

Visual Literacy Activity *Cont.*

The logo for 'networks' features the word in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font. A stylized graphic of intersecting lines forms a starburst or network pattern behind the letter 'o'.

Conflict and Absolutism in Europe

effective, Lieutenant General Oliver Cromwell introduced organizational changes that resulted in the New Model Army.

The New Model Army, unlike previous English armies, was not made up of scattered militias. Instead, it was a professional, regularly paid army of soldiers recruited from all over England, held together by a centralized command and strictly enforced discipline. The largest segment of the New Model Army was the Regiment of Foot, consisting of thousands of pikemen (pikes were long spears) and musketeers. The musketeers were so named because they used muskets, early firearms that looked like long rifles. Muskets, which were slow to load and to ignite, had to be discharged against the enemy while the musketeers were in precise linear formations. To ensure that such formations worked efficiently, musketeers had to participate in frequent drills. There was also the Regiment of Horse, consisting of mounted soldiers, or cavalrymen. About a thousand dragoons, or armed infantrymen on horseback, were also in this regiment.

During the seventeenth century, firearm technology improved rapidly. Weapons became lighter, more accurate, and easier to use. The earlier firearms, such as the type of musket called a matchlock, had to be ignited by a match in order to fire. The later flintlock improved on the matchlock; pressing the trigger sparked a flint inside the gun, igniting the charge. Armor was less effective the more firearms improved. Except for a few special cavalrymen who still wore full armor, most horsemen and infantry wore, at best, pot helmets, breastplates, and backplates, in addition to protective thick leather buff-coats.

The New Model Army owed its success, however, to qualities that had little to do with technological advancements. It was a disciplined army fueled by a religious fervor. As British historian Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859) noted, “[Cromwell’s] troops moved to victory with the precision of machines, while burning with the wildest fanaticism of Crusaders. . . . [They] never failed to destroy and break in pieces whatever force was opposed to them.”

Practicing the Skill

- 1. Describing** Look at the painting *The Battle of Naseby, 1645*, which shows the first victory of the New Model Army under Sir Thomas Fairfax. What generalizations can you make about how the New Model Army was different from a medieval army?

Visual Literacy Activity *Cont.*



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2. **Interpreting** Look at the engraving of the musketeer. How do you think it might have helped musketeers?

3. **Analyzing** What was considered “new” about New Model Army: the weapons it used or the way in which it was organized?

Go a Step Further

4. **Speculating** In the view of many, the New Model Army was successful mostly because of the character of its soldiers, many of whom were devoted, even fanatical, Puritans. These men were politically and religiously motivated to defeat the Royalists. In your opinion, what makes an army stronger: its weapons and strategies, or the fierce devotion and loyalty of its soldiers?
