notably Maximilian of Bavaria, were much less likely to promote dissenters. Continued adherence to Catholicism is said to have been one of the reasons why Sir John Hepburn (c.1598–1636) disagreed with Gustavus Adolphus in 1632 and quit Swedish service in favour of France.<sup>52</sup>

The lower ranks presented fewer social barriers than promotion to colonel or above. The ideal of nobility already included an emphasis on talent and virtue. There were strong expectations that noblemen had to prove themselves to their peers and subordinates to be considered worthy of their rank and status. This opened the door to others who might demonstrate similar qualities. Nonetheless, promotion for commoners became increasingly difficult as they climbed the ranks. Only 13 of the 107 imperial colonels in 1633 were commoners, while just 11 non-nobles reached general's rank compared to 196 nobles, aristocrats, and princes.<sup>53</sup> The pace of advancement was also generally slower. Johann Sporck (1595–1679) began his career as a drummer in Bavarian service, taking 12 years to reach the rank of cornet, the most junior cavalry officer, but thereafter his pro-

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51 *Fritz Geisthardt*: Peter Melander Graf zu Holzapfel 1589–1648, in: *Nassauische Lebensbilder* 4 (1950), S. 36–53.

52 *Michael Kaiser*: *Cuius exercitus, eius religio? Konfession und Heerwesen im Zeitalter des Dreißigjährigen Krieges*, in: *ARG* 91 (2000), S. 316–353; *Alexia Grosjean*: Sir John Hepburn, in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13005> (zuletzt abgerufen am: 23.10.2024).

53 *Redlich*, *Enterpriser*, Bd. I, S. 418; *Michael Kaiser*: 'Ist er vom Adel? Ja. Id satis videtur'. Adlige Standesqualität und militärische Leistung als Karrierefaktoren in der Epoche des Dreißigjährigen Krieges, in: Franz Bosbach/Keith Robbins/Karina Urbach (Hrsg.), *Geburt oder Leistung?* München 2003, S. 73–90.

motion was broadly like that of his noble peers, taking two more years to make captain, and a further six before he was colonel of his own regiment.<sup>54</sup>

Formal education had only a limited impact on individual's career prospects in an era when practical aptitude and experience were valued over bookish learning. Around a quarter of those who became Habsburg generals possessed university or high school education, though only one (Adam Forgács 1601–1681) had a degree. Many others had home schooling or completed cavalier's tours, but all this had little discernible impact on their future careers beyond delaying the age at which they first entered service.<sup>55</sup> In Melander's case, his education at Leiden University and in the entourage of Count Johann Ernst von Nassau-Siegen (1582–1617) clearly helped offset his relatively humble birth. Peter König's ability to speak Italian helped establish ties to Count Rambaldo di Collalto (1579–1630) who, as president of the Habsburg court war council, was one of the army's most influential generals and proved a valuable patron.<sup>56</sup> However, Gil de Haas (1597–1657), Johann Sporck, and Jan van Werth (1591–1652) all reached senior general's rank despite being illiterate commoners.

Much depended on being the right person at the right time to be noticed by superiors. There was an initial premium on experience as all belligerents scrambled to raise their forces virtually from scratch in 1618 and needed men who knew how to do this. Those serving or re-entering armies after 1618 generally experienced more rapid promotion than they had done previously. Nearly 80 Habsburg generals began their careers prior to 1618, of whom 12 survived to serve after 1648, compared to 127 starting after the war began, of whom 61 had died or retired before it ended. Of the 184 whose entire careers can be traced with reasonable certainty, 76 took more than ten years to reach colonel's rank, compared to 24 who achieved this in a year or less, usually thanks to their princely or aristocratic birth.

This group also accounted for the 17 promoted to major general (*Generalfeldwachtmeister* or its equivalent) within a year or starting at colonel's rank. Twenty more reached that status within another two years, while another 106 had achieved it after they had been a colonel for up to 10 years. It took over 10 years for the remaining 57 to make general, some only receiving this title at the very end of their careers. Only 13 reached the pinnacle of the military

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<sup>54</sup> *Helmut Lahrkamp*: Graf Johann von Spork, in: *Westfalen* 38 (1960), S. 62–71; *Schmidt-Brentano*, *Kaiserliche Generale*, S. 464–469. Other examples of commoners promoted see *Redlich*, *Enterpriser*, Bd. I, S. 416 f.; *Cordula Kapser*: Die bayerische Kriegsorganisation in der zweiten Hälfte des Dreißigjährigen Krieges 1635–1648/49. Münster 1997, S. 85–89.

<sup>55</sup> *Schmidt-Brentano*, *Kaiserliche Generale*, S. 570; *Redlich*, *Enterpriser*, Bd. I, S. 165.

<sup>56</sup> *Villiger/Steinauer/Bitterli*, Peter König, S. 45–54.

hierarchy as lieutenant general or general, the highest ranks in imperial service, and three of these were Habsburg archdukes. Another 99 received promotion beyond major general, including 40 who became field marshal. Habsburg service helped 40 of those subsequently entering a different service to be promoted, including 12 who became lieutenant generals.

A slow start to a career did not necessarily end all chances of future success, provided a soldier survived long enough and had other opportunities. Matthias Gallas (1584–1647) took at least a decade to make colonel in Bavarian service but was second-in-command of the imperial army under Wallenstein within another eight years. It took Maximilian von der Goltz (1593–1653) twice as long to reach colonel in 1631, but he ended his career as the imperial army's interim commander in 1649, while Tilly waited 22 years before promotion to colonel in 1596, and other two decades more before the start of the Thirty Years War made him famous.<sup>57</sup>

Promotion prospects narrowed in the final stages of the war as the decline in overall strength left most belligerents with too many senior officers. Mateo Marchese de Moncada y Cardona (†1656) had his request declined in March 1647 because the emperor already had enough generals. Demobilisation after 1648 further curtailed opportunities, and Cardona had to wait another four years before promotion, and then only received titular rank without actual command.<sup>58</sup>

Association with success naturally assisted an accelerated promotion and an entire generation of Bavarian and imperial officers benefited from having fought at White Mountain.<sup>59</sup> Victorious generals had the privilege of selecting an officer to report the good news to their political master who customarily rewarded the messenger. Antonio Biglia, Count Saronno (1590–1643), was fortunate to be sent to report the outcome at White Mountain to Emperor Ferdinand II who gave him a ring worth 4,000 crowns.<sup>60</sup>

Patronage also helped. Orphaned when both his parents died of plague in 1622, Friedrich Christoph von Hammerstein (1608–1685) was looked after by his uncle by marriage, Georg Hans von Peblis (1577–1650), an influential colonel and diplomat of Scottish descent in Palatine service who facilitated his entry

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57 *Robert Rebitsch*: Matthias Gallas (1588–1647). Münster 2006; *Bernd Rill*: Tilly. Feldherr für Kaiser und Reich. München 1984; *Schmidt-Brentano*, *Kaiserliche Generale*, S. 190 ff.

58 *Ebd.*, S. 329 f.

59 *Peter H. Wilson*: White Mountain as a Military Event, in: Katrin Keller/Petr Mat'a/Thomas Winkelbauer (Hrsg.), *Die Schlacht am Weißen Berg 1620*. Wien 2025, forthcoming; *Sutherland*, *Military Entrepreneur*, S. 11 f., 37–60.

60 *Schmidt-Brentano*, *Kaiserliche Generale*, S. 59.

into the Swedish army in 1630 in which he rose eventually to major general.<sup>61</sup> Patronage likewise assisted the meteoric rise of Raimondo Montecucoli (1609–1680), also orphaned at a young age when his father (himself a murderer) was killed in a family feud. Raimondo not only enjoyed the favour of his immediate lord, the duke of Modena, but also support from his cousin Ernesto (1582–1633), by that time already a colonel in the Spanish army, who subsequently became a trusted general under Wallenstein. Distant kinship to Collalto offered additional backing, especially when he began his military career in Ernesto's imperial regiment. The duke of Modena paid his ransom when he was captured by the Swedes in 1631, and offered refuge when Raimondo periodically found his career blocked by disputes with other imperial officers.<sup>62</sup> However, patronage could easily slip into favouritism, shutting out the deserving whilst others were promoted beyond their ability. German officers felt disadvantaged after 1634 by the favour shown their Italian colleagues like Gallas and Piccolomini who had been instrumental in Wallenstein's fall.<sup>63</sup>

High casualties opened vacancies, with battles followed by fresh rounds of promotions even in the defeated army. However, soldiers needed both luck and good survival skills to navigate the dangers. Not only did they have to find food, keep warm, avoid ill health or capture, but they also needed to know how to succeed within a group composed of violent men. Quarrels were frequent and could end careers. Peter König fell out with his immediate superior, the influential Wolfgang Rudolf von Ossa (1574–1647) who accused him of a murder plot, as well as pocketing 800,000t<sub>l</sub>r and conspiring to surrender the city of Lindau to the Swedes. Despite the intercession of influential patrons, König was deprived of his regiment and condemned to death in 1634. He fled, and though he was eventually pardoned, he was not permitted to return to active service. Certain mistakes were not forgiven and Brandenstein was unable to profit from the imperial amnesty in 1635 because his liege lord, the elector of Saxony, resented his acceptance of captured territory from the Swedes and had him and his family arrested.<sup>64</sup>

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**61** *Hans-Adam Frhr. von Hammerstein-Gesmodt*: Friedrich Christoph von Hammerstein. Königlich-schwedischer Generalmajor zu Pferd. Münster 2019. For Peblis, see the Scotland, Scandinavia, and Northern European Biographical Database (SSNE). URL: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/history/ssne/item.php?id=7432> (zuletzt abgerufen am: 23.10.2024).

**62** In addition to *Sutherland*, *Military Entrepreneur*, see *Georg Schreiber*: Raimondo Montecucoli. Feldherr, Schriftsteller und Kavalier. Graz 2000. For other examples, see *Redlich*, *Enterpriser*, Bd. I, S. 296–305; *Saito*, *Kriegskommissariat*, S. 266–280.

**63** *Sutherland*, *Military Entrepreneur*, S. 64 f.

**64** *Villiger/Steinauer/Bitterli*, Peter König, S. 171–197.

## V Social Advancement

The warlords whom soldiers served simultaneously wielded civil authority, opening opportunities for other, less obviously military or purely monetary rewards. Well over half of Habsburg generals received civil offices or honours, generally the title of court chamberlain (*Kämmerer*) which was granted liberally by the emperor as it cost him little but brought status to the recipient.<sup>65</sup> Others received titles such as ‘Well-Born’ (*Wohlgeboren*) or personal letters of thanks for brave deeds. At least 30 were initiated into heraldic orders, including the coveted Golden Fleece, while around half that number are recorded as receiving gold chains or portraits of the emperor. Maximilian of Bavaria spent 82,716fl on presents for soldiers and courtiers 1625–1648.<sup>66</sup> Such gifts were a common way of rewarding those of humbler birth or junior status, but all ranks might receive money, including at least 80 imperial generals. Cash was often the default when the emperor was unable to grant something more desirable, and it was also frequently simply a consolation for unpaid salaries or expenses.

Nearly 88 % of the 207 Habsburg generals improved their social status through their military service, including all 11 commoners, all of whom were ennobled with six rising to baron and two to count. Werth, Sperreuther, and Sporck all secured ennoblement whilst serving in the cavalry, underscoring the aristocratic associations of that arm. The same applied to Georg Derfflinger (1606–1695), an Upper Austrian peasant who fought for the Bohemian rebels, then Saxony, and finally Brandenburg where he was made a baron in 1674. Kaspar Schoch (1610–1672), the son of a serf, entered Bavarian service as a boy looking after a colonel’s dogs, and likewise later became colonel of his own dragoon regiment and ennobled.<sup>67</sup> Ennoblement was often linked to the fiction that the beneficiaries were already nobles. Werth’s baron’s diploma 1635 noted his proven military talents, but also stated he came from an old noble family which had fallen on hard times.<sup>68</sup> *Simplicissimus* discovers at the end of the novel that his circumstances were similar.

Soldiers who were already nobles aspired to higher titles. Seven imperial generals were made princes, while around 30 became imperial counts. The 21 gener-

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<sup>65</sup> *Schmidt-Brentano*, *Kaiserliche Generale*, S. 569.

<sup>66</sup> *Saito*, *Kriegskommissariat*, S. 146.

<sup>67</sup> *Kapser*, *Bayerische Kriegsorganisation*, S. 86.

<sup>68</sup> *Schmidt-Brentano*, *Kaiserliche Generale*, S. 459–463; *Christian Kodritzki*: *Seitenwechsel und andere Episoden aus dem Leben des Generals Claus Dietrich Freiherrn von Sperreuth*. Offenbach am Main 2015; *Helmut Lahrkamp*: *Jan van Werth*. Köln 1962.

als from princely houses account for the bulk of those who received no further elevation, since this was impossible in their case. Even those who did not necessarily receive a higher title could still improve their position through incorporation (*Inkolat*) within the nobility in the Habsburg provinces, consolidating their hold on new landed properties and facilitating their integration within the local elites. Much less is known about the careers of those who did not reach general's rank, but it is likely that a larger proportion of those who began as commoners were ennobled, even if they did not secure higher titles such as baron. For example, Augustin Fritsch (1599–1662) rose from humble origins by joining the Bavarian army as a musketeer in 1618, securing ennoblement 20 years later and ending his career as a colonel.<sup>69</sup>

Rulers manipulated the social hierarchy to space out their rewards, avoiding giving recipients too much at once and instead offering incremental improvements in status to encourage loyalty and further endeavour. The emperor enjoyed considerable advantages thanks to his wide powers to ennoble and to grant other privileges. Sporck was initially freed from serfdom in 1630, ennobled in 1647, and finally elevated to the status of imperial count in 1664.

Noble status was associated with the possession of landed property. Regardless of rank, most soldiers saw the acquisition of land as desirable and used their monetary profits to buy properties. Captain Urs Grimm (1596–1657) from Solothurn who served France after 1625 invested his funds in amassing land.<sup>70</sup> Land was also gifted or sold cheaply by rulers, notably the emperor and the Swedish monarchy, as rewards or recompense for pay arrears and expenses. Around a fifth of imperial generals acquired property this way. Wallenstein amassed 9,000 km<sup>2</sup>, including the duchy of Mecklenburg gifted by the emperor in lieu of pay arrears and unpaid loans, but lost within two years when the victorious Swedes restored it to its former owners. Wallenstein's remaining properties, along with those of his closest associates, were sequestered after their assassinations in 1634 and redistributed to consolidate the emperor's authority over his senior officers.

While Wallenstein was exceptional, other imperial officers amassed vast estates during the war. Duke Julius Heinrich von Sachsen-Lauenburg (1586–1665) was owed 825,365fl by December 1622 for raising and commanding four regiments in imperial service, including at White Mountain. He was obliged to accept the loss of nearly a third of this sum, in return for receiving half of the remainder in cash

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<sup>69</sup> Fritsch's autobiography is printed in *Karl Lohmann* (Hrsg.): *Die Zerstörung Magdeburgs von Otto von Guericke und andere Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Dreißigjährigen Kriege*. Berlin 1913, S. 237–284.

<sup>70</sup> *Erich Meyer*: *Solothurnische Geschichte in Einzelbildern*. Olten 2002, S. 118–124.

and the rest in land confiscated from the Bohemian rebels in 1623. He spent the cash to expand his new estates by buying more former rebel property which he further enlarged thanks to his marriage to Bohemia's richest heiress. By 1654, he numbered amongst that kingdom's 14 largest landowners.<sup>71</sup> As this example illustrates, senior officers were desirable marriage partners, and virtually all the imperial generals who married took wives of at least equal or superior social status.<sup>72</sup>

The Peace of Westphalia secured the gains made by the imperial officers, because it rejected the petitions from the Bohemian and Austrian exiles for the return of their properties confiscated in the 1620s. By contrast, most of those serving the Swedes lost the lands given them in the early 1630s, except in those principalities, like western Pomerania, which were permanently awarded to Sweden in the peace treaty. More broadly, the population decline caused land values to plummet in many areas, enabling some of the survivors able to buy property cheaply after 1648.

## VI Give Peace a Chance?

Contrary to the contemporary and subsequent critique, profiteering had little impact on strategy and did not discernibly prolong the war. Sweden's officers famously held Oxenstierna over a powder barrel August 1635 and compelled him to consider their material interests when making peace.<sup>73</sup> This made the army harder to manage, especially in the mid-1630s, but the chancellor soon reasserted authority. Sweden certainly haggled over the size of compensation to be paid to its officers for relinquishing their lost lands, but Oxenstierna primarily fought to secure territory for Sweden itself, and arguably prolonged the war by waging a separate conflict with Denmark 1643–1645 to remove it as a potentially hostile host of the peace conference.

Only in the final months did the Swedish high command deliberately target Prague because it offered a last chance to make booty before peace was concluded. Even this operation still had strategic value, because it forced the emperor to

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<sup>71</sup> *Petr Mat'a*: Wandlungen des böhmischen Adels im 17. Jahrhundert und der Aufstieg des Hauses Sachsen-Lauenburg in Böhmen, in: Michael Wenger/Annemarie Röder (Hrsg.): *Barockes Erbe. Markgräfin Sibylle Augusta von Baden-Baden und ihre böhmische Heimat*. Stuttgart 2010, S. 4–27.

<sup>72</sup> *Schmidt-Brentano*, *Kaiserliche Generale*, S. 571 f.

<sup>73</sup> *Sigmund Goetze*: *Die Politik des schwedischen Reichskanzlers Axel Oxenstierna gegenüber Kaiser und Reich*. Kiel 1971, S. 166 ff.

divert troops from a successful counteroffensive along the Danube, while Queen Christina encouraged her generals by assigning them lists of palaces and monasteries to plunder for her art collection.<sup>74</sup>

In making such assessments, it is helpful to distinguish between ‘stakeholder profiteering’ and ‘rent-seeking’. The former encompasses the legal and illicit gains made by those involved in organising, managing, and commanding the armies. Their investment of capital, credit, and reputations gave them a personal interest in military success. Defeats were dangerous and could encourage risk aversion, though there were often sound political reasons for caution. Fear of losing the baggage train forced armies to fight battles on disadvantageous terms, notably at Mingsheim and Höchst (both 1622), Stadtlohn (1623), and Zusmarshausen (1648). Though the train carried plunder, it was vital to sustaining troops on the move, so there could be more straightforwardly military arguments to protect it. Conversely, the prospect of promotions, rewards, or booty might incentivise personnel.

Generally, the emperor, Sweden, and most other belligerents managed to prevent stakeholder profiteering from becoming rent-seeking whereby those involved placed personal gain far above wider interests. Peer pressure assisted this because those who overstepped the bounds could harm others by, for example, leaving the line of battle to plunder, or by failing to keep their units up to strength. A key factor in Wallenstein’s initial dismissal in 1630 and in his judicial assassination four years later was the accusation that he was failing to pursue the war with sufficient energy. Having struggled to enforce royal authority, France conceded officers’ proprietorial rights after 1643 in the hope this would make them easier to manage. Profiteering crossed the line and began to erode effectiveness, especially because those at the top, notably Cardinal Mazarin, set a bad example themselves. The slide towards rent-seeking became unstoppable as France descended into civil war after 1648 and the crown largely relinquished supervision of its senior officers.<sup>75</sup>

Was peace an alternative? We enter the realm of counterfactual history, since we cannot say what would have happened to those who became soldiers had war not broken out or lasted so long. The late sixteenth and early seventeenth century was an era of underemployment, meaning that the conflict after 1618 offered an alternative, at least to some. War’s distinctive social and moral connotations meant it was not simply ‘just a trade’ (*Kriegshandwerk*). Nonetheless, it remained

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<sup>74</sup> Robert Rebitsch/Jenny Öhman/Jan Kilián: 1648: Kriegführung und Friedensverhandlungen. Prag und das Ende des Dreißigjährigen Krieges. Innsbruck 2018.

<sup>75</sup> David Parrott: Beyond Richelieu’s Army. Perspectives on Army, State and Society in France, 1620–1660, paper presented in Oxford 17 May 2023.

an economic option, especially offering means of survival in hard times, or for those down on their luck.

Peace threatened that. Officers were haunted by the fear of ‘reformation’, or the reduction, amalgamation, or disbandment of units which curtailed their investment, patronage, and prospects. The Westphalian peace was highly unusual making arrangements for demobilisation which were then implemented at the Nuremberg Exekutionstag 1649–1650 and involved paying off not only the Swedish army, but also those of the emperor, Bavaria, and Hessen-Kassel.<sup>76</sup> Not all soldiers were happy. One Bavarian regiment mutinied when its personnel learned that another unit had received three months’ discharge pay whereas they were only being offered one, while a Swedish unit attempted to avoid disbandment by trying to find employment in the ongoing Franco-Spanish war.<sup>77</sup> Nonetheless, the widespread fear of marauders proved largely unfounded as around 160,000 soldiers found alternative military employment or managed to reintegrate into civilian society.<sup>78</sup> Peter Hagendorf returned to home village where he became mayor within two years and raised his family with his second wife. Two of his three surviving sons held responsible positions in the local church, and all three appear to have possessed farms or other substantial property. Augustin Fritsch became a district official in Parkstein (Oberpfalz).

## VII Conclusions

War was an inherently risky business. Before making his fortune serving the emperor in the 1620s, Duke Julius Heinrich had lost 44,244 fl raising troops in 1613–1614 for Sweden during the Ingrian War.<sup>79</sup> Stockalper initially lost 75,000 l.t. and it was only thanks to his other economic activities (mining, salt trade, transport), that he survived long enough to make a profit. Donald MacKay, Baron Reay

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76 *Antje Oschmann*: *Der Nürnberger Exekutionstag 1649–1650. Das Ende des Dreißigjährigen Krieges in Deutschland*. Münster 1991.

77 *Michael Kaiser*: *Das schwierige Ende des Krieges. Die Abdankung des Regiments Winterscheid in Memmingen 1649*, in: Reinhard Baumann/Paul Hoser (Hrsg.), *Krieg in der Region*. Konstanz/München 2018, S. 193–222; *Hammerstein*, Hammerstein, S. 51f.

78 *Bernhard R. Kroener*: ‘Der Krieg hat ein Loch...’ Überlegungen zum Schicksal demobilisierter Söldner nach dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg, in: Heinz Duchhardt (Hrsg.), *Der Westfälische Friede. Diplomatie – politische Zäsur – kulturelles Umfeld – Rezeptionsgeschichte*. München 1998, S. 599–630.

79 *Jaakko Bjöklund*: *Officers as Creditors during the Ingrian War (1609–1617)*, in: Petri Talvitie/Juha-Matti Granqvist (Hrsg.), *Civilians and Military Supply in Early Modern Finland*. Helsinki 2021, S. 21–85, at 52.

(1591–1651) mortgaged his Scottish estates to raise 3,000 infantry to support Denmark in 1626, but he received barely half of the £4,000 he had been promised by his sovereign Charles I. Sweden also failed to pay him in full for a further 10,000 recruits he supplied after 1629, leaving him to face his creditors when Gustavus Adolphus died three years later.<sup>80</sup>

Those sitting at the top of Grimmelshausen's tree may have enjoyed more opportunities but, contrary to his critique, they were still exposed to considerable risks. Defeat for ordinary soldiers often entailed the immediate loss of any accumulated booty if the baggage train was captured during a retreat. The Protestant troopers particularly mourned the loss of the Westphalian hams stashed in their saddle bags but abandoned in their haste to escape Tilly's victorious army after Höchst in June 1622.<sup>81</sup> They faced serious hardship but could at least join the victors who were usually happy to rebuild their own depleted ranks by incorporating deserters or prisoners.

Ordinary soldiers might be punished if they broke the articles of war, including for plundering, but unlike their superiors, they were not usually held responsible for failures. Wallenstein and his closest supporters lost their lives. Federigo Savelli (1583–1649) managed to offload the blame for the disappointing outcome of the 1638 campaign onto Johann von Götz (1599–1645) who was court martialled and removed from command for 18 months. For many others like Krockow, failure ended their careers.

Death did not respect rank or status. Twenty-eight imperial generals were killed in action or died from wounds, another 111 were injured but survived, and at least 15 died of disease whilst on active service. Seven were murdered including Wallenstein and his associates Trčka and Ilow, while Cratz and Schaffgotsch were executed. Ninety-eight of the generals were captured at least once during their careers, four of whom died whilst held prisoner. Captivity enforced inactivity, threatening an officer's management of his unit and the associated patronage networks. Many paid large ransoms to secure their release, such as Wilhelm Count Lamboy (1598–1659), taken at Kempen January 1642, who spent 25,000 crowns, or Friedrich Rudolf Count zu Fürstenberg (1602–1655) who paid 4,000t<sub>hr</sub> at the end of the war when he was captured at Prague.<sup>82</sup>

Even if a soldier escaped wounds, he was likely to be worn out physically more quickly. Analysis of skeletons shows that soldiers were more prone to

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**80** *Ian Grimble*: The Royal Payment of MacKay's Regiment, in: *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 6 (1961), S. 23–38. MacKay's regiment was commanded by Robert Monro (1590–1680).

**81** *Karl Obser*: Der Feldzug des Jahres 1622 am Oberrhein nach den Denkwürdigkeiten des Feldherrn Ulysses von Salis-Marschlins, in: *ZGO NF* 7 (1892), S. 38–68, at 53.

**82** *Schmidt-Brentano*, *Kaiserliche Generale*, S. 175–178, 252.

joint problems than peasants of comparable age.<sup>83</sup> Military life was in any case inherently unhealthy since it shared the worst aspects of aristocratic culture. One imperial general died in a duel, while six others were killed whilst hunting. Alcohol abuse was widespread throughout all ranks and clearly shortened lives. The Saxon army initially welcomed the appointment of Wolf Heinrich von Baudissin (1597–1646) as their commander in 1632 as he was considered ambitious and energetic, but within four years his drinking had become so serious that he was often unable to exercise effective command.<sup>84</sup> Gallas also ruined his career and shortened his life through excessive drinking.

Most officers and many soldiers had wives and dependents whose own fortunes were closely tied to their husbands or fathers. Franz von Mercy (1597–1645) was killed commanding the imperial and Bavarian armies at Alerheim in 1645, leaving a widow and five small children. Though he was said to have considerable assets, they were reported as being left without means.<sup>85</sup>

Profits were uncertain and very unevenly distributed. A tiny minority made considerable fortunes, while a modest proportion improved their social status and material position, but overall wealth and productivity in the Empire declined markedly. Opportunities were shaped by the broader course of the war which determined the growth and contraction of armies, as well as the material and social benefits these might provide. The hierarchical character of military institutions imposed a further structural constraint beyond any individual's control. Though a few commoners made spectacular careers, armies broadly replicated and reinforced social hierarchy. Patronage could fast track some careers, but favouritism was inherently partial and closed opportunities to others. Much depended on an individual's character and fickle fortune. The risks were considerable and even those who were lucky faced difficulties along the way.

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<sup>83</sup> *Eickhoff/Schopper*, *Ihre letzte Schlacht*, S. 33 f., 94 f., 111 f., 122–127.

<sup>84</sup> *Christian Vitzthum von Eckstädt*: *Der Feldzug der sächsischen Armee durch die Mark Brandenburg im Jahre 1635 und 1636*, in: *Märkische Forschungen* 16 (1881), S. 303–386, at 354.

<sup>85</sup> *Günther Herbert*: *Franz von Mercy, kurbayerischer Feldmarschall im Dreißigjährigen Krieg*, in: *ZBLG* 69 (2006), S. 555–594.

