

The Pursuit of Justice

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*The Military Moral Economy in the USA, Australia, and
Great Britain – 1861-1945*

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1 Introduction

In May 1863, approximately 125 men of the 2nd Maine Volunteer Infantry Regiment initiated a protest against military authorities. Their unit had been disbanded, and those 125 men were ordered to march out to a new unit, the 20th Maine Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Those men of the 2nd Maine had built a home in the 2nd Maine; their comrades had become like family, and they had built a common identity in the unit with their own traditions, cultures and values. When the order came to move out, the men stood their ground and refused to obey the order. Exactly 55 years later an almost identical incident played out on the Western Front during the First World War.

In September 1918, several battalions of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) initiated a protest against military authorities. As with the 2nd Maine in 1863, their units were ordered to disband, and the men were ordered to march out to new units. As with the 2nd Maine, the men of those Australian battalions had built a home and an identity in their battalion, and their comrades had become like family. And again, as with the 2nd Maine in 1863, when the order came to move out, the men stood their ground and refused to follow the order. Finally, in September 1943, a group of men from the 50th and 51st Divisions of the British Army were ordered to transfer to other units as reinforcements. Those men, as with those of the 2nd Maine and of the AIF, had built their home and identity within their units. They had expected the military to honour their wishes to remain with their units, and when their expectations were shattered, they refused to comply with the orders.

These three extraordinary events – which took place in three very different armies in three very different wars, separated across 80 years of history – display a series of remarkable similarities. In each of the situations men of the rank and file had developed clear expectations of how they should behave and how they should be treated within the environment of the military. In each case, when authorities broke those expectations, rank-and-file men felt they could, and should, engage in direct action to return the situation back to the *status quo*. As this book will show, those patterns within those military environments reflect the same patterns that functioned as *moral economies* within civil societies – and they can thus effectively be described as *military moral economies*.

To emphasize the above points and demonstrate the workings of those military moral economies, this book will present an analysis of these three

incidences of protest within military environments. In particular, it will seek a detailed answer to the question: 'Why did these protests occur?' A close analysis of these incidents reveals striking parallels in the motivations of the protesters, their treatment by authorities, and the manner in which these actions were eventually resolved. Equally important, however, is understanding why *these particular men* in *these particular circumstances* protested, while other men in similar circumstances did not protest. For example: the 2nd Maine men protested when ordered to serve elsewhere; but the 10th Maine men did not protest when given similar orders. The 19th, 21st, 25th, 29th, 37th, 42nd, 54th and 60th Battalions of the AIF protested when ordered to serve elsewhere; but the 36th, 47th, and 52nd did not protest when given similar orders. And 350 men of the 50th and 51st Divisions protested when ordered to serve elsewhere; but 1150 other men in the same draft did not protest the order.

In order to shed further light on these events, and to understand their peculiarities, this book will investigate these men and their circumstances in detail. By contrasting those three events, and by linking with other similar events of those periods, it will also contribute towards the growing global history of military labour and protest, and identify some of the common aspects of soldiers' approach towards and expectations of military service.

Historians have often described the protesters of 1863, 1918, and 1943 as 'mutineers'. Leonard Guttridge noted that the term *mutiny* stirs the imagination and causes some to strike a sympathetic chord.¹ But there is little scholarly consensus in the definition of the term, and historians often apply it to excite readers and build tension. Guttridge added that 'Seldom has a term weighted with such gravity and threat eluded consensus upon its true definition'.² Among military historians, there is often uncertainty regarding when a simple refusal to obey orders becomes a mutiny.³ For example, the author and editor of the *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, C.E.W. Bean, was uncertain how to describe the events of September 1918. Bean used inverted commas to note the 'mutinies' and 'mutinies over disbandment',⁴ and he indexed the event as the 'protest

1 Leonard F. Guttridge, *Mutiny: A History of Naval Insurrection* (Annapolis: Blue Jacket Books, 1992), p. 1.

2 Guttridge, *Mutiny*, p. 1.

3 Guttridge provides examples of such uncertainty surrounding several incidents in *Mutiny*, pp. 2-3.

4 C.E.W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918: Volume VI – The Australian Imperial Force in France during the Allied Offensive, 1918* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1942), p. 953.

agst disbandmt. of bns.⁵ The men involved in these three incidents also expressed similar uncertainty. For example, Hugh Fraser, one of the men involved in the Salerno protest of 1943, later reflected on the events:

When the word mutiny is mentioned you perhaps think of, you know, Captain Bligh and the *Bounty* and men going about shouting and bawling and waving their swords and guns about. This was the quietest mutiny which ever happened at any time.⁶

Complicating this further are the political implications of this language. Mutinies have long been seen by military authorities as failures of leadership,⁷ and for this reason commanding officers who experience a mutiny under their command are often hesitant to use the term, lest it damage their reputation.⁸ This is a common theme that recurs throughout military forces. For example, in the British Royal Navy, mutinies were described as 'regrettable incidents' in an attempt to preserve the force's reputation as 'the world's most powerful and proudest naval force'.⁹ In other military forces, officers often sought to quickly resolve the issues at the heart of a mutiny or protest, and thus stop the action before it was brought to the attention of their superiors. Webb Garrison argued, for example, that during the American Civil War, 'Many a general officer tried to avoid the risk of having his own leadership questioned in the aftermath of a mutiny, so used soft words in describing resistance to his authority'.¹⁰

Similar practices have been observed within the AIF during the First World War. Rowan Cahill argued that, 'To minimize the number of actual mutinies, it seems the preferred Australian option has been, where possible, to treat alleged mutinous behaviour as something less legally controversial, thereby attracting less attention and scrutiny, and avoiding political fallout'.¹¹

5 Bean, *Official History: Vol. VI*, Index, p. xxi.

6 Interview with Hugh Fraser for 'Moray Firth People'. Am Baile: Highland History and Culture website, <http://www.ambaile.org.uk>, File 1669 (5/15).

7 For example, Douglas Haig blamed the commander of the Australian Corps, William Birdwood, for the Australian disciplinary problems during the First World War. J.G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 169.

8 Guttridge, *Mutiny*, pp. 2-4.

9 Guttridge, *Mutiny*, p. 4.

10 Webb Garrison, *Mutiny in the Civil War* (Shippensburg: White Mane Books, 2001), p. v.

11 Rowan Cahill, 'The Battle of Sydney', *Overland*, no. 169, 2002, pp. 50-54. For examples of this treatment of mutiny in international contexts, see David Englander, 'Mutinies and Military Morale', in Hew Strachan (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War* (Oxford:

Terry Irving and Rowan Cahill also argued that, 'Australian defence authorities have successfully swept mutinies under the carpet'.¹² Peter Stanley also commented on a number of incidents of strike and protest at length in his book *Bad Characters*. Stanley noted that, 'many of the "riots" and "mutinies" that the authorities faced were actually collective demonstrations [...] Officers had reason to conceal or diminish such incidents but soldiers' diaries reveal what the official record does not'.¹³ Stanley elaborated on this point by noting that officers of the AIF often felt 'shamed by their men's protests',¹⁴ and they were thus keen to cover up any rebellious incidents that occurred under their leadership. An example of this can be seen in an incident that took place in January 1915. While on a long route march through the Egyptian desert, soldiers of the 1st Brigade of the AIF simply sat down in the sand as a protest against their inadequate rations. The men refused to move until their complaints were listened to. The flustered commanding officer promised the men better treatment provided they end their protest and continue marching before their brigadier arrived.¹⁵ However, such incidents barely featured in the *Official History of Australia during the War of 1914-1918*, as the official historian, C.E.W. Bean, was keen to downplay occurrences of 'bad behaviour' to instead present a positive image of the Australian soldier to readers at home.

Even stronger sentiments are evident in histories of the British Army during the Second World War. Lawrence James argued that mutinies that occurred during the world wars 'were deliberately hushed up for the good reason that news of them would dishearten both civilians and fighting men as well as cheer the enemy'.¹⁶ Where mutinies were described, the mutineers were often presented as cowards who shirked their duties and abandoned their comrades. Indeed, James argued that mutiny, 'like cowardice, can be interpreted as a moral weakness. It is therefore a crime which is not much

Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 191-203; Jeffrey Grey, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence: Volume 1: The Australian Army* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 62-6; Christopher Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell: New Zealanders and Military Discipline in the First World War* (Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), especially p. 297; Timothy Bowman, *Irish Regiments in the Great War: Discipline and Morale* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 2003.

¹² Terry Irving and Rowan Cahill, *Radical Sydney* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010), p. 121.

¹³ Peter Stanley, *Bad Characters: Sex, Crime, Mutiny, Murder and the Australian Imperial Force* (Sydney: Pier 9, 2010), p. 149.

¹⁴ Stanley, *Bad Characters*, p. 210.

¹⁵ Jeffrey Williams, 'Discipline on Active Service: The 1st Brigade, First AIF 1914-1919' (LittB thesis, Australian National University, 1982), p. 20.

¹⁶ Lawrence James, *Mutiny in the British and Commonwealth Forces, 1797-1956* (London: Buchan & Enright, 1987), p. 3.

talked about, either by civilians or servicemen'.¹⁷ An example of these various elements can be found in Hugh Pond's analysis of the protest at Salerno in 1943. Pond scolds the protesters as 'mutinous troops' and describes in unsympathetic terms the 'appalling situation' in what was a 'sad day for the British Army'.¹⁸ Pond also rashly suggested that the 'real reason' the men protested was because they 'wanted to go back home (to Britain) with their regiments'.¹⁹ Furthermore, Pond argued that, 'Not unnaturally the whole episode was hushed up under wartime secrecy'.²⁰

Because mutinies and protests were often interpreted as shameful behaviour, the trend has also been to downplay and even omit such events from wartime reporting. Mutinies had the potential to damage morale, and there was always the risk that the behaviour could spread to other units. During wartime, soldiers were typically presented as 'heroes' – praised for their dedication to comrades, their courage under fire, and their sacrifice for the greater good. Praise was accorded to those soldiers who serve nobly and dedicate their lives to the military. Within this style of writing, refusals to work and fight, refusals to follow the orders of officers, and broader protests against military authorities were portrayed as cowardly, shameful and regretful incidents often led by a few 'bad characters'. For example, one naval officer argued that the Fort Jackson mutineers of 1862 'were mostly of foreign birth and low origin';²¹ and investigations into that mutiny by the Confederate general, Mansfield Lovell, attributed blame to the working-class and immigrant soldiers.²² Similarly, during the First World War, C.E.W. Bean attributed the cause of bad behaviour within the AIF in late 1914 and early 1915 to a small number of 'old soldiers'. Bean argued, 'A large number of these men were not Australians', and they exerted a bad influence on the other younger men.²³

17 James, *Mutiny in the British and Commonwealth Forces*, p. 4. James also remarked that he was refused access to one private archive due, he believed, to this reason.

18 Hugh Pond, *Salerno* (London: William Kimber and Co., 1961), pp. 208–9. Pond also argued that the men were 'vitaly required at the Salerno front' which, by the time of their protest, was no longer the case.

19 Pond, *Salerno*, pp. 208–9.

20 Pond, *Salerno*, pp. 208–9.

21 Cited in Michael D. Pierson, *Mutiny at Fort Jackson: The Untold Story of the Fall of New Orleans* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), p. 32.

22 Pierson, *Mutiny at Fort Jackson*, p. 32.

23 C.E.W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918: Volume I – The Story of ANZAC from the Outbreak of War to the End of the First Phase of the Gallipoli Campaign, May 4, 1915* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 11th edition, 1941), pp. 128–9.

Both American and Australian military law (and procedures) were originally direct descendants of British military law, and for many years after American independence and Australian federation, both American and Australian military laws, respectively, retained direct links and references to (and in many cases, directly copied) their British counterparts²⁴ Indeed, in Australia, Australian forces were specifically made subject to the British Army Act, 'as if they were part of His Majesty's Regular Land Forces', and this included provisions for punishments as provided by the Army Act.²⁵ However, despite the similarities in these systems of law, the application of those laws – specifically as they apply to mutinous behaviour – varied considerably depending on local factors, most notably the sentiment of commanding officers. As much as was possible and practical within a given situation, officers attempted to quell mutinous behaviour, deter protesters from persisting in such action, and avoid having to resort to laying charges against their men under the respective provisions granted by military law. In many cases where charges were made, they were laid by higher authorities and officers outside the unit being charged. Commanding officers and authorities within a unit were generally reluctant to lay serious charges against their own men if it could be avoided. In addition to the sentiment of commanding officers, other local environmental factors were also critical in determining authorities' responses to mutinous behaviour. Lenience might be shown if men were desperately needed in combat; if officers were desperate to be seen as strong leaders; or if officers empathized with the causes of the men under their command. These details will be further unpacked in the following chapters. As such, individual acts of protest and mutiny must be understood within their specific contexts.

As will be seen in the following chapters, there was a remarkably different response to the protests of 1863 and 1918, compared with the protests of 1943. Furthermore, we can even observe subtle changes in the treatment of mutinous behaviour during each of the three respective conflicts. The levels of discipline imposed by officers, and the punishments for offences throughout both the Confederate and the Union armed forces in 1865, bore little resemblance to the relatively more relaxed circumstances of early 1861. Similarly, during the Second World War, the threat posed by Germany

24 See for example Alfred Avins, 'A History of Short Desertion', *Military Law Review*, vol. 13, 1961, pp. 143-65.

25 Defence Act 1917, No. 36, ss 54 and 55. Australian military law retained these close references and links with British law until The Defence Force Discipline Act 1982, 85 years after the Federation of Australia.

hardened the discipline level and the hitherto casual approach to military service by the 'Saturday night soldiers' of the Territorial Army (TA).

Because authorities' responses to mutinous behaviour have varied across space and time, historical accounts of mutinies and protests within military environments often adopt a comparative approach. For example, Webb Garrison's book *Mutiny in the Civil War* served as a catalogue of protests and mutinies during the American Civil War, with several pages dedicated to each event, including the 2nd Maine's protest of 1863.²⁶ Lawrence James's *Mutiny in the British and Commonwealth Forces* similarly sought to uncover and document a series of relatively little-known events over a broad period, and James included a brief discussion on the protest at Salerno in 1943.²⁷ One of the most valuable aspects of James's analysis is that he also sought to provide a broader social and political context to the events, with his objective being 'not so much to discover a pattern, but in an attempt to reveal the extent to which external factors not only contributed to the uprisings but shaped them'.²⁸ Leonard F. Guttridge's *Mutiny: A History of Naval Insurrection*, focused, as the title suggests, on mutinies and protests within international naval forces;²⁹ and John Harris adopted a similar approach in his book *Scapegoat!* by selecting a series of courts-martial for analysis, including several protests/mutinies.³⁰

While there have been no dedicated studies of the 2nd Maine's protest in 1863, several scholars have provide valuable analyses of the events within broader contexts. Most notably, James Mundy dedicated a chapter to the 1863 protest within his broader history of the 2nd Maine during the American Civil War.³¹ The key value here is that Mundy also established a detailed understanding of the broader experiences of the unit during the war. A similar level of insight is gained in Thomas Desjardin's history of the 20th Maine during the Gettysburg campaign.³² While Desjardin focused his analysis on the 20th Maine, the experiences of the 2nd Maine men during their protest feature strongly in his discussion.

26 Garrison, *Mutiny in the Civil War*, pp. 92-7.

27 James, *Mutiny in the British and Commonwealth Forces*, pp. 167-75.

28 James, *Mutiny in the British and Commonwealth Forces*, pp. 4-5.

29 Guttridge, *Mutiny*, 1992.

30 John Harris, *Scapegoat! Famous Courts Martial* (London: Severn House, 1989).

31 James H. Mundy, *Second to None: The Story of the 2d Maine Volunteers – 'The Bangor Regiment'* (Scarborough, ME: Harp Publications, 1992), pp. 1-32.

32 Thomas A. Desjardin, *Stand Firm Ye Boys from Maine: The 20th Maine and the Gettysburg Campaign* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Likewise, there have been no dedicated studies of the protests undertaken by the AIF in 1918. The most detailed account to date comes from C.E.W. Bean, who analysed the protests over several pages of the sixth volume of the *Official History*. But while Bean adopted an empathetic approach to the protesters, and did briefly seek to understand their motivations for protesting, his attention was primarily focused on the administrative circumstances surrounding the disbandment of the AIF battalions and how this was managed by officers. Elsewhere, Michele Bomford and Ashley Ekins also provided brief summaries of the incident in their respective works, and a number of individual battalion histories have also made brief mention of the incident.³³ But, to date, there remains an absence of any detailed analysis of the protest.

Most analyses of the protest at Salerno in 1943 are also brief. The protest featured in Eric Morris's detailed study of the Salerno invasion, titled, *Salerno: A Military Fiasco*, but only as a side-note within a section that generally explores the German counter-attack.³⁴ It received similar attention by Hugh Pond, who provided a brief and critical analysis of the protest in his study of Salerno.³⁵ And Dominick Graham and Shelford Bidwell also summarized events within the context of the Salerno invasion, concluding that, 'The gut feeling of the Salerno mutineers was neither a refusal to face the dangers of the battlefield nor undue attachment to their regiments but that they had been treated unreasonably'.³⁶ Indeed, aside from those brief summaries of the events, there are few detailed studies available on the events of 1863, 1918 and 1943.

The one important exception to this is Saul David's detailed analysis of the 1943 protest, titled *Mutiny at Salerno*.³⁷ David scoured archival records and conducted interviews with many of the protesters and others involved in the subsequent trial to provide an exhaustive account of the 1943 protest, subsequent court-martial and the long-term impact of events on the protesters. Given this solid foundation, my investigation of the 1943 protest draws

33 Michele Bomford, *Beaten Down By Blood: The Battle of Mont St Quentin-Peronne 1918* (Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2012), pp. 325-7; Ashley Ekins, 'Fighting to Exhaustion: Morale, Discipline and Combat Effectiveness in the Armies of 1918', in Ashley Ekins (ed.), *1918: Year of Victory: The End of the Great War and the Shaping of History* (Auckland and Wolombi: Exisle Publishing, 2010), p. 113.

34 Eric Morris, *Salerno: A Military Fiasco* (New York: Stein and Day, 1984), pp. 271-4.

35 Pond, *Salerno*, pp. 208-9.

36 Dominick Graham and Shelford Bidwell, *Tug of War: The Battle for Italy, 1943-45* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military Classics, 2004), pp. 92-4.

37 Saul David, *Mutiny at Salerno 1943: An Injustice Exposed* (London: Conway, 2005).

heavily on David's work, and primarily seeks to contrast the events of 1943 with those of 1863 and 1918 and to understand the workings of the military moral economy within those environments.

Within the traditional genre of writing, historians have long portrayed mutineers as among the most dangerous and destructive elements of a military force.³⁸ Mutiny strikes fear into the heart of officers and has long been a military crime linked with the death sentence.³⁹ But if we take the time to cast aside these fears and actually examine the sentiment, motivations, and actions of supposed 'mutineers', we can often observe clear efforts to maintain standards of honour, integrity, and justice in environments where those standards were in general decline. Furthermore, such 'mutinies' were often intended simply as protests or strikes against perceived injustices within a military environment, and they were not necessarily attempts to gain control of that environment. In the three cases analysed in this book, for example, the protesters were attempting to maintain the moral *status quo* and achieve justice in an environment where they all felt that moral values were being violated by authorities.

To complement this traditional genre of military history, there is a growing body of scholarship that analyses military forces of the past as social environments, communities, and workplaces. Service personnel often enlisted for the pay or for the long-term social or economic benefits they hoped would result from military service; and they often thought of daily work within the military in similar ways that they thought of daily work within the civilian world.⁴⁰ Previous analyses of military labour have argued that this approach towards military service as work also included responses to complaints that utilized pre-war understandings of industrial action and bargaining.⁴¹

38 For example, Erik-Jan Zürcher argued that "Industrial action" by its own armed forces was of course the most serious crisis any ruling elite could face.' Erik-Jan Zürcher, 'Introduction: Understanding Changes in Military Recruitment and Employment Worldwide', in Erik-Jan Zürcher (ed.), *Fighting for a Living: A Comparative History of Military Labour 1500-2000* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), p. 41.

39 Guttridge, *Mutiny*, p. 7. C.E.W. Bean noted that 'Mutiny was one of the only two offences punishable in the A.I.F [Australian Imperial Force] by death.' Bean, *Official History: Vol. VI*, p. 940. Furthermore, mutiny remained an offence punishable by death in the United Kingdom until as late as 1998.

40 See for example the analyses within Zürcher, *Fighting for a Living*. See also Nathan Wise, 'The Lost Labour Force: Working Class Approaches towards Military Service during the Great War', *Labour History*, 93, November 2007, pp. 161-76.

41 Wise, 'The Lost Labour Force', pp. 171-3; Nathan Wise, "In Military Parlance I Suppose We Were Mutineers": Industrial Relations in the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War',

There are also increasing efforts to link these themes throughout different conflicts, and to identify the similarities and differences in the nature of military labour across different times and places. Erik-Jan Zürcher's 2013 compilation, *Fighting for a Living*, brought together 19 different case studies that explored aspects of military labour around the world through five different centuries of conflict. Many of these studies focused on the nature of labour relationships within the military – that is, what were the structures (nature of income, duration of service, and legal constraints on freedom) within which soldiers were employed by the military.⁴²

These historians have sought to place such incidents within a broader social, cultural, and labour framework, and to see these incidents within the military as protests (or strikes) against unsatisfactory social and labour conditions. However, it can be difficult to determine when a protest becomes a more formal and organized strike.⁴³ This is particularly the case in the AIF protest of 1918, when the protesters refused to follow a particular order, but continued with their regular work. Nonetheless, it is clear that both mutinies and strikes, however defined, fundamentally begin with a protest against military conditions that often develops into a larger incident. As such, the term *protest* is given preference throughout this book.

By and large, the study of protests, mutinies, and strikes in military environments is an under-studied and under-appreciated area. It is thus hoped that this book will make a substantial contribution to the field, both in terms of uncovering details on the three events in focus and by shedding valuable light on the factors that incite people to protest, and how common these factors were across different military forces in different eras. Protests, mutinies, and strikes must be seen as more than just responses to short-term mistreatment and low morale. They must be placed within broader contexts that incorporate considerations of pre-war social and cultural environments. As James Scott suggested in his analysis of Southeast Asian peasant protests, such behaviour must be seen within the context of contemporary understandings of 'social justice, of rights and obligations, of reciprocity'.⁴⁴ With this in mind, this book pays close attention to those

Labour History, no. 101, November, 2011, pp. 161-76.

42 See for example Zürcher, 'Introduction', pp. 19-29.

43 Indeed, some scholars believe the term 'strike' originated in naval mutinies where, as Gilje argues, 'sailors would "strike" the sails of a ship to prevent it from sailing during a labor stoppage'. See Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 252.

44 James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. vii.

understandings. It will scrutinize how those protesters of 1863, 1918, and 1943 perceived their rights and the obligations of the military, and how those perceptions factored into their desire to protest.

As a starting point, scholars must recognize and appreciate the civilian origins of soldiers, of their attitudes, and of the communities they constructed within the military. Much like the civil societies whence they came, the military communities those men shaped (largely, of course, in the absence of women) were structured along clear class lines and were heavily influenced by perceptions of manliness, job skill, and social status. Scholars must appreciate the continuities between those civilian and military environments. The same social divisions and tensions that permeated civil society in the USA, Australia, and Britain were replicated within military environments. Indeed, as explored in the following chapters, the rank-based hierarchy of the military was an extension of the civil social hierarchy.

Thus, in order to understand the sentiments of protesters in 1863, 1918, and 1943 – and, in particular, their sense of opposition and resistance to authority and the sense of moral economy that developed in those three environments – each analysis in the following three chapters includes a detailed exploration of the pre-war civilian relations which formed the basis for social relations and social hierarchies within the military. In particular, they will consider the oppositional relationship workers experienced with their employers and other authorities within civil society. They will consider how those civilian workers in the 1860s, 1910s, and 1930s – much like Thompson's English working people of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries⁴⁵ – articulated their sense of a common interest between themselves, and against their employers.

As those civilian workers entered the military to become soldiers, they found themselves once again in a familiar position in the social hierarchy. Whereas in civil society they had worked at the demands of powerful authorities, their employers, within the military they worked at the demands of another class of powerful authorities – their officers. As will be seen in the chapters to follow, the men who held power in civil society were the same men who held power within the military. The class structure of civil society was simply replicated by the rank hierarchy of the military.

Together, those workers carried that same identity of interests between themselves as they joined the rank and file in their new military environments. And, together, they encountered another class of men, their officers,

45 E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 2013 [first published 1963]), pp. 8-9.

who held interests that were often different from, and occasionally in opposition to and in conflict with, the interests of the rank and file. For many workers, this pattern of common experiences – of being on the ‘lesser end’ of a productive relationship and of being in conflict with the interests of other classes, whether it be in a civil or a military environment – helped solidify their class consciousness and identity. In the United States, for example, the defeat of the Confederacy in 1865 was celebrated, by some, as the defeat of aristocracy and inequality throughout American society. In a resolution presented in Boston, Ira Steward urged that it ‘be known that the workingmen of America will in future claim a more equal share in the wealth their industry creates in peace and a more equal participation in the privileges and blessings of those free institutions, defended by their manhood on many a bloody field of battle’.⁴⁶ The actions of men like Steward invigorated class-conscious workers and the American labour movement, and in the post-war years labour organizations flourished.

These understandings of class, approaches to work, and responses to workplace issues must also be contextualized within historical understandings of gender and, in particular, of ‘manliness’ in these eras. In each of the three eras under investigation in this book, men demonstrated their manliness in an attempt to gain peer approval and social recognition.⁴⁷ John Tosh observed of nineteenth-century Britain, for example, that the ‘qualification for a man’s life among men – in short for a role in the public sphere – depends on their masculinity being tested against the recognition of their peers during puberty, young adulthood and beyond’.⁴⁸ Within civil society, manliness was typically demonstrated and tested at home, at work, and among all-male associations.⁴⁹

In each period, within the United States of America, Australia, and Great Britain, enlisting in the armed forces was a powerful way to assert manliness. Within an Australian context, for example, Martin Crotty argued that ‘the most obvious way in which manliness could be defined in national terms was in the glorification of fighting for the nation against external

46 Resolution presented at Faneuil Hall, Boston, 1865. Cited in Hyman Kuritz, ‘Ira Steward and the Eight Hour Day’, *Science and Society*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1956, p. 122.

47 Tosh argued that public affirmation was central to masculine status. John Tosh, ‘What Should Historians do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain’, *History Workshop*, no. 38, 1994, p. 184.

48 Tosh, ‘What Should Historians do with Masculinity?’, p. 184.

49 Tosh, ‘What Should Historians do with Masculinity?’, p. 184.

enemies'.⁵⁰ Soldiers' identities then were grounded in an assertion of peak-manliness. Enlisting in the military was widely regarded as the 'manliest' thing a man could do. But enlistment in the armed forces did not end the pursuit of manliness. Within the new living and working environment of the military, men continued to search for ways to assert their manly credentials over others, and to test their manliness among their peers.⁵¹

However, this assertion of peak-manliness and attempts to assert manliness on a daily basis in the new environment of the military were complicated by the fundamentally subservient nature of military service. While new recruits asserted their masculine superiority over civilians who did not enlist, they were simultaneously in an authoritatively inferior position below their officers. On occasion, the tensions could boil over into conflict – not only between officers and their men but also between regiments of the same army – as groups of individuals sought opportunities to assert their manly superiority over others.⁵²

Within the subservient environment of the army, one of the ways that men of the rank and file sought to assert their manly superiority was to display a sense of pride in their work. Much like skilled labourers in civil society had displayed pride in their productive outputs, so too soldiers in military environments displayed a sense of both personal and collective pride in their military achievements. In time, those achievements, and the sense of pride associated with them, became an integral part of each unit's sense of *esprit de corps*, as outlined in more detail below.

The similarities in these three protests can best be explained by utilizing the theories of moral economies, similar to those originally espoused by E.P. Thompson and James Scott.⁵³ Moral economy theory holds that communities

50 Martin Crotty, *Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity 1870-1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), p. 25. For a recent similar analysis of the situation in New Zealand, where soldiers were held up as the archetypal man during the First World War, see Steven Loveridge, "Soldiers and Shirkers": Modernity and New Zealand Masculinity during the Great War', *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2013, pp. 59-79; for a British comparison, see Meg Albrinck, 'Humanitarians and He-Men: Recruitment Posters and the Masculine Ideal', in Pearl James (ed.), *Picture This: World War I Posters and Visual Culture* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), pp. 312-39.

51 This has been analysed in an Australian context in Nathan Wise, 'Job Skill, Manliness and Working Relationships in the Australian Imperial Force during World War I', *Labour History*, no. 106, May 2014, pp. 99-122.

52 For a detailed example of this, see Wise, 'Job Skill, Manliness and Working Relationships', pp. 115-21.

53 E.P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', *Past and Present*, no. 50, February, 1971; Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*.