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“DESERTED HIS MAJESTY’S SERVICE”: MILITARY RUNAWAYS, THE BRITISH-AMERICAN PRESS, AND THE PROBLEM OF DESERTION DURING THE SEVEN YEARS’ WAR

By Thomas Agostini

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On March 31, 1757, an advertisement appeared in the *Pennsylvania Journal* announcing the disappearance of Robert Aensworth. At aged twenty-seven, Aensworth was an immigrant from Ireland who worked for some time as an indentured servant in Trenton, New Jersey. After an apparently unremarkable term of service, the young Irishman took a job as a free laborer several miles to the north in Hunderton County, New Jersey. Here, in 1756, he encountered a recruiting party of British regulars from the 44th Foot led by a Lieutenant Barly. Aensworth evidently volunteered and served for a time as a redcoat, but he soon found military life repellent. At the risk of several notoriously severe punishments, including scourging by the cat of nine tails as well as the death penalty, the former servant deserted from his unit. It is not known how long Aensworth evaded pursuers after his disappearance, but they caught up to him near Trenton, New Jersey. Once taking him into custody, they placed “a Pair of Handcuffs” on his wrists and confined him in Richard Maybury’s house. That night, facing the fearsome prospect of his imminent punishment, Aensworth vanished yet again. Somehow he managed to slip out of his restraints and sneak through the front door of the house undetected. Once outside, the artful Irishman “mounted and rode off” on a horse that was left naively outside the Maybury home “saddled and bridled.” The last time anyone saw Aensworth, he was “crossing the Ferry to the Pennsylvania Side.” In despair, his officers placed a notice in a Philadelphia newspaper describing his escape and offered the sum of five pounds in Pennsylvania currency for his capture.¹

Aensworth was one of nearly two thousand soldiers named as deserters in surviving issues of newspapers printed in British colonies from Nova Scotia to Georgia between 1755 and 1762. Like items placed in the papers for runaway wives, servants, slaves, apprentices, and other fugitives, deserter advertisements reveal a transatlantic society where diverse individuals sometimes used mobility to escape intolerable personal or economic relationships. These advertisements provide, on occasion, wonderfully rich and detailed data on troops. This information is invaluable to scholars because many of the contemporaneous muster rolls, the traditional sources that scholars would use to ascertain the compositions of units, simply do not survive from the era of the Seven Years’ War. As a result, previous studies of soldiers relied on other existing documents like personal correspondence, court martial testimony, diaries, and pension records. Evidence gleaned from these sources occasionally allowed these historians to uncover details like the motives that different troops had for absconding, the ways the army tried to deter desertion, and the types of discipline that regular and provincial officers employed, but these studies left three critical questions largely unresolved.

Who were the individuals who deserted, and what were their ethnic and occupational backgrounds? What methods did army officers and civil officials use to apprehend runaways or prevent their departures? Last, what strategies and artifices did deserters use to get away from their units and how did they continue to elude their pursuers?

Well over 50,000 men, and a few women, served in the regular British army, or the provincial forces raised by the colonies, during the Seven Years' War in North America. Redcoats were troops who enlisted into the King's army, while provincials were fulltime soldiers in the military forces of individual colonies. As such, provincial units were not militia, which were only part time bodies of troops hastily summoned for home defense.² Army regiments recruited regionally in the British Isles, North America, and even in continental Europe, but while provincial forces typically raised troops within their respective colonies, substantial numbers of immigrants from Europe also joined these units. Although most redcoats enlisted for life (and a few joined the army for a three-year period), many regulars probably suspected that they would return to civilian life when the war ended and the army contracted to its' peacetime strength. Similarly, few, if any, colonial recruits planned to make a career as a provincial soldier. Most joined the military for less than a year, although some Pennsylvania troops accepted three-year commitments. As the war progressed, the divergence in experience between common redcoats and colonial soldiers gradually lessened because numerous provincials re-enlisted for multiple campaigns, while new recruits steadily entered the regular army. Although many recruits for regular and colonial forces had similar ethnic and occupational backgrounds, they commonly received different treatment from their superiors in regards to pay, discipline, and the duties they performed. In theory, provincial troops who served alongside redcoats were subject to the harsh discipline imposed by the Mutiny Act, but in practice, they were usually not punished as severely. Wages for regular soldiers were pitifully meager, especially after deductions, known contemporaneously as "stoppages," came out of their pay, while colonial troops often made double or even quadruple this amount.³ Provincials earned more money, but they worked extremely hard for their wages. As the war progressed, commanders increasingly assigned combat duty to regular units, while colonial troops shouldered essential roles as convoy escorts, manual laborers, and construction workers. Despite the different treatment they sometimes received from officers, the similar social backgrounds and perspectives of common regular and provincial soldiers meant that these troops sometimes behaved similarly when faced with difficult conditions or harsh treatment.

Among the classic studies of the Seven Years' War in America are the works of Fred Anderson. In his first book, Anderson focused on Massachusetts provincials and found that there were three main causes of their mutinies or mass desertions. Massachusetts soldiers became restive if the army failed to provide them with sufficient rations, if commanders required them to serve beyond the terms of their enlistments, or if the army failed to provide additional pay for work that was unrelated to their service. Although their officers used a mixture of persuasion and the threat of force to deter these disorders, Massachusetts troops nearly always justified their actions as a response to a "contractual" violation of their enlistment papers. In a study of Connecticut provincials, Harold Selesky came

to some similar conclusions. He found that alleged violations of "contractual principles" were a motive for these New Englanders as well, especially if they received orders to serve beyond the dates specified in their enlistments. Selesky also noted that soldiers born outside Connecticut were no more likely to run away than native-born troops. James Titus' study of Virginia soldiers found that these troops deserted for different reasons. Some resented being drafted, others fled the acute dangers and hardships inherent to military service, and since most enlisted soldiers were poor and could not vote, many likely had limited attachment to their native colony. Most recently, Stephen Brumwell's study of the regular army found that redcoats deserted in response to abuse from officers, personal reasons (such as going in search of a lost love), an insufficient quantity of pay or food, or a bout of drunkenness. Each of these scholars made valuable contributions to the existing knowledge on soldiers of the Seven Years' War, but none of their studies provided much detail on the appearances, nativities, and trades of deserters. Moreover, they offered little information on the efforts of civilian leaders and military commanders to curtail desertion. Finally, since these historians understandably focused on affairs within the army, they often paid little attention to the tactics deserters used to escape, or what happened to them once they got away.⁴

While the information appearing in the papers cannot reveal the exact numbers of troops who fled service, these notices not only supplement the findings of earlier studies, they reveal much more about deserters and the problems that desertion posed to the army. First, these advertisements provide the most comprehensive descriptions available of individual soldiers during the war and confirm that the regular and provincial forces brought together an extremely diverse collection of recruits from Britain, Ireland, Germany, the West Indies, and the North American colonies. Details like personal appearance, accents, unusual possessions, or distinguishing behavior often appeared alongside more basic information like age, ethnicity, and occupation. Second, deserter advertisements furnish information on various techniques used by the authorities to deter or capture deserters. In addition to the notices themselves, these items show that the military employed several different strategies to prevent desertion and detain military runaways including physical isolation, misinformation, indoctrination and persuasion, as well as actual force. Third, although previous studies suggest that New England provincials were unusual in their willingness to revolt against their officers, notices in the newspapers prove that both regulars, as well as provincial units from southern colonies, also staged mutinies or departed *en masse*.⁵ Perhaps even more significantly, the newspaper advertisements reveal the tactics that deserters used to escape the army and avoid capture. Regular and provincial runaways disguised their appearance, hid their identities, traveled widely, and sought out allies in their efforts to remain free and escape punishment. Although most deserters were illiterate, the press coverage of their comportment and actions suggest that many redcoats and provincials were dissatisfied with military life. In sum, this study uses newspaper advertisements to shed light on a shadowy war within a war. On one side were officers and civil officials who used a variety of methods, including the press, to curtail desertion. On the other side were the deserters themselves, who used fast feet and sharp wits in their efforts to elude capture and escape punishment.

The advertisements that checkered the North American papers shed light on a phenomenon that remains poorly understood today, though it vexed military commanders mightily during the era of the Seven Years' War. Desertion was a longstanding problem in Europe, and armies commonly experienced losses that substantially weakened, or even crippled, forces in the field. The Prussian army of Frederick the Great provides one example. Frederick's regiments had a reputation for being highly disciplined, but his battalions typically lost ten percent of their strength annually. In one severe case, the Jung-Braunschweig regiment of the Prussian army lost 1,650 troops, a figure that represented nearly the entire strength of this ill-fated unit. This problem was not the Prussians' alone. The numbers of deserters who absconded from the armies of Austria, France, and Russia were legion. During the Seven Years' War alone, 62,000 soldiers quit the Austrian army, 70,000 departed from the French, and 80,000 troops fled from the Russian army.⁶ While desertion rates were quite high in European armies, existing estimates of the rate of desertion suggest that the British and colonial forces lost far fewer troops in the Americas during the Seven Years' War. There were, according to these calculations, only three percent of regulars who deserted each year from units stationed in the mainland colonies or the Caribbean. Regrettably, less information exists on desertion rates among the provincials, but most scholars agree that they probably lost a somewhat higher proportion of their soldiers than the redcoats. During the war, Connecticut's forces, for example, lost between four and six percent annually.⁷ The collective picture that emerges from existing studies of the Seven Years' War suggests that desertion was, surprisingly enough, much less of a problem among the British and colonial forces that campaigned in North America than in European armies. According to these figures, soldiers in the army of Frederick the Great, for example, deserted at a rate that more than tripled that of the contemporaneous British army in America, despite the greater stresses from poor logistics and disease that troops endured when campaigning in the New World.⁸

Examination of virtually all of the surviving issues of the British-American newspapers printed between 1755 and 1762 makes it clear that the problem of desertion was a recurrent topic in the wartime colonial press.⁹ Deserter advertisements buttressed officers' authority and financed the press in the same way that runaway slave notices, according to David Waldstreicher, revealed that the "relation between slavery and print culture was reciprocal."¹⁰ Among periodicals for which more two or three individual copies still exist, all included deserter items. An analysis of these surviving seventeen periodicals, which were printed from Nova Scotia to Georgia, reveals that 1,745 individual deserters appeared in 417 unique advertisements. Over a quarter of these notices appeared in two or more periodicals. Such items often pledged higher rewards, indicating that deserters traveled widely, or that officers especially coveted their captures. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* was the most prolific publisher of all colonial newspapers, advertising for 510 individual deserters. The next most important press, with 277 army runaways, was the *New York Mercury*. Other significant papers were the *Virginia Gazette*, *Weyman's New York Gazette*, the *Boston New-Letter and New England Chronicle*, and the *Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser*. While there were nearly 200 listings for individuals, the average number of deserters appearing in each notice was four, not counting two large advertisements listing 173

and 116 names. Since many of these items contain full descriptions, the advertisements were, as Jonathan Prude observed of all eighteenth-century runaway notices, "extraordinary documents . . . almost unmanageably rich in detail . . . providing brisk but arresting portraits" of their subjects.¹¹ Unfortunately, deserters received far less attention in the historiography than runaway slaves, spouses, apprentices, or servants.

I

One subject that officers frequently included in deserter notices was the birthplaces of runaway soldiers. The nativity of deserters appeared in about forty percent of the notices. These data reveal both deserters' diverse origins and officers' propensity to note soldiers born in Europe. The most common country of origin, representing about twenty-five percent of those listed, was Ireland, while just under twenty percent of runaways were English. The large number of Virginians, about sixteen percent of the total, is probably disproportionate, resulting from a notice listing provincial deserters drafted from the local militia. In addition, there were smaller numbers born in Germany, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Scotland, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Wales, Connecticut, and "New England." Other nativities included "America," Barbados, Delaware, France, Free-town, Holland, the Isle of Man, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Sweden, and Switzerland.¹² Occasionally, the exact birthplace of a deserter appeared in the advertisement. When Captain Horatio Gates reported the flight of John Ahlyreen from his independent company of British regulars, he also pointed out that this "flat faced" deserter was "born at Stockholm in Sweden, and educated at the University there."¹³ Frequent notations of deserters' nativities reveal that, for officers, culture was a key feature of personal identity, so it is hardly surprising that they included the ethnic backgrounds of troops in some advertisements as well.

While only a quarter of notices listed the ethnic extractions of runaways, Europeans, especially those from the British Isles, predominated. In a few cases, advertisers struggled to categorize runaways. For example, the *New York Mercury* described Toby Hazard, whose "Hair [was] not like a Negro's, but a little longer" as somewhere "between an Indian and a Negro." A talented man who could play "on the Violin with his left Hand," Hazard ran away from his owner, "passed for a free man," joined the New York provincials, received his pay, and then "absconded, in order as 'tis supposed to escape by Sea."¹⁴ While some deserters' ethnic backgrounds evidently defied easy descriptions, others appeared more obvious. (See Table 1) There were small numbers of Blacks ("Negro" and "Mulatto"), Dutch, French, Indian, Manx, Scots, Swedes, Swiss, and Welsh reported, but other groups were more abundant. Among the most frequent were Germans, who comprised nearly fourteen percent of the ethnicities mentioned in the advertisements. There were almost twice as many English, however, as Germans. Most numerous of all were the Irish, who represented over forty percent all deserter ethnicities. Nevertheless, one should not necessarily infer that Irish soldiers were more likely to desert.¹⁵ Rather, officers probably noted Irish ethnicities because they worried that these soldiers were secretly Catholics. Lord Loudoun, for example, not only feared that the 50th and 51st Regiments had

large numbers of recruits from Ireland, “which were mostly Roman Catholics,” he also warned that there were some “in the other Regiments, tho’ all possible care has been taken to prevent it.”¹⁶ In many cases, fears that Irish Catholics were more likely to desert were probably overblown, but some of these suspicions were justified. John Ogilvie, a regular army chaplain noted that Patrick Dunn, a captured deserter from the 35th Regiment, confessed to being a “romish Priest.” After Dunn’s subsequent execution for desertion, Ogilvie observed that the unfortunate man had “dy’d a strict Papist, born in Galway in the Kingdom of Ireland.”¹⁷

While elite fears of the Irish likely contributed to their frequent descriptions in the advertisements, numerous references in the papers to regulars born in America, and provincials born in Europe, were probably not hyperbolized. After examining regimental returns from 1757, recruiting records, and the rolls of the 58th Foot, Brumwell cautioned that “the proportion of American recruits in the British Army should not be exaggerated.” He found that in 1757, fewer than six percent of the 14,126 troops who served in the regular forces were born in America. While it is true that the relative number of redcoats from the colonies probably increased as the war dragged on between 1758 and 1763, it is unlikely that such an increase would account for the much larger proportion of American redcoats listed as deserters in the newspapers. Of approximately 400 regulars whose nativity appeared in the advertisements, nearly eighteen percent were born in America. This total would be even higher if one also considers that some recruits who entered the regular forces in the colonies were born in Europe. In fact, the notices show that, among redcoats who had joined the army in America, over twenty-eight percent were European immigrants. Thus, it appears that recruits from the colonies were probably three to four times as likely to desert from the regular army as troops who enlisted in Europe.¹⁸ Several reasons for this disparity come to mind, including the greater social contacts that most inhabitants of the colonies possessed, their better knowledge of the countryside, and the fact that relatively few of them had served more than a year. Indeed, many ran from recruiting parties. James Fitzjeffrey, a sailor from Boston

Table 1
Ethnicities of Deserters Appearing in Newspapers (1755–1762)

<i>Ethnicities of Deserter</i>	<i>Number of Deserters</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Ethnicities</i>
<i>Irish</i>	179	41.2%
<i>English</i>	125	28.8%
<i>German</i>	59	13.6%
<i>Scottish</i>	31	7.1%
<i>Indian</i>	14	3.2%
<i>Welsh</i>	11	2.5%
<i>Dutch</i>	4	0.9%
<i>Black</i>	4	0.9%
<i>Swiss</i>	2	0.5%
<i>French</i>	2	0.5%
<i>Swedish</i>	1	0.2%
<i>Manx</i>	1	0.2%

who was "very apt to get drunk," absconded from Ensign Jehu Hay of the Royal Americans and was "supposed to have gone to Point Look Out" in Maryland, "as his Wife and Friends live there."¹⁹

Although American-born redcoats were more likely than others to desert, it is probable that provincial soldiers born in Europe also fled their units in disproportionate numbers. Anderson and Selesky found that fewer than ten percent of Massachusetts and Connecticut troops were foreign-born.²⁰ The relative uniformity in New England units meant that Europeans stood out more than locals. As a result, Massachusetts and Connecticut officers probably included the nativities of provincials born in Europe, but neglected to specify the nativities of native New Englanders because this information seemed unremarkable. This explains the fact that nearly fifty-eight percent of deserting provincials from New England whose nativities appeared in the advertisements were born in Europe. In comparison, colonial forces to the south of New England, from New York to South Carolina, contained substantial numbers of European-born soldiers. For example, Titus found that approximately forty percent of Virginia troops were born in that colony, while nearly fifty percent of the soldiers came from Europe. Consequently, Virginia commanders, and other provincial officers outside of New England, were more consistent in listing the nativities of all troops in their advertisements. Although Selesky argued that there was little difference in the propensity of foreign-born troops to desert from the Connecticut forces, Titus argued the opposite for the Virginians, asserting that the "fact that so many common soldiers were immigrants likely did nothing to increase their personal identification with Virginia's cause."²¹ Evidence from the newspapers supports Titus' view. Excluding a single advertisement for draftees who deserted, significantly enough, from the Virginia forces, provincials born in Europe were substantially more likely to desert from colonial units than troops born in America. Accordingly, over sixty percent of deserters whose nativities appeared in newspaper advertisements from provincial units outside of New England were European immigrants.

Another common characteristic revealed in these runaway notices was peacetime occupation, recorded for about one fourth of deserters. (See Table 2) Although most of this information is probably reliable, one cannot assume that occupational data recorded in the advertisements, or the muster rolls used by other studies, was always accurate. Most army runaways came from the lower sort of society, but some "talkative" souls, as the *New London Summary* noted, "pretended" to a higher station such as "doctor" or "scholar."²² There were fifty-three separate occupations listed, including John Rust of the 35th Foot who was "a Tooth Drawer."²³ The large number of skilled craft workers among deserters was disproportional to their presence in the ranks. By piecing together fragmentary data, Anderson, Titus, and Brumwell found that artisans represented approximately thirty to forty percent of the soldiers who served in Massachusetts, Virginia, and regular battalions.²⁴ The presence of skilled workers in many of these units is not surprising, because as Brumwell notes, these numbers "mirrored that of the workforce in general."²⁵ Although many artisans entered the military, the advertisements suggest that a disproportionate number of them also deserted. In fact, nearly half of the deserters listed in the newspapers were craft workers. The reason for this divergence may be that artisans, whose trades involved so-

Table 2
Occupations of Deserters

Occupational Type	Number of Deserters	Percentage of Deserters by Occupation
Artisan	202	45.1%
Agricultural Activities	84	18.8%
Laborer	77	17.2%
Sailor	37	8.3%
Personal Services	14	3.1%
None	10	2.2%
Teacher	5	1.1%
Soldier	5	1.1%
Transient	4	0.9%
Mercantile Activities	3	0.7%
Fisherman	2	0.5%
Slave	2	0.5%
Servant	2	0.5%
Clergy	1	0.3%

cial esteem, special expertise, and independent action, were more likely than other troops to become discontented with the minimal status, repetition, and compliance that characterized life as a private soldier.

Besides the numerous craft workers, deserters provided a variety of other jobs. Some troops were agricultural workers, others claimed to be unskilled manual laborers, and a few provided personal services. There were also teachers, preachers, servants, and even some slaves. Occasionally, they claimed unusual jobs that paid little money like John Murray, a deserter from the 17th Foot, who practiced “dog-breaking.”²⁶ Most impressively, however, was the relatively high number of sailors who appeared in advertisements, despite the fact that relatively few joined the army. The main reason for the small numbers of mariners in regular and provincial units, of course, was the fierce competition that military recruiters received for labor from the Royal Navy, privateers, the whaling industry, and merchant shipping. While relatively few seamen joined the regular or colonial forces, those who actually did enlist in the military were especially apt to desert. Indeed, it appears that seamen were at least twice as likely as other workers to run away from the army. Although less than five percent of the regular and provincial troops studied by Anderson, Titus, and Brumwell were sailors, at least ten percent of the deserters listed in newspaper advertisements claimed to be seamen. This difference was especially striking when comparing the regulars studied by Brumwell to the number of sailors in redcoats who deserted.²⁷ Although Brumwell’s sample of 635 redcoats contained only one former mariner, over thirty-seven percent of the former sailors who joined the military and later deserted were regulars. The relative ease of boarding a ship and sailing away tempted many, and commanders feared that men “who followed the sea” might soon return to it. This explains the frequent advertisements describing soldiers who wore maritime disguises. For example, four regulars who deserted from the 80th Regiment donned either “Sailors short Jackets . . . and Trowsers” or a “Sailor Made Waistcoat” and “Bonnet.”²⁸ Seamen had a well-earned reputation for collective resistance, but most advertisers

also realized that wartime demands for experienced crewmembers meant that some ship captains would look the other way if suspected deserters came on board.²⁹ Captain Harry Charteris, a recruiter for the Royal Americans, complained publicly that "Attempts have successfully been made to induce several of the Soldiers enlisted by me . . . to desert" and "board some Ships in [Boston] Harbour."³⁰

In addition to nativity, ethnicity, and occupation, deserter advertisements sometimes listed very specific distinguishing traits of individual soldiers.³¹ One bit of personal information revealed for 715 soldiers was height. According to these data, soldiers born in the colonies tended to be taller than Europeans.³² The average height of troops born in America was five feet eight inches. Among Europeans, inhabitants of the British Isles were slightly taller than those on the continental mainland. Soldiers from Britain, Ireland, or the Isle of Man stood five feet seven inches high, while deserters born in France, Switzerland, Holland, Germany, or Sweden averaged five feet six and a half inches in height. The tallest man was John Wright, a runaway from the 22nd Regiment, who stood six feet eight inches. Coincidentally, Wright ran off with the shortest deserter listed in the advertisements. James Stewart, a twenty-two year-old weaver, was a dwarf who was three feet nine inches tall.³³ Like height, detailed descriptions of speech and language also appeared. A notice in the *Virginia Gazette* described various deserters as being "slow of Speech," having "very much of the Irish Brogue," or possessing "a remarkable hoarse Voice."³⁴ Other advertisements noted idiosyncratic behavior. The *Maryland Gazette* observed in a single item that one deserter was "a thick clumsy Fellow, another had "long Hair" and took "a great Deal of Pains with it, and a third had "the Character of an honest Man" but was "often bragging of his Courage."³⁵ Occasionally, descriptions were even more openly disparaging and sought to denigrate the personal characters of runaway troops. An advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* stated that a provincial named John Brown had "a very stupid Appearance" and was "much addicted to Liquor."³⁶ Similarly, *Weyman's New York Gazette* described John Campbell, a fugitive who was probably a deserter from the Royal Americans, as "a grand villain." More interesting, however, was a peculiar object he kept in his possession. Campbell carried "a Tobacco stopper with a Negro Head on it, in which there" was "a Magnet; and where-ever he goes, generally asks for a Bunch of Keys, in order to shew the Virtues of it by taking the Keys of it by the said Magnet, which" was likely "done in order to take Observation of them."³⁷ Some of the hostility evident in the newspapers probably stemmed from a sense of frustration officers felt in dealing with crafty figures like Campbell, but in addition to the advertisements themselves, the military employed a number of methods to deter desertion and recapture troops who ran away.

II

Advertisements and other sources reveal that British and provincial commanders took a number of precautions, including physical isolation, in order to deter or prevent their troops from running off. Encampments were made on islands or peninsulas, when possible, to cut off escape routes. Recruiting parties in Massachusetts sent their charges to Castle William in Boston harbor.

Yet, not all troops were daunted by the waters surrounding the island fortress. The Boston Weekly News-Letter reported that two Massachusetts provincials, "John Hooker . . . born in East Jersey," and "William Jones . . . born in South Carolina," escaped "from Castle William . . . [after stealing] a Canoe."³⁸ Commanders also confined troops on ships. In a fleet bound for the West Indies, it was ordered that "no . . . Soldier to go on shore, but only by the permission" and "Commanding Officers" were to ensure "that no boat goes from the ship . . . unless on duty."³⁹ A Connecticut provincial named Levi Redfield observed that after arriving "in the harbour of New York, we were not allowed to go on shore, for fear of desertion."⁴⁰ Other officers posted additional guards to watch for any wayward soldiers. Nathaniel Sawtell ordered that, since "Some of the [Massachusetts] provincials have Diserted Lately, . . . partys Are posted so as there is great Reason to beleave they will be taken up."⁴¹ Some officers also required frequent bed checks from hospitals to prevent the disappearance of any malingerers. A Virginia commander in Fredericksburg ordered "the Doct to be very punctual in Reporting the absent Men at the Hospital, that none may Desert long before they are mist~."⁴²

Since health concerns could provoke desertions, some commanders tried to suppress reports that contagious illnesses were present in camps. Service in the tropics was notorious for lethal epidemics, and Corporal William Todd, a redcoat diarist in England, recorded that there were "upwards of 8 hundred confin'd" in the "Savoy in London" after word leaked out that they were "bound for the Indies."⁴³ Since the actual outbreak of sickness could cause a panic, some officers tried to keep news of infectious disease from the troops. Henry Bouquet divulged that, "We are keeping . . . [smallpox] as much a secret as possible, to prevent desertion, and are isolating those who have been attacked by it."⁴⁴ Some units could be intensively affected before they could get away. In one notice, all five soldiers who deserted from Gorham's Rangers were ill. This group included Peter Warhonks, a Rhode Island Indian "remarkably known by his frequently spitting in his relating any Story," who recently had "the Small Pox."⁴⁵

Other documents reveal that officials tried to placate soldiers. Governor Francis Fauquier donated 800 captured French uniforms to threadbare Virginia troops, noting that "By this Step, I hope Desertion and all the Complaints . . . will be entirely stop'd."⁴⁶ Others provided intermittent pay, knowing their troops would desert otherwise, and in other cases earnings were withheld lest they desert immediately after payment. Sir John St. Clair wrote that the North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland provincials garrisoning Fort Cumberland had "such a Spirit got amongst them that I fear all . . . Remedies . . . will prove ineffectual." "Many of these wou'd have been gone by this time," he admitted, "had they not ben in daily expectation of Receiving about six weeks subsistence which could not be paid."⁴⁷ In another instances, the "Officers of the four Maryland Companies [who] found it would be impracticable to keep their Men any longer together without pay" granted furloughs until wages could be distributed.⁴⁸ Some officers also used religion to persuade troops that desertion was immoral. Sermons were read to soldiers with the explicit approval of their commanders. In a speech to Virginia recruits, Samuel Davies denounced anyone who would "seek to prolong" their "Life," by such "mean and unlawful Ways, by a cowardly Desertion of the Cause of your Country."⁴⁹ Regular officers sponsored

similar sermons. In an address to a battalion of the Royal Americans given at Christ Church in Philadelphia, William Smith equated "Desertion" with "robbery to the public."⁵⁰ One New York provincial chaplain explicitly prayed before assembled troops that commanders would use "more vigorous measures to prevent deserting."⁵¹

When officers were not busy providing new cloths, disbursing pay, or appealing to soldiers' religious principles, they also relied on severe punishments calculated to exact revenge and intimidate any soldiers who contemplated desertion. Indeed, commanders eagerly punished troops who fled their units, even after several years' time. This was especially true for repeat offenders. James Ramsey wrote that "Corpl Brelsford . . . [has] Lodged in Jayl One Joseph Perry who I believe deserted . . . about 8 years ago." Perry, who had "enlisted with 3 Parties which we know of" was deemed "a fit object of Exemplary Punishment."⁵² Perry, however, could not match the record of John Maddox. After several years on the run, the army finally captured and executed Maddox in Scotland, but only after he had deserted "by his own confession . . . 34 times from the army, and twice from the navy."⁵³ Although the *Boston Weekly Newsletter* did not reveal how he died, Maddox's execution was probably carried out by a firing squad or by hanging. All punishments in the military, corporal as well capital, were public events. Commanders deliberately assembled troops so that all could witness their retribution, and reports of these fearsome proceedings often appeared in the newspapers. Throughout most of the war, provincials were subject to the same bloody code that regulars faced, but in practice, relatively few colonial soldiers were actually executed. Instead, most captured deserters from provincial units, and many regulars as well, went under the lash. For example, at Stillwater, New York, an alert sentry spotted three Connecticut provincials "coming toward ye fort who as soon as theay perceived it made Toward ye woods . . . to Escape." After tracking the fugitives into "a Kind of Swamp," two of the runaways were captured and received 250 lashes "with the Cat of nine tails on the Naked Back."⁵⁴

By the standards of the day, this was not an excessive penalty; each of these deserters could have received over 1,000 lashes, yet advertisements reveal that commanders sometimes offered pardons to prisoners instead. There were practical reasons for such apparent magnanimity. It was far cheaper to extend mercy to a soldier than it was to execute the offender, locate, enlist, train, cloth, and pay a further enlistment bounty to a recruit. Moreover, many deserters who received corporal punishment were unable, for a time, to perform their duties. Consequently, commanders typically condemned only those who were likely to desert again if pardoned.⁵⁵ On rare occasions, commanders offered a general amnesty to all deserters who would return to their units. In January of 1759, a notice appeared in several newspapers stating that General Amherst was "pleased to pardon any Soldiers who have deserted . . . [and] shall voluntarily join his Colours" before March 1st.⁵⁶ Such acts of clemency were not simply magnanimous. Most officers viewed deserters with contempt, but chronic shortages of recruits sometimes necessitated pardons. Thomas Gage specified that "the Deserters that Returned on Mr. Amherst's Proclamation are by no means to be discharged . . . & any of them that shall desert again will certainly be hanged."⁵⁷ From the perspective of soldiers tired of life as fugitives, amnesty was one way of avoiding

the stress of potential recapture, even if they had to return to their units. In one case, a group of regular army deserters from Connecticut who had "Secret[ed] themselves" in the colony petitioned Governor Thomas Fitch for "Reasonable Assurances of Pardon."⁵⁸ Offering amnesty, however, did not always curb desertion. George Washington fumed that "Lenity . . . emboldens them in these villainous undertakings. One of those . . . condemned to be hanged, deserted immediately upon receiving his pardon."⁵⁹

In addition to announcements of amnesty, the colonial press and other sources also contained news of efforts civil and military officials used to recapture fugitives. In Massachusetts, the government declared it lawful for Sheriffs "to break open any Dwelling House" or "any Ship . . . to make Search for . . . Deserter[s]."⁶⁰ On rare occasions, leading civil servants became personally involved in these efforts. After "Massachusetts and Rhode Islanders went off in Bodies," Governor Thomas Pownall sent Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson to "turn back all those he should meet in his Way, which he has accordingly done to the Number of 53."⁶¹ In addition, one of the main tasks of recruiting parties, in addition to securing new enlistments, was to hunt for fugitives. When John Wrightson, a recruiter for the 27th Foot, captured two deserters who revealed the hiding places of three others sixty miles away, the officer sent two soldiers "in Disguise to the place . . . where they found him and he informed" on the others "who they took."⁶² Some used force to apprehend deserters. In Trenton, New Jersey, a soldier who ran away with another from the 48th Regiment had "nine Men's Pay in his Pocket." When three loyal troops pursued them to Burlington, "the Deserters attempted to escape by running into a deep Creek, with an Intent of swim a-cross" before a corporal "fired, and killed Collings on the spot," and the other man "in dread of loosing his Life . . . immediately tack't about and surrendered."⁶³ Provincial troops also made extensive efforts to take deserters. When five Maryland provincials spotted six fugitives from the North Carolina forces, "the Ring Leader of the Deserters . . . Presented & locked his firelock" before being shot and killed by a Marylander.⁶⁴ Newspapers reveal much about officers' efforts to quell desertion, but advertisements and other sources also shed light on the actions of deserters themselves.

III

Notices printed in the colonial press can provide evidence on deserters' motives, personal circumstances, tactics, and the means that some runaways used to make good their escape. For example, items in the papers and additional documents reveal that New Englanders were not the only colonial troops who mutinied.⁶⁵ On at least two occasions, there was a considerable exodus from the South Carolina provincials. The *South Carolina Gazette* reported that "Not a man . . . could be prevailed on to remain here, alledging that there time was up &c." The next year, it was again noted that "there has been great desertion from Col. Middleton's Regiment, which had lost upwards of 170 men . . . looking upon themselves as naturally discharged after a twelve-months service."⁶⁶ North Carolina provincials staged revolts if they remained unpaid. Governor Dinwiddie observed that "the No. Carolina Forces had disbanded Themselves [and] deserted in Compa's" after officers failed to compensate them.⁶⁷ Sizable

groups of Virginians sometimes ran off together. In one case, twenty-five Virginia provincials "collected and were going off" while their officers "were at Church . . . but were stop'd and Imprison'd before the Plot came to its full height."⁶⁸ The lack of pay prompted throngs of Marylanders to run off. In the wake of numerous desertions, a Maryland provincial officer feared that "without Money . . . I don't expect there will be . . . any Body to Garrison this Fort but Officers."⁶⁹ Groups of provincial soldiers from Delaware also fled the army. George Washington complained that there was such "a considerable desertion in the lower county troops . . . that I can not ascertain the exact number that is left."⁷⁰ In Pennsylvania, Governor William Denny observed that "the New Levies . . . were greatly dissatisfied at being detained after the expiration of their Enlistments, and had frequently attempted to march off in a Body."⁷¹

Although there were some especially cohesive battalions, like regiments of Scottish Highlanders, which never revolted during the war, evidence culled from newspapers and other accounts suggest that desertion could be a serious problem in other regular units.⁷² In at least one case, so many redcoats left units that their commanders evacuated those who remained. For example, Lieutenant-Colonel William Amherst wrote that, although "Abercromby's is a fine Regt.," it was withdrawn from Fort Niagara, New York after being "torn to pieces by desertions."⁷³ In addition to this event, there were some mutinies or mass desertions by redcoats that occurred during the conflict. In 1756, 300 regulars from the 50th Foot, many of whom were recruits from New England, staged an armed insurrection demanding more food and all of their pay at Fort Oswego. The officers negotiated a truce with the mutineers and executed two of their leaders, but conditions did not improve and many soldiers simply left the garrison. A few months later, the fort's commander, Lieutenant Colonel James Mercer of the 51st Foot received a note that was tied to a rock and tossed into the fort from the outside. It was anonymously addressed to "the Officers in General," but was obviously written by several soldiers. The letter had a defiant, sarcastic tone and read, "Gentlemen, You seem surprized at our Desertion, but youl not be surprized if you'l consider that we have been starved with Hunger & Cold in the Winter, and that we have received no pay for seven or eight Months; Now we have no Cloaths and you cheat us out of our allowance of Rum and half our Working Money."⁷⁴ While advertisements and other records show that both colonial and regular units faced mutinies, they do not provide the systematic data necessary to revise previous estimates and establish the actual rates of desertion among provincial and army regiments.

One of the most important reasons why mutinies in units were not mentioned more frequently was that desertions by individuals or small groups continually removed the most restive soldiers from the ranks. Advertisements show that encouragement from family, friends, and other accomplices likely helped to convince many troops to desert. Whether one fled with a relative, wife, neighbor, slave, or other soldiers, departing with a person whom the deserter trusted was a key consideration. Having a running-mate encouraged desertion because soldiers benefited from the companionship, shared resources, and advice offered by accomplices in an enterprise of considerable risk. Relatives disappeared together on several occasions. According to *Parker's New York Gazette*, two brothers from Barbados, Thomas and Samuel Bowlers, fled the 1st Royal Regiment of

Foot.⁷⁵ Close friendships and sexual relationships also bound fugitives together. John Martin reported that three Virginia provincials were recaptured after trying to flee to their families. Martin observed that "Smith has a Sweetheart & 2 Children here & Barker a Wife which . . . were the Loadstones that Attracted them."⁷⁶ At Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Thomas Pendible, who was suspected of "making counterfeit pieces of Eight," fled from the 50th Regiment in the company of "a tall lusty woman" named Jane.⁷⁷ Others joined escaped servants or slaves. In a widely published advertisement, John Lloyd feared that his "Negro Man Servant, named CYRUS," who ran off with "an Iron Collar revited round his Neck, and an Ox Chain fasten'd to it," would "consort" with fugitive soldiers since he was spotted two years earlier with two deserters from the 48th Foot.⁷⁸ Cultural ties might also be important. Governor Horatio Sharpe observed that "the Germans desert daily from Colo Stanwix [of the Royal Americans and] . . . another party consisting of [eleven] Men all Germans has followed their Example."⁷⁹ Likewise, the *Connecticut Gazette* reported that two "Old Countrymen," who were "both very talkative, and hard drinking fellows," deserted from that colony's provincial forces.⁸⁰

Clearly, opportunistic soldiers often took items to aid their escape, but in other cases, deserters also wanted revenge. Because officers had to purchase uniforms, arms, and other equipment, anytime soldiers eloped with these objects, they were literally stealing from their superiors. Since both acts carried a potential death penalty, many soldiers simply combined one with the other. Abercromby stated that "the Genl thinks the arms & accoutrements lost by Deserters ought to be made up by the Cpts, as a Coll I might subscribe to that doctrine but I suspect that loss falls on the Colonel."⁸¹ At least one in three deserters combined their desertion with theft, and the persons whom they stole from were overwhelmingly their officers. Before leaving the army, Robert Browne, a regular soldier born in "Williamsbourg . . . stole out of the Room of Lieutenant Parker . . . a Diamond Ring the Stone large . . . and a brace of Pistols."⁸² Thomas Douglas, a former Indian trader, "deserted from Lieutenant Bayly, and robb'd him of a considerable sum; a fusee . . . and a side highland pistol."⁸³ If soldiers gained their officer's trust, they might gain a position to better fleece their commanders. John Hamilton, a regular before becoming Quartermaster for the Virginia troops, "managed his affairs" with particular "cunning." After "egregiously embezzling . . . some of the Regimental Stores," Hamilton waited until other troops deserted, volunteered to lead a fellow provincial (a confederate) in pursuit, and "was gone too long to be pursued" after "he was suspected."⁸⁴ Often stolen articles were sold to fund traveling expenses. South Carolina Governor Lyttelton ordered a £5 fine for anyone who "knowingly" traded for "Arms [or] Cloaths" from fugitives "or cause the Colour of such Cloaths to be changed."⁸⁵ Nevertheless, revenge should not be excluded in every case. At a minimum, deserters who took officers' valuables did so knowing they had gotten the better of would-be superiors, at least temporarily.

Once soldiers decided to leave, notices in the colonial press revealed that many chose to desert at night when other troops were asleep and darkness provided concealment from the wandering eyes of sentinels. At least one soldier avoided this latter problem by leaving while assigned to guard. A Cheshire soldier of the 55th Foot, Joseph Bradburn, "deserted off his Post when Centry,

with his Arms and . . . a new Sute of Cloathing."⁸⁶ Others ran from recruiters. John Massett escaped after collecting an enlistment bounty from the 47th Regiment. He was allegedly an "old offender having made a practice of imposing on recruiting officers and . . . endeavouring to seduce others to desert."⁸⁷ To prevent soldiers from collecting the enlistment bounty and deserting, officers from each regiment inspected recruits who arrived at the army to discover if any had served in other units. Jeffery Amherst wrote that "37 recruits arrived from Massachusetts Government; one proved a deserter from Gorhams. I gave 14 of these to compleat the 46th Regiment and 22 to Major Gorhams Rangers besides his deserter."⁸⁸ Yet, enlistees were not the only troops who ran from recruiting parties. Some soldiers waited until they were assigned to recruit before deserting. Thomas Simpson, who was "remarkable for playing well at Hand Ball," left a "Party of [regular] Recruits" after "pretend[ing] that he was going in Search of one Peter Dent, who deserted some Time ago."⁸⁹ Another tactic was to take a furlough and then not return. In such instances, officers often delayed listing missing soldiers as deserters so troops could return without fear of execution. Abraham Freehold took leave from the New Jersey Regiment and even "hired a Horse" to visit his family who lived "near the Sign of the Buck, in Bucks County," Pennsylvania. Instead, Freehold was spotted "in Philadelphia." Inquiry revealed that "he was an Imposter, having no Family near that Place."⁹⁰

Like other fugitives advertised in the newspapers, deserters often chose to become "imposters" in order to hide from the authorities. With rewards offered for their capture, and local officials stopping suspects, many soldiers used aliases. Robert Dinwiddie grumbled that the deserters' names would be "inserted in our Gazettes," although these "Villains will soon change their Names" because "their Persons [were] not described."⁹¹ Nevertheless, twenty-five deserter advertisements included soldiers' pseudonyms, and many others were likely unknown. Since most of these soldiers enlisted in America, they probably feared recognition more than troops arriving from Europe. A deserter from the 50th Foot had three known names; "One Campbell, alias Hamilton, alias Johnson."⁹² Others adopted physical disguises. Robert Milton, a deserter from the Virginia forces had "his Hair cut," and wore "a Bob or Que Wig," to better masquerade as "a Doctor."⁹³ Another soldier had two disguises. James Dickenson "wore a Sailor's Dress and assumes the Dialect and Dress of a Quaker."⁹⁴ Sometimes clothing was stolen. Edward Stork of the 80th Regiment took a blue coat "and an Otter Skin Hat . . . to disguise himself . . . [as] an Indian Trader." Stork was undoubtedly pleased to discover another useful tool in the coat pocket, "a furlough sign'd by Major Gladwin."⁹⁵ Such documents were difficult to acquire, and their value could be great, but using stolen material was risky if word spread that a deserter was using a particular soldier's discharge. Far better to forge a document, if one could write, for then deserters could invent false names or destinations to buttress their stories. In one advertisement, an Irish deserter from the "New York Forces" was thought to have a forged pass, "as he has good Learning."⁹⁶ Even if one was illiterate, there were other ways to obtain false papers. Two enterprising brothers, Joseph and William Reatop, broke into a print shop and ran off six phony discharges. They were only captured when the owner, a Dunker from Ephrata, Pennsylvania, returned to find the deserters working his press in a "grose . . . piece of Villany."⁹⁷

In addition to disguise, desertion required mobility, and advertisements and other papers reveal that simply outrunning pursuers was an especially effective way of avoiding capture. A preferred method was to board an outgoing ship. Elijah Estabrooks, a Massachusetts soldier stationed at Halifax, noted that two provincial stowaways were discovered and arrested on board a schooner after a search party "dug in the ballast and found them."⁹⁸ Officers especially feared that deserters would join ship crews and often explicitly forbade "captains of vessels" from "tak[ing] any on board." Amherst also discovered some provincial soldiers who pre-positioned "two Batteaus" near their camp "to make their escape."⁹⁹ Still worse to commanders, some deserters actually hijacked ships. Twenty-two Massachusetts provincials "forcibly entered a Sloop" and sailed to Boston, "pretending" that their terms of enlistment had expired.¹⁰⁰ In another case, five red-coats "deserted . . . took Possession of a small Schooner . . . and threatened" the crew "with Death, if they would not carry them to Cape Breton." When two of the hijackers went ashore for water, the sailors managed to overpower "the other three, and return'd with them to Halifax."¹⁰¹ More commonly, deserters made off on horseback. Five North Carolina provincials "took five waggon horses" at Lancaster, Pennsylvania and rode away.¹⁰² While tactics like mobility were critical for deserters, the most invaluable aids for successful escape were sympathetic people whom they encountered in the course of their travels.

Even if deserters were actually captured, advertisements and other sources reveal that some colonists actively shielded runaway troops from the authorities, and a few even used force. For example, a sergeant from the Virginia Regiment reported that was "assaulted" by "some Lawless fellows" who "concealed" two deserters, but he fought back and was "AmPLY revenged by Cutting off the Arm of one!"¹⁰³ More successfully, an ax-wielding mob threatened "to murder the Recruiting Party" of the 1st Royal Regiment of Foot in New Hampshire whom they "Beat & abused" before freeing a captured deserter.¹⁰⁴ Even if search parties managed to incarcerate captured deserters, some managed to get help. John Spriggins, "a Deserter from his Majesty's 47th Regiment" who had been re-captured, was "rescued" from guards during the night by a mob in Newport, Rhode Island.¹⁰⁵ Likewise, two deserters from "the South Carolina regiment" absconded from the "common goal in Charles-Town." Security must have been lax because James Lewis and John Rason managed to "rip off the hinges of the door" and "break open the . . . window" of their cell in the evening without being overheard. "Proper utensils" for the job were smuggled into these prisoners by an "evil-minded" person or persons.¹⁰⁶ Sometimes deserters received help from fellow inmates. In New York, a soldier joined with a counterfeiter and a sailor and "crept up the Chimney of the Room in which they were confined, let themselves down by the help of their Bed Cloaths into the Goal Yard and got clear off."¹⁰⁷

Notwithstanding such protests, information gleaned from deserter notices and personal correspondence suggests that those escapees who remained at large permanently usually had help. Some deserters went into hiding with their families. In a "Postscript," the *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, warned that a deserter from the 40th Foot named Abijah Everenden had probably "secreted himself" in "Stoughton, where his Father, and his Wife and Family now lives."¹⁰⁸ Others accepted aid from employers desperate for workers during the labor-scarce

war years. William Matthews, who deserted the 47th Regiment, probably hid with his spouse and employer. An advertisement in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* explained that he “worked with Mr. Joseph Davis, Shoemaker . . . and may now be reasonably be supposed to be in his employ,” since Matthews’ wife still worked there.¹⁰⁹ Washington suggested the “Inhabitants [should be] liable to certain heavy Fines, or corporal Punishments, for Entertaining of Deserters, and a Reward (should be offered) for taking them up. If this was done, it wou’d be next to an impossibility . . . to Escape.”¹¹⁰ Deserters gained sympathy from “credulous people” by “asserting falshoods of the ill treatment . . . from their officers, and the great want of everything in the Regiment except bad usage.” After “listen[ing] to their complaints,” these civilians “industriously propagate them thro’ the Country, and screen the Offenders from Justice!”¹¹¹ Not all civilians, however, offered aid to deserters. Elizabeth Porter wrote a flurry of letters to her husband, Captain Moses Porter of the Massachusetts forces, complaining that she “had terrible frites with men that deserted from the army” whom she suspected of “trying to break into the house in the night.” The deserters were “very troublesome” and were “often about the house in the night” in order to “milk our cows devour our corne” and “destroy our garden.”¹¹² Although hungry deserters sometimes wandered onto farms in search of food and shelter, others sought refuge elsewhere.

Some soldiers found sanctuary outside of the British colonial settlements. Deserters sometimes settled among friendly Indians. In at least one case, a deserter had lived among the Indians before enlisting. Matthew Jung, a German-born Corporal who “speaks bad English,” deserted from the Royal American Regiment in Baltimore, Maryland with “his Wife and Child.” He had “formerly kept a School at Conawauga” in Canada and was sighted with another soldier “on the Way to that Place.”¹¹³ Only rarely were officers able to retake fugitives in such cases. Nathaniel Onion, an Indian man who deserted from both Ruggles’ Massachusetts provincials and the 44th Foot, was one exception. Although Onion escaped before his intended court martial, General John Winslow reported that “he keeps a Larg Saragilo of Wenches in the woods of Rhode Island and can [be retaken] . . . at anytime.”¹¹⁴ The frequent desertions to Indian communities beyond the reach of the army confounded military and civil officials alike. William Williams railed against the deserters who “made the Indians Seize the [military] Baggage Horses and not let them pass untile they had Rum.” These deserters also incited the Iroquois to “kill the Cattle . . . passing thro their Castles” and “forged an order . . . for two Gilles of Rum.” Even worse, at a time when the Six Nations’ neutrality was doubted, the “Divilish Deserters” had audaciously “said things unrespectful” about William Johnson, Britain’s chief intermediary among the Iroquois.¹¹⁵ For a few refugees, flight to the Indians provided lasting protection when they convinced their hosts to broker written amnesties for them. Toan-kakanan, a Minisink diplomat secured a discharge from Governor James Hamilton for one Faizer who “was tired with soldiering, and chose to come and live with the Indians” and was now “beloved by us all.”¹¹⁶

One of the most intriguing and surprising findings in the colonial newspapers is that a few defiant runaways actually purchased their own “anti-deserter” advertisements which disputed officers’ claims that they ran away illegally. In one notice, John Dunbar complained that Captain James Armstrong had published a

notice listing him as a deserter from the Pennsylvania provincials. He buttressed his claim with the assent of "two of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of New Castle" who "certified" that a recruiter "put two Dollars in said Dunbar's Hand in a clandestine Manner," but that the money was "thrown back immediately."¹¹⁷ Another "anti-deserter" notice appeared for "Francis Madding, an Irishman," who stated bluntly: "I am no deserter." Although the recruiter gave him "a Dollar, a Bowl of Punch to Drink to his Majesty's Health," and "10 Dollars," Madding insisted that he was not legally enlisted in the "Virginia Regiment" because he had not yet received the remainder of his bounty.¹¹⁸ A recruit's father placed another "anti-deserter" item in the papers. Derrick Hogeland, Esquire, who was a Bucks County, Pennsylvania assemblyman, protested that his twenty-one-year-old son "Daniel was not duly inlisted," which was "fully proved before the . . . Chief Justice of this Province" and that "the said Advertisement . . . is false."¹¹⁹ The Hogeland item also demonstrates why only a few "anti-deserter" notices appeared in the papers. Most runaways lacked the education, social connections, and economic resources necessary to compose and purchase such advertisements. Notices for deserters "buttressed" officers' authority, but anti-deserter advertisements reveal that the motivation for this support was, for some printers, purely monetary. For the right price, the press would publish anything, whether it benefited the military or not.

IV

The opening page of J.A. Houlding's classic study of the eighteenth-century British army contains a quote from Frederick the Great that states: "If my soldiers began to think, not one would remain in the ranks."¹²⁰ Deserter advertisements cast Frederick's reflection in an ironic light. They confirm that regular and provincial soldiers were not always the thoughtless automatons that some officers desired, but careful, calculating individuals who sometimes decided to risk everything and flee the military. Although some scholars accept that intoxication was an important cause of desertion, the soldiers advertised in the press were unlike the accused deserters who told courts martial that they left the army due to drunkenness.¹²¹ There can be no question that most regulars and provincials habitually consumed alcohol, and some drank with enthusiastic abandon, but neither careless inebriates, nor severe alcoholics, were likely to appear in advertisements. Recruiters customarily provided a drink for enlisting, while camp followers sold cheap alcohol to soldiers. Moreover, when troops labored on especially difficult tasks, or in unhealthy environments, the army deliberately provided a daily ration of beer, wine, whiskey, or rum, and as a result, some soldiers developed a physical addiction to alcohol.¹²² Troops commonly campaigned in wilderness areas, and so the army itself became the only reliable supply of liquor for many miles. Since successful desertion required mobility, it is highly unlikely that many confirmed alcoholics willingly left their only reliable source of liquor behind. Carrying a sufficient quantity of alcohol was impractical, and even if they did get away, they would not have made it very far. The *Merck Manual* notes that alcoholics begin to suffer from "mild" withdrawal symptoms, including overly responsive reflexes and tremors, weakness, sweating, and gastrointestinal discomfort, within twelve to forty-eight hours after their last drink,

and more severe symptoms after two to three days, including delirium and hallucinations which resemble the effects of schizophrenia.¹²³ Since many of the deserters who appeared in the newspapers managed to elude capture in isolated areas for several days, if not weeks, it seems unlikely that any of them suffered from these symptoms. This is not to suggest that soldiers never drank excessively, wandered out of camp, and were discovered in the morning. However, since desertion was a capital offense, and new recruits were expensive and hard to locate, such troops were more likely to be accused of the lesser crime of drunkenness and tried by regimental courts martial.¹²⁴ Drunkenness was a convenient excuse some used to explain their actions, but few of the soldiers who appeared in advertisements deserted because they were actually intoxicated.

While the notices buttress many of the findings that Anderson, Selesky, Titus, and Brumwell made about the phenomena of desertion, they also reveal a wealth of additional information about the individual deserters, the military's attempts to suppress their activities, and the tactics fugitives used to avoid detection. First, the advertisements disclose significant details regarding the troops who risked savage punishments for the chance to get away from the army. Deserters were an extremely diverse group who differed in some ways from the overall population of troops. Many were Irish, and a majority of the redcoats who deserted had enlisted in America, whether they were native to the colonies or recent emigrants from Europe. Similarly, provincials from Europe were more likely to desert than those born in the colonies. The occupations of deserters broadly reflected the jobs listed by provincial and regular soldiers, but the advertisements also show that artisans, and especially sailors, were more liable to run off. Second, the notices illustrate the various strategies that the military used to suppress desertion. Encampments were isolated, officers attempted to prevent conflict among soldiers, and commanders deliberately withheld word that infectious disease was in the army. In other cases, officials offered soldiers new cloths, withheld pay, or encouraged chaplains to persuade troops that desertion was a sin. When deterrence failed, officers imposed harsh punishments on some and pardoned others while sheriffs, recruiting parties, and even high-ranking royal officials scoured towns and the countryside for signs of deserters. Third, advertisements and other documents demonstrate that mutinies and mass desertions by New England troops were not unique. Many regular units, as well as provincial forces from New Hampshire to South Carolina experienced similar events. More commonly, however, were individuals, or small bands of three or four soldiers, who stole away from the army, often at night, and used mobility, disguise, and the support they received from family and friends in their efforts to escape the army.

Because officers did not place advertisements for every soldier who fled their units, deserter notices cannot reveal the total number of desertions during the war, but the advertisements suggest that regular and provincial troops deserted at comparable rates. Regular and provincial units, however, probably experienced varying degrees of desertion at different stages of the conflict. The campaigns of 1755 and 1758 illustrate this divergence because there were similar numbers of regular and provincial troops who served together on both of these campaigns. In 1755, there were well over 5,000 redcoats who campaigned in America, while slightly more than 6,000 provincials from North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland,

New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire also served.¹²⁵ During this year, regular deserters appeared more frequently in the newspapers than provincials. In fact, of 233 names advertised in the papers in 1755, over eighty-four percent were regulars. The reasons for this ratio are twofold. First, regular regiments enlisted many of their troops in the colonies during this year, and most of these recruits eventually realized that they might enlist in provincial units for better pay, a shorter commitment, and discipline that was less severe. This meant that the large numbers of redcoats who enlisted in America in 1755 were more likely to be discontented with their lot in the British army than the troops who arrived from Europe. Second, while provincial forces in Acadia and at Lake George fared well in this year, the devastating defeat that Edward Braddock's regulars suffered near Fort Duquesne sowed confusion within his army, bred fear, and fostered conditions that led many of his troops to desert. By 1758, the scale of warfare expanded tremendously; there were about 22,000 redcoats, and nearly the same number of provincials, deployed throughout North America.¹²⁶ During this year, the newspapers printed more items for deserters from the colonial forces than regulars. An examination of all the advertisements that appeared in 1758 shows that of 118 names, sixty percent were provincials. The chief difference between the regular and provincial forces of 1755 and 1758 was the composition of the British army itself. Many of the royal regiments that served in 1758 had arrived in the colonies intact, and were more cohesive than the newly raised or expanded regiments under Braddock. Compared to the shocks of 1755, the regulars did far better; they earned major victories at Louisbourg and at Fort Duquesne, although the well-disciplined 42nd Highlanders suffered exceedingly at Ticonderoga. A better way to gauge the general propensity of regulars and provincials to desert during the war is to examine the overall totals of deserters who appeared in advertisements between 1755 and 1762. Of the 1,694 troops whose units were mentioned, nearly 800 were redcoats, and over 900 wore provincial brown, green, red, or blue. The data culled from the newspapers cannot establish the exact scale of desertion from colonial and regular forces, but these figures do hint that both regulars and provincials deserted in large numbers, and sometimes at similarly high rates.

The large number of advertisements that appeared for runaway troops show that desertion was ongoing theme in the British colonial press during the Seven Years' War. While there is simply no way of knowing how many acts of desertion went unrecorded, the broad distribution of advertisements, and their continued appearances in the papers, may suggest that desertion was a larger problem than was previously thought. Anecdotal evidence, while limited, provides further clues to this. In letter written to General John Forbes in 1758, for example, General James Abercromby confided: "I dare not be rigid for Fear of a Total Desertion, in which case it would be impossible to make a stand here."¹²⁷ While Abercromby was typical of officers who used a variety of methods to discourage and diminish the problem of desertion, few seemed disposed to consider the types of serious reforms suggested by a common redcoat who was a veteran of the North American war. Just five years before the American War of Independence, "Jonas" warned metropolitan readers in London, that "if ever we should be engaged in another war, the poor soldiers and sailors expect to have divi-

dends made in a more equal manner. . . . "Then" he predicted, "the government would find" that the troops would behave "with harmony and satisfaction, and almost insure success."¹²⁸ In the end, no one provided a better assessment of the problems posed by deserters during the Seven Years' War than George Washington who confessed, "In short, they tire my patience, & almost weary me to death! The expence of pursuing them is very considerable; and to suffer them to escape, without aiming at pursuit is but giving up the point, altho' we have had but little success of late."¹²⁹

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ENDNOTES

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1. *The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser*, March 31, 1757, Number 747.
2. Stephen Conway, *War, State, and Society in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (New York, 2006), 64–65; J.A. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715–1795* (Oxford, England, 1981), 116n31, 296; Alan J. Guy, ed., *Colonel Samuel Bagshawe and the Army of George II, 1731–1762* (London, 1990), 2.
3. See Stanley Pargellis, *Lord Loudoun in North America* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1968), 101; Paul E. Kopperman, "The Stoppages Mutiny of 1763," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 69 (1986): 241–254.
4. See Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (New York, 1984), 162–163, 187–188, 192–194; Harold E. Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut* (New Haven, 1990), 175, 188–189, 208; James Titus, *The Old Dominion at War: Society, Politics, and Warfare in Late Colonial Virginia* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1991), 57, 68–70, 103–107, 183n69; Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and the War in the Americas* (New York, 2002), 103–104, 155, 168, 174–177.
5. Fred Anderson, "Why did New Englanders Make Bad Soldiers?" Contractual Principles and Military Conduct during the Seven Years' War," *William and Mary Quarterly* 40 (1981): 395–417.
6. Peter Way noted that desertion "bedeviled all armies at this time." See Way, "Rebellion of the Regulars: Working Soldiers and the Mutiny of 1763–1764," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., 57 (2000): 771n29. Theodore Ropp, *War in the Modern World* (Durham, North Carolina, 1959), 39n; Christopher Duffy, *The Army of Frederick the Great* (New York, 1974), 67; Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War* (London, 1983), 9; John Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe, 1648–1789* (New York, 1982), 70–73; Jeremy Black, *A Military Revolution? Military Change and European Society, 1550–1800* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, 1991), 47–48; Lee Kennett, *The French Armies in the*

Seven Years' War: A Study in Military Organization and Administration (Durham, North Carolina, 1967), 84–85.

7. Pargellis, *Lord Loudoun*, 108–109n7; Selesky, *War and Society*, 189.

8. See Daniel J. Beattie, “The Adaptation of the British Army to Wilderness Warfare, 1755–1763,” in *Adapting to Conditions: War and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Maarten Ultee (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1986), 57, 79; Guy Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast* (Amherst, Mass., 2003).

9. *Antigua Gazette* (1755–1756) April 12, 1755 (American Antiquarian Society); *Barbados Gazette* (1755–1762) No Issues Available; *Barbados Mercury and Bridge Town Gazette* (1762) No Issues Available; *New London Summary* (September 1758–1762); *Connecticut Gazette* (1755–1762); *The Wilmington Courant* (1762) No Issues Available; *Jamaica Gazette* (1755?–1762?) No Issues Available; *Kingston Journal* (1756–1762) November 29, 1760; October 24, 1761. (American Antiquarian Society); *Saint Jago de la Vega Gazette* (1755?–1762?) No Issues Available; *Saint Jago Intelligencer* (1756?–1762?) May 14, 1757 (Institute of Jamaica—I did not examine this lone surviving issue of *The Saint Jago Intelligencer*); *Weekly Jamaica Courant* (1755) No Issues Available; *The Maryland Gazette* (1755–1762); *The Boston Evening Post* (1755–1762); *The Boston Gazette and Country Journal* (1755–1762); *The Boston Post Boy* (1755–August 22, 1757); *The Boston Weekly Advertiser* (August 22, 1757–January 1, 1759); *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser* (January 1, 1759–1762); *The Boston Weekly News-Letter* (1755–1762); *The New Hampshire Gazette* (1756–1762); *The New York Gazette* (1755–1759); *Parker's New York Gazette* (1759–1762); *Weyman's New York Gazette* (1759–1762); *The New York Mercury* (1755–1762); *The North Carolina Gazette* (1755–1762) April 15, 1758; October 18, 1759; *The Halifax Gazette* (1755–1762) February 15, 1755; March 1, 1755; August 23, 1755; December 9, 1758; May 14, 1761; May 21, 1761; May 28, 1761; *The Pennsylvania Gazette* (1755–1762); *The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser* (1755–1762); *The Newport Mercury* (1758–1762); *The Providence Gazette* (1762); *Saint Christopher Gazette and Caribbean Courier* (1755–1762) No Issues Available; *The South Carolina Gazette* (1755–1762); *The South Carolina Weekly Gazette* (1757–1762) October 24, 1759–December 10, 1760; *The Virginia Gazette* (1755–1762) 1755, July–September 1756, September–December 1757, November–1759–1760.

10. David Waldstreicher, “Reading the Runaways: Self-Fashioning, Print Culture, and Confidence in Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Mid-Atlantic,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 56 (1999): 268–270.

11. Jonathan Prude, “To Look upon the ‘Lower Sort’: Runaway Ads and the Appearance of Unfree Laborers in America, 1750–1800,” *Journal of American History* 78 (1991): 125, 159.

12. Deserters born in the colonies, especially New England, are very likely under-represented because many of the notices printed for these provincial forces did not include nativity.

13. *The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser*, March 10, 1757, Number 744.

14. *The New York Mercury*, November 24, 1760, Number 432.

15. The papers did not distinguish Irish Catholics from Scots-Irish Presbyterians. Irish soldiers represented over twenty-seven percent of the rank and file troops in the British Army. See Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 73, 318 (Table 5). I would like to thank Dr. Stephen Brumwell for this reference.
16. John Campbell to William Augustus, Albany, New York, August 29, 1756, in Pargellis, *Military Affairs*, 232. Loudoun was referring to the 44th and 48th Regiments that came from Ireland with Braddock.
17. Milton Hamilton, ed., "The Diary of the Reverend John Ogilvie, 1750–1759," *Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum* 10 (1961): 375.
18. Of 393 redcoats whose nativity appeared in the advertisements, fully 17.8 percent were born in the colonies, while 82.2 percent came from Europe. As I noted in the text, this figure is even higher if one examines deserters whose advertisements state the location of their enlistment and their nativity. I would like to thank Ioana Lupas Scott for providing expert assistance with this section.
19. *The Maryland Gazette*, August 18, 1757, Number 641.
20. Anderson, *A People's Army*, 232 (Table 13); Selesky, *War and Society*, 173.
21. Titus, *Old Dominion*, 83, 183n69; Selesky, *War and Society*, 173.
22. *The New-London Summary*, August 13, 1762, Number 210.
23. *The Boston Evening Post*, September 20, 1756, Number 1099.
24. Anderson, *A People's Army*, 236; Titus, *Old Dominion*, 85–86; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 78–79, 320. Harold Selesky noted that there were a wide variety of trades listed by Connecticut soldiers in the muster rolls that he examined, but does not provide any detailed figures. See Selesky, *War and Society*, 173. Peter Way observed that over fifty-two percent of regular recruits listed "trades" when they joined the army, but also found that less than eighteen percent of redcoats listed in returns were "craftsmen." See Way, "Rebellion of the Regulars," 769, 772.
25. Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 79. See also Anderson, *A People's Army*, 55. Titus argued that the Virginia Regiment contained a vastly disproportionate number of poor people, and shrewdly cautioned that whether "some of them had any history of employment at all is an open question." See Titus, *Old Dominion*, 88.
26. *The New York Mercury*, November 10, 1760, Number 430.
27. Anderson, *A People's Army*, 236; Titus, *Old Dominion*, 87; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 320. This estimate likely represents a minimal proportion of seafarers who deserted from the regular and provincial forces. I only counted deserters explicitly described as a "mariner," a "seaman," or a "sailor." Many others who appeared in the advertisements wore maritime clothing, but since some of these people wore sailor's dress as a disguise, I did not count any of them.
28. *The Boston Evening Post*, April 2, 1759, Number 346.

29. See Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750* (New York, 1987), 205–253.
30. *The Boston Evening Post*, December 27, 1756, Number 1113.
31. Gwenda Morgan and Peter Rushton, “Visible Bodies: Power, Subordination, and Identity in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World,” *Journal of Social History* 39 (2005): 39–64.
32. Deserter advertisements are also an excellent source of anthropometric data on people from all over the Atlantic world. Whether the soldier who left the army was born in Sweden, Wales, or New Jersey, officers gave the heights of 41.0 percent of the run-aways. Analysis of deserter’s heights confirms the findings of other studies of eighteenth-century stature. A. Theodore Steegmann and P.A. Haseley, “Stature Variation in the British American Colonies: French and Indian War Records, 1755–1763” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 75 (1988): 413–422; A. Theodore Steegmann, “18th Century British Military Stature: Growth Cessation, Selective Recruiting, Secular Trends, Nutrition at Birth, Cold and Occupation,” *Human Biology* 57 (1985): 77–95.
33. *The New York Mercury*, May 11, 1761, Number 458; *Weyman’s New York Gazette*, May 11, 1761, Number 121.
34. *The Virginia Gazette*, December 12, 1755, Number 257.
35. *The Maryland Gazette*, October 28, 1762; Number 912.
36. *The Virginia Gazette*, October 3, 1755, Number 247.
37. *Weyman’s New York Gazette*, May 24, 1762, Number 179.
38. *The Boston Weekly News-Letter*, July 29, 1756, Number 2821.
39. “Order Book kept by Major Moncrieffe of Voyage and Campaigns from New York, Martinique, Grenada, and Havanna,” 10, Manuscript Group 23 K34, item 2, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.
40. Levi Redfield, *A True Account of Some Memorable Events and Remarkable Occurrences in the Life of Levi Redfield, Late of Connecticut* (Norwich, Connecticut, 1799), 6–7.
41. “Order Book of Captain Silas Brown’s Company, Timothy Ruggles’ Regiment of Massachusetts Provincials by Nathaniel Sawtell, 31 August–9 October 1760,” October 7, 1760, in Massachusetts Historical Society (hereafter MHS), Boston.
42. *Order Book of the Virginia Regt . . . at Fredericksburg*, August 26, 1762, in Brock Collection 97, H.L.
43. William Todd, “Diary,” vol. 1, 13, in Edward Hall Manuscripts Collection, Wigan Record Office, Wigan, England. I would like to thank Stephanie Tsang in Wigan for her help with this manuscript.
44. Henry Bouquet to Forbes, July 31, 1758, in S.K. Stevens et al., ed., *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, vol. 2, *The Forbes Expedition* (Harrisburg, 1951), 293.
45. *The Boston Weekly News-Letter*, July 16, 1761, Number 2976.

46. Francis Fauquier to William Byrd, June 19, 1758 in George Reese, ed., *Official Papers of Francis Fauquier*, vol. 1 (Charlottesville, 1980), 34.
47. John St. Clair to Thomas Dunbar, August 9, 1755, in *The Headquarters Papers of John Forbes*, reel 1, item 9 (microfilm, The David Library of the American Revolution (hereafter DL), Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania).
48. Sharpe to Amherst, January 26, 1759, in William Browne, ed., *Correspondence of Governor Horatio Sharpe, 1753–1757*, vol. 9, *Archives of Maryland* (Baltimore, 1888), Browne, ed., *Correspondence of Governor Horatio Sharpe*, vol. 6, 322.
49. Samuel Davies, *Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier* (Philadelphia, 1755), 12.
50. William Smith, *The Christian Soldier's Duty; the Lawfullness and Dignity of his Office; and the Importance of the Protestant Cause in the British Colonies*. (Philadelphia, 1757), 19–20.
51. Daniel Shute, "A Journal of the Rev. Daniel Shute, D.D., Chaplain in the Expedition to Canada in 1758," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 12 (1874): 140.
52. James Ramsey to Campbell, January 5, 1756, in Loudon Papers (hereafter LO), 745, Huntingdon Library, San Marino, CA.
53. *The Boston Weekly News-Letter*, March 19, 1761, Number 2959.
54. "Capt. David Holmess Book," August 26, 1758, in MHS.
55. When a deserter from the 27th Regiment was captured, Amherst "thought [him]self obliged to approve the [death] sentence as it was his second desertion." See J. Clarence Webster, ed., *The Journal of Jeffery Amherst: Recording the Military Career of General Amherst in America from 1758 to 1763* (Chicago, 1931), 135.
56. See *The Boston Evening Post*, January 29, 1759, Number 1222; *The New York Mercury*, January 15, 1759, Number 335; *The Boston News-Letter*, January 25, 1759, Number 2995; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, January 29, 1759, Number 76; *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 15, 1759, Number 1573; *The New York Gazette or Weekly Post Boy*, January 15, 1759, Number 837; *The Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, January 29, 1759, Number 200.
57. Thomas Gage to Eyre Massey, April 5, 1759 in *Thomas Gage Letterbooks*, William L. Clements Library (hereafter, C.L.), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
58. Thomas Fitch to Amherst, April 23, 1759 in *The Fitch Papers: Correspondence and Documents During Thomas Fitch's Governorship. . . . , 1754–1766*, vol. 2, *January 1759–May 1766*, in *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society*, vol. 18 (Hartford, 1920), 16.
59. Washington to Dinwiddie, September 17, 1757, in Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, vol. 4, 405–406.
60. *The Boston Weekly Advertiser*, June 12, 1758, Number 43.

61. Abercromby to Forbes, August 2, 1758 in *The Headquarters Papers of John Forbes*, reel 3, item 436 (microfilm, DL).
62. John Wrightson to Forbes, November 2, 1757 in *Dalhousie Muniments*, item 2/14/4 (microfilm, DL).
63. *The New York Gazette or Weekly Post Boy*, April 3, 1758, Number 5793.
64. "Report of John Rogers," July 12, 1758, in *Dalhousie Muniments*, item 2/59, (microfilm, DL); Hugh Waddell to Forbes, July 21, 1758, in *Headquarters Papers of Forbes*, reel 2, item 407 (microfilm, DL).
65. Anderson, "Why did New Englanders Make Bad Soldiers?" 395–417.
66. *The South Carolina Gazette*, July 19, 1760, Number 1354; *ibid.*, October 10, 1761, Number 1419.
67. Dinwiddie to the Lords of Trade, September 23, 1754, in Brock, ed., *The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, vol.1, 327. See also Sharpe to John Sharpe, April 19, 1755, in Browne, ed., *Correspondence of Governor Horatio Sharpe*, vol. 6, 200–201.
68. Washington to Robert Dinwiddie, August 20, 1754 in Brock, ed., *The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, vol.1, 287–289.
69. Richard Pearis to Forbes, January 9, 1759, in *Dalhousie Muniments*, item 2/90/19a (microfilm, DL).
70. George Washington to Forbes, November 16, 1758, in Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, vol. 6, 130.
71. William Denny to John Forbes, February 9, 1759, in *Dalhousie Muniments*, National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh, item 2/90/26 (microfilm, DL); see also Denny to —, October 5, 1759, in *Pennsylvania Archives* 1st Ser., vol. 3 (Philadelphia, 1853), 686.
72. I would like to thank Scott Stephenson and Sandy Campbell for their helpful comments on this point.
73. John Webster, ed., *The Journal of William Amherst in America, 1758–1760* (London, 1927), 60. Many redcoats mutinied after the war. See Way, "Rebellion of the Regulars," 763.
74. "Journal of the Transactions at Oswego by Patrick Mackellar, Eng'r, June 5, 1756," in Pargellis, *Military Affairs*, 202. See also "Information of Captain John Vickers of the 50th Regiment in Response to Questions posed by Lord Loudoun," January 4, 1757, in *ibid.*, 286, 287, 288; and George Demler, "Report of the State of Oswego, May 28, 1756," LO 1185. San Marino, California. See also Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 128–129.
75. The Bowlers brothers were they only Bajans advertised as deserters. See *Weyman's New York Gazette*, November 17, 1760, Number 94; *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 27, 1760, Number 1666; and *Parker's New York Gazette or the Weekly Post-Boy*, November 20, 1760, Number 933.

76. See John Martin to Washington, August 30, 1755, in Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, vol. 2, 11–12.
77. *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 19, 1756, Number 1417.
78. Advertisements for “Cyrus” appeared in *Weyman's New York Gazette*, October 13, 1761, Number 145; *The New York Mercury*, October 12, 1761, Number 480; *The Boston Weekly News-Letter*, October 22, 1761, Number 2990; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, October 19, 1761, Number 218; *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 22, 1761, Number 1713; *Parker's New York Gazette or the Weekly Post Boy*, October 15, 1761, Number 980; and *The Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, October 19, 1761, Number 342.
79. Sharpe to Baltimore, September 5, 1757 in Browne, ed., *Correspondence of Governor Horatio Sharpe*, 81.
80. *The Connecticut Gazette*, July 7, 1759, Number 222.
81. James Abercromby to Campbell, April 13, 1756, in LO 1044.
82. *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 1, 1761, Number 1710; *The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser*, October 1, 1761, Number 982.
83. *The New York Mercury*, June 2, 1755, Number 147; *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 29, 1755, Number 1379.
84. Washington to Dinwiddie, October 5, 1757, in Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, vol. 5, 3; Washington to John Stanwix, October 8, 1757 in *ibid.*, 8–9.
85. *The South Carolina Gazette*, April 28, 1759, Number 1281.
86. *Weyman's New York Gazette*, September 20, 1762, Number 197.
87. *The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser*, June 10, 1756, Number 705; *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 17, 1756, Number 1434.
88. Webster, ed., *The Journal of Jeffery Amherst*, 283.
89. *The Maryland Gazette*, June 5, 1760, Number 787.
90. *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 18, 1761, Number 1695. Only two weeks later, Freehold and another deserter allegedly murdered a woman in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. See *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 22, 1761, Number 1713.
91. Dinwiddie to James Innes, August, 1754, in Brock, ed., *The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, vol. 1, 270–271.
92. *The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser*, June 3, 1756, Number 704.
93. *The Virginia Gazette*, November 14, 1755, Number 253.
94. *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 30, 1758, Number 1527.
95. *The New York Mercury*, August 30, 1762, Number 526.

96. *Weyman's New York Gazette*, May 26, 1760, Number 68.
97. St. Clair to Forbes, May 9, 1758 in *Headquarters Papers of John Forbes*, reel 2, item 207 (DL).
98. Harold A. Skaarup, ed., *Ticonderoga Soldier: Elijah Estabrooks Journal 1758–1760, A Massachusetts Provincial Soldier in the French and Indian War* (New York, 2001), 214.
99. Webster, ed., *The Journal of Jeffery Amherst*, 186.
100. *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, July 28, 1760, Number 154; *The Boston Evening Post*, July 28, 1760, Number 1300.
101. *The New York Gazette or the Weekly Post-Boy*, May 3, 1756, Number 694; *The Boston Weekly News-Letter*, April 30, 1756, Number 2808.
102. *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 29, 1755, Number 1379.
103. Peter Hog to Washington, December 17, 1755, in Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, vol. 2, 219–220.
104. William Cook to Benning Wentworth, December 31, 1757, in Nathaniel Bouton, ed., *New Hampshire Provincial and State Papers*, vol. 6 (New York, 1973), 641.
105. *The Newport Mercury*, April 8, 1760, Number 95.
106. *The South Carolina Gazette*, August 8, 1761, Number 1410.
107. *The New York Mercury*, August 3, 1761, Number 470; *The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser*, August 6, 1761, Number 824.
108. *The Boston Weekly News-Letter*, A Postscript, February 23, 1758, Number 2902.
109. *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 8, 1756, Number 1424; *ibid.*, July 8, 1756, Number 1437.
110. Washington to Dinwiddie, October 11, 1755, in Brock, ed., *The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, vol. 2, 238–239.
111. Washington to Dinwiddie, September 8, 1756, in Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, vol. 3, 397, 399.
112. Elizabeth Porter to Moses Porter, August 9, 1755, in Bulfinch Family Papers, 1720–1840, Box 1 of 3. MHS; and Elizabeth Porter to Moses Porter, August 29, 1755, in *ibid.*
113. *The Maryland Gazette*, November 4, 1756, Number 600.
114. John Winslow to Campbell, October 28, 1756, in John Winslow Journal, reel 2, MHS. By the 1640s, the term “wench” had a multiplicity of sexual, social, and racial overtones. See Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, & Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1996), 368–370.
115. William Williams to William Johnson, March 28, 1756, in LO 994.

116. Toan-kakanan to James Hamilton, et al., July 11, 1760, in *Pennsylvania Archives, Colonial Records*, vol. 8 (Harrisburg, 1852), 486, 488.
117. *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 19, 1759, Number 1595.
118. *The Maryland Gazette*, July 29, 1762, Number 899.
119. *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 22, 1756, Number 1426.
120. Houlding, *Fit for Service*, n.p.
121. Arthur N. Gilbert, "Why Men Deserted from the Eighteenth-Century British Army," *Armed Forces and Society* 4 (1980), 553–567; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 104–105.
122. See Paul E. Kopperman, "The Cheapest Pay": Alcohol Abuse in the Eighteenth-Century British Army," *The Journal of Military History* 60 (1996), 445–470. The Massachusetts provincial troops who garrisoned Fort Cumberland, Nova Scotia committed several thefts, according to their commanding officer, in order to exchange the stolen goods for alcohol. See Anderson, *A People's Army*, 128. In risking severe corporal punishment to obtain alcohol, the soldiers' actions suggest addictive behavior.
123. *The Merck Manual of Diagnosis and Therapy*, 2006, sec. 15, ch. 195, s.v. "Alcoholism," 1580–1585.
124. Arthur N. Gilbert, "The Regimental Courts Martial in the Eighteenth-Century British Army," *Albion* 8 (1976), 50–66.
125. See Houlding, 344–345n63; Pargellis, *Lord Loudoun*, 108; Lawrence Henry Gipson, *The Great War for the Empire*, vol. 6, *The Years of Defeat* (New York, 1946), 142–143; John A. Schutz, *William Shirley: King's Governor of Massachusetts* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1961), 206–207; Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 112, 115; Franklin Thayer Nichols, "The Organization of Braddock's Army," *William and Mary Quarterly* 4 (1947): 123–147.
126. See Beattie, "Adapting to Conditions," 67; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 24.
127. Abercromby to Forbes, August 2, 1758, in *Sir Frederick Haldimand Papers*, BL, reel 3, item 436 (microfilm, DL).
128. "Jonas," *A Soldier's Journal* (London: 1770), 188–189.
129. Washington to Dinwiddie, September 17, 1757, in Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, vol. 4, 405–406.