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Introduction

IN 1792, a French speechwriter invoked the patriotic duty of those taking up arms to defend the struggling revolutionary nation. He proclaimed that “there is no sacrifice that he is not ready to make for our common mother, the *patrie*.” The true citizen “concentrates his most tender affections in his *patrie*. He prefers it to his family, his wife, his children, and even himself.”¹

Soldiers’ families, however, were not convinced that they should be sacrificed—or that soldiers’ sacrifices should be unlimited. Some sought to keep men out of the hands of the state entirely. Others argued that veterans’ returns were as necessary as their departures had been. When peace appeared imminent in 1797, one widow presented her son’s homecoming as both a patriotic duty and a reward for his service. She pleaded with the government: “Give my son the reward he seeks so ardently, that of coming to lighten the misery of his mother and feed his sisters by his care and his hard work. After serving the *patrie* with so much loyalty and courage, he will serve humanity and fulfill the duties of filial piety; he will only leave the flags of the Republic to fly to the aid of his mother.”²

If family members dreamt of the return of absent spouses or sons, popular culture throughout the French Revolution and Napoleonic eras promised returning soldiers domestic joys. When peace was proclaimed in 1797, theaters across France sought to lure their audiences with shows vaunting happy unions, like *Marriage with the Peace*. After war had resumed but a new peace treaty seemed imminent in 1801, stages again sought to entice viewers with offerings like *The Preliminaries of Peace or the Lovers Reunited*.³ Napoleonic theaters brushed off familiar scripts and celebrated fresh rounds of theatrical nuptials each time

1. Michel, *Discours sur l’amour de la patrie*, 6. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

2. Archives Nationales (henceforward AN) AF / III / 313 / 2, Alavoine.

3. Gamas, *Le mariage à la paix*, unpublished; see Kennedy et al., *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences*, 292; and Courtois, *Les préliminaires de paix ou les amans réunis*.

peace appeared likely. Even after Napoleon's empire was overturned and a new king came to power, theaters promised that wedding bells would ring for returning veterans—and for young conscripts saved from the draft.

The possibility of marriage as a reward for soldiers was not just a theatrical fantasy. It was also a very real practice directly promoted by the state. Revolutionary officials promised to support couples deemed to be especially deserving. Napoleon's government arranged public weddings and state-sponsored dowries for veterans throughout his reign. The practice reached its apogee in 1810, with six thousand such weddings planned to happen simultaneously across France, in conjunction with the emperor's own nuptials.

This book takes as its starting point such visions of homecoming and marriage as a "soldier's reward." The French Revolution established the modern concept of citizen-soldiers, and institutionalized forms of mass conscription unprecedented in modern history. Rewards for military service included promotion, financial support, glory, and patriotic recognition.⁴ But contemporaries—citizens and officials alike—also envisioned recompense in other ways, as the right to "fly to the aid" of desperate relatives or to earn the "warrior's reward" of forming a new household. Indeed, from the early years of the French Revolution through the beginnings of the Bourbon Restoration, both popular culture and governments presented compelling messages about the joys of family life that would follow the traumas of battle. Veterans would come home to the embraces of patient sweethearts or win new conquests with tales of derring-do and displays of their scars. The state would recognize their heroism and local communities celebrate their return with wedding bells. Their parents and siblings would be similarly rewarded; men and women who had sacrificed loved ones and endured the absences or deaths of young men would see their sons or brothers again, or at least be compensated for their losses.

At the same time, family bonds and responsibilities actively worked against military service. Young men sought to avoid the draft, or deserted the troops, often asking family members to protect them. Couples arranged paper marriages in hopes that young men seen as heads of households would be less likely to be conscripted. Communities' willingness to celebrate soldier-heroes was undercut by financial woes, political and ideological divisions, revolutionary upheavals, and the toll of seemingly endless war. Veterans could be physically impaired and disconnected from families or childhood sweethearts they had not seen for years. Young women and their parents sometimes calculated that an able-bodied civilian man would be a better mate than a soldier who might never return, or would return only as a disfigured, or economically risky, partner. While contemporaries rarely talked directly about such issues, they

4. On other forms of reward, see Blaufarb, *The French Army*; and Ihl, *Le mérite et la république*.

hinted at concerns that ex-combatants' experiences with trauma and violence and exposure to venereal disease made them ill-suited to domestic life.

Citizens also dreamt repeatedly of peace. As the Napoleonic wars reached their climax in 1814, some called for an end to fighting on the grounds that by saving young men from conscription, peace would restore families and rescue mothers from constant anguish. One royalist sarcastically heralded peace as a misfortune that would somehow be welcomed throughout France: "I would wager that mothers are crazy enough to celebrate. They will no longer curse the day they gave birth or fear having children [who are likely to be killed in battle]. No more conscription? What will we do?" He concluded on a more optimistic note about the world that might follow one centered on rewards for military heroism: "All French share one wish today: less glory, more happiness."⁵ In the following years, veterans of the Napoleonic armies came back to a world of defeat, rather than victory, and to a political order that tried to reverse many revolutionary changes. Pamphleteers sometimes contended that happy family life should be a reward not for military service, but for its opposite: abandoning a quest for personal glory to support a postwar order.

War was a recurrent aspect of daily life in France for more than two decades. Yet the story of these wars, from April 1792 until Napoleon's definitive fall from power in 1815, is often treated separately from the story of the French Revolution. The Revolution offers so many compelling narratives—of new ideas of rights and new forms of violence, of dramatic ideological experiments and equally dramatic power struggles—that war can appear peripheral. It impinges only at a few key moments, as historians consider, for example, how required military service sparked civil war in 1793, how war fed the period of state-sponsored violence in 1793–94 often known as the Terror, and how militarization contributed to Napoleon's rise. Yet assuming that war and the concomitant militarization of society were marginal to the full story of the Revolution leaves aside how men and women experienced conflict; related it to social, cultural, and political transformations; or anticipated its end. In short, we cannot understand the revolutionary period without taking a close look at the experiences of the wars that were its armature.

Military specialists have certainly explored many aspects of these wars, including the dramatic sagas of battles, the changing social profile of the army, possible motivations of the troops, and recurrent issues of draft dodging and desertion.⁶ But if war is often marginal in accounts of the Revolution, military histories can also appear removed from analyses of social and cultural

5. *Collection de différentes pièces relatives à la déchéance*, 49.

6. Overviews include Chickering and Förster, eds., *War in an Age of Revolution, 1775–1815*; Rapport, *The Napoleonic Wars: A Very Short Introduction*; and Mikaberidze, *The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History*.

change.⁷ This division is reinforced by disciplinary divides between gender and family history on one hand and military history on the other. Scholars have creatively blended these approaches for a few topics, including the transgressive stories of women soldiers, the bonds between homesick soldiers and their mothers, and the effects of prolonged warfare on fostering more aggressive heterosexuality or, alternatively, new forms of homosexual intimacy.⁸ Yet most work on gender history during the revolutionary era focuses on women's political activism or rights, or more generally, on legal and cultural change. Military history and gender and family history are often very separate endeavors for the period, unlike for scholarship on the world wars.

Experiences of war and peacemaking are also often treated separately. Indeed, it is easy to assume that governments need to work to persuade citizens to support war, but that people will simply welcome peace. Making peace after two decades of war was actually a profound challenge. It required not only drafting treaties, changing governments, and dealing with the logistics of demobilization, but also negotiating the aftermath of entrenched militarism. *The Soldier's Reward* builds on work that explores how these postwar years, like the Revolution and war itself, were crucial moments of social and cultural transition.⁹ It draws on research into the experiences of veterans, tracing the challenges these men faced after their homecomings and the ambivalence of the post-Napoleonic French state toward former warriors.¹⁰ But it also moves beyond veterans to uncover the importance of postwar transitions in France for those less directly connected to the military, including combatants' parents, siblings, and spouses, and men who had actively avoided service.

The story begins on the eve of the Revolution and continues through the drama of civil and international war. It moves through the Napoleonic era and ends with the return of a monarchy and the uneasy establishment of a postwar

7. For two recent exceptions, see Tozzi, "Home Fronts and Battlefields"; and Dodman, "Ordinary Radicalization."

8. Work on women soldiers includes Brice, *La femme et les armées de la révolution*; Conner, "Les Femmes Militaires" and "La Vrai Madame Sans-Gêne"; S. Steinberg, *La confusion des sexes*; Godineau, "De la guerrière à la citoyenne"; J.-C. Martin, *La révolte brisée* and "Travestissements"; Ross, "La femme militaire"; Bouhet, "Les femmes et les armées"; Hopkin, "The World Turned Upside Down"; Cardoza, "Habits Appropriate to Her Sex"; Mabo, "Genre et armes dans les conflictualités locales"; Füssell, "Between Dissimulation and Sensation"; and Cardoza and Hagemann, "History and Memory of Army Women." On sexuality, emotion, and military service, see B. J. Martin, *Napoleonic Friendship* and "Military Mates"; Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée*; Boudon, *Le sexe sous l'empire*; and Dodman, *What Nostalgia Was*.

9. Haynes, Heuer, and Davidson, "Ending War"; Dudink, "After the Republic"; Hagemann, "'Heroic Virgins' and 'Bellicose Amazons'"; and Aaslestad, "Identifying a Postwar Period."

10. Woloch, "A Sacred Debt" and *The French Veteran*; Petiteau, *Lendemain d'empire* and "Survivors of War"; Vidalenc, *Les demi-soldes*.

order. War and its aftermath would touch almost every family in France and its empire. It combined with Revolution to reshape both models of masculinity and femininity and relations between families and the state. We cannot fully understand changing family and gender relationships in the period without considering the dynamics of prolonged warfare. But neither can we fully understand the evolution of war in this era, its relationships to changing political and ideological regimes, and the reasons why it was supported, sustained, or ended, if we do not take into account gender and family life.

Combatants, Civilians, and “Total War”

More than two decades of seemingly endless conflict required constantly bringing new men into the troops. Volunteers first joined in 1791 to defend the fledgling revolutionary nation from its enemies. The National Assembly declared war on Austria in April 1792, then on Spain and England. Civil war began in western France in spring 1793. The *levée en masse* in August 1793 inaugurated the first mass mobilization in history. In 1798, the French Republic formally established conscription, and transformed an emergency response into a permanent institution. While many aspects of the Revolution were challenged by Napoleon’s rise to power, conscription became one of its most inescapable legacies. At least two million French men were recruited into the troops between 1798 and 1815. Up to three and a half million fought during the periods of the Revolution and the Empire as a whole. Of the men born in France between 1790 and 1795, two out of five served in Napoleon’s armies.¹¹

Many of those men never returned. In 1814 and 1815, royalist pamphleteers contended that there had been five, six, or even seven million deaths—more casualties than there had been men fighting.¹² Such dubious statistics reflected both uncertainty about the full costs of war and Restoration propaganda about the evils of Napoleonic rule. The real numbers are staggering enough. About half a million French military personnel died during the Revolution, and up to a million under Napoleon. There may have been close to five million deaths for all European theaters of war, military and civilian.¹³

These numbers approach the horrific losses of World War I, though they took place over a much longer period.¹⁴ Several historians have taken the term

11. Forrest, *Conscripts and Deserters*, 20–21.

12. The figure of five million appeared in pamphlets such as *Discours d’un brave militaire* and *Deux mots de vérité*. Guéau de Reverseaux de Rouvray, *La paix de l’Europe avec la France*, estimated six million. The figure of seven million surfaced later, possibly in 1817; see Petiteau, *Lendemain d’empire*, 75.

13. For estimates of casualties, see Germani, “Dying for Liberty,” 97–98.

14. David Bell has argued that the probable total of a million deaths for France during the Napoleonic era may have included a higher portion of young men than those who perished in 1914–18. Bell, *The First Total War*, 7. Natalie Petiteau provides a more cautious estimate,

“total war,” coined for the twentieth century, and applied it to the revolutionary era.¹⁵ “Total war” heralds a new kind of warfare that requires mass participation, through either a popular rush to arms or the state’s power to force its citizenry to fight. It implies the subordination of the civilian state to military control. Perhaps most importantly, it suggests warfare aimed at total victory and complete destruction of the enemy.

Many of these definitions are controversial with regard to the Revolution. In debating whether the term “total war” applies to a period when slaughter was less industrialized than in the twentieth century, historians have argued about the centrality of technology to the term and how much the revolutionary and Napoleonic periods changed the nature of warfare. Arguments involve quantitative assessments of the scale of battles and the extent of casualties. They also involve qualitative judgments about the relative savagery of the revolutionary wars and the degree to which new ideals led to new forms of brutality.¹⁶

Another idea associated with “total war” has received far less attention: the possibility that war created new and closer connections between combatants and civilians in an all-out mobilization of society or, conversely, led to unprecedented ruptures as soldiers shared experiences unimaginable to those behind the lines. The revolutionary and Napoleonic eras provide evidence for both developments. New forms of warfare combined with revolutionary and postrevolutionary shifts to bring the “home front” (an expression first popularized by US wartime propaganda in 1918) together with the world of the camps and battlefields.¹⁷ In the late eighteenth century, many people in France had surprisingly little direct experience of warfare or interactions with soldiers. The military revolution of the previous century curtailed earlier practices by which armies lived off the bounty of civilian populations. Young men could be forced into service through the royal militia—but only about

calculating that Napoleonic wars destroyed about 2 percent of France’s total population, while World War I destroyed about 3 percent. Petiteau, *Lendemains d’empire*, 76. Alan Forrest has argued that French losses from 1792 to 1814 can be realistically compared to those in 1914–18 but emphasizes that they occurred over twenty years rather than four. Forrest, *The Legacy of the French Revolutionary Wars*, 64. Annie Crépin contends that mobilization was less than in World War I (when a fifth of the population was called up), but that the risk of death was greater in 1800–1815. Crépin, *Défendre la France*, 158. In contrast, Owen Connelly observes that the French population grew during the Napoleonic wars, suggesting that casualties, although devastating for those directly involved, did not dramatically impact population numbers as a whole. Connelly, *The French Revolution and Napoleonic Era*, 232–33.

15. Bell, *The First Total War*; and Guimar, *L’invention de la guerre totale*.

16. These include Chickering, “Total War: The Use and Abuse of a Concept”; Broers, “The Concept of ‘Total War’”; and Charters, Rosenhaft, and Smith, *Civilians and War in Europe*. See also Bell et al., “Autour de la guerre totale.” For the claim that the Napoleonic wars should be seen as the first modern, if not the first total, wars, see Hagemann, “The Military and Masculinity.”

17. Forrest, *Conscripts and Deserters*, 20–21.

one in forty eligible men were enlisted, and officers came almost exclusively from the nobility.¹⁸ The Revolution transformed these dynamics, promoting citizen-soldiers, men who proved their patriotism by taking up arms for their country.¹⁹ The levée en masse of August 1793 sent men between eighteen and twenty-five to fight and sought to mobilize the entire population behind the war effort. In instituting formal conscription in 1798, officials proclaimed that the law erased “the line of demarcation that kings traced between the citizen and the soldier; it organizes a truly national army.”²⁰

War continued to permeate daily life under Napoleon. It influenced everything from popular entertainment to marriage, business to artwork, and political relationships to literary exchanges.²¹ It required civilians to interact repeatedly with the state. Women and civilian men petitioned authorities to secure permanent discharges for soldiers to “fly home” to their aid or debated whether a young woman should offer her hand in marriage to a returning veteran. They also engaged with the state in myriad other ways, provoked both by revolutionary upheavals and by the exigences of war. These included asking for financial help; seeking patronage for patriotic writing or artwork; trying to discover what happened to a loved one who was missing in action; regularizing the status of a prisoner of war who wanted to remain in France; and attempting to dissolve a marriage undertaken only so that a man might avoid conscription. Military service may have indefinitely separated a man from home, but it imbricated his family members in new relationships with the state and shaped their own claims to citizenship.

At the same time, home and war front could appear profoundly different spaces. Observing that the term “civilian” did not exist in French or English until the end of the Old Regime, David Bell has contended that the Revolution inaugurated a new culture in which warfare became seen as separate from normal existence.²² Others have similarly claimed that the military became an increasingly self-contained world, particularly under Napoleon.²³ Soldiers could be away from their homes for years. Men who volunteered during the early Revolution or who were incorporated into the ranks in 1793 believed that they would fight for a few months. Those who escaped serious injury or disease and did not desert were often still in the troops years later. The 1798 conscription law limited terms of service to five years during peace—but made them

18. Tozzi, “Home Fronts and Battlefields.”

19. Forrest, “Citizenship and Military Service.”

20. *Bulletin décadaire*, no. 7, 1 Frimaire Year VII (November 21, 1798).

21. Studies of the impact of war on social and cultural life include Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire*; Favret, *War at a Distance*; Forrest, “The Military Culture of Napoleonic France”; Germani, “Staging Battles”; and Padiyar, Shaw, and Simpson, eds., *Visual Culture and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*.

22. Bell, *The First Total War*.

23. Forrest, Hagemann, and Rendall, “Introduction: Nations in Arms, People at War,” 4.

unlimited during war. Even after soldiers returned home, they faced challenges trying to communicate their experiences of war to a civilian audience.²⁴ The language of violence permeated recruitment literature, and the mentality of combat could penetrate every level of society as men trained in killing returned to civilian life.²⁵ Yet contemporaries rarely acknowledged veterans' potential for aggression at home. While men and women diagnosed nostalgia or *mal du pays* as a disease that could cripple soldiers, they did not use modern categories like post-traumatic stress disorder to understand the psychological effects of war.²⁶ Instead, recurrent depictions of warriors as humane, generous, and embedded in familial networks counterbalanced fears of soldiers' violence and emotional distance.

The Consequences and Limits of "Martial Masculinity"

The revolutionary and Napoleonic periods reshaped gender roles in many ways, including the development of what historians have labeled martial masculinity.²⁷ This book follows ways revolutionaries and their successors wrestled with the possibility that there was, or should be, a central definition of citizenship and masculinity, focused on fighting for the patrie. It shows how they promoted the virility of soldier-heroes and deemed them worthy of reward, and how ideas of martial masculinity evolved over the course of the Revolution, the Napoleonic era, and the early Restoration. But perhaps more importantly, it uncovers the limits of these models. Virility, military service, and citizenship sat uneasily together. The French Revolution may have created modern models of male citizen-soldiers, but it also fostered powerful alternatives.

Many of these alternatives centered on domestic life. Marriage had a fundamentally contradictory relationship to war. It was the reward par excellence for warriors, offering romance as recognition of valor and a means of reintegrating them into the nation. It was also one of the best ways of avoiding

24. This is especially clear in memoirs. See Thoral, *From Valmy to Waterloo*, 175; and Grieg, *Dead Men Telling Tales*.

25. On the language of recruitment, see Hippler, "Service militaire et intégration nationale." On violence and returned soldiers, see Dwyer, "It Still Makes Me Shudder;" "Public Remembering," "Violence and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars," and "War Stories."

26. Dodman, *What Nostalgia Was*.

27. "Martial masculinity" is used primarily in Anglophone literature, including Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée* and "Making Frenchmen into Warriors"; and Forrest, "Citizenship and Masculinity" and "Citizenship, Honour, and Masculinity." See also Brown, Barry, and Begiato, eds., *Martial Masculinities*. The term "virility" may be more common in Francophone work, or work translated from French. See Corbin, Courtine, and Vigarello, eds., *Histoire de la virilité*, vol. 2, especially Bertaud, "L'armée et le brevet de virilité" and "La virilité militaire."

military service, as men who could claim to be heads of households had a reasonable chance of avoiding conscription. Marriage was a joyful means of celebrating peace, linking individual homecomings to a national end of violence. Conversely, it was a means of producing a new generation of warriors and inculcating them with a commitment to continued fighting. It was a deeply private decision, a declaration of love between two individuals. And it was a familial decision—a calculation about what alliance would be most advantageous—and a key matter of public interest.

By considering marriage as a crucial pivot point between civilian and military life, *The Soldier's Reward* explores competing ideas about the masculinity and relative worth of those who took up arms and those who did not, while exploring the degree to which virility was compatible with domestic life. It builds on growing interest in the family as both a social and legal unit and a cultural and political construction in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It also intervenes in arguments about when and how models of companionate marriage developed and investigates the power of the state in private life.²⁸

Potential soldier-husbands were often seriously injured or ill. Popular culture lauded combatants as heroes with wounds that demonstrated their courage and patriotism. Wounds also led to prolonged suffering and limited men's abilities after they were demobilized. Although soldiers claimed triumphant *noms de guerre*—including Victor, Belle France, and Goes-with-a-Good-Heart—Peg-leg was the most common epithet for veterans. Battlefield treatment often meant amputation. Disease was rampant and killed far more men than battlefield injury; even those who survived were weakened and disfigured.²⁹ Physical incapacity was the surest, and often the only, way to secure an exemption or release from military service. Innovative work on suffering and martial masculinity in World War I has shown the consequences of similar damage. While mustard gas and machine guns destroyed bodies in distinctly horrifying ways, studies of the twentieth century suggest how much war could both reinforce and challenge martial masculinity.³⁰ The particular constructions of masculinity and citizenship in the French Revolution—which

28. Desan, *The Family on Trial*; and Verjus et al., “Regards croisés sur le mariage.” Work on companionate marriage includes Roberts, *Sentimental Savants*; Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution*; Davidson, “Happy Marriages”; and Goodman, “Marriage Choice and Marital Success.” See also Cage, *Unnatural Frenchmen*; and Marsden, “Married Nuns.”

29. Woloch, *The French Veteran*; Lemaire, *Les blessés dans les armées napoléoniennes* and “Les blessures de la guerre.” See also Lamy and Mounier, “La chair et le canon”; and Howard, *Napoleon's Doctors*.

30. Scholarship on masculinity, injury, and World War I is most developed for Britain and Germany. Works include Cohen, *The War Come Home*; Kienitz, “Body Damage”; Meyer “Not Septimus Now”; Bourke, *Dismembering the Male* and “Love and Limblessness”; Salvante, “The Wounded Male Body”; and Perry, *Recycling the Disabled*.

emphasized collective sacrifice and the ability to contribute to the nation as a whole—could make the long-term effects of injury profoundly relevant not just for individuals but also for broader social and political developments.

If war had the most direct impact on men and masculinity, it also shaped women's lives. The development of martial masculinity helps to explain why women did not get the full rights of citizenship during the French Revolution. Some historians see the distinction between a male world of citizen-soldiers and a domestic world of women as one of the crucial features of the Revolution and one of its most lasting legacies. Joan Landes has reprised André Rauch's argument that "what had been the *métier* of some—carrying arms—became the characteristic of all, a quality that distinguishes the man from the child, from the woman, but also from the sick and the old."³¹ Éliane Viennot has similarly contended that the Revolution dug a deep division between the sexes, reinforced by political struggles and by the 1793 *levée en masse* and the institution of conscription in 1798.³² Such statements support general interpretations of the Revolution as disempowering women. Other scholars have drawn very different lessons, seeing women's demands to bear arms and stories of women soldiers as radical and enduring challenges to gendered hierarchy. These approaches often dovetail with broader analyses of women acting as citizens during the Revolution, making immediate claims to rights and inspiring later movements.³³

Yet while historians have touched on how war combined with revolution to foster or limit women's political rights, we have thought less about ways relationships between the "home front" and the camps and battlefields affected other aspects of women's identities and experiences.³⁴

A few women did take up arms, whether under their own names or disguised as men. Their numbers are small—perhaps a hundred in an army that fluctuated between 300,000 and 700,000 during the Revolution—although there were likely more cases than have been identified.³⁵ In April 1793, legislators expelled "unnecessary women" from the troops, including women soldiers, military spouses, and camp followers, permitting only a small number

31. Landes, "Republican Citizenship," 97.

32. Viennot, *Et la modernité fut masculine*.

33. Offen, "Women's Memory, Women's History"; and S. Steinberg, *La confusion des sexes*.

34. Karen Hagemann's work constitutes an important exception. Among other works, see Hagemann, Rendall, and Mettele, eds., *Gender, War and Politics: Transatlantic Perspectives 1775-1830*.

35. The most common number is eighty, although that includes counterrevolutionary women. There were likely more women soldiers, as totals have come largely from records in the archives of the Service Historique de la Défense (hereafter SHD)—primarily limited to women soldiers who sought pensions or state assistance—and accounts of women whose careers were particularly colorful or who were publicly honored.

of laundresses and *vivandières*, women who provided basic foodstuffs. As we will see, their expulsion reflected concerns about women's citizenship. But it also resulted from a decision to treat soldiers as family men and allow them to marry without formal permission from military superiors, a decision that led to unprecedented numbers of women in the troops. For the women soldiers forced to demobilize in the wake of the law, the "soldier's reward" of homecoming still promised honor and financial support, although many ultimately lived in poverty.

Most women experienced war more indirectly. Apart from the horrors of civil war, battles were largely fought outside France's borders until the last stages of Napoleon's empire, meaning that French civilians were protected from its most direct ravages. But women were still intimately tied to war. They played vital symbolic roles, whether as stoic and sacrificing mothers of soldiers or as girlfriends whose anxiety contrasted with the courage of martial masculinity. They were charged with embodying collective emotions of grief and mourning. They were vulnerable to sexual violence, especially in the 1814–15 invasion.

They also played much more active roles. Many sent off sons, brothers, husbands, or lovers to war. They decided whether to marry conscripts or veterans and confronted the consequences of those choices. They dealt with the prolonged absence or death of loved ones. They confronted the economic ramifications of missing men and took up more, and often different, forms of work in their absence. They turned repeatedly to the government for both news and assistance. Indeed, if martial masculinity and war contributed to reshaping gender roles for women and distancing women from the exercise of political rights, war also shaped their relation to the state and claims to citizenship in ways that reverberated long after the most dramatic struggles of the Revolution.

Rethinking Citizenship

Looking at soldiers and their families also challenges our modern vision of citizenship as synonymous with individual rights, to reveal how contemporaries saw it as a familial enterprise. Anne Verjus has shown that family structures underpinned many aspects of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century political rights. Among other things, calculating taxes to establish whether men were eligible to vote included the economic contributions of their wives—even when couples were legally separated.³⁶ Familial dimensions of citizenship become even clearer when viewed in light of the civic duties imposed by the Revolution. The obligation to take up arms to defend the nation did not just involve individual men, or even the few women who claimed to be

36. Verjus, *Le cens de la famille* and *Le bon mari*.

fulfilling their patriotic duty by fighting. The ability of the state to recruit soldiers and sustain prolonged warfare depended both on a man's willingness to place duty above domestic affections and on his family's acceptance of that duty. Authorities thus appealed to men and women to inspire their sons, husbands, brothers, and romantic interests to fight, while inciting men to take up arms to defend their families and the mother country as a whole.

Men and women responded by adapting revolutionary models to depict civic duties as stages of a man's life, in which he filled his patriotic duty sequentially, as a soldier and then as a civilian. This was the idea behind the widow Alavoine's contention that "after serving the patrie with so much loyalty and courage," her son would "serve humanity and fulfill the duties of filial piety." Families also defined citizenship as something that could be divided among sons or brothers. One son would fight, while another devoted himself to farming or supporting needy relatives. Both women and civilian men insisted on their civic contributions in motivating soldiers, "sacrificing" their sons, husbands, brothers, or lovers to the state or actively consenting to their departure and accepting the emotional and economic costs of their absence. They presented such sacrifices as proof of their own citizenship and claimed that the nation owed them because of that support. Revolutionary governments promised that if men fought for the nation, the state would provide for those left behind, though such promises were often unfulfilled.

Soldiers and their families insisted on their social usefulness and civic generosity. Such dimensions of citizenship were critical for men and women in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Revolutionaries, at least from the abbé Sieyès's famous 1788 pamphlet "What Is the Third Estate?" onward, defined citizens as people who were useful to their compatriots. Those excluded from, or opposed to, the nation were selfish parasites, egoists who lived at the expense of others. In this vision, citizen-soldiers, who were prepared to lay down their lives for the nation, epitomized civic altruism. Explicit references to usefulness and generosity have largely disappeared from modern theorizations of citizenship, but the image of soldiers as unselfish heroes has carried through to our modern tributes to the men (and more rarely, women) who make the ultimate sacrifice.

Combining familial models of citizenship and of civic and military generosity led to questions. Could civilians—men or women—ever be more useful than those in the military? Was military service still an act of bravery and civic generosity if individuals were coerced to fight? Was it selfish to want war to end? Should the state emphasize veterans' past sacrifices as soldiers—or the promise that they could become newly productive as civilians? Was the marriage of wounded men as a reward for military service also a reward for their brides—or did it require a new sacrifice on their part? How central did ideals of social usefulness remain as ideas of citizenship changed over the course of revolutionary and postrevolutionary regimes?

Managing and Performing Emotions

The French Revolution has become a key site for scholars seeking to understand the role of emotions in shaping public actions. Historians have looked most closely at famous moments during the Revolution, from the collective euphoria that accompanied the abolition of feudal privilege in 1789 to the drama of the Terror.³⁷ Farewells to soldiers, expressions of grief, and celebrations of veterans' homecomings were other highly charged moments, but ones that have less often been recognized as connected to contemporary political and social change.³⁸ Such moments reveal tensions between a quest for emotions viewed as "natural" or authentic and a desire to demonstrate stoic resolve.³⁹ While soldiers were supposed to refrain from crying, their tears could appear as acceptable if they were shed on behalf of others and did not impede sacrifice. When civilian men and women petitioned the state to alleviate the war's effects on their lives, they struggled with balancing demonstrations of their patriotic silence with accounts of their suffering or compassion. Contemporaries repeatedly weighed the competing values of love and courage, gratitude and pity, honor and glory, sensitivity and stoicism, and filial devotion and patriotic sacrifice.

All of the regimes that governed France between 1789 and 1830 sought to elicit strong public displays of emotions and direct them in appropriate ways. They faced persistent challenges in controlling such displays. The send-off of recruits was supposed to be a joyous display of unity and military might, but it was also a wrenching time of separation. Revolutionaries put bodies—especially wounded bodies—on display in unprecedented ways.⁴⁰ Authorities sought to showcase injured men both as figures whose mutilated bodies had to be avenged and as heroes worthy of collective devotion and romantic desire. Yet such spectacles could provoke pity, disgust, and despair. Official recognition of those killed in battle and the anguish of their families had to be handled carefully to express appreciation while avoiding calling attention to military losses or vulnerability.

If problems of using public displays of emotion were recurrent, how people understood and framed emotions changed from the eve of the Revolution through the Restoration. William Reddy has contended that sentimentalism (his word for what those in the eighteenth century called *sensibilité*) gave way to passion between 1794 and 1814 as the dominant force in society. Others have

37. For overviews, see Rosenfeld, "Thinking about Feeling"; Wahnich, *Les émotions, la révolution française et le présent*; and Mazeau, "Émotions politiques."

38. See especially Forrest, "Le départ du conscrit."

39. For similar tensions in other revolutionary contexts, see L. A. H. Parker, "Veiled Emotions."

40. Baecque, *The Body Politic*; and Biard and Maignon, *La souffrance et la gloire*.

contested his formulations but agree that the period marks a turning point in how men and women connected emotions to politics.⁴¹ Those in power thus wrestled with changing understandings of the psychological and social effects of showcasing or silencing emotions.

Both revolutionary and postrevolutionary regimes could find it useful specifically to display *women's* emotional responses to war. Starting about 1770, French men and women began to revive the ideal of a Spartan woman, who overcame her distress to place her country's needs before her own. Revolutionaries would seize upon this image of mothers who repressed tears and sent their sons to war to legitimate the superiority of the mother country and its demands upon its children. All, even those who had the most right to be protected, seemed to accept it. In contrast, Napoleonic culture often portrayed men who triumphed over feminine tears to take up arms. By the early Restoration, royalists promoted a distinctive image of young mothers desperate for peace and grateful to a returned king who saved their sons. While these changes reflect many factors—from evolving gender roles to growing weariness with Napoleon's war machine—they also show that accounts of women's emotional responses to war were not simply documents of individual reactions but were mobilized for political ends.

“Cultural Recycling”: Using Old Models in New Orders

Alexis de Tocqueville famously argued that there were important administrative connections between the Old Regime and the French Revolution despite revolutionaries' claims to have broken completely with the past.⁴² There were also hidden cultural continuities: even as people sought to invent a new world, they quietly repurposed familiar references and rituals. This process, which I have labeled “cultural recycling,” was particularly important when it came to promoting war and heralding peace.

Such adaptations did not simply show the persistence of engrained habits. They provided convenient templates for making sense of the world in periods of rapid change, as well as tools that governments hoped to use to legitimate both mobilization and demobilization. They shaped the ways men and women understood the place of the army, imagined soldiers' homecomings, and constructed gender roles during and after the Revolution and war.

Reuses, however, carried awkward associations. When the government of the late Revolution sought to promote conscription, it drew on emotional repertoires developed during the Jacobin Republic. Officials invoked threats to French families, exhorting would-be soldiers to avenge their fellow citizens. But such references could resonate badly in the aftermath of the Terror, as

41. Reddy, “Sentimentalism and Its Erasure” and *The Navigation of Feeling*.

42. Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*.

men and women had become uneasy with spectacles of gore, and authorities struggled to control popular reactions.

Conversely, royalists rushing to find ways to celebrate peace in 1814 found revolutionary and Napoleonic plays celebrating veterans' marriages to be expedient. Such plays could be approved and performed quickly; censors and actors were familiar with many aspects of the scripts, and audiences could be enticed with recognizable plots and characters. But royalists marking a peace defined by defeat and legitimated in part by the end of conscription stumbled repeatedly over the plays' celebrations of victorious soldier-heroes.

At the same time, apparent cultural recycling could mask substantive changes. When theaters first promoted plays celebrating peace in the late Revolution and early Napoleonic periods, they heralded the marriages of veterans to loyal young women, and imagined that beneficent authorities would magically provide dowries to deserving couples. State-sponsored marriages under Napoleon would seem to be the realization of these theatrical fantasies. But Napoleon's government actually transformed veterans' marriages from a way of imagining collective celebrations of peace into a tool for promoting continued warfare.

From the Creation of Revolutionary Soldier-Citizens to the Challenges of a Royalist Peace

To understand the "soldier's reward" in its various forms requires bringing together sources rarely considered together. This book thus draws on the records of military history, including troop rosters, battle plans, soldiers' memoirs, and reports of anticonscription riots. It combines these records with materials more often associated with cultural history, including music, from drinking songs to heart-rending laments; artwork, from paintings of patriotic departures to engravings celebrating women warriors; and accounts of official festivals. It draws especially on the most important form of both entertainment and political propaganda in the period: popular theater.⁴³ Hundreds of *pièces de circonstance*, theatrical works produced for specific occasions, celebrated political events, military victories, and peace treaties.⁴⁴ These were subsidized by series of different governments, and tickets made free to eager audiences.⁴⁵ Censors scrutinized scripts before they were produced, though could push for shows to be staged quickly; police attended performances and kept a wary eye on audiences' reactions, and critics commented with both

43. R. J. Goldstein, ed., *The Frightful Stage*, 5.

44. For listings, see the Calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la révolution, <https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/>; and Lecomte, *Napoléon et l'empire racontés par le théâtre*. See also Kennedy et al., *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences*.

45. Julian, "Les 'gratits' de Napoléon."

indulgence and indignation. Plays, and popular and official responses, were revelatory of how contemporaries imagined relationships between civilians and combatants, or hoped that those relationships could be remade.

I also turn to records most often associated with social history. Personal papers, especially family letters and journals, offer hints of how individuals experienced and negotiated this tumultuous era. Police reports, meetings of town councils, personal petitions, and court records provide other clues. Indeed, we look most at records of individuals' interactions with the government. The experience of revolution brought many men and women into unprecedented contact with the state. So too did the experience of prolonged war and its aftermath. Their records reveal the drama and complexities of individual lives, as writers combined formulaic expressions with vivid biographical details. They illuminate how individuals hoped to persuade authorities of the justice of their cause, and what they believed the state owed them and their families.

Chapter 1 opens with relations between war and family in the last years of the Old Regime. While arms-bearing was an honorable profession for nobles in the eighteenth century, contemporaries viewed military service for ordinary soldiers as something that young men were forced or tricked into doing, or took up selfishly at the expense of their families and loved ones. In the wake of France's defeats in the Seven Years War (1756–63), reformers proposed new models of citizen-soldiers, who would fight for both family and country. They debated how men could become such citizen-soldiers, and especially whether military men could, or should, marry. These debates provide an important and overlooked site for uncovering competing visions of citizenship, gender, emotion, and state power.

Chapter 2 takes us to the heart of the Revolution, when the abstract question of whether all French citizens were, or should be, soldiers suddenly became urgent to resolve in practice. Arms-bearing became entangled with ideas of citizenship as the Revolution radicalized, and new tensions developed between military mobilization and changes to gender and family life. Citizens were supposed to be good family members; they were also supposed to abandon their families to defend the mother country.

Although new ideals and institutions of citizen-soldiers were primarily associated with men, this chapter also investigates the experiences of women soldiers. It considers why such women enlisted, and what happened when they were officially demobilized in 1793. Their experiences and the stories that surrounded them—from debates over whether women veterans could continue to wear military uniforms to plays lauding armed “amazons”—suggest what honor, gender, and citizenship could mean for those forcibly discharged amid ongoing warfare.

Even while revolutionaries heralded soldier-citizens, they expected war to be short. Combatants anticipated returning home after a campaign or a season, once national emergency was over. Robespierre's fall from power in

1794 seemed to promise an end to that emergency. But war continued long afterward. Chapter 3 draws on a previously unexamined corpus of about 16,000 petitions from veterans seeking to come home in the later 1790s, even as battles raged on. Middle-aged volunteers begged for permission to return to their wives and children; teenage soldiers admitted that they lacked the strength to continue; elderly parents longed for the companionship and labor of absent sons; and a few women professed their desperate love for their missing spouses. The chapter uses these petitions, in combination with other materials on soldiers' families, to investigate evolving definitions of citizenship in the later Revolution, the prolonged effects of war on men and women, strategic emotional appeals to authorities, and alternatives to martial masculinity.

In 1798, a new law on conscription transformed military service from a response to emergency into a permanent institution. It would subsequently become the backbone of Napoleon's war machine. Chapter 4 explores how this law was instituted. One moment proved pivotal: the assassination of two diplomats in front of their families during peace negotiations in Rastadt and the apparently miraculous survival of a third diplomat. The Directorial government sought to use the stories of these "martyrs of peace" to call for vengeance and legitimate conscription. But it struggled with the limits of adapting earlier models for promoting mass mobilization in a changed political world.

Chapter 5 turns from the drummers of war to the playwrights of peace. It concentrates on popular theater celebrating short-lived peace treaties in 1797 and again in 1801. Such plays featured veterans' homecomings. Their happy endings made it possible for playwrights and their audiences to consider openly whether war would actually end. Should women remain loyal to absent sweethearts, especially if they doubted such men would return? Would wounded, violent, or impoverished veterans still make desirable husbands and fathers? The plays also reveal both surprising continuities and subtle shifts in imagining peace before and after Napoleon's ascent to power.

Chapter 6 brings us to the marriages of real veterans, specifically to the state-sponsored weddings under Napoleon. These weddings transformed older models of philanthropy and theatrical fantasies of marriage with peace into tools for celebrating Napoleon and legitimating ongoing war. Looking at local attempts to arrange weddings and individuals' experiences shows both ideological and financial challenges when a militarized state tried to become a marriage broker. It lays bare the tensions between rewarding wounded veterans for their past service and establishing new civilian households. The archives also reveal surprising, if rare, attempts to use such weddings as rewards for women veterans.

The final chapters examine the challenges of peacemaking after 1814. Most historians have treated these years as a postrevolutionary moment; I emphasize how much they were shaped by the aftermath of war. Chapter 7 tracks these dynamics through a contemporary explosion of partisan pamphlets.

Many of these works explicitly or implicitly addressed the relationships between gender, citizenship, family, and military service. Royalist pamphleteers vacillated between depicting conscripts as youthful victims of Napoleon's tyranny and seeing soldiers as men who sought personal glory at the expense of their suffering families. These tracts illuminate the challenges of martial masculinity in a period when the most obvious figures of virility were veterans associated with a defeated regime.

Chapter 8 broadens our scope to return to other cultural sources, including theater, songs, and artwork. These tell a hidden story. Even as royalists decried revolutionary and Napoleonic regimes, they drew on earlier models for envisioning the end of war and negotiating soldiers' homecomings, models that included both familiar theatrical plots and the reuse of state-sponsored marriages. Adapting these models to a new order, however, often worked badly. To bolster a royalist peace, contemporaries thus also turned to new representations, especially those of mothers desperate for the end of war and grateful to the king who brought peace and ended conscription. While these images built on the real activities of women in protesting conscription and protecting draft dodgers, they served powerful political purposes.

A final chapter, "Wishing for the Death of the Woman Who Saved His Life," uncovers the lived experiences of a postwar era. The practical and emotional challenges of ending war were enormous, not just for governments and veterans, but also for families. They ranged from trying to track down the fate of husbands, brothers, and sons who were missing in action to the vexed negotiations over whether individuals who had been paid to fight in the place of conscripts were still owed their contractual dues once peace arrived. I look especially at men and women who had made paper marriages so that a young man might be deemed a head of household and thus escape conscription. With the return of a Catholic monarchy and the abolition of divorce, such couples feared being forced to remain together for life. They desperately tried to use the Restoration government's denunciations of conscription and war for their own purposes.

The conclusion touches on the surprising return of a new form of military recruitment in 1818, which officials were careful not to label as "conscription," and the growing popularity of the image of the soldier-farmer (*soldat laboureur*) in the 1820s, a veteran returned home but ready to resume arms. While these developments suggest the ways that contemporaries sought to move past the immediate experiences of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, mass mobilization and peacemaking also had longer-term impacts. If the "soldier's reward" of marriage has largely disappeared as a modern point of reference, we are living in a world marked by fundamental tensions it reveals between the demands of family, war, and citizenship.

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