Support for maimed and disabled soldiers had exercised the mind of government since the sixteenth century. A maimed soldier rate was ordered to be introduced in 1593 which was linked some eight years later with the existing rate for the support of poor prisoners in the King's Bench and Marshalsea prisons in London. These rates, together with all the other rates necessary to enable Lancashire to discharge its financial responsibilities, were decided upon by the Justices often sitting en bloc at a meeting known as the 'Sheriffs Table' at Lancaster. (Quintrell 1981) Collection of the rates were the responsibility of the High Constable of each Hundred (working through the parish or township officers). In Lancashire each Hundred had two High Constables appointed (unusually) for one year only. The High Constables for Lonsdale were appointed so that one came from North of the Sands and the other from South.

Prior to the Civil Wars the problem of relief for the 'maymed souldier' was not large and was easily manageable within the prescribed procedures. Once the wars had started the problem became acute. In 1642 Parliament accepted responsibility for the relief of disabled soldiers and for the widows and orphans of those killed. According to Firth in Cromwell's Army 'Though these promises were imperfectly fulfilled owing to the financial difficulties of successive governments a serious attempt was made to carry them out' (Firth 1921). Money for relief was raised either centrally through a levy on the Excise or through the counties as hitherto. At the Quarter Sessions held both at Lancaster and Preston in the summer of 1651 there were numerous petitions relating to Parliamentary soldiers. At one stage two hospitals in the country as a whole were maintained and almost 6,000 out persons were being paid - usually at the rate of 4s weekly. The numbers of out persons were reduced but nevertheless financial difficulties arose and arrears mounted - particularly during the period of uncertainty which existed after the death of Cromwell in 1658. The following year Lord Fairfax, the former Commander in Chief of the New Model Army petitioned Parliament on behalf of 2,500 maimed soldiers and 4,000 widows and orphans seeking regular payment of relief (Firth 1921). However, at the Restoration, the hospitals were closed and the pensions terminated. Recipients were given twelve weeks' benefit and dismissed with letters of recommendation to the Justices of the appropriate county.

The matter came before the Justices at the Sheriffs Table meeting of Justices at Lancaster Castle in March 1661. It was ordered that the appropriate recipients be identified and that relief be administered by the appropriate Hundred. As the money was to be raised by the county under the original Act of Elizabeth I it was little enough - for Lonsdale Hundred only £9-10-8. Many people must have missed out (Quintrell, 1981)

A new Act was passed in 1662 'for releeffe of poor maymed officers and souldiers who have faithfully served his Majesty and his royal father in the late warrs'. (14 Charles II C9) At the Sheriffs Table meeting in August that year the arrangements for raising and spending the necessary finance were laid down. Clearly the money raised under the new Act was earmarked for ex-Royalist soldiers only. Whether their former opponents could still obtain relief under the old arrangements is not
clear. Certainly after 1660 it has not been possible to identify from Quarter Sessions papers any payments made to exclusively Parliamentarian soldiers. Payments to Royalist soldiers are numerous either under the original provisions or the Act of 1662. Among early petitioners - all in 1661, was Thomas Ainsworth, a former quartermaster under Sir John Girlington of Thirland Castle at Tunstall. He had received 'severall dangerous wounds whereby your petitioner remained a lame and impotent man'.(QSP 213/8) Richard Lonsdale had also served under Girlington - who himself was killed in 1645. He had lost his right eye and had also been shot in the head '... the bullet being yet in his head to the great weakening of his body and impairing of his sight and hearing'. His application for relief is endorsed among other by Sir Philip Musgrave of Edenhall, a noted Cumberland Royalist.(QSP 213/14) The final petition of 1661 was that of John Cooper of Hornby. Yet again a former soldier under Sir John Girlington he had been 'shott through the thigh and received other dangerous wounds and some hurts besides long and sad imprisonment'. (QSP 213/14) Also from Hornby was Edward Bond who applied for relief the following year. He had served in the Regiment of Colonel Kirkby as a 'Drumbeater' and despite great 'weakness and feebleness of body' had a wife and, perhaps more surprisingly in view of his injuries, four small children. His application was supported by the Vicar of Melling, of which parish Hornby formed part. (QSP 213/4)

The crippled soldiers could be found in most of the villages of North Lancashire. In 1673 Thomas Clarke of Cockerham applied for help. He had fought under Colonel Thomas Dalton of Thurnham Hall (just outside Cockerham) until the Colonel was killed and his troops disbanded. The petitioner had lost the use of two of his fingers so 'he tooke himselfe to his Native Towne whither being come could not ....live quietly for the contrary partie, but was tossed to and fro for the space of three or four yeares....so that he could not follow any imployment'.(QSP 410/14) And there were others, like James Ward of Borwick (QSP 410/7) and Laurence Dunderdale - a surgeon under Sir John Girlington. In his petition he claimed that 'he did cure 120 souldiers in the said Regiment' - pretty good for a seventeenth century doctor. His sponsors were Colonel Richard Kirkby of Kirkby Ireleth and Thomas Carus of the well known Halton Royalist family.(QSP 293/5.)

When money stopped being collected for the specific use of maimed soldiers is not clear. The last oblique reference in the Lancashire Sheriffs Table records is 1675. In one of the Welsh counties - Brecon - payments were continued until the death of Charles II in 1685.(Tucker 1966) In the Lancashire records a petition survives from 1683 from a John Walsmey of Goosenargh. He had served under the command of the well known Royalist, Captain Butler of Kirkland just north of Garstang. Captain Butler had been killed at the first Battle of Newbury in 1643, but John Walsmey had continued with the Cavalier Army till the surrender of Newark in 1646. He appears to have received 10s a year (probably under the Act of 1662) but such was his current poverty (he had been a miller) the overseers of the poor were ordered to pay him an additional 12d weekly. (QSP 573/8)

Civil War veterans would gradually decrease in number, but there must have been many still alive at the end of the century.

However, there were other wars and other veterans - such as William Freason 'lately returned from beyond the seas' who petitioned Lancaster Quarter Sessions in the winter of 1680/1681. He had been a soldier almost thirty years and had served in Portugal before being sent to Tangiers to assist in the defence of that town against attack by the Moors. Both these periods of service were as a result of the treaty between England and Portugal arising from the marriage of Charles II to Catherine of Braganza in 1661. Many of the troops sent to Portugal were from the recently
disbanded Parliamentary Army and it, therefore, seems likely that the beginning of Freason's military service was actually in Cromwell's New Model Army - which, as already indicated, would make him something of a rarity as a recipient for relief. One is glad to know that he was awarded 12d weekly. Presumably his political sins had now been forgotten.

The accession of William III began the sequence of wars with France which lasted with quite short breaks for the next one hundred and twenty five years. Edward and Henry Bridge found themselves in Lancaster Castle in 1699 - why, it is not quite clear. One of the two brothers was an ex-soldier and had taken part in the campaigns in Ireland, culminating in the Battle of Aughrim in 1691. He had then fought in Flanders and had been present at the recapture of Namur in 1695. It seems that the only thing preventing release was the non-payment of 'Mr Hornby's fees'. Perhaps he was a lawyer! Thomas Greaves lived in Hornby and was one of Marlborough's soldiers. In his petition dated April 1707 he emphasises that he enlisted voluntarily and served until he was disabled of his right hand at ye seige of Menin' the previous year. On his return to Hornby, his birthplace and place of settlement for Poor Law purposes, he was allowed by the overseers the weekly sum of 6d. He was then joined by his wife and young child who had travelled over from Ireland and he now requested an increase. The overseers were ordered to pay him a lump sum of 40d plus an additional penny per week. The final petition is from a sailor, Thomas Hooke of Upper Rawcliffe, and is dated 1713. He sets out in detail his eighteen years of service - originally as a marine and subsequently 'A seaman before ye mast'. It is a fascinating document, that sets out most clearly the hazards of seafaring life in the navy of Queen Anne (and earlier) and the many and varied engagements in which he had taken part and the places he had visited. It also indicates the local stresses and strains that could exist between the Poor Law Overseers the 'Lords of ye Town' and the local Justice (and Squire). Thomas Hooke was ordered 10d weekly. He deserved it.

The presence of these veterans in the towns and villages of North Lancashire (and doubtless throughout the country) would be well known to the inhabitants. There would be others like them who did not need to apply to Quarter Sessions, but existed on what they were allowed by the parish or from support by their families and there would be those who were not disabled and returned to some form of civilian employment. Whatever their condition, they would contribute to the life and the knowledge of the community and perhaps give those who lived there some knowledge and insight into the outside world.

Quarter Sessions Papers (*QSP*) are held at the County Record Office, Preston.