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DRAFT VERSION

Warrior Values in Carolean Society – Role of fighting in the Worldview of Early-Eighteenth-Century Swedish Officers

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Introduction – Honour and Role of Fighting

Honour through participating in war, fighting and battles were important parts of societies and culture in Early Modern Europe. From the point of history of mentalities wars were most important to the world-views of military personnel in the Swedish case, officers of the Carolean army (*karoliner*). During the Great Northern War (1700–1721) Charles XII had led the main Swedish forces to victory after victory. Many of his men were part of a proud victorious army with highly militaristic ideals. This all ended after a disastrous battle of Poltava 1709. Thirty thousand Swedes ended up as prisoners of war in distant Russia after a humiliating parade in Moscow. For the next twelve years, they languished in captivity and were joined by even more prisoners from the Baltic provinces and Finland.²

The glory of the victorious army was past, but the role of honour was still present in contemporary societies, but now in a new harsh manner. After the war another fight came, over reducing military positions. What role did warrior values and experience play in this process?

There has been a debate about the role of military history and where it should focus. Since the 1960s old military history has been criticized as stuck in old beliefs and narrow viewpoints. War has been seen only as the chess game of lord generals and kings, as opposed to "New military history" focusing on larger historical contexts than just the actual fighting and battlefields, seeing the experiences of individual soldiers as crucial to understanding war.

American military historian Michael Moyar as one of many has turned against the critics of "traditional military history". According to him military history has since Herodotus and Thucydides emphasized the wider political, economic, and socio-cultural context. Moyar has claimed that the key issue in understanding the military is the need to understand the role of

¹ Presentation of author

² About Great Northern War and the Caroleans for example Larsson, Olle, *Stormaktens sista krig: Sverige och stora nordiska kriget 1700–1721* (Lund 2009).

fighting in military history. Joanna Bourke, a cultural historian of war who has researched face-to-face-killing, highlights that war is about killing, it's not about dying. A soldier's aim is to kill, not to die in combat.³ Military historians should understand both the realities commanders of armies and the broader picture and functions of the military as a part of wider society.

In this article⁴, I claim, that in order to obtain a military post after reducing of army a 1720s Swedish officer had to present himself as a warrior style combatant (*krigare*) to earn his post and office and by this way, his place in society. An analysis of this process opens the perspective of the whole worldview of the early modern military; of officers, nobility and society as a whole. The military code of honour created an idealistic image of a model masculine military man. An officer had to be honourable, and earned the right to be treated with the respect due to a man of his standing. An honourable man had the right to a livelihood and a decent position in society.⁵ In this sense the code of honour has often been seen as a system of admitting individuals into, or excluding them from, certain society or group.⁶

My aim is to show the ways by which and the elements out of which the warrior – *krigaren* and his military honour was constructed. Secondly, I will show the significance of honour for officers in practice and the relationship between honour and society. The Warrior himself was a person who had offered life in the service of his king and country, family and society. This could be seen as an ideal, which heavily affected the common view of the role of a man in a wider context. Against this ideal officers had to measure themselves, and they consequently

³ Bourke, Joanna, *An Intimate History of Killing. Face-to-Face Killing in the Twentieth-Century Warfare*. (London 1999) p. xiii–xx; Moyer, Mark, "The Current State of Military History", in *The Historical Journal* 50:1, 2007, p. 226.

⁴ This article is mostly based on my dissertation, Sarkamo, Ville, *Karoliinien soturiarvot. Kunnian hallitsema karoliinien maailmankuva Ruotsin valtakunnassa 1700-luvun alussa. (Carolean Warrior Values: An Honour-Dominated Worldview in Early-Eighteenth-Century Sweden)* (Jyväskylä 2011). See also Sarkamo, Ville, "Honour, Masculinity and Corporality in the Officer Corps of Early Eighteenth-Century Sweden", in *Sjuttonhundratalet*, 32–49, 2010.

⁵ About honour see also for example Henderson, Frank Stewart, *Honor* (Chicago 1994); Lilliequist, Jonas, "Ära, dygd och manlighet. Strategier för social prestige i 1600- och 1700-talets Sverige", in *Lychnos 2009, årsbok för idé och lärdoms historia*, pp. 117–147. Concerning officer culture of 18th century see also Wirilander, Kaarlo: *Suomen upseeristo 1700-luvulla, Sosiaalishistoriallinen tutkimus Suomen armeijan jakopalkkaisesta upseeristosta* (Helsingfors 1950). (Published in Swedish: *Officerskåren i Finland under 1700-talet*, Falun 1964) and Thisner, Fredrik, *Militärstatens arvegods. Officerstjänstens socialreproduktiva funktion i Sverige och Danmark, ca. 1720–1800* (Uppsala 2007).

⁶ Henderson (1994), pp. 145–146; Sarkamo (2010); Sarkamo (2011), pp. 164–172.

represented actions in a manner which satisfied the requirements of this ideal. Accordingly honour, masculinity and the physical body were closely linked.⁷

Sources

The main empirical primary sources are the archive records of the Swedish Diet, including committee records from the Age of Freedom 1719/1721–1772 (*Riksdagsarkiven, frihetstidens utskottshandlingar*). They contain the records of the Placement Committee (*placeringsdeputationens handlingar*) from the 1723 Diet, comprising altogether eleven volumes consisting mostly of claims (*memorialer*) from veterans of the Great Northern War, but also the minutes of the committee itself. Many of the members of the Placement Committee were officers themselves; they shared much the same values as those who wrote the claims.⁸

This material, which was written in the exceptional situation after the Great Northern War, has rarely been examined. Researcher can use lists of credentials and patents of nobility (*meritlistor* and *adelsbrev*) as primary sources which are easier to find from catalog of archival material. But the veterans' claims constitute a deeper and wider repository of sources than those often simple and monotonic lists of credentials, because the officers could, and at least sometimes did, express themselves rather more expressively and freely in the claims. The importance and usefulness of the Placement Committee records is evident because the placement process itself was a challenge to officers' honour. For this article, I have selected various memorials, which represent honour most evident. The usual case being officers defending their position or placement through invoking their actions in battle.

In addition to the main primary sources, I have also consulted several different kinds of printed, normative sources such as Articles of War (*krigsartiklar*) and accounts (*berättelser, relationer*) of fighting. Battle accounts and soldiers' diaries (especially the series *Karolinska krigares dagböcker*).

My main source about the role of pietistic awakening, which highlights the emotional change but continuity in warrior ideals followed by defeat, is Pietist leader Captain Wreech's

⁷ Connell R. W., *Masculinities* (Cambridge 1995), pp. 66–71; Liliequist, 2009, pp. 117–147; Hallenberg, Mats, "The Golden Age of the Aggressive Male? Violence, Masculinity and the State in Sixteenth-Century Sweden". in *Gender and History* 25:1, 2013, pp. 132–149.

⁸ Members of the Placement Committee see, Riksarkivet (hereafter RA), Stockholm, Riksdagsarkiven, Frihetstidens utskottshandlingar 1719–1772, Riksdagshandlingar år 1723: X, , R 2451, Placeringsdeputationen, pp. 2–4; R 2467, Deputationens betänkanden, pp. 36–37.

written history about the Swedish prisoners in Russia and Siberia (*Wahrhaffte und umständliche Historie Von denen Schwedischen Gefangenen in Rußland und Sibirien*). This was first published in 1725 and an extended version was published in 1728. It consists of Wreech's written history based on the experiences of himself and others. What is even more important, besides the narrative it consists mostly of letters by many Pietist Caroleans. Especially interesting is the correspondence and use of militant warrior retorics between officers and the Pietist leader Professor August Hermann Francke (1663–1727) of the University of Halle Germany, which was the centre of the Pietist awakening.

The sources provide an insight both into the ideals and practices of warrior life, both as a socially constructed lingual analysis, and as a description of the practical action. The actions of people actually says something about their beliefs and worldviews. It reveals the wider extent to which warrior values permeated early modern society. It also reveals a great deal about the everyday actions in which honour was sometimes closely involved. The behaviour of soldiers in combat is a key example of a situation in which the role of honour is easily discerned from the actions of ordinary men.

In this article, those about 15,000 commissioned and non-commissioned officers (as well as the volunteers who wished to become officers in the Swedish army)⁹ who fought and mostly died in the Great Northern War are regarded as warriors (*krigare*). Because of the lack of primary sources for other ranks, this kind of study necessarily focuses on the officers. However we should recognize that many of the officers' masculine values, especially those which were closely linked to qualities such as bravery on the battlefield, were also characteristics of the common soldiers.

Officers and the Placement Process in the Diet of 1723

After defeat in the Great Northern War, the armies of Sweden were dramatically reduced, which meant a huge decrease in the number of officers. In 1719 there were altogether about 5 000 officers but after 1723 only about 2 000 offices.¹⁰ After previous wars during the era when Sweden was a major power, officers had been rewarded for their wartime sacrifices, but now the

⁹Lewenhaupt, Adam, *Karl XII:s officerare I-II. Biografiska anteckningar av Adam Lewenhaupt* (Stockholm 1921), pp. III–IV; Lindegren, Jan, *Makstatens resurser* (Manuscript 1992), p. 181; Ericsson, Peter 2002: *Stora nordiska kriget förklarar: Karl XII och det ideologiska tilltalet*, (Uppsala 2002), pp. 27–28.

¹⁰ Lewenhaupt (1921), pp. III–IV; Compare Carlsson, Sten, *Bonde-präst-ämbetsman: Svensk ståndscirkulation från 1680 till våra dagar* (Stockholm 1962), p. 33; Wirilander (1950), p. 145; Sarkamo(2011), pp. 149–150.

lost war and the collapse of Sweden's great power status meant a personal catastrophe for many officers. Some who retained their rank in the army were paid reduced salaries or even half salary (*expectanter*), there was enforced retirement for older officers, and many were discharged from the army altogether.¹¹

The placement of officers in the early 1720s was a major operation, as can be seen from the large number of committee records. Of all the 1723 committee records, about half concerned the placement of officers.¹² This unique situation consequently produced a large and unified collection of accounts, offering an insight into warrior mentalities.

Military posts were considered to be a direct reward for honourable service. This was evident in the records of the final proceedings of the Diet in 1723 concerning the placement of officers. The Diet expressed its regret that it was impossible to find posts for all those officers who had made sacrifices for the Crown. This statement also emphasised the principle that "the strongest spur to honour, virtue and bravery is that all officers should get that which their honour and reward (*belöning*) deserve". So if a deserving officer did not obtain a post, it was a direct affront to his honour. Officers appealed to the sense of honour when they applied for posts. Many government officials had a military background and shared the same worldview and sense of honour as the applicant officers.¹³

In these claims, the Carolean officers often appealed to the fact that they had no skills to equip them for civilian professions. The fighting man's life did not demand the same kind of skills that were needed in civilian life. In this way the officers tried to forestall dismissal from the army in the placement process. Officers were trained for war and for nothing else. They had chosen a soldier's life and they should be treated like soldiers, be the country at war or peace. An officer's career was not just a profession but rather a way of life in the broader sense. At the 1723 Diet, the veterans strongly rejected proposals for officers to be placed in civilian posts.¹⁴

The personal honour of the veterans was challenged and offended by the situation in 1723. Honour, in this sense, only came to light when it was challenged. Although it is possible to find references to honour in many kinds of sources, the material used here is unique because of

¹¹ Karonen, Petri, "Coping with Peace after a Debacle: the Crisis of the Transition to Peace in Sweden after the Great Northern War (1700–1721)", in *Scandinavian Journal of History* 3/2008, vol. 33, pp. 241–271.

¹² RA, Frihetstidens utskottshandlingar, förteckning.

¹³ RA, R 2451, Placeringsdeputations protokoll, pp. 2–4.

¹⁴ Sveriges ridderskaps och adels riksdags-protokoll från och med år 1719: II:I, II:II. Riksdagen 1723, (Stockholm 1875–1876) pp. 333–334; Sarkamo (2011), pp. 149–163.

its broad scale. The homogeneity and breadth of the source material make research on this subject both practically and economically viable. The Placement Committee convened only in 1723, never meeting before or after that date in early modern Sweden.

The Importance of Battlefield and Fighting in Military Culture

The year 1708 I took part in the fierce battle at Holowczyn even though I was in harsh fever. In spite of being sick I did not leave my rank but decided to join battle where I became wounded to my left shoulder. After the Captain and Lieutenant of our company were badly wounded I alone led our company for the rest of the fight up until the end.¹⁵

In 1708 Ensign (*kornett*) Adolf Herman Wrangel wrote in his memorial about his greatest merit, the bloody battle of Holowczyn, where the Swedish army won its last victory before the catastrophe at Poltava, was a scene of his bravery. Wrangel described three things. First he highlighted the bloodiness of battle itself (*skarpa actionen*) in which he took part even though suffering from a fever (*hetsig feber*). So the fierceness of battle made it honourable and also taking part while sick was evidence of bravery or reliability. It would have been acceptable to forsake battle due to illness, but because he was an honourable officer he fulfilled his obligation to the Crown and regiment. Wrangel shared the harshness of fighting, being wounded in his left shoulder. After his commanding Captain and Lieutenant were badly wounded, he alone led the company.¹⁶ Wrangel highlighted his sense of duty, the harshness of the battle and the fact that he did his duty, commanding the company when the other officers were wounded.

Fifteen years later Wrangel described his merits explicitly claiming office. He knew that the merits to be noticed were based on experience, capability and proven military competence.¹⁷ He believed that his claim to office was strengthened by describing his bravery in detail as opposed to listing his merits. Taking part in battle was the centre of his narrative. The role

¹⁵ RA, R 2445, memorial Wrangel, p. 258.

¹⁶ RA, R 2445, memorial Wrangel, p. 258.

¹⁷ RA, R 2467, Placeringsdeputationens memorial, pp. 49–63; R 2448, memorial Gertta, p.166.

wounds and being wounded were highlighted, even though severe wounds could lead to dismissal. But still Wrangel, like many others, wrote about their wounds clearly and visibly.¹⁸

Friederich Sture wrote how he “had been lucky to take apart (*lyckan att bevista*) in many famous, brave and victorious actions, battles, sieges and charges in the recent war”. He had faced “as well tough and almost unbearable campaigns including the unfortunate battle of Poltava”. He also maintained that he had the honour to have served under General Horn and other generals.¹⁹ All officers did not write implicitly about their sense of honour, rather they used adjectives connected to honour such as being brave, loyal or manly.²⁰ But some like Sture even wrote about the good fortune of being a part of the famous campaign of the king. Commonly this was mentioned as it was believed to strengthen claims.

To become a soldier and/or a volunteer (*volontär*), was the initial stages of becoming an officer. The start was by swearing an oath. Later becoming an officer another oath was sworn. How oaths were spoken in practice has been described by Lieutenant Joachim Lyth in his journal from Charles XII’s Russian campaign. Lyth swore an oath to the flag of his Regiment on being promoted to ensign in cavalry (*kornett*). Few days later when general Rehnskiöld inspected the regiment Lyth presented him with a written version of his oath.²¹

When a soldier gave his oath, he only became a soldier while a warrior was born on the battlefield. Baptism of fire was important. For example the secretary of Chancery of the King (*kanslisekreterare*) Josias Cederhielm wrote about his baptism of fire in the Battle of Narva 1700, as “musket balls were whistling in ears but did not bite everybody, Thank for God”.²² Although most soldiers died of disease in camps rather than being killed in battle. But the role of battles and fighting had a deeper meaning in military culture. The place where death was most dramatically present was crucial. Battle and fighting was the last proof of the manhood of an officer.

Rituals before the battle were needed to prepare men for dying. The chaplains’ role was to preach that no cannon ball or musket shot hit a man without God’s will. This has been seen as

¹⁸ For example, RA, R 2444, memorial Frestare, p. 10; memorial Starck, p. 188; memorial Plantingh (in a testimony by Axel Sparre), pp. 343–344; R 2449, memorial Tungelfelt, p. 326.

¹⁹ R 2450, memorial Sture, p. 15–16.

²⁰ Compare to Collstedt, Christopher, *Duellanten och rättvisa: Duellbrott och synen på manlighet i stormaktsväldets slutskede* (Lund 2007).

²¹ Joachim Lyths dagbok, i *Karolinska krigares dagböcker 2* (Hereafter KKD)(Lund 1903), p. 27.

²² Kansanaho, Erkki, *Heränneitä karoliineja. Pietismin soihdunkantajia Kaarle XII:n armeijassa (Awoken Caroleans: Torchbearers of Pietism in Charles XII's Army)* (Helsingfors 1950), p. 71.

a sign of Carolean fatalism. But rather it is a way to prepare men for battle setting them into trance with drums, pipes and speeches altogether. Of equal importance was primary group cohesion, as men fought because their comrades did.²³ Fighting rituals of “primitive” communities have long been the focus of cultural anthropology. Still the practices of early modern battles are largely unknown surprisingly. Certain fatalist explanations exist, such as misbelief of fulfilling the God’s will.

Seeing things as spatial, is an important method of understanding the practices of war. Battles were fought mainly in places which were open enough for battle formations (*ordre de bataille*). This caused problem especially in the forested regions of Northern Europe where armies actually had to find a suitable field for fighting in a proper manner. The common tactics were usually suited for open fields of Central Europe. Before battle the commander called a war council with his highest officers to give orders to each regiment.²⁴

Holding the battlefield after the battle was important and it had a great symbolical and practical meaning. The results of battles, i.e. who had won, was not always a simple affair. If the battle was indecisive he who stayed on the field could easily be presented as victorious. This often resulted in avoiding pursuit of retreating enemies. One reason was that after battle the troops were mentally and psychically exhausted, lines were broken, ammunition was low, wounded needed treatment and prisoners had to be guarded. Psychological limits of killing may have been present and evident. Troops which used line tactics and faced close combat, had to have enormous battle stress. Psychologically and physiologically it was not possible for troops to continue fighting after intensive close combat.²⁵

Battles and battlefields were closely related the closeness of death and its waiting. The field itself was understood as a stage of deathly play, and also as a symbol of struggle. Death was the factor which made society more equal in the high day of society of estates. Battles broke the strict hierarchy and disciplin of every day practices in field armies. Under enemies cannon

²³ Shils, Edward, A, and Janowitz, Morris, “Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II.” in *The Public Opinion Quarterly* Vol. 12, No 2, 1948, pp. 280–315; Kansanaho (1950), pp. 223–258; Englund, Peter, *Poltava: Berättelsen om en armés undergång* (Stockholm 1988).

²⁴ For example Hornborg, Eirik, *Karolinen Armfelt och kampen om Finland under Stora nordiska kriget*. (Borgå 1952), pp. 13–30; Englund (1988), pp. 47–56; Lamberg, Marko, Hakanen, Marko and Haikari, Janne, *Physical and Cultural Space in Pre-industrial Europe: Methodological approaches to Spatiatality*, (Lund 2011).

²⁵ For example Englund (1988), pp. 85, and 172; Sörensen, Thomas, *Sista Striden, De Mörnerska husarerna vid Bornhöft*. (Luleå 2004), pp. 135–192. Sjöström, Oskar, *Fraustadt 1706: ett fält färjat rött* (Lund 2008) pp. 243–254; Sarkamo (2011), pp. 41–65.

fire cannonball strike down a man instantly whether he was a common soldier or a high nobility officer. Officer's casualties in battles were even higher than common soldiers.²⁶ The role and meaning of battles in a wider cultural scale in society is not well understood. Sacrifices in battles legitimized officers and nobles higher social status. Battles legitimized social order, continuity and stability in early modern societies. Also the chaos of battles made it possible to manifest personal capability and allowed rises in social hierarchy.

Role of Sieges and Patrol Missions

Officer status as a fighting man was defined by how many battles (*batailler*), assaults (*stormningar*) and patrol missions (*partier*) he had experienced. Lieutenant Herman Hasveer described in his memorial a certain siege of a Danish redoubt (*skans*) in 1716. Colonel Falkenberg's battalion, where Hasveer served, were ordered by the King to storm the position ending in success without losses. Soon after Danish troops counterattacked and after furious fighting (*tämmelig skarpt fäcktande*) Hasveer had to surrender with the surviving men. All ammunition was used up and the commander Falkenberg was mortally wounded, his troops surrendered unconditionally.²⁷

Hasveer had to make clear in his narrative that Swedish troops had done everything possible before surrendering. Surrenders were resolved in a sensitive, but very serious, ritual where honour played the largest part. If the loser could surrender in a honourable manner, it was easier to end the bloody struggle. Respect and ceremony was important. Keeping the sword marked for officers a symbol of a honourable defeat.²⁸ Marches from besieged cities by the losing side were often spectacular parades, honouring the losing side.

Robert Petré described in a diary the siege of Mitau. A winning side ordered triumph were the band played and a trophies were carried when conquerors marched in to the fort of the city. Petré told how after Polish POW's were dined and well treated. After the dining,booty was shared between the Swedes but the Trophies and strength horses were held by Crown. Smaller (*smärre*) horses were given to officers and NCO's for private use. Petré got personally two horses fine for riding (*klippare*) and one and a half riksdaler. Soldiers, dragoons and cavalrymen

²⁶ For example Hornborg (1952), p. 307.

²⁷ RA, R2444, memorial Hasveer, p. 265.

²⁸ On surrendering ceremonials, see memorial Starenflycht R 2444, 380v; Englund (1988) pp. 137–139; Hornborg (1952), p. 216.

got one riksdaler each. Officers got of course most, Ensign got two and a half (*fänrik, kornet*) rd, Lieutenants got three rd and Captains and Cavalry masters (*kaptän, ryttmästare*) five rd and all of them large amount of horses.²⁹

The history of actual fighting in early modern Europe is usually described through the drama of battle, also producing the most source material. But for the officers themselves, sieges, charges, and especially patrols were important and constituted a way to demonstrate ones quality. In the prevailing linear tactics of the day, the individual officer was anonymous, while small engagements were opportunity to display competence. In general these smaller actions are not preserved in the sources but are very present in officers own writings. Some small actions were used in propaganda, highlighting the fortitude of officers.³⁰

Evidence of Fighting: the Body and Symbols of Bravery

A warrior needed evidence of his bravery, and among the clearest were wounds received in combat. Wounds constituted a direct physical proof of bravery, loyalty and suffering. If a warrior had sufficient physical evidence, no further explanations were needed. Ensign (*kornett*) Alexander Starck could simply point directly to his wounds as testimony that he had fought in five major battles (*har varit wid fem batailler som mina blesyrer vittna kunna*). For a man of honour, this laconic statement was sufficient. Starck's claim offers an example of a physically oriented warrior culture where actions and concrete physical evidence went far beyond only words.³¹

It was a problem for a warrior if he did not have any wounds on his body, and in such a situation he would need to justify his claims of being a brave soldier. This is the reason why Pehr Cedersparre wrote that although he had managed to get through the war without any wounds, he had been surrounded by the enemy many times. He had lost his horse and equipment in a situation in which he had also been in great danger of losing his life. In such cases it was necessary for the claimants to resort to self-justification, but this was always hard for fighting men in a culture where actions and physicality played the key role. In peacetime society, wounds also played an important role among civilians. Corporal (*drabantkorpral*) Rühl of the Royal

²⁹ KKD 1, Petrés dagbok, pp. 8–9.

³⁰ Utförlig berättelse, om den lyckelige action, som af öfwerstens och commendantens herr Carl Gustaf Skyttes detacherade partie under herr majoren Freudenfelts commando förelupen är emot ryszarne den 25 maji anno 1703. Stockholm: tryckt: uti kongl. boktr. hos sal. Wankifs enckia [1703].

³¹ RA, R 2444, memorial Starck, p. 188.

Bodyguard, who had suffered greatly in captivity, died at home in Finland in 1740. When he died, people counted 16 scars on his body.³²

The practice of appealing to wounds is also interesting because wounds and physical “infirmity” were in fact often used as criteria for the dismissal of officers.³³ It was honourable for an officer to carry battle wounds on his body, but the same wounds could impede his ability to perform his duties. It was sometimes the case that an officer’s wounds healed so that he was able to carry out his duties, but with increasing age old wounds might begin to trouble him. When young, the Swedish officers bore their wounds proudly, but in old age the same wounds caused health problems – although the scars still aroused awe among fellow officers, and in society.

Apart from their wounds, officers also referred to blood and the shedding of it. The most usual rhetorical formula referred to service with “life and blood” (*lif och blod*). It may be noted that civilian officials in the eighteenth century also swore to serve the Crown with their “life and blood”. The formula obviously passed from military usage into civilian life. In many claims, officers referred rhetorically to fighting “to the death” (*in til dödstund*).³⁴ Behind these expressions, not directly referring to specific events, lay the fact, that most of the officers actually did give their lives in war and literally fought to their deaths. In this sense they were very concrete rhetorical expressions.

Officers also made specific references to blood. Rudolf August von Hallern, applying for a post in the Upland Regiment, stated: “I, with my innermost heart’s blood hold myself unsparingly in the military service of His Royal Majesty”. Lorentz von Schultz, who was severely tortured, wrote in his claim that he “never complained, but enjoyed all of [his] blood’s work”, and that he had “with blood earned [his] salary”. The symbolism of bleeding was strongly present in many of the memorials.³⁵

The sacrifice of one’s blood could be also invoked in very different situations. After the Russian War in the 1740s (War of the Hats), General von Buddenbrock was sentenced to death for his unsuccessful conduct of the war. Although he was given the option of exile, his sense of

³² RA, R 2447, memorial Cedersparre, p. 82v; Kansanaho (1950), pp. 89–90.

³³ Wirilander (1950), pp. 230–231.

³⁴ For example RA, R 2444 memorial Mörning, pp. 300–300v; R2448, memorial Gertta, p. 165.

³⁵ RA, R 2444, memorial von Schultz, pp. 266–266v; memorial von Hallern, p. 321.

honour made him refuse this chance. He stated: 'A soldier must always be ready to sacrifice his blood for the fatherland, even if it be at a place of execution.'³⁶

Honour was also involved in many rituals often in the way that fallen soldiers were honoured. Comrades killed in battle were saluted. For example, C M Posse described in his diary how fallen Swedish soldiers of Lifeguards (drabanter och gardiet) were buried to a mass grave after the Battle of Holowczyn 1708. Instead of this mass grave two officers, Ensign Lilliesverd and Lieutenant Starck were buried together to a single grave. General Adjutant Claes Hierta was a man worth to be buried to his own personal grave. Bishop doctor Malmberg held the sermon (likpredikan) and firing squad of 600 men from the Lifeguard regiment saluted with two rounds. It should be noted that two rounds was the battle signal in the Swedish army. Burial rituals were a combination of practicality and honouring. Officers were usually buried separately from men in individual graves, but common soldiers were generally laid to rest in mass graves. The victors could also leave the bodies of fallen enemies as a warning to others.³⁷

Many Carolean officers mentioned the funerals of their fellow officers in diaries. It was commonplace that the bodies of fallen officers were carried from the battlefield to be buried honourably. In a report, Captain Colling le Clair described how he and a comrade carried from the field the body of the regimental commander, Colonel von Essen, killed at Storkyro in 1714. They found his and the bodies of two other officers' in a pile of naked corpses. In their account, too, specific reference was made to the battle wounds of von Essen. The dire consequences of major battles were visible long afterwards. Many of the wounded remained with the armies, fighting for their lives for weeks and months after the battles. Some of them recovered, others died.³⁸

The Role of Officers, as Suffering Servants

³⁶ Andersson, Hans, "Jag mig nöjd under bilan böjer: Berättelser av och om avrättade i Stockholm 1720–1910". in *Släkt och Hävd nr 3–4/2002*, pp. 336–337; Karonen, Petri, "Kun miekka osuu harhaan (When a Sword Miss)". Jari Eilola (toim.) *Makaaberin ruumis. Mielikuvia kuolemasta ja kehosta (Macabre Body. Inspirations about the death and body)*. (Helsingfors 2009), pp. 241–271.

³⁷ KKD 1, Posses dagbok, pp. 314–317; Donagan, Barbara, "Atrocity, War, Crime, and Treason in the English Civil War", in *American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 4, pp. 1137–1166, (1994); Bourke (1999), pp. 159–202.

³⁸ Colling le Clair's narrative about the conditions in battlefield after battle of Storkyro 1714. In Koskinen, Yrjö, *Lähteitä Ison Vihan historiaan (Sources to the History of Great Wrath)* (Helsingfors 1865); KKD 2, Lyths dagbok, p. 70 ; KKD 1, Posses dagbok, p. 317.

The soldiers' virtue entailed a strong devotion to the Crown. The officers saw themselves as loyal servants of the king, but this was a personal, reciprocal relation.

After the Great Northern War, numerous stories were told about the brave veterans, whose endurance had proved almost superhuman, and who, at least in some cases, were decently rewarded. The above mentioned Corporal Rühl of the Lifeguards took part in a plan to organize a mass escape from Russian captivity. The plan was however revealed to the Russians. It was related that Rühl was then thrown into a vile underground dungeon for nine years, where he lived mainly on bread and water. Rühl endured his incarceration and returned home. In 1727 he was ennobled and promoted to the rank of colonel.³⁹

As a reward for their loyalty, officers were awarded positions and their concomitant benefits from the crown, securing the officers' living conditions and future career prospects. Rewards also determined an individual's position within the community, and the holder of a position thus had the right to enjoy and demand the respect and honour that came with it. In this context, honour was regarded as a merit earned in war.

In their claims, officers also appealed to the fact that they had sacrificed their youth for king and country. As a member of the force accompanying Charles XII from Perevolochna to Bender. Olof Langh, an officer of the Uppland Regiment appealed in his claim that he had not learned a civilian profession in his youth due to his service. He had learned only what was necessary to be a soldier. Anders Mörning also appealed to the fact that he had sacrificed his youth to the army (*krigsväsendet*).⁴⁰

Johan Palander, who held a Captain's warrant (*fullmakt*), and was applying for classification (*indelning*) as a lieutenant in the placement roster, appealed to the fact that in his fourteen years of service he had sacrificed his best years to learning soldiery. Carl Frestare, who had served in the Västmanland Regiment, claimed that he had given his best years to the realm, and emphasised the sacrifice by pointing out that he had done so languishing in captivity.⁴¹

Officers sometimes used their youth as an argument in a different way. Berent Christopher von Phasian, who had served right from the beginning of the Great Northern War and had recently been discharged. He wrote in his *memorial* that he had been dismissed against his will, and that he still possessed qualities fitting for military service. Phasian emphasised his

³⁹ RA, R 2444, memorial von Schultz, pp. 266–266v; See also Kansanaho (1950), pp. 89–90.

⁴⁰ RA, R 2444, memorial Langh, p. 296–297; memorial Mörning, p. 300v.

⁴¹ RA, R 2444, memorial Frestare, p.9; memorial Palander, p.270v.

willingness and physical capacity in his claim. Carl Ulbrich Schilt stated more eloquently that after the war he was in the full bloom of youth (*blomstrande ungdom*) and was therefore highly fitted for a military post.⁴²

Schilt and many others appealed to the practical fact that their age made them suitable for military positions, and that dismissal would be a waste of human resources. They used their age as a marker for physical prowess. Younger officers like these, often appointed after Poltava in 1709, in most cases could not cite battle merits, and therefore resorted to a different tactic. Their argument was that their youth and good physical condition, put them ahead of their competitors, the older veterans, who had survived major battles and years in captivity. Basically officers always swore their unity as a brotherhood, but practically they created smaller groups that vied with each other over offices. Officers wrote that a *Prejudice*, a certain detriment (Latin: *praejudicium*), was involved when officer had been bypassed by another officer.

Thousands of prisoners were officers and their warrior identity often collapsed under the conditions of captivity. During misery and humiliation, nine officers wrote to August Hermann Francke, leader of the Lutheran Pietistic awakening movement in Halle, asking for spiritual guidance. Francke took a chance and responded by invoking the warrior values held by the officers: 'Shall He use You as Fighters for Jesus Christ, as blessed vessels and instruments, by which many will be guided to Christ'.⁴³ Warriors for Christ were awakened, and the leaders of a new religious movement were born. Becoming a reborn Christian imbued the officers' lives with new meaning. Self-sacrifice and the harsh and brutal years of war were suddenly described as merely a necessary step to the road of finding Christ.

A distinction has been made between narrow and broad definitions of Pietism as phenomena.⁴⁴ In the narrower definition, Pietism is merely a religious phenomenon. But a wider definition raise the important question of Pietism in Protestant movements threatening the orthodoxy of the Protestant state churches.⁴⁵ Historians have also emphasized the relationship between Pietism and the Enlightenment, which eventually contributed to secularising Europe. It has been noted that Pietism and the Enlightenment both challenged Protestant orthodoxy asserting the rights of the individual, and both Pietism and the Enlightenment were more

⁴² RA, R 2419, memorial von Phasian, 1601v; R 2444, memorial Schilt, p. 338v.

⁴³ Wreech, Curt Friedrich von, *Wahrhaffte und umständliche Historie Von denen Schwedischen Gefangenen in Rußland und Siberien* (Sorau 1728), p. 96. Francke 24.11.1713.

⁴⁴ Jonathan Strom: 'Problems and Promises of Pietism Research'. In *Church History* 71:3 (September 2002), p. 540.

⁴⁵ Strom (2002), p. 539.

concerned with practice than theory. The crucial historical question is whether Pietistic anti-traditional and practical, individualism paved the way for a secular expression of these same traits in the Enlightenment.⁴⁶

What happened in Russian captivity has been well illustrated in research, but why was Pietism embraced and why did the prisoners of war adhere to it even after their repatriation? I agree that Pietism was the first real movement challenging the authority of the church and collective religion, and in so doing forging the way to a more individual society. What is less noticed is how the movement's militaristic rhetorics was a direct continuation of a secular warrior ethos.' Pietists highlighted the struggle, fighting, blood spilling, sacrifice in their teachings.⁴⁷

Pietist hymns, such as "Hymns of Moses and his Lambs" ("Mose och Lambsens wisor") can also be seen as an example of the Pietist warrior-minded world view. Especially Psalms 79-86 "About Spiritual Fight, Battle and Victory" ("*Om Andelig Kamp, Strid och Seger*") highlighted the role of war, battle and spiritualization, the role of a fighter, but now in a spiritual form.⁴⁸ Closer look to pietistic movement, brings light to the wider historical impact of the warrior values of the Carolean officers. Actual fighting was over but the military ethos left its permanent trace to the rhetorics and world view of this revivalist movement.

Officer as Part of Society

Concepts connected to the officer's role in the regiment and its officer corps and as a patriarchal father figure were central in the texts dealing with the lives of the Carolean officers. Even in the "Officers' and soldiers' Oath of Duty" (*Officerares samt Gemenas Eed och plicht*), laid down in King Charles XI's Articles of War in 1683. The oath and the actual articles of war also tell a lot of daily military life.

Family name and blood played a central role in the lives of the Carolean officers. In the patriarchal society which attached great importance to the family, the individual officer could also invoke his family and their sacrifices in his claims. References to family members who had

⁴⁶ Gaskill, Malcolm, *Crime and Mentalities in Early Modern England* (Cambridge 2000), pp. 10–11.

⁴⁷ For example Wreech (1728), Franckes letter to Caroleans, p. 96, 24.11.1713; Christoph Eberhards letter 3.2.1714, p. 105; Wreechs letter to Isendorff 7.1.1715, p.238.

⁴⁸ *Mose och Lambsens wisor*, 1740, psalms 79–86.

fallen in battle were used by individuals as a strategy for holding on to their positions. The reason was that the individual's name and honour were closely linked to those of his family. For example, Olof Renberg had lost his father and his brother in the Great Northern War, and used this in his claim.⁴⁹ Death in action in the service of king and country was a sacrifice that called for the members of the family of the fallen warrior to be rewarded. The family's honour was maintained by the deeds of their forefathers, in the same way as nobility. The forefathers' actions had to be revered and constituted the status and wealth of the family. Many officers thus lived in a deeply felt debt of gratitude to their forebears.⁵⁰

The life of an officer was also strictly controlled by military norms and culture. He belonged to the army, and consequently it was permissible for his superiors to inflict corporal punishment on a soldier. The body and the soul were also connected in this way; the body defiled the soul, and the soul could be punished by punishing the body.⁵¹

This concept was evident in the articles of war and for example in the courts-martial. All the soldiers were required to attend a court-martial if the charge involved life, limb or honour. The court-martial, like courts in a civilian life, was seen as essential for the proper functioning of the military society. Because the actions of the guilty brought God's wrath on the whole military community (the army or the regiment), it was important to purge the collective sin that lay over the community by removing the perpetrators from it. That was why courts-martials were always held in the open air. Crimes that did not threaten the whole community were dealt with indoors. The different forms of capital punishment reflected the baseness of the crime. Death before a firing squad was more honourable than hanging. The most dishonourable crime, high treason, were punished by mutilation of the perpetrator's body.⁵²

Likewise, the regiment's *esprit de corps* was maintained by regarding the whole regiment as a living organism. Society as such was seen as an organism and a family. Consequently, its

⁴⁹ RA, R 2444, Memorial Renberg, pp. 267–268.

⁵⁰ Marklund, Andreas, "På fädernas Axlar: Fadessymboler, manlighet och patriotisk gemenskap under Stora nordiska kriget", in *Scandia* 72:1, 2006, pp. 27–33.

⁵¹ See also Porter, Roy, "History of Body". in Burke, Peter (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge 1992); Porter, Roy, "History of Body Reconsidered", in Burke, Peter (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, Second edition (Cambridge 2001); Donagan 1994, pp. 1137 - 1166; Liliequist, 2009, pp. 117–147; Sarkamo 2011, pp. 66 - 81.

⁵² *Krigz-Acticlar af Carl den XI förnyade och stadgade den 2 Martii 1683*. Åbo 1789: Tryckt hos K. Acad. boktryckaren mag. J. C. Frenckell, Kongliga Majtitz förordning huruledes och hwad wijd Generel och Regementzrätterne uder dess Militities hållas - - -. pp. 87–122; Compare Gilbert 1976, 80. Gilbert, Arthur 1976: Law and Honour among Eighteen-Century British Army Officers. *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 75-87.

diseased parts had to be removed. In worst case, it was possible to decimate the regiment by choosing every tenth man by lot to be hanged. Incompetent officers were expelled from their regiments if they broke the code of honour. In several crimes it was also possible to order a whole unit to live outside a military camp for a temporary period.⁵³

Superior officers had the duty to maintain discipline physically and in that way violate the bodily integrity of the subordinates. A good example is a case which Sergeant Major (*fältväbel*) Robert Petré described in his diary. In 1705, during the siege of a fortification, Petré had ordered his subordinate, Sergeant Hedberg, and his men to perform some duties while he went to see his own superiors. When Petré returned to his post, he found Hedberg and his men sleeping. Petré asked the sergeant why he had not obeyed the order. Because Hedberg's response did not satisfy him, Petré hit him with his sword a couple of times. The sergeant felt that he had been insulted and complained about Petré's behaviour to two captains. They found, after hearing Petré, that the sergeant major had acted correctly. Sergeant Hedberg did not leave the case there, however, but insisted on reporting it to the commander, Colonel Knorring. The latter offered no sympathy to the complaining sergeant either and instead ordered him to be arrested for failing to obey the commands of his superior, which had been given in the service of His Royal Majesty (*Kungliga Majestet*). Although Hedberg was released that same evening, he had surely received a lesson about patriarchal order and obedience.⁵⁴ Even so, the individual soldier had the right to complain about chastisement by his superiors. This because patriarchal order was a dual relationship – just as the soldiers were obliged to obey, the officer was responsible for the wellbeing of the soldiers. The colonel was the father of the children i.e. the soldiers, in a patriarchal relationship.

Because corporal punishment could be easily inflicted on a soldier by his superiors, it is not surprising that insults from civilians caused extreme reactions. Thus conflicts between common soldiers and civilians often led to violence. It has been claimed that this kind of violent behaviour was a rational use of violence. It highlights the culture-related need to defend one's honour with force, if necessary. For posterity, the most striking form that this took was the duel, which was especially favoured by military officers.⁵⁵

⁵³ Krigs-articlar (1683), articles. 64–66.

⁵⁴ KKD 1, Petrés dagbok, pp. 80–81.

⁵⁵ On duels, see for example Frevert, Ute, *Men of Honour. (Ehrenmänner das Duell in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft)* (Cambridge MA. 1995); Collstedt (2007); (Sarkamo 2011), pp. 124–129.

Duels were usually fought to first blood, which meant that blood had to be spilled before the fight was over. The shedding of blood settled a verbal insult, again a demonstration of the close link between the body and honour.

Historian Ute Frevert has maintained that officers had two kinds of duties in 19th and early 20th century Prussia and Bavaria. He had to behave in accordance to the practices of the officer corps *esprit de corps* and on the other hand he had to gain respect and prestige in a wider social context including civilian society. An officer had to show courage and bravery on the battlefield, but when necessary, also defend his honour, sword in hand. If not the insult challenged the honour of the whole group.⁵⁶

One example can be found in Leonard Kagg's story about his time in Russian captivity. A group of prisoners had been assembled to hear orders from the Czar, and were commanded to take off their hats. Some men who were standing further away apparently did not hear the order. It was raining heavily, and they wanted keep their heads covered. A Russian guard knocked one officer's hat off so fiercely that his wig also fell to the ground. The officer responded quickly with a couple of heavy punches. This act started a scuffle in which two prisoners lost their lives. Kagg also saw at least eight wounded Russian soldiers. Kagg's account demonstrated the physical nature of military culture. The whole cultural code of manliness in the early modern period expected men to respond to insults with physical force. Honor was always a matter of life and death.

Sociologist and a Frontman from World War II Knut Pipping highlights in his 1947 classical study about the Finnish machine gun company as a society (*Kompaniet som samhälle – iakttagelser i ett finskt frontförband 1941–1944*) foreword, how you had to pay attention to the informal systems and practices in understanding the communication between soldiers in a military group. Informal ties and practices made orders and actions understandable and legitimize to soldiers. The behavior of frontline soldiers could be seen as disrespectful or disobeying towards their superiors if the informal rules and structures were not factored in. For a visiting officer it was impossible to understand.⁵⁷ Historian Magnus Perlestam has shown that discipline

⁵⁶ Frevert (1995) pp. 61–62.

⁵⁷ Pipping, Knut, *Kompania pienoisyhteiskuntana (Kompaniet som samhälle – iakttagelser i ett finskt frontförband 1941–1944)* (Helsingfors 1978 [1947]), p. 21.

and automatically done obeying was not the reality of the early modern military life. It is a misbelief which historical scholars have misleadingly done.⁵⁸

Conclusions

The honour of an officer was integral to his character, thought, speech, habits, actions and decisions, or in shorter words, his whole way of life. But the nature of existing archive sources creates a certain problem. Because honour is visible mainly in conflicts it is easy to misinterpret the passive, latent code of honour. But a code of honour was not just a system of integrating and excluding individuals from the group. Rather it was an active, flexible system where individuals had to continuously repeat the actions in a manner, which was understood as honourable.

The importance of military honour becomes manifest in a situation where warrior ideals and the harsh brutal reality of life clashed. The placement of officers in Sweden after the Great Northern War presented one type of situation where the honour of warriors was challenged. Scaling-down the army involved a major problem to ensure the livelihoods of veterans, because the contemporary ideals required a decent reward to officers for their sacrifices.

The placement process was also very difficult for the officers on the Committee. They were obliged to rationing privileges that they themselves, being members of the same honour group, regarded as earned rights, thereby offending the honour of the claimants. In turn, the claimants implicitly and explicitly appealed to the shared sense of honour among officers. Merits had to be presented as matters of honour related to the code of honour. The claimants always tried to emphasise their honourable actions.

In the light of the evidence of my above-mentioned primary sources, the connection between honour, and the body was significant in the military culture of Carolean officers. This ideal was most visibly manifested by the warrior king Charles XII, who embodied the ideal of the Carolean warrior. To be a warrior, an appeal to merits in battle was the first and foremost way of defending a claim to a post because bravery in combat was the most respected quality in military life. A secondary option for an officer was to invoke his role as a patriarchal father figure to his soldiers. Finally, he could appeal to the principle of equality among officers, as the officer corps was principally seen as a brotherhood, with a common identity focused on honour.

⁵⁸ Perlestam, Magnus, *Lydnad i karolinernas tid* (Lund 2008) pp. 10–11.

However, the writing of claims involved one further problem. The warrior culture was a culture of physical actions, not words. Officers with clear evidence of bravery, especially wounds, were in the best position. They could use a laconic rhetoric that needed no further explanation. If an officer did not have battle wounds, he resorted to other means of displaying bravery, but this demanded evidence.

It was harder to discharge an officer who possessed honourable merits. In practice, of course, when the army was reduced, factors including close relationships and patriarchal duty meant that favourites of the members of the Placement Committee might bypass officers of greater merit. On the other hand, it was more difficult to overlook an officer with merits, and even harder to ignore the claim of an evidently brave officer. For the soldiers, and especially for those without notable patrons, an appeal to warrior honour was their best chance. As such, this reveals an insight into the minds of the fighting men of early modern Europe.

Military honour was tested in many situations, especially in combat and other actions in which a soldier faced death and had the choice of either fleeing or holding fast. The challenge to manliness and honour was ever-present in the form of fear that would turn one into a coward. This can be seen in the claims: if an officer had distinguished himself in battle, he was considered a gallant man, enjoying greater respect both in warrior and civilian society. Officers of higher rank might even become heroes in the legends of the common people.

On the other hand, day to day life in the army in the early modern era was in many ways far removed from the imagined glory of battlefields. The regiments, companies, and field armies formed societies, living its everyday life, with all the routines and problems, in a state of war. The officer's role as a patriarchal father figure is evident. In practice, the mentalities and models of action of the fighting men were formed within a contradictory culture in which the masculine role of the warrior, dictated by a code of honour, was constantly challenged. Honour, masculinity and corporality were challenged by a culture which was centred on performance and action. In this way, military history has to be linked to a wider study of early modern mentalities and everyday practices.

Early modern soldiers had a sacred relation to places where death was present. Battlefields differed from other places where death was close, due to the drama of mass killing and dying. In that sense the closeness to death made the role of battle and fighting important in early modern societies. The scene of dying actually made society more equal and regenerated the possibility to

rise in social hierarchy. If historians do not understand the role of battle and battlefields, many effects of the larger picture of early modern society stays unnoticed.

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