MADE TO ORDER: AN INTERPRETATION OF MASCULINITY IN
BRITAIN DURING THE GREAT WAR

A University Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of
California State University, East Bay

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in History

By
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March, 2014
MADE TO ORDER: AN INTERPRETATION OF MASCULINITY IN BRITAIN DURING THE GREAT WAR

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Preface

For the past two years I have been researching what it meant to be male in Great Britain during the period leading up to and during the First World War. I've examined the masculine identity shared in the ranks of British soldiers serving on the continent as well as among the men who remained at home. I have looked at how the British male living in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw himself and how that self-image was the result of a unique historical transformation -- the masculinization of British society. British males living around the turn of the last century expressed a constructed historical masculinity, one that the government and organs of the state fostered and also profited from. The inspiration behind this project, however, was decided long before the subsequent research, and finding extensive pre-existing works in this area was at once exciting and also disappointing as I wanted to be the first to investigate these waters. The historian Simon Schama observed correctly that all history tends towards autobiographical confession, and writing this thesis has, at various times, been deeply personal. In these pages, it is my hope that I have done some justice towards further understanding what motivated those lost as a result of man’s folly, and that in some small way I have kept the memory of the war alive.
Acknowledgments

The author wishes to express appreciation to the Department of History at California State East Bay for their support, especially to Professor Henry Reichman and Professor Jessica Weiss for their vast reserve of knowledge in and their dedication to the field of history, and of course their patience. To Professor Nancy Thompson who graciously agreed to read and edit this work. Professor Khal Schneider’s kindness and encouragement helped me in completing all parts of the history program. Henry Adams suggested that teachers affect eternity as they never know where their influence stops, so to that end this thesis is as much a product of my eighth grade history teacher at Joaquin Miller Middle School, Mr. Madsen, who unknowingly rescued me from childhood loneliness by showing me worlds beyond the one I knew. I also want to dedicate this thesis to my former professor Dr. Bernard A. Cook who taught at Loyola University New Orleans when I was an undergraduate. Although he likely wouldn’t remember me, his lasting impression was as a gentle, intelligent, and the kindest of human beings.

The small staff at the Imperial War Museum in London was very helpful in showing me how to navigate their collection. The British Library and the National Archives have moved towards digitizing their vast archival materials making for user friendly navigation and made some of my research more manageable.

This thesis would never have been completed without the devotion of my mother and father. Special thanks to my friend Dr. Jade O’Dell who agreed to
edit my work, and to my friend Michael Clark who inspired me by example. This thesis is also dedicated to Paul Wakefield, whose broken promise and unrealized potential would unintentionally give me the kernel at the center of this thesis. And for another Paul, the protagonist in Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front*, whose lost innocence is hopefully reflected in the following pages.
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List of Abbreviations

ANZAC....................................................Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
BEF.............................................................................British Expeditionary Force
DORA.............................................................................Defense of the Realm Act
IWM......................................................................................Imperial War Museum
NCF...................................................................................No-Conscription Fellowship
PRC...................................................................................Parliamentary Recruiting Committee
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Introduction

Subject, Historiography and Method of this Investigation

War is a part of God’s world order

Helmuth von Moltke¹

The first casualty of war is truth

Lord Philip Snowden, 1916 ²

I

Private Joseph Pickard of the British Fourth Battalion of Northumberland Fusiliers was thrown into the air from an explosion on the last day of March in 1918. He had been fighting near Moreuil in France during the Second Battle of the Somme when a shell exploded in front of him. Regaining consciousness and finding that he was among a pile of dead men, Pickard realized that he either must move or likely die from a bayonet wound inflicted by the advancing German army. Pickard looked down and tore his pants away to search for wounds; he found extensive ones. The sciatic nerve in the joint of his left leg had been cut and shrapnel had fractured both hip joints, the pelvis on his left side was smashed, “I had three holes in my bladder. I lost my nose. Ha-ha. I was a bloody

¹ Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Molke, letter to Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, December 11, 1880.

mess."\(^3\) Crawling out of the wooded area near where he had been fighting and along a road behind the trenches he slowly moved towards help. A stretcher was brought, an ambulance taken, and a blanket was placed over his body - he was marked dead. Pickard eventually received assistance from an orderly who removed the shroud and took him to hospital where he awaited a bed and extensive surgery. Recounting his part in the Great War some seventy years later in an interview in 1986, his thick Geordie accent sounded muffled from the prosthetic nose he had been given to replace the one he lost in 1918. He worked as a child of fourteen in a fishing reel factory and then as a military hut builder until he was eighteen, when he lied to a recruiting officer and became an under-aged volunteer in the military in 1916. Pickard’s decision to voluntarily join the military was, he remembered, a consequence of chronic unemployment, but there was also something else which he couldn’t explain, “When the war started I wanted to be in it. I don’t know why. I didn’t have any feelings about it. It’s only looking back that you see the different sides of it, but looking back I was too

\(^3\) During the 1970’s and 1980’s, the Imperial War Museum recorded a series of oral histories from servicemen of the Great War. Many of the interviews referenced throughout this work are from the IWM’s collection, and this work incorporates a number of these accounts. Consisting of soldier and officer interviews as well as interviews of conscientious objectors, they give a broad spectrum of experiences. These interviews are archived in digital format and are conveniently located on the IWM website. Interview 8946 of British private Joseph Pickard was recorded by Peter M. Hart in 1986, accessed July 12, 2013, [http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80008738](http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80008738). In addition to individual interviews, there are a series of collected interviews with narration on a new site set up by the IWM dedicated explicitly to the centenary of the war, accessed July 12, 2013, [http://www.1914.org](http://www.1914.org). These Centenary Podcasts range in subject: *The Somme, War in the Air, Passchendaele, and Women’s War Service*. This year, the British Government is planning commemorations, restoration of First World War monuments, and scholarships for pupils and teachers from every state funded secondary school to visit the battlefields of the Western Front in an effort to maintain awareness of Britain’s role in the Great War.
young to have any feelings about it.”

One reason Pickard, and others like him, may have felt obligated to fight in the war, namely an ambition to live up to the ideal of British masculinity, will be the subject of this study.

Opinions as to the significance of the First World War for England are as profuse as they are varied. This year marks the centennial, marking as good a time as any to advance those discussions. Bismarck had correctly anticipated the cause some decades before, “Some damn foolish thing in the Balkans.” A local issue in Serbia turned, through a series of short-sighted diplomatic entanglements and overdeveloped hostilities, into a cataclysmic disaster sweeping all major European powers into a typhoon of war. In the aftermath were left painful questions. How could a cataclysm of this magnitude have happened? Joseph Pickard was only one of nearly eight million soldiers from the British Empire to fight in the Great War, and one of more than three million killed or wounded. Why was the impact of the war on British society so dramatic and how did the average man experience this change? The war destabilized Victorian society even as it extinguished any pre-existing notions of martial glory, while tarnishing the image of the soldier as hero.

War was a male undertaking at the beginning of the twentieth century. Women largely took on responsibilities that were outside their traditional gender roles. In the civilian workforce, women worked in manufacturing and factory jobs,

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and many women farmed the land. Women served as field nurses on the front lines and rode in ambulances tending to wounded soldiers. Nearly forty-thousand women joined an organization called the Women’s Legion set up by the Marchioness of Londonderry, with the objective of cooking meals for the army. Dorothy Lawrence disguised herself as a man and enlisted in the British Army in 1914; Flora Sanders, an English nurse who joined a St. John Ambulance unit in Serbia became an officer in the Serbian army. Yet, British women were not allowed to vote in their governments’ elections in 1914, let alone enlist in the British Army. British males were tasked with fighting and dying in this conflict. It was the men of Britain who volunteered; the men who were selected to go to war or who refused to fight. These men in theory had to be a certain age, they had to have a certain chest size, had to have good teeth, and there were height and weight restrictions on enlistment, but from church pulpits to sports fields, England’s best males were advised to join the military. Part of the scope of this

5 Dorothy Lawrence’s story is not a happy one. Lawrence, a journalist, persuaded some friends to teach her drilling and marching, dyed her skin with furniture polish, and joined the 1st Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment in 1914. Lawrence laid mines close to the front lines with the BEF, and was under constant shell bombardment. Fearing that her true identity would be discovered and would put her fellow soldiers in peril, she surrendered to British officers after ten days. Lawrence was deemed first a spy and after interrogation was imprisoned and not allowed to discuss her activities. Following the war she was deemed insane and spent the majority of her life in an asylum, see Bernard A. Cook, Women and War: A Historical Encyclopedia from Antiquity to the Present (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Press, 2006) p. 367. Flora Sanders went to Serbia with 36 other women on a humanitarian mission in 1914. When separated from her ambulance unit, Sanders was inducted into the Serbian army by Serbian officers who viewed her participation as a precautionary method to ensure her safety. Sanders fought in the military alongside Serbian troops. Promoted to Corporal, she was wounded by a grenade explosion during hand to hand combat with Bulgarian troops as the Serbian Army advanced into Bitola. After the war, Sanders was promoted to Captain and was officially the only serving British female in the First World War, see Flora Sanders, The Autobiography of a Woman Soldier: A Brief Record of Adventure with the Serbian Army 1916-1919 (London: H.F. & G. Witherby, 1927).
project will be to examine where these men came from and what role they played in the British Army during the First World War.

British masculine ideals, which this thesis seeks to trace as a historical phenomenon, have been outlined before. Elaine Showalter suggested that the quintessential British male qualities were "stiff upper lip, self-control, self-restraint, and will power." This is also the general understanding of male roles reflected in social histories of the period. Women were left to their domestic role, summed up in the chauvinistic musings of best-selling Victorian author William Landels: "Man has no aptitude for domestic duties, and so long as they require to be done - that is, so long as the world lasts - women will be required to do them." The historian Susan Kent writes, "Men possessed the capacity for reason, action, aggression, independence, and self-interest. Women inhabited a separate, private sphere, one suitable for the culturally inherent qualities of femininity at the turn of the last century: emotion, passivity, submission, dependence, and selflessness, all derived, it was claimed insistently, from women's sexual and reproductive organization." Men were expected to be

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independent, fiercely patriotic, maintain households, and hold positions of power. To be a man in Britain at the turn of the last century, one had to exhibit qualities of self-restraint and detachment, as well as be aggressive in defending one’s rights and power. Male qualities in Britain, those the British government and officially sanctioned organizations of the state encouraged were: patriotism, strength in physical exercise, domestic authority, duty, and male group interest. The organizations that played an integral part in shaping that British masculine ideal were: the War Office and Parliament, the British education system and youth groups, the British class system and British Imperial goals, as well as in British prisons.

At the outbreak of the war more than a hundred-thousand young men between the ages of nineteen and thirty volunteered to join the British Army in response to a call to arms from the newly appointed Secretary of State for War, Lord Horatio Kitchener, hero of Khartoum and the Boer War (plate 1). By January of 1915, nearly one million young men had joined Kitchener’s Army, in a planned recruitment drive to make up for low enlistment numbers at the war’s outbreak. The men that enlisted in what Kitchener himself called the New Army joined along with others from rural and town communities throughout the United Kingdom; a strict departure from past British wars which relied strictly on a professional army. These New Army units were nicknamed, Pals Battalions, as they were comprised of friends, neighbors, school mates, and co-workers from local communities. This would have far reaching consequences for whole
neighborhoods and entire graduating classes that all volunteered together and died together. “In retrospect, one marvels that any nation of civilians can be uprooted from their normal peaceful lives,” wrote one British soldier, A.J. Turner, after the war “and within a few months be converted into professional mass killers motivated by subtle propaganda and defense of their ‘right.’”

Certainly subtle propaganda and a perceived defense of their right drove some of these men to join so enthusiastically, but were these volunteers also acting out a sense of manliness decades in the making? Did the men volunteering in the hundreds of thousands act out of patriotism, a sense of camaraderie, or a chance at valor, and if they did, where did these desires originate? What effects did these ideals have on these men?

Never before in history had so many men taken up arms; never before had soldiers on both sides been so unprepared to deal with the technological advancements of warfare. Commenting on atrocities committed by Austro-Hungarian soldiers in Serbia after the outbreak of war, Stephan Audion-Rouzeau and Annette Becker wrote, “Facial mutilations, particularly of the eyes, were most frequent, and done to men and women, though women were also the victims of sexual violence and mutilations of the genital organs. Anthropologists of violence have long recorded that such attacks aim at people’s most human features, the

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The mutilation of Joseph Pickard’s face had a lasting impact on the way he thought other people viewed his appearance. He remembered walking out of hospital in London where he had undergone one of many plastic surgeries on his nose after his near death on the Western Front, “I walked past some kids playing about...I passed two or three on the streets, and when I got there all the kids in the blinking neighborhood had gathered. Talking, looking, gawking at me. I’d just put the thing on! I could have taken a crutch and hit the whole blinking lot of them. I knew what they were looking at, and I turned around and went straight back to the hospital.” The bomb made the mutilation of Pickard’s face an impersonal act committed not by another man directly but with the same intended affect. It is unclear if the bomb explosion maimed Pickard’s genitalia; if they were left unharmed it was not for lack of trying on the part of German bomb manufacturers to destroy them. No one had fought a major war in Europe for forty years in 1914; the development of technology reshaped the men who came into contact with these new weapons of war. Against machine guns, tanks, airplanes, long range shells, and poison gas, men’s courage and physical prowess counted for very little. The method of war changed the way men saw themselves, both physically and psychologically.

The scope of this project is limited to the following: British men living in the last half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, those with experience in

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the war or those who refused to join with the British Army. This work will examine war policy, diplomacy, and the politics of gender in Britain. The British class system as it related to masculinity will be discussed and any facet of life relating to masculinity: in the home, labor, in larger society through propaganda and culture, in those who lacked the necessary masculinity the state was interested in promoting.

Social and political history intersected in Britain to influence gender. My focus is on the ways in which power influences gender, and the effects of that power on the men of Britain. Historian Joan Scott revealed, “the legitimizing of war - of expending young lives to protect the state - has variously taken the forms of explicit appeals to manhood (to the need to defend women and children), of implicit reliance of belief in the duty of sons to serve their leaders or their (father the) king, and of associations between masculinity and national strength.”

Scott is attempting to explain gender’s place in the complexity of social history; the story of masculinity in Britain prior to and during the Great War offers the reader of history a glimpse into the ways in which the power of the state can manipulate the social construction of gender. Men were taught to be patriotic in British schools, they increased their physical stamina in training camps, and they bonded with other males and heard their pastor lecture them about how important it was to go to war. The question this thesis seeks to answer is how

British men were expected to live up to the masculine ideals of their nation, and how British society and the British government worked to keep that masculine ideal intact. Britain was willing to fight a war in order to maintain the social order it had shaped and protected.

II

Looking at history in terms of gender is a recent development. Second Wave Feminism in the 1970’s is directly responsible for the re-examination of the role of gender in history. Regarding the feminist reassessment of traditional historiographies, the historian Joan W. Scott wrote, “Feminist scholars pointed out early on that the study of women would not only add new subject matter but would also force a critical reexamination of the premises and standards of existing scholarly work.”

In outlining new avenues of historical inquiry, feminist scholars opened up new worlds of historical inquiry. “It seems to me that we should be interested in the history of both men and women that we should not be working only the subjected sex any more than an historian of class can focus entirely on peasants,” wrote historian Natalie Zemon Davis in the 1970’s. “Our goal is to discover the range in sex roles and in sexual symbolism in different societies and periods, to find out what meaning they had and how they functioned to maintain the social order or to promote its change.”

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12 Ibid., 1054.

application of gender, as an analytic and theoretical tool resulted in revised
history curriculums and departments, and significantly enlarged the options for
historical exploration. Without the contribution of feminist challenges to the
dominant patriarchal narrative of history, there would likely be no study of
masculinity.

This work deals with masculinity and men exclusively rather than looking
at the places where spheres of men and women intersect; stressing masculinity
as an issue intertwined with high politics and power, and not necessarily in a way
that is conducive to all men – at least not the men in the trenches at
Passchendaele or the Somme. In the case of gender and wartime, historians
look at male interactions primarily, not in terms of theoretical history, but in
physical reality. Men were living together for months and years at a time within
an environment that was not generally populated with women. Letters from
home were so highly prized during the First World War, and the post so

14 Scott writes, “Because, on the face of it, war, diplomacy, and high politics have not been
explicitly about those relationships (relations between the sexes), gender seems not to apply and
so continues to be irrelevant to the thinking of historians concerned with issues of politics and
power.” Scott is referring to those historians who chose to map new territory not necessarily
limited to, “such topics as women, children, families, and gender ideologies.” See Joan W. Scott,
“Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis, American Historical Review, 91 no. 5 (Dec.

15 Betty Friedan’s The Feminine Mystique (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001) outlined the ways
gender identities in the past were expressions of their husband and children, while Barbara
Welter in her work, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860” American Quarterly, 18 no. 2
(Summer, 1966) espoused that women in the 19th century were subject to living up to an
idealized femininity. This paper, in part, seeks to offer a male version of Welter’s thesis, although
with men living at the turn of the twentieth century, radically different spheres and radically
different expectations and understandings concerning masculine ideals. Friedan’s argument is
equally beneficial in examining the interplay between men and men’s identities as an expression
of state power.
frequently referenced in diaries, not only because it offered a link home, but it was a reminder of women and shared experience with the opposite gender. Historical investigation of wartime and masculinity “provides a way to decode meaning and to understand the complex connections among various forms of human interaction. When historians look for the ways in which the concept of gender legitimizes and constructs social relationships, they develop insight into the reciprocal nature of gender and society and into the particular and contextually specific ways in which politics constructs gender and gender constructs politics.”16 Gender roles for males in wartime exclusively privileged that part of the masculine ideals; men nonetheless were participating in an activity whereby women and British society were to be protected.

Gender and wartime are a challenge in other respects to historical investigation. For example, Marxist constructions of the past have difficulty assimilating gender into a materialist version of history. As Joan Scott points out, “...Marxism involve[s] an idea of economic causality and a vision of the path along which history had moved dialectically. There is no such clarity or coherence for either race or gender.”17 Victorian England would seem like an ideal candidate for a materialist interpretation of history, with its rigid class system


and familiar patriarchal relationships between the sexes.¹⁸ As those who have tried to tangle with reconciling Freud and Marx can attest, however, the classical materialist model has difficulty explaining non-economic behavior and our understanding of gender. There were males who were being exploited and those doing the exploiting, but nonetheless they held similar identities as men.

Historian Joanna Bourke partly argues that economic tensions and class antagonisms lessened in the shared experience of all men in the Great War. Jay Winter, on the other hand, concentrates on economic relations and masculinity, and argues that economic conditions improved for all men as the result of the war. Gender can be applied to the history of this period in seemingly endless ways. Other historians have examined masculinity in Britain in terms of literature, empire, liberalism, religion, sexuality, and domesticity, while others have concentrated on public schools and boys’ organizations.¹⁹ This work will restrict discussion to British institutions and the British government, and their indirect and direct approach to the male gender.

This history is focused on the product of gender as created by power, and therefore is indebted to the social constructivist interpretation of Michel Foucault. Foucault’s assertion that sexuality was contingent on or produced in historical

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¹⁸ Engels writes in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State: in light of the researches of Lewis H. Morgan* (1804), that, “At all events, the situation will be very much changed for men. But also that of women, and of all women, will be considered altered.” He was writing in the future tense, as women’s rights were a century away.

context lends the steam that makes this history run. The functioning of state power and its ability to alter expectations that needed to be met in terms of greater British objectives is much more a debt to Foucault than Marx, although no doubt their ideas are interwoven here. Changes occurring in society that made more manly men fight a war with such insignificant or flimsy rationale had to have immense power to induce all men to feel compelled to fight in it. The hundreds of thousands who leapt out of trenches at the sound of a whistle were doing so because the English state mechanisms had been making them manlier. They made it possible through their education, through empowering organizations like the Boys’ Brigade and the Boy Scouts, through British military training, by promoting physical exercise in the public sphere and through drills in schools, and in playing on masculine fears and masculine desires.

To help illustrate the power/gender relationship, British laws are highlighted throughout this work, some subtle and some direct, as well as the functions of the organs of the British state and how they operated on gender in a way previously inconceivable. Of the notable monographs written in the last twenty years on the subject of masculinity in Britain during this period are two by British women. In *Dismembering the Male: Men’s Bodies, Britain, and the Great War*, Joanna Bourke discusses men’s physical bodies and what function these bodies served during and after the war, in terms of how their masculinity was presented physically in British culture during this period. From their physically trained bodies, mutilated bodies, to memorialization to the dead, and through
dissolution of some class antagonisms through friendships, Bourke argues that men’s experience with their physical body influenced their writing about the war.

Jessica Meyer examines cultural representations of masculinity too, exploring the ways in which masculinity was split between the family expectations of the British male as father and provider and his role as soldier and defender in, *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War*. Meyer looks at the male in antebellum Britain both in terms of his domestic role and his role as warrior of the nation. “The influence of lived experience and social expectations of appropriate masculinity,” she explains, “both the ways in which individual men negotiated the social discourses of the soldier hero and the independent householder to construct personal masculine identities, and the ways in which different narratives forms the shaped expression of these identities.”

In this work, the hope is to concentrate less on the cultural impact of the war, and more on the way in which the British government acted to influence men.

Both of these authors are building on, in differing degrees, Paul Fussell’s influential work, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, which argues that culture and cultural identity were altered by the war and that the war was the break that defined the twentieth century. Historians have examined the topic of gender in terms of cultural impact and have touched on the contributions of social and


political pressure to create a more masculine society, but this work looks at the
effort of government, military, education system, and pulpit, and the subtle and
obvious ways that Britain helped create manlier men.

III

The overreaching claim that the government laid out some grand strategy
at manipulating gender when it came to getting men into the trenches is not my
intention; rather, the following chapters look at a trajectory of disconnected
influences (some on the surface seemingly insignificant): one military rule, one
statute, or the first meeting of the Boy Scout organization, to follow that particular
rule’s or organization’s promulgation or growth and illustrate its proliferation,
concluding with analysis of its influence on the masculine character. Of course
this is the more difficult task, as subtle changes in the ways in which masculinity
were present in society are not as easily traced as the deliberate outcomes
expressed culturally. While the cultural output from the war tells us much about
the way men were shaped by the war, it is an all-together different thing to
explore how the men were shaped in order to send them into war.

The British Parliament that declared war on Germany in August of 1914
was comprised of 272 liberals, 271 conservatives, 42 representing labor and 74
Irish parliamentarians, as well as a handful of independents who had been
elected in 1910, all led by the lugubrious Herbert Asquith. Parliament comprised
a split government, but not when it came to war.\textsuperscript{22} It was the impassioned Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey who lectured Parliament, stating, “I would like the House to approach this crisis in which we are now in from the point of view of British interests, British honour, and British obligations, free from all passion as to why peace has not yet been preserved.”\textsuperscript{23} Grey was saying more than he knew. The method of this work, in part, will be to look at British interests and how the government was protecting them.

The Defense of the Realm Act (DORA) passed on August 8, 1914, gave the British government wide ranging powers in orchestrating the war, how it could use its reserves, and the way it organized its men. England in 1914 was a modern nation with a myriad of offices dedicated to achieving these objectives. The Orwellian-entitled Ministry of Information that emerged near the end of the war and took over duties that were early on more generally tasked to the War Office, was responsible for propaganda and publicity in Britain. The War Office,

\textsuperscript{22} Writing about the declaration of war in 1914, AJP Taylor wrote that war was declared, “as though King George V still possessed the undiminished prerogatives of Henry VIII.” He continues, “At 10:30 PM on August 4, 1914 the King held a privy council at Buckingham Palace which was attended only by one other minister and two court officials...The cabinet played no part once it had resolved to defend the neutrality of Belgium...Nor did the cabinet authorize the declaration of war. The parliament of the United Kingdom, though informed of events, did not give formal approval to the government’s acts until it voted a credit of £100 million, without a division, on August 6.” Of course it was not until August 8 that Parliament passed DORA allowing for large scale funding of war, see, AJP Taylor, \textit{English History: 1914-1945} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

of course, oversaw recruitment and strategy. The British government worked to steer certain young men toward a more masculine attitude to meet war objectives. Yet in many ways the country had been moving in that direction before the war. The sources used for this work and the method in applying them are specific to the British government and social institutions. By examining the efforts of the British state to mold its society through the lens of power, the efforts of government before, during and after the war paints a picture of a society deeply interested in gender roles. Any discussion of modern life is extremely complex, and social conditions are not always uniformly experienced or directly influenced by policy, as in England, where there existed a highly regimented classed society, for example.

Over the next few pages we will encounter spies, nationalists, cowards, heroes, warriors, Kings and children, but they were all are male living out understandings of masculinity that men of the day were expected to act in accordance with, and were influenced by the laws, organizations and codes of British society that upheld it. The theme of this paper, however, should not take away from the experience of the men themselves. The rules and regulations present in British society or the influences presented in the organs of power should be tempered by the very subjective nature of masculinity of any period.

Historian Jennifer V. Evans’s recent article, “Seeing Subjectivity: Erotic Photography and the Optics of Desire,” offers a unique method of critiquing gender and subjectivity. The article’s primary subject is a German post-Second
World War photographer, yet Evans’s historiographical method explores what the artist’s photographic images convey, “the emotions they [images] stir, the memories they resurrect or conjure up, and possibly even redeem.”24 The value in Evans’s article stretches beyond the scope of the photographer’s lens. Her discussion of her main subject and her method of recording and compiling data from the archives, similarly applies to the ways in which masculine studies rely heavily on subjective understanding. As Evans points out, historians have difficulty with “the subjective world of human wants and needs,”25 and the British men who volunteered in the military by the hundreds of thousands in 1914 normally didn’t record journal entries explicitly saying, “I feel manly today, more so than I did five years ago, and so now I will join the military.” There were as many reasons to join the military or wear a mustache or join the Boy Scouts as there were reasons to enlist in order to avoid unemployment, to fit in, to fall prey to a persuasive propaganda piece, or to fulfill a sense of national obligation. Evans’s thoughts are relevant to this work, as masculinity is as much subjective as it is historically dependent. A courtier living in Charles II’s Restoration England, for example, might have felt equally up to the task of warrior as his early twentieth century counterpart despite his outward appearance of wig and heels.


25 Ibid., 433.
In Chapter One what it meant to be manly in the Edwardian period and during the war will be discussed, as well as what influences guided that identity. The Second Chapter will be concerned with the youth and how the organization of young boys was crucial for masculine identities to form in accordance with a wartime society. Class was always important in England: did the aristocrat feel the same way about masculine identity as did the coal miner’s son? Chapter Three will explore the idea of class in relationship to masculine ideals, as well as the geographical differences in relation to maleness. The final chapter is perhaps the most important because the topic of masculinity will be brought into clear focus by those who did not conform to the masculine ideal.

The reader would be well-informed to view British laws and organizations, highlighted in this work, as part of the larger subjective world of the masculine, “and in realizing the subjectivity of our sources and their abiding impact on us,” as Evans points out, historians can add another dimension, “in the ongoing emotional wrangling between us, our sources, and our subjects.”26 The man standing in front of the recruitment poster could have emotions that are completely different from the previous viewer, yet those posters were a part of an enticement and a play on what it was in England to be masculine and, “this need not deter us from using them constructively.”27 It is the objective this paper seeks to maintain, but the method employed here asks the reader to not forgo the

26 Ibid., 433.

27 Ibid., 433.
subjective nature of men, but to look at men as subjects, as they were known to the British government: Subjects.
Chapter One
Of Moustaches and Men

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there’s some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware.

Rupert Brooke, *The Soldier*, 1914

Men’s facial hair was worthy of strict regulation in the British military beginning in the Victorian period, and the soldier’s lip is as good a place as any to begin discussing masculine ideals in English society. Men behaved and dressed in accordance with Victorian expectations of masculine behavior, and this Victorian manliness ultimately helped shape the masculine ideals that found their way into the trenches of Flanders and France. This official army regulation, which first appeared in 1860, lasted until men conscripted in the middle of the First World War were often too young to be able to grow any facial hair. In 1916, General Sir Nevil Macready, who hated moustaches personally and was all too happy to get rid of his own,

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signed an order abolishing the previous one. So, from the mid-Victorian period until the middle of the First World War men were obligated to wear a moustache if they were to serve and participate in one function expected of men only - to fight in war. A message was being conveyed by way of this regulation, and even if the young men wearing them in the ranks of the British Expeditionary Force didn’t realize it, they were in fact wearing a particular historical symbol of manliness inherited from the soldiers and warriors the British met on the frontiers of their Empire.

Early Victorian society, pre-occupied as it was with appearances, was still being influenced by the seventeenth century. Wigs and beards were incompatible in the eyes of a seventeenth century aristocratic society earnestly attempting to recreate Versailles at the Palace of Whitehall; as the lower classes emulated the style of their social superiors, men in British society tended to avoid any hair that adorned the face. Lack of facial hair certainly did not mean less military success or prowess on the field of battle as the victories of Admiral

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30 "On 8th October, 1916, the order allowing all ranks to grow or not to grow, moustaches according to their fancy was signed...I dropped into a barber's shop and set the example that evening, as I was only too glad to be rid of the unsightly bristles to which I had for many years been condemned by obedience to regulations." Macready, Sir Nevil. *Annals of an Active Life* (New York: Doran, 1925), 258-259.

31 Influences on men’s fashions as well as perceptions of manhood exuding from the power of the court of Louis XVI are profuse. In 1698, Peter the Great famously ordered Russian men to shave off their beards and in 1705 levied a tax on beard wearers to make Russian’s appear more Western. The rays of the Sun King’s fashionable court set the standard in England as well. Charles II had been living off of a 600 Livres grant from Louis XVI in 1654 following the death of his father, and during the Restoration had adopted the look of a French courtier, see Antonia Fraser’s *King Charles II* (London: Phoenix) 2002. Charles was known to wear the adopted Van Dyke beard having its own following from his father’s reign.
Nelson or the Duke of Wellington could attest. George III, even when dealing with his darkest psychological demons, was deemed sane only by his ability to remain cleanly shaven. Most men living during the Regency period would have found the prospect of facial hair covering their entire face to be unfashionable and unsuitable for urbane society, perhaps best illustrated by the fashion of Percy Bysshe Shelley (figure 1). In the early Victorian era, the same rules applied; men who were in control of their senses and who identified as the descendants of men capable of defeating Napoleon on the battlefield were to be clean shaven. Two of the most famous men of the early Victorian period, Charles Dickens (figure 2) and Benjamin Disraeli (figure 3) were prototypical of the fashion that minimized features considered unmanly and were therefore clean shaven in their early careers.

A dramatic shift took place in the 1850’s and fashionable men began to wear beards. As the British historian Robert J Evans contends, “Manliness for the Victorians was expressed physically, among other things, in the form of

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32 See William Hague’s biography, William Pitt the Younger (New York: Knopf) 2005. According to Hague, the King’s doctor, in attempt to convince Pitt of the King’s sanity had George III shave himself. The King’s success in completing the task meant that the Regency Bill was defeated for a number of years. Also, Piers Brendon writes, “...for as long as wigs were worn facial hair was an object of ridicule in England, where it was seen as tragically appropriate that in his mad state George III should remain unshaven.” Piers Brendon’s The Decline and Fall of the English Empire (New York: Knopf, 2005), 55.

33 A necessary accessory during the Regency Period was the “neckcloth” or cravat which was a strip of linen or silk that was wound around the neck several times and tied in the front, and this according to the fashion of the day, would not have been worn with whiskers. The cravat is military in origin as well: Croatian mercenaries hired to support Louis XIII of France and Cardinal Richelieu against the Duke of Guise and the Queen Mother, Marie de’Medici. There is apparently an entire academic study of the long range implications of wearing cravats, see http://academia-cravatica.hr.
beards and moustaches, which characterized virtually all the great Victorian men, from the poet laureate Alfred Lord Tennyson down to the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury.”

Two men, Sir Frederick Leighton (figure 4) and Lord Cyril Flowers (figure 5), who were considered the most fashionable men of their day, wore beards. While this trend may have been related to both a change in what visually was expressed as masculine and an expression of fashion, the military regulation in 1860, Regimental Command 1,695, had a much more powerful and potent origin than a mere penchant for the bearded look.

We can attribute the change in military policy to the mandatory moustache to British campaigns in the East. “It is only when you get to see and realize what India is, that she is the strength and the greatness of England,” wrote Lord Curzon. “It is only then, that you feel that every nerve a man may strain, every energy he may put forward cannot be devoted to a nobler purpose than keeping tight the cords that hold India to ourselves.” It was in the process of keeping those cords tight that the clean shaven British soldiers began encountering and interacting with mustached Indian Maharajahs and Sepoys in the employment of the British East India Company. Indian soldiers ridiculed their British

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counterparts as feminine for their lack of facial hair, particularly in the form of a moustache, as the Indian man revered his moustache as a symbol of masculinity and virility. Consequently, British soldiers began to appropriate this custom in an effort to appear as masculine and virile as their Indian counterparts. British officers and soldiers mimicked this custom in order to express an equal manliness to the Indian soldiers in their employ and to win over the local Princes’ respect (plate 2 and plate 3). When they returned home, many of the mothers and wives had their sons and husbands shave off the moustaches due to their fear that they had gone native, but over time, military leadership found the moustache politically advantageous, and in 1831 the 16th Lancers, soldiers in the Raj, received an order permitting them to wear moustaches. The exception eventually led to the rule, and in 1860, moustaches were mandated for all men serving in the British army. This political and social custom, appropriated by

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36 “The mode became imperative in India, where beards were deemed sacred but the moustache was a symbol of virility. Indians looked upon ‘the bare faces of the English with amazement and contempt, regarding as ‘na-mard, unmanly,’ countenances emasculated by the razor. So in 1831 the 16th Lancers hailed with delight an order permitting them to wear moustaches,” Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 127. The moustache and facial hair more generally were also the custom of the Arab nations that equally associated facial hair and masculinity, even in contemporary Arab society this custom exists as we have seen in the recent conflict in Syria, see, Aisha Harris, “Why Do So Many Arab Leaders Wear Mustaches?” *Slate*, July 18, 2012, accessed September 19, 2013, [http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2012/07/syrias_assassinated_officials_and_other_arab_leaders_wear_mustaches_for_the_look_of_power.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2012/07/syrias_assassinated_officials_and_other_arab_leaders_wear_mustaches_for_the_look_of_power.html).

37 The Vellore Uprising of 1805 challenged British authority over a dress code that Hindu’s were forbidden religious marks on their foreheads and Muslim’s were to shave off their beards and moustaches. Around a hundred British soldiers were killed and around 400 of the native soldiers. This kind of confusion over cultural expressions, which the British would witness on a larger scale in 1857, was indicative of cultural misunderstanding involving altering their understanding of what constituted manly appearance for native Indians. See, Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men* (London: Papermac, 1986).
British soldiers as the Eastern physical expression of masculinity, initially to fit in among masculine men, became a pre-condition for service for men joining the ranks of the British Army as fighting warriors on the Continent of Europe between 1914 and 1918.

Although the Prince of Wales continued to wear a beard, by the 1890's the fad for beards had cooled dramatically; yet the moustache retained its status as the definitive mark of the military man and soldier at the turn of the twentieth century. Appointed as Secretary of War in 1914, Lord Horatio Kitchener was the archetypical soldier hero. Decorated for service in the far reaches of Empire, King George V and Queen Mary were often escorted by the hero of Khartoum and The Boer War. By far the most successful campaign poster of the First World War, that of Kitchener with the ridiculously proportioned moustache (figure 6), melded the potent masculine subject along with the ideal of soldier hero won on the frontiers of the Empire. It was this imagined masculinity of fighting men with stalwart moustaches that partly encouraged the men in 1914 that they too could be both capable and resilient in the face of the German threat. It was not the only image capitalized on by Whitehall, where the nation’s war department and policy for the war were crafted, but it was the most effective. Masculinity in Britain was enforced and encouraged, but it would take further cultivation of social and political influences to create the kind of man willing to fight on behalf of these masculine ideals, and many of these were already present before the war.
The First World War did not drop out of a clear blue sky, disturbing quiet Edwardian afternoons and turning them into the blood and mud of the trenches.\textsuperscript{38} Threats of war in Europe and talk of militarism in British society were on the rise at the conclusion of the Boer War. In 1903, for example, Erskine Childers in \textit{The Riddle of the Sands}, called for all Englishmen to be trained for the coming conflict with Germany. German militarism and the political crisis of the late 1890s and early 1900s provided enough anxiety and newsprint for both the \textit{London Times} and \textit{Punch}.\textsuperscript{39} Additionally, the British defeats in the Boer war did not leave the country exhausted by war.\textsuperscript{40} Masculinity too, as we have seen from the example of the beard, evolved during the Victorian period in terms of its physical

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\item \textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, commented, “At least two years of failure and experience are needed to turn a civilian and commercial nation into a military power.” Britain had become quite experienced in warfare from the experiences on the frontiers of their extended empire. Britain adopted an irrational exuberance before the Boer War as it did a decade or so later, “Pretoria by Christmas,” was the cry in 1898, while in 1914 many British believed the “war will be over by Christmas.” Many of the tactics used during the conflict in South Africa were also similar to those used in the First World War; the men that comprised the British ranks in the Boer War were enlisted from all over its Empire, which would be mirrored in the trenches of Europe as well. The Maxim Gun, a rotating early form of the machine gun was used throughout the British Empire, of which the Anglo-French historian and soldier Hilaire Belloc said, “Whatever happens, we have the Maxim Gun, and they do not.” At the Battle of Omdurman, Kitchener unleashed the Maxim guns, where 10,000 Mahdi supporters were gunned down in less than five hours, with 47 British casualties. Later the German machine guns at the Somme would act in much the same way against the British who lost nearly 60,000 on the first day. The Boer’s purchased weaponry from Germany and France, marking in many ways the Boer War as a prelude to the Great War. See, Rowena Hammal, “How Long Before the Sunset?: British Attitudes to War, 1871-1914.” \textit{History Review}, 2010 issue 68, accessed January 17, 2014, http://www.historytoday.com/rowena-hammal/how-long-sunset-british-attitudes-war-1871-1914.
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manifestations. In order to explore further changes in what was considered masculine and how it looked on the eve of the Great War, a discussion of the role of men in British society is necessary. British men played the role of defenders of the nation and the role of domestic masculinity; both were enforced. Looking at this delicate balance between the obligation of men at home and as they transition into soldiers, the domestic function of men and the understanding of men’s gender roles in British society becomes clear. British men were subject to rules and strict codes, reflected by society, and reinforced in laws privileging males. A common masculinity then can be traced in the ways this patriarchal society managed to keep the male identity firm. The government reinforced these identities and perpetuated the masculine ideal.

Although in many respects it seems hardly imaginable to consider today, society in Britain at the turn of the last century was overwhelmingly made up of men. Men held political power as there were no women in Parliament. Women could not vote and were forbidden any position in professional careers; they could not work in law firms nor could they become physicians. Men’s lives, roles, and positions in Britain would not be completely unrecognizable today in some ways; however, it is important to keep in mind that Britain was not a place where women enjoyed any visible presence in the public sphere. This is not to minimize the tremendous pressure brought about by the burgeoning Suffrage
movement, but in many ways, the war put a brake on social change. While a patriarchic society may offer few positive elements for understanding anything outside a male-dominated universe, it makes the population of working men, men in political office, and the soldier in uniform excellent subjects in a laboratory studying what males privileged. Class distinctions with regard to masculine identity, religion and masculinity, as well as urban versus rural masculine identity will be addressed later; so for now, let us focus on what historians have said men consistently found to be male qualities and how those qualities were enforced.

Men possessed a monopoly on the public sphere and took on the public roles, expressed in the kind of British laws passed by men. Nowhere was this self-control and power more evident than in the male role of provider and in the domestic sphere. While many Victorians flattered themselves in believing marriage to be about love, marriage was for the most part a means of survival for women forced into dependent roles; most men held their legally endorsed role as the superior one. “Barred by law and custom from entering trades and professions by which they could support themselves,” writes Susan Kent, “and restricted in the possession of property, woman had only one means of livelihood, that of marriage.”

Masculine identities were understood to be synonymous with the role of provider, household authority, and public figure in

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42 Ibid, 86.
Victorian and Edwardian society. The British government did its best to accommodate this status quo in terms of reflecting male privilege in the laws. Men were forced into the role of provider by the marriage and divorce laws. It was not until 1882 that the Married Women’s Property Act was passed allowing women to keep the property they brought to a marriage.\textsuperscript{43} Government laws and statutes and organs of the state ensured that patriarchy dominated and was reflected in the authoritarian household. The masculine standard was the male as the domestic provider, he was the household authoritarian figure, and he possessed the qualities of, “reason, action, aggression, independence, and self-interest”\textsuperscript{44} that were enforced by British codes. Men passed laws excluding women from the public sphere. Laws in Britain forbade women any right to vote. These masculine qualities associated with authority, both in the political and domestic spheres were the hallmark of Victorian society. It is worth identifying these Victorian masculine traits to see where their transformation and also their continuity were reflected in the front lines of the war.

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The British male also had the role as the warrior in British popular imagination and this image was enforced by the same means as his domestic

\textsuperscript{43} The 1882 Married Women’s Property Act forced British women to be acknowledged as entities in common law where before they were not considered party to any lawsuits. Normally any property brought to a marriage from the woman was considered her husband’s. See National Archives, Married Women’s Property Act of 1882, accessed January 16, 2014, \url{http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/45-46/75}.

role. Men were encouraged in Victorian England to serve in keeping with the component of their country’s masculine model. The Conscription Law of 1916, which was passed as the volunteer forces of Kitchener’s Army dried up, took men from all the ranks of British society and adapted them into the constructed masculine militarism that had been the hallmark of the Victorian gentleman. As these men made their way onto the continent, they also took their traditional role of provider and domestic breadwinner into battle. Letters between soldiers at the front and women at home provided a connection to the identities they had left behind upon enlistment. In such letters, men could present themselves as soldiers through their descriptions of their war experience and could continue to be involved in domestic activities. Men’s identities as providers gave traceable expression in the money and gifts they sent back home. One British soldier, D. Manning, wrote home to his wife, “If the youngsters are bad at any time please don’t hide it from me...should they or you are [sic] seriously ill just try and get me a wire I’ll do the rest.” How Manning would get that help is unclear, but he, like the majority of soldiers, continued with a deep sense of living out the role that British society had assigned him. Men also sent home their army pay to their mothers, wives and families. This paternalistic masculinity was transferred as well, according to Meyer, into the protective attitudes commanders showed towards the units they commanded. For example, R.C. Trench, an officer with

the Sherwood Foresters, in a letter dated in April of 1917 inquires about his wife, asking her if she is well-provided for and if she would send some kippers for his unit to see if they could be acquired regularly. A fusion of the paternalistic with home and the military unit would exist intact throughout the war and was present in the post-war world where the role of provider was closely linked to the male expectation of being an independent worker. The paternalistic and domestic duties associated with British masculinity, as we have seen with roots in English history, survived the war, but there were additional reflections of masculine identity in the bodies of those men who were fighting in the war that did not. The men living out this social convention gave them security in a foreign environment, and is the physical expression of the success of the power of British law, keeping those aspects of masculinity intact on the field of battle. The British men of 1914 were fighting to uphold the British social order.

Men’s traditional gender roles were, of course, the result of decades of male domination of British organs of power; however, the men sent into battle were the products of a transformative masculinity, one that was developed by training and regimentation in another British system of power, the British military. The volunteers in August of 1914 were not immediately sent into battle (the first of the Kitchener units seeing action in the Battle of the Somme in 1916); they were molded to incorporate traits the army believed would make more effective

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men in the field. “Employers and the state,” writes historian Joanna Bourke, “were primarily concerned with the usefulness of the male body and both attempted to discipline men who failed to perform their assigned duties, recognizing, at the same time, that it was important to regulate behavior in order to discourage shirking and malingering.”47 The British government wanted only the best specimens of men and boys, and the military was adept at making men more “manly” through regimented physical fitness in preparation to fight, in regimentation and regulation of masculinity, and in curtailing what they considered unmanly attributes. Men conscripted into the armed services were often drafted in less than perfect physical condition. The National Service Medical Boards in Britain approved physically unfit men into the military with the expectation that proper discipline and physical training would make better and more fit men.

Men in civilian society too were encouraged by suppliers of exercise equipment to become physically fit, while the British government was eager to make the connection between physical fitness and character.48 Much publicity was given to the British sporting tradition with respect to physical fitness, even though the nineteenth century’s bloodlust for hunting games and fishing were directed towards men who were of a class where these images and traditions


48 Ibid, 179. “These different rationales for physical training were regarded as complementary...the concerns arising out of the war enhanced disquiet and provided pseudo-scientific data to bolster official anxieties.”
were unknown.  

One irony of this push for physical fitness in the broader population, according to historian Jay Winter, was that the war, “with all the suffering it caused, was the occasion of a completely unanticipated improvement in the life expectancy of the civilian population.”

British interests intensely examined ways in which the male body could best express a kind of masculine male physical perfection to alleviate anxieties that the other side was stronger, quicker, faster. Although E.M. Forster regarded this new mania for physical fitness as creating “well developed bodies, fairly developed minds, and undeveloped hearts,” physical masculinity was pushed by the government. Designed to increase the effectiveness of the male fighting force, produce competition, and male bonding, masculinity molded by schools (plate 4) and the military sought to make beautiful the regimental lines and physically perfect the male bodies that comprised the unit (plate 5). Great effort was made to draw

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attention to the beauty of the group. The military organized parades to boost morale and attract additional volunteers, while also utilizing threats of conscription (figure 7).

The British government and military enforced a heightened state surveillance of masculinity and discipline of the body. They had an interest in promoting masculinity, seen in British schools, British literature, British newspapers, and intensely in the British military. They were a regulated sex, with expectations to perform a duty (plate 6). That is not to say that this physical perfection did not have individual consequences the state wished to avoid. Bourke points out: “With conscription, civilian men were removed from the secure, known environment of home and assigned to an institution where male sexuality attracted everyone from the commander and chief down.” Men were subject to sexual regulation in the military over fears that their sex drive would lead to desertion from running off with a young woman. The military was also obsessively concerned about sexually transmitted diseases. Military restrictions

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52 Group sports were encouraged by the military and in schools, particularly after the government’s chief medical officer in charge of physical fitness in the schools, George Newman, was convinced that through improving competition and physical fitness on the football, cricket and rugby fields, men became more physically robust, see Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men’s Bodies, Britain and The Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), 182-5. Sport also encouraged mingling of the middle and upper classes creating social bonds among officers in the war, see, T. G. Ashplant, *Fractured Loyalties: Masculinity, Class and Politics* (Chicago: Rivers Oram Press, 2007), 46-47.

53 Joanna Bourke argues that regulatory institutions were set up in England to discourage shirking and malingering, but most importantly to maximize male potential. After the war, Bourke argues, these institutions continued to operate but in pseudo-scientific work, Ibid., 171.

54 Ibid., 158.
on male sexuality were enacted because mores of the day held that sexually active males would reduce male potency: only a certain number of servicemen were allowed to marry, and marrying off the strength was the subject of much discussion. Marriage and sexual activity, according to the thoughts of the day, could strongly sap the potency of masculinity that was being developed on playing fields and physical fitness camps; the military felt compelled to enforce a strict sexuality for British men.

Regimentation and surveillance of physical masculinity were expressed in the uniform as well. Men’s public sartorial changes had been evident in the Victorian period, where the large blouses of men and high collars were traded for three piece suits and smoking jackets. Changes in men’s clothing in terms of going into battle were of course practical in nature. Gone forever were the colorful uniforms of centuries past, as the English red coats were deemed easily spotted and an impediment in fighting; camouflage meant avoiding being machine gunned. Arthur Hemsley, an officer who served in the Gallipoli campaign, recalled the change during the Boer War, “I can remember the little school I went to, the teacher said, ‘I am going to show you a piece of cloth which

55 The idea that men could conserve their masculine potency via limited sexual activity was pushed by doctors, as Kathy J. Phillips points out, “Using medical language crossed by economic concepts, nineteenth century doctors schooled the middle class that each man possessed a limited amount of sperm and overall bodily energy; release of sexual energy would ‘deplete the supply available for other purposes and would thus lead to enervation and lethargy, if not more dire consequences [such as madness]. Ejaculation was described as ‘spending’ the semen, a metaphor that would have made sense to those who had been taught that ‘a penny saved is a penny earned.’” Kathy J. Phillips, Manipulating Masculinity: War and Gender in Modern British and American Literature (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 1.
is the new uniform for the British Army, it is called khaki." Camouflage was certainly a more practical alternative to the traditional white helmets and red coats, but the change in color did not take away from the overall impression it gave to the man wearing the uniform (plate 7). The figure of the soldier in uniform had the power to convey the man wearing one as having, "qualities of endurance, adaptability, courage and duty." The uniform elevated the heroic elements of masculinity and impressed both men and women; this image of the soldier hero presented in the uniform was a symbol maintaining British social order. Considering the men's uniforms were seen everywhere in England during the war, one cannot minimize the visual connection between masculine identity and the soldier's uniform. In retrospect, at seeing a group of men in full uniform and on parade, D.J. Polley, later a machine gunner on the Western front, stated that he was "longing to join, especially when in a short time they donned their khaki. They looked so well, their faces browned, and each looked fit and full of hope." As we have already seen, British males in the army began to change

56 Interview 9927 of British Corporal Arthur Hemsley, interviewer, Lyn E. Smith in 1987, accessed September, 19, 2013, http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009710. In a separate interview by Walter Griffin, he recalled, "I was born in Jubilee Year, in 1887. There was a certain amount of pride in what our soldiers [in the Boer War] were then accomplishing. Therefore, I suppose anything connected with the army was quite good. And this had its carryover onto the children and the way in which they dressed. The result was, I'm pretty sure, I had one of the khaki hats and would be marching about with it, I suppose more than likely not, with a wooden sword. Children were influenced, quite sure, by the thing we heard or knew of soldiers." From Interview 9790 of British civilian absolutist conscientious objector, Walter Griffin, interviewer, Margaret A Brooks, on March 3, 1987, accessed January, 29, 2013, http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009574.


their appearances by growing moustaches in accordance with military regulation; all soldiers had the same uniform that was easily spotted all over the streets of major cities in England, and the physical robustness of masculine training created a new masculine identity, which helped characterize men in terms of self-identity through outward expression and in enforcing male expectations in British society with a new form of masculinity in the unit (plate 9).

Physical perfection of the male body prepared for war, the marching unit as a beautiful expression of regimentation, and the male uniform became symbols and rituals that in turn presented seductive images, which would further attract more men, supplying the necessary bodies to fill the ranks in the trenches. For those coming back from the war, however, this seemed strange. As Robert Graves said when he was on leave, “England looked strange to us returned soldiers. We could not understand the war madness that ran about everywhere, looking for a pseudo-military outlet.”

Masculine roles of domestic authoritarian and warrior in the field of battle, of masculine physical perfection, of male bonding, of identifying with men in uniform, and all the seeming benefits of becoming more masculine could be manipulated.

IV

Masculine identities are difficult to define, as gender is often illusive and personal, but not when these ideals are singled out by those willing to exploit them. In order to capitalize on and heighten the masculine perception of what it

meant to be a man, established in large regard by British social laws and by the military, the British government launched an intense propaganda campaign the likes of which had yet to be seen in the world. This propaganda campaign drew in thousands of volunteers (plate 8). “Before the war, the manipulation of public opinion was regarded as the province of the church, the press, political parties, philanthropists and non-governmental organizations,” Joanna Bourke points out, “but with the declaration of war, this changed as the government mobilized its resources in an attempt to counter German propaganda. Thus a new weapon of war was invented.”

The Prime Minister asked England’s most prolific and well known authors, including Thomas Hardy, Arthur Conan Doyle, John Galsworthy, James Barrie, H.G. Wells, and others to advance the war effort. Some forty-seven authors joined these famous names in signing an open letter to the British public advancing Britain’s involvement in the war. One of the few who did not agree to sign was Bertrand Russell, but any dissent was drowned out by Rudyard Kipling, who was one of the strongest proponents of the war, referring to the German “Huns” in his poetry, complaining that the government was spending too much on social programs and not enough on England’s military. The government, military, and British officials knew that this war would require influential voices and innovative propaganda to create a climate where being a man meant joining in

this crusade against Germany. Authors and artists produced books, pamphlets, wrote columns in newspapers, and produced films steering public opinion toward the war. The War Office channeled money into well-established publishing houses, purchased all of the copies, and distributed them for free.61

The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, a thirty member body working as a division of the War Office at Whitehall, began producing and distributing posters on an unprecedented scale. Fifty-four million copies of some two hundred posters were produced by the PRC over the course of the war. Millions of others were produced by private organizations often secretly supplied with funds from the war department.62 The PRC enlisted the help of the advertising firm of Hedley La Bas and Eric Field of Caxton Advertising Agency to create the necessary images to attract as many men as possible. Beginning early on as only words on enlarged handbills in no more than two colors of ink, and then usually only spelling out the conditions of enlistment, by the fourth week of the war the posters began to feature graphic images playing on public fear of German atrocity but also on British manliness. As mentioned earlier, the Kitchener posters of the masculine soldier hero were effective. Private Thomas McIndoe remembered, “Seeing that picture of Kitchener and his finger pointing apart from any position that you took up the finger was always pointing to you. It was a wonderful poster really. And I think it assisted recruitment very much. I

62 Ibid., 148.
went to the recruiting officer; he said that I was too young...” McIndoe put on a bowler hat, returned to the recruitment office, and told them he was eighteen and one month. The recruiter asked, “Don’t you mean nineteen and one month?” McIndoe declared, “Yes, Sir,” and Thomas McIndoe was signed up.63

Recruitment posters became ubiquitous. As the London Times reported in January of 1915, “Posters appealing to recruits are to be seen on every hoarding, in most shop windows, in omnibuses, tramcars, and commercial vans. The great base of Nelson’s pillar is covered with them. Their number and variety are remarkable. Everywhere, Lord Kitchener sternly points a monstrously big finger, exclaiming: “I Want You.”64 The range of material for encouraging men on these posters clearly illustrates the lengths to which the PRC would go to play on British masculinity. Posters encouraging enlistment played on the viewer’s understanding of contemporary masculine traits: “He’s Happy & Satisfied, Are You?” (figure 8) exploited the role of men’s happiness as obtained in defender of the nation; “There are Three Types of Men,” (figure 9) referenced the masculine versus the man who was not manly; and “When are the other Boys coming?” (figure 10) and “AN APPEAL TO YOU ‘Give us a hand old man!’” (figure 11) referred to the perception that the military offered camaraderie and played on bonds between males. Kitchener’s army relied heavily on bonds


of camaraderie, and these recruitment efforts by the PRC were directed locally. The creation of the *Pals Battalions* which sought out the recruitment of men in the same vicinity, same school, or same profession, was often aimed at those bonds of friendship and locality of the poster.

Lord Derby, the conservative Director-General of Recruiting for the army, had been effective in raising a *Pals Battalion* at Lincolnshire in late 1914. Derby, who personally owned 68,000 acres of land and employed nearly a hundred servants at his country house alone, rose to the occasion.\(^{65}\) The dockyard workers he spoke to joined up together as one unit following his speech; Derby had developed a reputation for getting men into the army. He devised a scheme in late 1915 after the volunteers from Lord Kitchener’s Armies had dried up and recruitment seemed impervious to the increase in propaganda. The Derby Scheme was designed to encourage men to enlist by promising that they would only be called upon if they were needed. In addition, the scheme promised that single men would be called first before any married men so as to alleviate concerns that men would be separated from families too soon; thereby satisfying their inherent role as domestic provider. Simultaneously, the Derby Scheme also met the other imperative of idealized masculinity - that of defender of the nation. The scheme included sending local recruiters on canvassing missions to knock on doors to see if eligible men in the households had joined up or when they

would join up.\textsuperscript{66} The initial success of the program so overwhelmed the recruitment offices that many men were accepted without medical examinations and were told that they would be examined only if called up. The Derby Scheme added another two hundred thousand men into the ranks of the British Army, with another two million that attested for service at a later date. The tremendous loss of life on the battlefields in Europe, however, proved that a more drastic approach would be required to increase the number of men enlisting. The half measure of the Derby Scheme illustrated the government’s ambivalence about conscription; however, the volunteer effort was proving inadequate in making up for the dropping numbers and lacked the necessary strength of government conscription. Therefore in March of 1916, the British Parliament enacted the Military Service Act of 1916. Men would be forced into the idealized masculinity reflected in its propaganda and tested on the battlefield, whether they liked it or not.

Male identities are not universal or unmalleable; nowhere is this clearer than in war with its power to disrupt social order. It was imperative that the youth of Britain be conditioned in an effort to maintain the British identity of the masculine soldier hero and defend this social order for the future of the British Empire. The remainder of this study will examine the ways in which class and

\textsuperscript{66} Prospective soldiers were supposed to receive a letter from Lord Derby before a knock at the door, and the canvassing recruiters received a letter from the War Office with Derby’s signature, and those men who opted to enlist under the Derby Scheme were issued a khaki armband to avoid being mistaken from a shirker. See, British Army brassard, accessed February 16, 2014, \url{http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30076979}. 


modernity shaped masculinity, how non-conformity to the masculine ideal was handled in British society, and in the next chapter how masculinity could be modified through training the youth, making the distinction very clear between what behavior was expected of British boys and girls.
Chapter Two

Anthem For Doomed Youth

There were great numbers of young men who had never been in a war and were consequently far from unwilling to join in this one.

Thucydides, *5th Century BC* 67

What was it about the *Orient Express* that made it the setting for intrigue and espionage, as well as the inspiration for more than a share of theatric crime novels? Mata Hari, the infamous belly-dancer and spy, often rode the *Orient Express* on her clandestine adventures through Europe. The train seemed equally attractive to men with power. Nicholas II of Russia demanded that special cars be built for his trip to Paris, while King Leopold II of Belgium rode the train with the objective of infiltrating a Turkish harem. Perhaps it was simply the exotic destinations and scenery on that stretch of rail track, married with the luxurious surroundings of marquetry and silk sheets in the compartments. Whatever the combination, it was the favored mode of transportation traveling to the East for another spy, Robert Stevenson Smyth Baden-Powell. Baden-Powell travelled on the train disguised as a butterfly collector, complete with net and samples, sketching butterfly wings on a large pad from his compartment and from the window in the dining car. Unknown to the train’s other passengers

Baden-Powell was not a lepidopterist on a mission to collect rare butterfly samples from the Balkans as he claimed, rather he was sketching coded maps of fortifications along the Dalmatian coast inside the wings of the butterflies he was drawing. Completed on the route of the Orient Express in the 1890's at the behest of the British Director of Military Intelligence, these maps were utilized later by the British and Italian navies in the Great War.68

Baden-Powell had the quintessential British military man’s career, and it closely followed that of many officers born in the early Victorian period. Like Kitchener, he saw action in India and Africa; he led a command in South Africa during the Second Boer War. Forces under Baden-Powell were credited with holding the strategically important city of Mafeking in May of 1900 against a Boer artillery siege. The Boer War made Baden-Powell a national hero, and he was promoted to lieutenant-general, enjoying the confidence and counsel of Edward VII. Influenced greatly by his experiences in the military, Baden-Powell was an example of how the public valued courage and worshiped the type of victorious

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leadership reflected in a military that promoted this type of masculinity. In order to defend the city of Mafeking, he had enlisted the civilians living in the town. The townspeople formed a cadet corps for young boys between eleven and fourteen to act as hospital orderlies, errand runners and messengers. Baden-Powell had, for some time, been thinking about how young boys could free up fighting men. In India, he had written a guide to training military scouts for the army. Returning from South Africa to find that his work, *Aids to Scouting*, had become a best seller in England and was being used by educators and youth leaders, Baden-Powell began to compile his thoughts about the function of young boys as scouts from his experience at Mafeking. Removing from *Aids to Scouting* specific details pertaining to grown men but leaving in the most important aspects of how military men should conduct themselves, he wrote a version of *Aids to Scouting* for boys entitled, *Scouting for Boys*. In 1908, Lord Robert Stevenson Smyth Baden-Powell founded the Boy Scouts.

69 At least one Baden-Powell biographer maintains that he was a repressed homosexual; other biographers have scrutinized his personal associations with close male friends. Baden-Powell recorded his dreams in a diary and most were about young men. He was also known to cross-dress during his time in the military, playing the female leading roles in productions for the army, even making his own dresses. Several books and papers could be written about the sexual anxiety of Robert Baden-Powell. While this may have little to do with his military prowess or his public social connections, it would help explain the intense interest Baden-Powell had in encouraging manliness as part of the training in the Boy Scouts. Historically of course this would have long term consequences. In Britain, the Boy Scouts only began to allow homosexual members and leaders officially in 1997 with the passage of the U.K. Scouting Association *Equal Opportunities Policy Guidelines*. The Boy Scouts of America began allowing homosexual boys into the scouts in January of this year, however the current policy of the BSA maintains that no homosexual adults, or “avowed homosexuals [sic]” be allowed to hold any leadership positions (BSA Membership Standards Resolution, accessed September 26, 2013 http://www.scouting.org/sitecore/content/membershipstandards/resolution/resolution.aspx.), see, Tim Jeal, *Baden Powell: Founder of the Boy Scouts* (Yale University Press, 2007) and see, Brook Allen, “Rainbow Merit Badge.” *The New York Times*, July 19, 2012, accessed, September 26, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/20/opinion/scoutings-gay-founder.html?_r=0.
The Boy Scouts were encouraged by the British government as useful for patriotic advancement; the Boy Scouts produced the kind of boys it sought to promote: those with patriotic loyalty and obedience to their duty.\(^7\) The Scout Association was incorporated throughout the British Commonwealth by a Royal Charter on January 4, 1912.\(^7\) The Boy Scouts, the British education system, and the British military sought out and encouraged youth to be more masculine, altering their relationship to the nation-state, changing their physical appearance; and testing the young British man’s sense of duty (plate 10). Masculine traits instilled in British males as boys were also those ideals that were targeted in males in British society at large; the relationship of the government, education, and the military is striking in its effectiveness at changing boys into more masculine children. The masculinity of the Boy Scouts stressed militarism, patriotism, duty, and survival, and it provided the youth of England with a sense of urgency about the war. Baden-Powell’s efforts paid off for the British War Office.

One of Baden-Powell’s biggest promoters was William Alexander Smith. It was Smith who strongly encouraged Baden-Powell to write *Scouting for Boys*.

\(^7\) This connection was even stronger in the British Empire, where in India Baden-Powell was asked by the Viceroy in 1921 to intervene on behalf the Scouting Associations to allow Indian’s into the Scouts. Ultimately Baden-Powell was unable to reconcile the British government’s position as it related to allowing Indians into the BSA, and thereafter Indian Scouts formed segregated units and did not mix with their British counterparts, see John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1940* (London: Shoe String, 1977).

William Smith, also a military careerist, joined the Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers in 1874 and moved up the ranks to Lieutenant. Smith fell in love with the sixteen year old daughter of a Presbyterian minister, and already a devoted Christian from an early age and doubly so through marriage, Smith later fell under the spell of the two American evangelists, Moody and Sanky, who further enflamed his unique version of Scottish Protestantism. Influenced by his love of the army and his Christian religion, William Smith established what he called the Boys’ Brigade in 1883, stressing his calling to make Sunday Sabbath School more attractive to young men. Smith believed that discipline and the methods he learned in the Rifle Volunteers could be used effectively in training the boys in his congregation. The first number of fifty-nine boys to volunteer quickly dropped to thirty-five, some of the boys having realized what they were in for. The object of the Boys’ Brigades according to Smith was, “The advancement of Christ’s Kingdom among Boys and the promotion of habits of Reverence, Discipline, Self-Respect, and all that tends towards a true Christian Manliness [italics mine].”

As with a great many things derived parochially, the organization turned militarist, doubtlessly a result of Smith’s experience in the British Army. By the end of 1883, the first Glasgow Company of the Boys Brigade had been formed, led by two sergeants, two corporals, and two lance-corporals who divided the boys into six squads. Smith wrote a book entitled, How to Form and Conduct a

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72 This organization still is influencing boys in the United Kingdom and throughout the former British Empire. Today the Boys’ Brigade has some 60,000 children in groups much like those William Smith championed in his day. see, “Boys Brigade: What are we Doing Now?” accessed September 23, 2013, http://www.boys-brigade.org.uk/whoweare.htm.
*Company* in 1888, which outlined behavior expected of the boys in the Boys’ Brigade, becoming colloquially known as *The Little Red Book*. The young boys were expected to be on the field by 8 A.M (following the 6 A.M. reveille); the drills that the boys were required to complete involved handling rifles. The military exercises and ordered behavior of the Boys’ Brigade made these groups look like detachments of an army. The officers that came back from Khartoum and Delhi needed an outlet to exhibit their dominance and some chose to head these brigades. Young cadets of the Boys’ Brigades were uniformed; many joined and accepted a position to acquire the uniform because many of the boys could not afford shoes, and so gladly accepted the cap, belt and haversack. In 1889, the eighty-one Companies of Boys’ Brigade from all over the United Kingdom met in Glasgow for a field parade. In total, some 3,649 boys were led by fife and drum for their annual Drill Inspection. Two Non-commissioned Officers and two detachments of the King’s 15th Hussars kept crowd control. This youth rally was the largest England had seen; the Boys’ Brigade military display was a sight so familiar later in the trenches of Europe. In 1903, Lord Baden-Powell was asked by William Smith to become Vice-President of the Boys’ Brigade on his return from his African campaign.

73 “The rifles caused the biggest offense,” writes Donald McFarlan, “it seemed only natural in those days that the only good drill was one that included the precise thud and slap and smart control of rifles exercised in precision. Some of the earliest manuals available from the Boys’ Brigade were: Infantry Drill, Manual Exercises for the Rifle and Carbine, and Firing Exercises.” Donald M. McFarlan, *First for Boys: The Story of the Boys’ Brigade, 1883-1983*, 33, accessed September 25, 2013, [http://www.boys-brigade.org.uk/ffb.pdf](http://www.boys-brigade.org.uk/ffb.pdf).

To see if his ideas about the young boys of England and Scouting would work, Baden-Powell tested them first on the Dorset Island of Brownsea. On Brownsea, in August of 1907, Baden-Powell hosted approximately a hundred boys and divided them into platoons with names like Wolves and Bulls. The Brownsea Island Scouting experiment proved to Baden-Powell that a large scale Scouting movement would be successful in capturing a particular motivation to change the behavior of young boys away from individuality and towards group patriotism and civic duty. In 1910, Edward VII personally persuaded Baden-Powell to concentrate all his efforts on leading the emerging Scout movement. By comparison to the Boys’ Brigade, the Boy Scouts evolved under Baden-Powell’s leadership into a formidable movement. In 1910, the Scouts could claim a membership of over 100,000 boys and by the end of the war that number had doubled.75 A good Scout was expected to live in accordance with Scout honor expressed in *Scouting for Boys*.76 Boys were taught the Scout Oath, “On my honour I promise that ... 1. I will do my duty to God and the King. 2. I will do my best to help others, whatever it costs me. 3. I know the scout law, and will obey it.”77 In the Scout’s Oath was present the same ideals held by the military and

75 Scouting was tremendously popular post war, with numbers in Britain reaching 420,000 in 1930. Associated today strongly in the United States, scouting membership has reached 2.7 million young boys. This author was a Cub-scout, Weebelo, and Boy Scout, leaving before achieving Eagle Scout status. See, Boy Scouts of America Fact Sheet, accessed, September 25, 2013, [http://www.scouting.org/About/FactSheets/ScoutingFacts.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/About/FactSheets/ScoutingFacts.aspx).

76 *Scouting for Boys* was priced at 4 pence, affordable to many of the young boys it attracted who could pay for the book from proceeds from work.

every soldier was trained to privilege: Patriotism, Duty, and Obedience. Despite Baden-Powell’s removal of most of the adult male scouting lessons, *Scouting for Boys* included instructions for boys on how to kill a man, “Aim first at the man, then, moving the muzzle a little faster than he is moving, and fire while moving it when it is pointing where he will be a second or two later, and the bullet will just get there at the same time as he does and will hit him.”

*Scouting for Boys* stressed the duty of a citizen-soldier and fostered group mentality among the boys of England (plate 11 and plate 12).

Scouting gave young males the opportunity to feel a sense of belonging. It also gave them the opportunity to bond with other male children in mutual understandings of what was expected of a male. Baden-Powell’s project, derived from the military experience of a siege in war-torn South Africa, foreshadowed the Great War. Baden-Powell enjoyed boasting that over seventy percent of Scouts went into the military to fight for Britain during the war. Baden-Powell happened to be an artist as well. He designed at least two successful posters for the PRC. Baden-Powell designed “Are YOU in this?” (figure 12) a poster illustrating almost perfectly the streamlined transition from a youth Scout into a man fighting England’s enemies in the field. Young men signed up from the Boy Scouts into the British Army at significant rates (figure 13). Of the 100,000 Boy

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Scouts to make the transition and sign up for their patriotic duty during the Great War, 10,000 would be killed.\textsuperscript{79}

II

Education in Britain was compulsory in the beginning of the 1880’s. Schooling previously had been largely left up to local populations; access and quality of education remained closely tied to wealth, gender, and class. The Education Act of 1880 made some progress with educating larger segments of the population, making schooling mandatory for children between the ages of five and ten years of age. In 1899 the age was raised to twelve. These educational reforms were chiefly designed to combat child labor, but by the dawn of the twentieth century only around eighty percent of those children between five and twelve attended any kind of schooling. Many of the British children who did attend schools worked outside of school hours. In 1901 the number was put at three-hundred thousand child laborers, with truancy often committed out of economic necessity for many British families. Public and grammar schools were affected by the Balfour Education Act of 1902, and were left to jurisdictional control by local authorities rather than School Boards. The Board Schools remained in areas with large industrial or urban populations. Male children were segregated from females in working class schools; boys were taught how to earn

livings, while females were largely instructed in domestic duties.\textsuperscript{80} “There were no boys and girls mixed in those days,” recalled George Walker who was 3 when he began school, “All the girls were at one school and all the boys in another.”\textsuperscript{81} George was routinely caned by teachers at his school if he was late from working his milk delivery job, he recalled, “we were taught discipline in those days...and we got plenty of physical exercise.”\textsuperscript{82} In terms of masculine ideals this type of discipline and instruction on how to provide for their families was in keeping with gender expectations; however, changes to masculine upbringings reflected in educational reforms and state control over school curricula had the effect of encouraging young boys to cherish certain values of the state.

A uniformity in education was achieved through regulations that sought “to ensure a certain measure of breadth and richness in the curriculum of Secondary Schools, and to provide against schools recognised under that name offering only an education which is stunted, illiberal, unpractical or over-specialised.”\textsuperscript{83} Education for young boys in secondary schools took on practical and generalized characteristics, making for a more widely developed consensus on what boyhood

\textsuperscript{80} The Board School systems were designed for industrial towns; most schools in rural settings were run by parochial religious institutions. The wealthy of course sent their boys to preparatory schools to prepare them for entry into England’s Universities. For an example of a working class school, see Pat Cryer, “The Edmonton School”, accessed December 19, 2013, \url{http://www.1900s.org.uk/1900s-schools.htm}.

\textsuperscript{81} Interview 9276 of British Boy, George Walker was recorded by Jan R Stovold in 1986, accessed October 5, 2013 \url{http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009066}.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{83} Sir W. H. Hardow, an examiner of schools in 1900 wrote several reports on education in England, see, Derek Gillard, “The Hadow Reports: An Introduction”, accessed October 4, 2013, \url{http://www.infed.org/schooling/hadow_reports.htm}. 
and becoming a man in Britain meant. Boys were taught a patriotic and generalized history. As Private George Morgan who served with the 1st Bradford Pals recalled after the war, “We had been brought up to believe that Britain was the best country in the world and we wanted to defend her. The history taught us at school showed that we were better than other people and now all the news was that Germany was the aggressors and we wanted to show the Germans what we could do.”

British masculinity too was reflected in the trade and technical schools for the working classes that were created to continue practical education after a boy turned sixteen. Reinforcing the notion that men worked and provided for women and children, Britain looked to improve commercial and industrial education, for fear that they were falling behind America and the other industrialized European countries in terms of their commercial interests. Boys in public schools were taught a patriotic history, practical knowledge regarding work, and were kept away from females, making for male conceptions of chauvinism and providing and defending the mother country. At the dawn of the twentieth century, young boys were taught obedience by their fathers at home.


85 “The first was in 1901 the Trade School for Furniture and Cabinet-making was founded at the Shoreditch Technical Institute in London. They were designed to take boys at or near the completion of their elementary school career for a period of one, two or three years, and to give a specialised training that would fit them to enter into workshop or factory life, at about the age of 16, with the prospect of becoming skilled workers or of rising ultimately to positions of responsibility as foremen, draughtsmen, or even managers.” see, Derek Gillard, “Education in England: A Brief History”, accessed September 29, 2013, http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history/chapter04.html.
and in their education; their fathers were the authority, the King the father of the country.

The state of boys’ physical fitness was made apparent to the British government by the male recruits who volunteered to join the army during the Boer War. The medical examiners noticed that the young men who had been educated in England’s schools were ill-prepared for fighting. It also became immediately apparent to the government that military training improved physical bodies of fighting men; drill as a means to improve the physical fitness of young men in England was encouraged by the government through legislation and governance of the civilian population. Britain put in great effort to improve the health and physical body of the male population. In 1901, the Physical Training Committee was created to combat what was considered the physical feebleness of young men of England. In 1905, the state began to systematically advocate exercise in schools, producing a guidebook for teachers entitled, Suggestions for the Considerations of Teachers. This guide stressed physical fitness, an important element to the altering physical requirements of masculine identity that was being stressed in society as a whole. Physical training to make males more physically fit took on military characteristics. The Director of Physical Education and the divisional assistants were, “for the sake of the economy,” chosen from the War Office. The War Office issued training guides for students in English

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87 Ibid, 181.
boarding schools and public education, while sergeants and corporals were put in charge of physical education in schools. This close tie between the military and education made a smooth transition for many men; the war seeming like just another military exercise. Physical training, it was believed, made young boys think and behave as a group while lessening their individual interests. Schoolboys were taken onto the field for exercise in the form of games and competitive sports, increasing the level of competitiveness and camaraderie that were evident later on the fields of France (figure 14).

The War Office’s influence over the male body increased when war was declared, instituting a policy whereby physical fitness trainers in public schools could make the transition into the armed services and become officers. After the war, more than a third of physical training instructors were ex-army or ex-navy officers. The close relationship between the army and education created boys mentally prepared to defend England. Their increased understanding of Britain’s glorified past, as well as their physically prepared bodies were ready thanks to the close relationship between the government, military, and schools. Young men who remained in schools were subject to the same obedience and physical training that men already in the service were receiving. The youth being trained in schools to become physically fit as well as patriotic became the targets of recruitment. Underage recruits, the War Office argued, that possessed a physically fit body trumped age restrictions. A physically matured body was the

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88 Ibid, 182.
prize for recruitment in Britain; the principle qualification for recruiting young boys.\textsuperscript{89}

III

Private George Morgan of the 1st Bradford Pals Battalion, who would later witness the worst fighting on the Somme, recounted his experience as an underage recruit after the war ended “I told the recruiting officer I was 16, and he said, ‘You had better go outside, come back again and tell me something different.’ I came back in and told him I was nineteen and I was in. I thought it would be the end of the world if I didn't pass [the medical]. People were being failed for all sorts of reasons. When I came to have my chest measured (I was only sixteen and rather small) I took a deep breath and puffed out my chest as far as I could and the doctor said “You've just scraped through.” It was marvelous being accepted. When I went back home and told my mother she said I was a

\textsuperscript{89} The demand for manpower during the war made state interest in the body paramount, medical examination requirements were developed with War Office recommendation, other times youths were recruited according to their appearance. The rule of thumb was to let through anyone who appeared to be physically fit, allowing for many underage recruits to be accepted based on subjective physical requirements.
fool and she’d give me a good hiding; but I told her, 'I'm a man now, you can't hit a man'".90

Morgan’s insistence that he was a man now, ennobled by his decision to enlist and by his acceptance, was common. Diaries, interviews, and recollections of the men who served in the Great War reveal that underage recruitment was rampant. The propaganda and encouragement from the government had a particular effect on the young. A sixteen year old London messenger boy, Tommy Gay said, “I had to go into the army because Kitchener put a poster on the wall which said: ‘We want you. We want you!’” Although he was only sixteen, when he knocked on the Recruitment Office door, the sergeant told Gay, “Oh yes! You’re just the lads we want.”91 Children in Britain at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century were allowed to leave school at twelve to work. Lack of mandatory education past childhood meant that the army offered a chance at a higher income than many wage jobs and had the added benefit of proving to oneself and others that a young boy was

90 Ralph N. Hudson, *The Bradford Pals: A Short History of the 16th and 18th Battalions of the Prince of Wales Own West Yorkshire Regiment* (Bradford: Bradford Arts, Museums, and Libraries Service, 2000), 2 and Interview of George Morgan, “It was wonderful to be accepted” accessed September 25, 2013, http://www.bradlibs.com/bradfordpals/web_audio/morgan.htm. Morgan as a fresh recruit was brought up to the Languard trench as part of the B Company in the middle of the night of June 30, 1916 after marching to relieve the forces on the Somme front. Hudson writes, “Looking around his new surroundings his eyes fell on the corpse of a young soldier, probably killed by a shell burst. Thrown on to the parados, a head hung back into the trench...In his mind’s eye George saw a small child looking up into the face of a young woman, asking: “Does everyone die, Mummy?” “Yes they do,” replied the young woman. “Will I die, Mummy?” “Yes,” replied the young woman, but not for a long time. “Ibid, 30.

capable of being a man.\textsuperscript{92} Although the official age to join the volunteers was 19, the recruitment officers didn’t check birth certificates. Jack Ashley, a British Officer of the Royal Garrison Artillery spoke candidly about the reality of the situation after the war “If you were a young man in 1914, healthy at any age from 15 upwards, you needed a lot of luck if you were going to survive the next four or five years.”\textsuperscript{93}

It is difficult to find specifics on the actual number of under-aged boys who fought in the war. The official number is 250,000; however so many young men lied about their ages that the number is doubtlessly underrepresentive. There isn’t a consensus either over who was the youngest child to serve. An Irish boy from Waterford named John Condon who died in a German gas attack at Ypres, was reportedly the youngest at twelve. Another may have been George Maher

\hspace{1cm}\textsuperscript{92} Much of the opposition to underage recruitment was from a liberal MP and industrialist named Arthur Markham. Markham was a coal magnate, Chairman of the Markham Steam Coal Company; as many of the young boys left the working conditions in Markham’s mine for the opportunities in the army, Markham saw his profits going with them. On September 22, 1915 he addressed Parliament, “I should like to ask the Prime Minister a question upon the forms which have been circulated by the Local Government Board. In my own Constituency boys of fifteen and sixteen have been and are recruited and the Government are perfectly well aware of it. In fact a boy of sixteen was recruited in my Constituency and his father and mother went to the headquarters of the Sherwood Foresters and tried to get him back but the authorities refused to allow him to go back, although he is only sixteen years of age. He came from Kirkby-in-Ashfield. In the same village another boy of fifteen enlisted and his parents were unable to get him back. Are we to understand it is the policy of the Government to take immature boys of fifteen and sixteen when they have set down a definitive military age at which boys may be enlisted? The question has been raised time after time and we get no satisfaction from the Government. Surely no system of enlistment can be satisfactory which allows boys like that to be taken. The War Office well knows that the declarations made by these boys - made for patriotic reasons - are false......”, See, minutes from the House of Commons and House of Lords, accessed, September 25, 2013, \url{http://hansard.millbank systems.com/commons/1915/sep/22/consolidated-fund-no-4-bill#}.

\hspace{1cm}\textsuperscript{93} Interview 6831 of British Officer, Jack Ashley was recorded by Julian Freeman in 1983, accessed September 27, 2013, \url{http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80006647}. 
who was thirteen and also knew a boy he fought alongside that was so small that the other men had to hold him up so that he could see over the trench walls. In 2013, it was decided that Sidney Lewis was youngest at 12. Young boys of Britain had been swayed more effectively by the government’s assault on the public imagination, and the propaganda and recruitment drives sponsored by the War Office played successfully on the heightened sensitivity to masculine ideals in wartime Britain that appealed to those who wanted to play at war.

Recruitment officers were paid on the bounty system; if they got a young man to enlist they received a commission of two shillings and sixpence (around £6 in today’s money). As a result, every kind of tactic was used to recruit young men, resulting in officers insulting and routinely bullying teenagers into joining the military. Young men were also encouraged by their employers and even released from their jobs, making enlistment the only alternative. Employers replaced those young men with women and younger children. A young boy, George Walker, delivered milk on the home front from 1913-1915 beginning at

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the age of ten, and then worked in a brass foundry from 1915 until 1919, working from six in the morning until eight at night on the same machine. He recalled, “we thought we were doing important work...women used to do their share just like men.”

Like people employed in factory jobs creating weapons, coal miners were considered essential and were not recruited because they functioned as a reserve occupation. That did not keep 52,000 northern miners, the backbone of the English working class, to join up. These tough young men (many under-aged) were the unfortunate sons who joined Kitchener’s Army that were called up again and again at the Somme. The demographics of the war changed the age of recruits in the army. By 1918, nearly half the infantry of the British Army was 19 or younger.

Male bonding, in schools, in the coal mines, in the factories of England, and in the Scouts helped recruitment efforts. Much of the recruitment during the war was aimed towards making men feel they were sharing in a group activity and working with one another towards a common end. The military obviously required the group mentality and men who were encouraged to join this way did so out of fear of being left out. The uniform, as previously discussed in Chapter One, helped in this regard, as it ritualized masculinity; it was designed to humiliate the boys who did not sign up. When their school mates had heard of

97 “We used to have a football team of boys that worked in the factory, we called the young boys draft sons, we had squabbles...[the officials] used to tell us to pack up, there was no time for fighting in the factory...we used to make darts and through them, but mainly we played football outside. There were no other games provided for us. No enjoyments outside us boys playing ourselves.” Interview 9276 of British Boy, George Walker was recorded by Jan R Stovold in 1986, accessed October 5, 2013, http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009066.
the boys who had volunteered in the *Pals Battalions* and were going off to fight, many wanted to join them. Ralph Ernest Barnwell immediately signed up when he heard that ex-public school boys were joining, he stated, “The idea of serving with the sort of people with whom one had been associated had a natural attraction.” Recruitment posters produced by the PRC stressed camaraderie and played on this notion of bonding with fellow males. Posters like “All Together!” and “He’s Happy and Satisfied, Are You?” and “When Are the Other Boys Coming?” and “An APPEAL to YOU” gave the viewer the opportunity of gazing upon the male ideals in Britain, and influenced them to join other males in fighting, all part of an unspoken male bond. Male bonding during actual fighting allowed men to form friendships that sent many men back to fighting because of a feeling of guilt over abandoning their fellow men in the unit.99 Men had to learn the domestic duties that women had done previously in battle. In the trench, men cooked for themselves, often for the first time, washed their plates and cleaned their own clothes in rivers and in French homes. The experience of war demanded intimacy between men; fighting encouraged group trust and the sharing of provisions. Companies of men competed with other units for best dressed or most disciplined, calling the other group poor fighters or laggards. These friendships developed and matured; with the always present threat of


99 Siegfried Sassoon, the poet and novelist, left the mental hospital at Craiglockheart mainly with the desire to return to the unit that was previously under his command and whom the soldiers adored, see, Jean Moorcroft Wilson, *Siegfried Sassoon: Soldier, Poet, Lover, Friend* (New York: Overlook, 2014).
death, the men fighting in the Great War developed trust that supported inseparable companionship.

Young men wanted to speed up the process of becoming men, and the army was a sure test of manliness as covered in the previous chapters. Government propaganda helped in large measure to reinforce that idea; the Scouting movement offered a pseudo form of soldiering and prepared the youth to be obedient and patriotic, the education system and military prepared the young male body, and the lax attitude towards underage recruitment illustrates the power of the State and Society’s role in encouraging the masculinization of British boys.
Plates and Figures
The Changing Face of British Masculinity

figure 1  Percy Bysshe Shelley

figure 2  Charles Dickens in 1839

figure 3  Benjamin Disraeli in 1852
figure 4  Sir Frederick Leighton, 1871

figure 5  Lord Cyril Flowers, 1872

plate 1  Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, 1885
The countenance of Empire

plate 2  Douglas Haig, aged 23
in 1885: Lieutenant in the Hussars
plate 3  Colonial Officers in India, 1910

plate 4  Boys of the Sleyne School, exercising early 1900's note the Captain in front
plate 5
Physical exercises for recruits in the covered tennis hall at Trinity in Cambridge, 1915

plate 6
Physical Inspections by Recruiting Physicians, 1915
The British Male at War

figure 6  Lord Kitchener as ideal masculine patriot and warrior fingering the viewer, 1914

plate 7  BEF Troops preparing for deployment August 6, 1914

plate 8  Recruiting Office London, 1914
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figure 7  Another Kitchener Poster appearing one year after the first, this time with the added threat of conscription, 1915
figure 8  Recruitment Poster, 1915

figure 9  PRC poster, 1915

figure 10  From the Central Council for the Recruitment for Ireland, 1915

figure 11  From the Central Council for the Recruitment for Ireland, 1915
plate 10  Scouts in uniform from Britain and France along with their respective flags, 1912

figure 12  A Lord Baden-Powell designed recruitment poster, 1915

plate 11  Baden-Powell and George V handing out Scout Badges
The Duke of Connaught inspecting Boys Scouts

Boy Scout contemplating enlisting. PRC poster, 1915

British Athletes! Will you follow this Glorious example?, 1915
plate 13

51st Highland Division on parade

figure 15
ANZAC “worthy sons of Empire”

figure 16
English inspired poster from Australia
plate 14  Irish BEF soldiers resting in a back trench at First Battle of the Somme, 1916

plate 15  King George V inspecting the 25th Infantry division
plate 16  BEF Soldiers at Gallipoli

plate 17  13th Royal Fusiliers after the attack on La Boisselle, July 7, 1916
figure 17  PRC poster, 1915
figure 18  PRC poster, 1916
plate 18 Contiencious Objectors in Dartmoor Quary, 1916
Figure 19: Picture Postcard by artist Archibald English, 1916

Figure 20: Daily Mail cartoon by artist Frank Holland, depicting the lazy conscientious objector
plate 19  Located in the 3rd London General Hospital, its Government name was, “Masks for Facial Disfigurement Department.” Wounded soldiers called it “The Tin Noses Shop.”

plate 20  Wounded amputees learn how to use their prosthetic legs, 1916
Chapter Three

Song to the Men of England

Men of England, wherefore plough
For the Lords who lay ye low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Percy Bysshe Shelley, 1819  

I heard the sighs of men, that have no skill
To speak of their distress, no, nor the will!
A voice I know. And this time I must go.

Wilfred Owen, 1918  

Located in the furthest South-West corner of Britain, Kent is home to shipbuilding, brick and cement industries, much the same as it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Kent is also where much of England’s agriculture originates; since the times of Julius Caesar men and women have tilled the soil to grow apples, hops, and hazelnuts. It was here in the small village of Shoreham that a young boy named Thomas Highgate was born in 1895, and where he too became an agricultural laborer. Highgate, like many young men, found the advantages of the military more compelling than a life of trying to farm the land. At seventeen, Thomas enlisted in the military, and in February of 1913 he became a soldier in the First Battalion of the Royal West Kent Regiment. His

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battalion was stationed for training in Dublin, Ireland, before the war broke out. Far from Kent, far from Dublin, was the Kaiser in Germany, and Thomas’s unit was called up when England declared war against Germany; he crossed with them across the English Channel on the 15th of August 1914. Highgate, eighteen years old, was scheduled to fight Germany’s Army, the enemy of his native land.

This examination of the British government and its relationship with making more masculine men was contingent on factors that were part of their own creation. Highgate was an under-aged volunteer, and as we have seen in the last chapter, these young men were educated to be obedient and patriotic and were often the object of British Army Recruiters’ bounties. Once enlisted, British soldiers like Highgate experienced a climate in which their masculinity was tightly controlled by the military through surveillance of their physical selves, which made them dependent on the other males through the bonds that were formed among them in the absence of women. With the military’s insistence that they be transformed into the kind of male that was ideal for Britain’s war at the turn of the last century, the British government’s decision to include men like Highgate in their plans tells us they wanted all men from all classes. To disadvantaged young men like Highgate, the sons of landed gentry were specifically trained in leadership positions to guide their social inferiors. It was in part the male bonding between men of the same class that captivated men like Highgate, and this fact was not lost to the propagandists in the British
Government who knew to play on those sentiments. Kitchener’s plan for *Pals battalions*, or men from the same town, school, profession, or sports team were as effective as they were indicative of the bond men felt for their fellow men who had agreed to serve, thereby building a wave of recruitment from ranks of men from the same social class. The British government, the state-run education system, the military, and even systems of power like the British class system’s effect on men, help make the case that masculinity in the period leading up to and during the First World War was a project of British systems of power. Masculinity was affected by other aspects of male existence in England during the period, like the class system, and masculine ideals differed geographically throughout England and its Empire. In this chapter male identity will be discussed in terms of the instituted class system; the geographical differences and influences in the ways men viewed themselves in England, in the British Isles, and in the British Empire will also be explored.

Thomas Highgate, the farm laborer turned professional soldier in France, was spotted on the grounds of the estate of the Baron Edouard Alphonse de Rothschild, near the Chateau de Ferrieres\(^\text{102}\) by one of the gamekeepers who happened to be a former soldier and English. Highgate had been ordered up the

\(^{102}\) Ferrieres was an opulent property; as was conceivable in the late nineteenth century. The chateau was completed in the Neo-Renaissance style and commissioned by the British architect Joseph Paxton. Paxton had also designed Mentmore Towers, the British country estate of Baron Mayer de Rothschild. Edouard was reported to instruct Paxton, “Build me a Mentmore, but twice the size.” The German Emperor, Wilhelm I, commenting on the opulence and aesthetics of the estate when he visited in the 1860’s, said, “No Kings could afford this! It could only belong to a Rothschild.” See, Michael Hall, *The Victorian Country House* (London: Aurum Press, 2009).
evening before and had taken part in the First Battle of the Marne. Highgate reportedly said to the gamekeeper, “I have had enough of it, I want to get out of it and this is how I am going to do it.” Having changed into civilian clothes (his British Army uniform was recovered not far away), he was returned to British Army Command. Highgate was given a court martial and tried with no attorney; all of his fellow soldiers who could have potentially been called upon or used as witnesses were all killed or wounded. He attempted to explain his actions away but was nevertheless found guilty of desertion. The penalty for deserting the British Army was death. Senior Officers at his trial insisted that Thomas be executed, “at once” and “as publicly as possible.” He was tried and convicted on the same day, as the men of the First Dorset Regiment and First Cheshire Regiment witnessed the firing squad that shot Highgate the morning of September 8th, 1914. Thomas Highgate was the first British soldier killed for desertion in the British Army during the Great War.\(^\text{103}\)

II

There has been a considerable amount of scholarship around the confluence of class and gender; many historians have attempted to unravel masculine and feminine identities during the Victorian Era and the First World War. British history is the history of class, where men were judged by their title

\(^{103}\) In 2000, the name Thomas Highgate was not included when the vote from the Shoreham Parish Council decided to not include his name on their war monument. In 2006, the Prime Minister passed the Armed Forces Act of 2006, whereby Highgate and 306 other British deserters were given posthumous pardons, see “Shot at dawn, pardoned 90 years on” accessed October 11, 2013, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/4798025.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/4798025.stm).
and their futures decided by one embryo and one zygote. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, there was an emerging middle class created by the industrialization of England where new fortunes and new attitudes developed alongside new wealth. The history of class is not the focus of this history, but it is nevertheless worth exploring the place where class and masculinity meet in this period, as this relationship yields further clarity in understanding class values and their relationship to British masculinity. An exploration of class in Britain yields not one understanding of masculinity; a study of class creates masculinities or ways in which each class treated the subject of gender. The male-dominated class system and those in the still emerging middle classes determined a male’s education, where he went to school, his career and social position, and where he would fit in the armed services. Poor people generally were led as opposed to being leaders, both in terms of the political, social or economic world as well as in the military.

Aristocratic families in 1914 made up the officer class in the Great War, comprising the bulk of men in charge of boys like Thomas Highgate. Trained in the best prep schools in England and later at either Trinity Hall or Oxford, officers had skills and identities of their class. In these schools men were trained for


105 For an exhaustive work on the male leadership training that the upper classes received in the leading public schools in England see, T.G. Ashplant, *Fractured Loyalties: Masculinity, Class and Politics in Britain, 1900-30* (Chicago: Rivers Oram Press, 2007).
leadership roles, their masculine identity strongly linked to nation and class, and they were also trained to motivate other socially inferior men to fight. Many of the officer class in the First World War had been instructed in such a way as to ensure they would maintain their social status, and parents sought to instill masculine behaviors appropriate to the upper class. As an English Gentleman, an expectation was to lead your social inferiors, as had been the tradition since William the Conqueror. The upper-class male, in addition to being a leader of men, was also expected to play the role of family guardian and would take on the role of paterfamilias for his own family. Duty bound to fight for their king aristocratic males were almost uniformly patriotic and joined up in the largest numbers in comparison to the total population. Officers and junior officers from the upper classes were also the men most frequently killed, disproportionately from the common soldiers they were put in charge of leading. More officers from aristocratic families were lost in the years between 1914 and 1918, proportionally to the overall population, when compared to the number sent in to fight. It is therefore no coincidence that many of the prep schools in Britain have memorials to whole classes of boys that perished in the war. Generally, in the British Army,

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106 T. G. Ashplant argues that masculinity was a reflection of both the nation-state and class in the English upper-class preparatory schools, making for a closed system. “Britain in the late-nineteenth century,” Ashplant writes, “was not even in theory a meritocratic society, and powerful barriers operated to prevent the marketisation of many areas of life. Privileged social classes were reproduced in significant part by recruitment from the children of their own members; and so individual families adopted or developed strategies for enabling their own children to succeed to, or improve upon, the parents’ class position both as successful class members in their own lifetime and as parents of a subsequent generation.” See, T. G. Ashplant, Fractured Loyalties: Masculinity, Class and Politics (Chicago: Rivers Oram Press, 2007), 38.
one officer was assigned to thirty men and during the war one officer fell for every nineteen men.\textsuperscript{107}

When the officer class from the landed gentry of England was beginning to be exhausted, the government turned to upper middle class young men to take their place. The upper middle class and middle class men fighting in the First World War shared with the men of the aristocratic families in England common masculine traits learned in schools and on playing fields. The still emerging middle class of the 1880’s and 1890’s sought to emulate the lifestyle and social standing of the upper classes. One way in which they concentrated their efforts in attaining this goal was to enroll their young boys in the English public school system, whereby formal bonds were established between the old social order of landed gentry and the nouveaux riche of Fleet Street. Young men who attended Cambridge and Oxford from non-aristocratic and aristocratic families formed the social bonds that later held the officer class together with shared history. They had also learned companionship and social connection through sport. The middle and upper middle classes encouraged their young men to play sports, which for the last three decades of the nineteenth century was becoming institutionalized for the first time. This additional bond born on the polo fields, cricket mounds and rugby fields of Britain provided an exclusionary diversion, a

boundary between the two classes and those of the socially lowest men. This competitiveness among upper class men was sometimes reflected in the actions officers and junior officers took in battle. Some took more valiant risks at proving themselves men than the common soldier, in an effort to impress the men they had been trained to lead. Most famously perhaps was the case of the poet Siegfried Sassoon, or Mad Jack as his soldiers called him, from a well to do merchant family in Kent, who had attended Cambridge and was fond of night raids on German trenches in which he would lob grenades into German trenches. Patriotism, loyalty, and romantic idealism marked his early poetry, and his acquaintances and worldview came largely from his upbringing.

The Victorian middle class also developed values associated with a class in which a work ethic was prized and enterprise encouraged. The new identities of the middle class stood in contrast to the old order, placing increasing value on character and service (be it to a company or family) as characteristics men should strive towards. They used imagery of the poorer classes to justify these new values, marking poor men as the criminal class and the middle class as detached from their condition. Middle class resentment towards the poor was

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108 Sport brought a component that could be shared by the middle and upper classes in a shared status in English society, allowing for a mixed social activity that formed bonds where community was evident on the front, see T. G. Ashplant, *Fractured Loyalties: Masculinity, Class and Politics* (Chicago: Rivers Oram Press, 2007), 46-47.

109 Daniel Bivona argues that Victorian middle class male journalists could boast and write of entering the urban slums (a new word originating from this period) in search of adventure and exploration. For our focus, the importance in the emphasis on detachment was taught to Victorian men in the upper and middle classes, as well as the value of industry and enterprise. See, Daniel Bivona and Roger B. Henkle, *The Imagination of Class: Masculinity and the Victorian Urban Poor* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), 1-7.
closely linked to their avoidance of the negative attributes associated with the working class, whereby the new industrial class prized social legitimacy and political acceptance. *Self-Control* became a hallmark of the new English Gentlemen and it was believed by the middle class that the poor in these slums suffered from a deficiency of character.\(^{110}\) The new middle-class desired to place these new values in stark contrast to the agrarian and urban poor who had their own set of masculine ideals of work and family. Evidence of this relationship between the classes was clear during the war, as middle class men saw their *service* in terms of service to their country, while the working class men saw war and service as *work*.\(^{111}\)

The urban poor were also adept at survival, not in the form of camaraderie on the sports field, but in the real world of survival where competition meant eating or starving. Poor people in England in the late nineteenth century came from urban areas where working class families lived in overcrowded slums where filth and disease were rampant; poor sanitation and hygiene were marked characteristics. Because men in the working class composed the vast majority of

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\(^{110}\) Poverty offered men an escape for men, insofar as poor and working class men were not often held to the same ideals as their middle and upper class peers. Daniel Bivona argues that, “The male middle class imaginary of urban poverty presents a complex picture, one in which anxieties about competition, violence, class-based resentment, individuality, and the need to differentiate oneself from the scions of inherited wealth influence the ways in which the urban poor [were] represented.” He further argues that there was a “new gentlemen” that emerges in the nineteenth century where an internalized ethic of “self-control” was put forth to differentiate the new middle class from the old. See Daniel Bivona and Roger B. Henkle, *The Imagination of Class: Masculinity and the Victorian Urban Poor* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), 1-7.

wage earning people, the role of provider had much firmer identity association with masculinity (as well as the growing sense of *being* working class) irrespective of any *condescension of posterity*. Many of the urban and agrarian working class used the army as a chance to escape their working conditions. Once in the military class differences didn't evaporate; even if they did not erupt, resentments of officers receiving preferential treatment fueled hostilities between the classes even in a foreign field. Once they returned, servicemen of the middle class were often threatened through injury or disability with falling behind in their social standing whereby they risked and often became lower class themselves.

In retrospect the summer of 1914 held an idyllic tranquility for the English. For men whose class was not of primary concern, this summer held a special romantic memory. “The summer of 1914 was a beautiful one and the last of an era,” wrote F. C. Lewis. “Youths went about in gangs and, on Sundays, country walks were fashionable when one wore a straw hat in the summer and carried a cane.” This tranquil world, shattered by war disrupted the social fabric of England as well as the traditional roles of men. War had the ability to not only create new masculinities, it also had the power to create bonds which had previously not existed. For example, let us re-examine for a moment another

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112 E.P. Thompson’s work, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966), details the rise of the working class identities from the late regency to the Victorian period, and is an excellent reference for understanding the transitions in society during the English Industrial Revolution.

role the British Army uniform provided. Army uniforms had the tendency to break
down class, as everyone walked around with the same kind of clothing.
Camaraderie was also created in the units; there was a sense of oneness with a
particular regiment or company, with competition among the different military
detachments, and as we have seen with the attitudes, some of the officers
showed the soldiers under their command. Death of loved individuals impacted
the lower classes and the upper crust; the fallen dead offered symbols of a tragic
nature. While class cannot be entirely separated from English social history
before and after the war, the experience of the men in both late Victorian society
and the Great War changed in terms of gender and class that were altered by the
institutions that upheld the class system.

III

In addition to class, regionalism and geographical differences affected how
men saw themselves and behaved; understandings of manliness were unique
depending on for whose allegiance you as a man were fighting. The imagined
British community, where men’s roles were primary and developed particular to
that society, was a tool that could be used to construct masculinity and
manipulate that identity in Britain and her Empire. Yet there were torn loyalties in
men who were not from the center of power and also visibly and culturally
different understandings of masculinity throughout the United Kingdom as well as
the Empire. The relationship to England and the British Isles was dependent on
Scottish, Welsh, and Irish nationalisms or the ways in which they felt their
manhood was tested in relation to their own national sentiments. The British
government needed to make certain that patriotism was paramount among
British nationals and subdued enough in other parts of her dominions to keep
masculinity and the meaning of being a man the issue for which men would be
willing to fight.

Scottish patriotism and loyalty to England were not issues in the First
World War; the war did nothing to develop a Scottish nationalist movement.¹¹⁴
On the contrary, Scottish men volunteered in higher percentages compared to
their British counterparts, the result of which is that hardly a township or city in
Scotland today is without a memorial to Scots who died in the war. Prior to the
conflict, and especially in rural areas, Scottish men traditionally joined the local
territorial forces that formed an important component of community life in
Scotland. A sense of shared history of military service in the British Army (in the
eighteenth century for example, Scottish men dominated the British Army), as
well as membership in the territorial forces helped boost recruitment from
Scotland when the British declared war.

Scots nevertheless desired to express their particular toughness and
wanted distinction and recognition in the British military. The acquiescence of the
British to Scottish demands made room and accommodations for Scottish
expressions of masculinity. For example, the Tyneside Scottish regiment, that

¹¹⁴ See, “Domestic Impact of war on Politics” in Scottish History, accessed October 17, 2013,
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/higherscottishhistory/impactofthegreatwar/war_politics/
index.asp.
was to be swallowed up with the BEF, had petitioned the Army for special
allowances to allow them to wear Glengarry bonnets, as well as requesting that
each battalion be allowed to have pipes and drums in their bands. A petition by
the Tynesides for full kilted uniforms was rejected, but many units were allowed
kilts, for example the 51st Highland Division (plate 13) wore them and was rated
by the Germans among the fiercest fighters. Traditionally to be a true Scott, a
man had to wear a kilt; Colin Campbell the 1st Baron Clyde who led a Highland
Brigade during the Crimean War asserted that, “a man in a kilt is a man and a
half.” The motto of the Tyneside Scottish during the Great War, “Hard as
Hammers,” belied attempts by the Scots to outdo British men’s toughness. Belief
in the oversized Scottish contribution of more manly men led to a separate war
monument for Scotland after the war. The kilts, bonnets and bagpipes made for
highly visible regiments, and the government of England played on these
Scottish symbols of nationalism and masculinity in war propaganda.

Appeals were made for anyone with Scottish ancestry to sign up; this was
done in an effort to create what Kitchener called “Old County Regiments” in
Kitchener’s Army, appealing to locality and to Scottish patriotism. Victor Silvester

115 It was in the Crimea that the Scots earned a famous talisman of martial glory; a journalist
who coined the term, The Thin Red Line when he saw at a distance the 93rd Sutherland
Highlanders under the command of Colin Campbell fight back a charge of over 25,000 Russian
Infantry at Balaklava. Instead of creating a phalanx which had been customary in nineteenth
century warfare, Campbell ordered the Scots to form a line where their red coats and dark kilts at
a distance created the look of a thin red whisp across the landscape, he reportedly stated, "I
knew the 93rd, and I did not think it worth the trouble of forming a square." This was part of the
mythology of Scottish toughness and stalwart courage in the face of almost impossible odds, as
their victory came to symbolize Scottish bravery. See, “The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders
(Princess Louise's)” accessed February 16, 2014, http://www.argylls.co.uk/history/the-93rd-
remembered going to sign up as a Scot in London, “I was fourteen and nine months on the morning I played truant, and went up to the headquarters of the London Scottish at Buckingham Palace Gate. A sergeant in the recruiting office asked me what I wanted, and he questioned me about my Scottish ancestry. ‘My mother’s father was a Scot,’ I said. That seemed adequate, so he asked me my age. ‘Eighteen and nine months,’ I said. ‘All right, the sergeant said. Fill in this form and wait in the next room for the medical officer to look at you.’”

The Pals Battalions raised during those early months of the war exploited Scottish loyalty in Britain and were also targeted by the PLC in Scotland. For example, in Glasgow the Pals Battalions combined recruits from different parts of the city: the

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116 Sylvester, later a dancer and then a bandleader during the Second World War, recounted in his memoirs that war was not the brave adventure he signed up for: “[Our company] went up into the front-line near Arras... As we were moving up to our sector along the communication trenches, a shell burst ahead of me and one of my platoon dropped. He was the first man I ever saw killed. Both his legs were blown off and the whole of his face and body was peppered with shrapnel. The sight turned my stomach. I was sick and terrified, but even more frightened of showing it [italics mine]. That night I had been asleep in a dugout about three hours when I woke up feeling something biting my hip. I put my hand down and my fingers closed on a big rat. It had nibbled through my haversack, my tunic and pleated kilt to get at my flesh. With a cry of horror I threw it from me.” Sylvester, still a teenager, was later assigned to five execution squads, and when recalling the first: “The victim was brought out from a shed and led struggling to a chair to which he was then bound and a white handkerchief placed over his heart as our target area. He was said to have fled in the face of the enemy. Mortified by the sight of the poor wretch tugging at his bonds, twelve of us, on the order raised our rifles unsteadily. Some of the men, unable to face the ordeal, had got themselves drunk overnight. They could not have aimed straight if they tried, and, contrary to popular belief, all twelve rifles were loaded. The condemned man had also been plied with whisky during the night, but I remained sober through fear. The tears were rolling down my cheeks as he went on attempting to free himself from the ropes attaching him to the chair. I aimed blindly and when the gun smoke had cleared away we were further horrified to see that, although wounded, the intended victim was still alive. Still blindfolded, he was attempting to make a run for it still strapped to the chair. The blood was running freely from a chest wound. An officer in charge stepped forward to put the finishing touch with a revolver held to the poor man’s temple. He had only once cried out and that was when he shouted the one word ‘mother’. He could not have been much older than me. We were told later that he had in fact been suffering from shell-shock, a condition not recognised by the army at the time. Later I took part in four more such executions.” From, John Hamilton, *Trench Fighting of World War I* (Edina, Minnesota: ABDO, 2005).
15th Highlanders represented the tram workers, the 16th the Boys’ Brigade, the 17th the Chamber of Commerce. Recruitment drives with rows of kilted soldiers succeeded in recruiting more, and Scottish enlistment in the Great War reached nearly 700,000 men.

Irish participation in the Great War is as fraught with contention today as it was in 1914. Home Rule for Ireland had been a politically charged topic in the years leading up to the Great War; Asquith, the Prime Minister when war broke out, could not have avoided the topic dividing loyalty within Ireland and the United Kingdom. Yet the Irish question, like Women’s Suffrage, was largely sidetracked by the war; political action in Ireland would continue to be problematic, culminating in the Easter Rebellion of 1916. Recruitment was as high in Ireland as it was in Britain at the outbreak of the war; well over 200,000 Irish fought in the Great War, bravely fighting in the Royal Irish Regiment, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the Royal Iniskilling Fusiliers and the Irish Guards (plate 14), alongside their British counterparts in the war (plate 15). Yet those divisions fighting for Britain, and all led by Protestant officers, acted out conflicting loyalties.

Antagonisms between British and Irish, patriotically - or religiously - based, were quelled in part by the efforts of the politician John Redmond who worked at convincing the Irish that they should fight for Britain out of loyalty and the common threat of a potential German invasion, and then persuade the British that the Irishman was loyal. Redmond explained to the Irish that they acted as
one type of man, as patriot, as pious, and in their attitude towards the other
gender, “The Irish soldier with his limpid faith and unaffected piety, his rosary
recited on the hillside, his Mass in the ruined barn under shellfire, his ‘act of
contrition’ in the trench before facing the hail of assault, his attitude towards
women, has mostly been a singular expression.”\textsuperscript{117} This worked at the beginning
of the war as Irish Home Rule was abandoned for a unified effort at defeating the
German threat and blew up in 1916 when Irish nationals attempted rebellion in
Dublin with her ally deeply in the Great War. The Easter Rebellion was
squashed, yet antagonisms between British and Irish continued to be a thorn in
the side of the British government. In 1918, Whitehall pressed for a conscription
act for Ireland. No one in Ireland was ever drafted into the war, however,
because Irish nationalists, trade unionists and Catholic Priests refused the order.

\textit{Little Catholic Belgium}, the \textit{cause celebre} that Redmond pushed on
Ireland, was of deep concern to the Catholic Church. Nearly every religious
leader in Britain was a rabid war monger. The Archbishop of Canterbury stated in
1915 that he did not, “[e]ntertain any doubt that our nation could not, without
sacrificing principles of honour and justice, more dear than life itself, have stood
aside and looked idly on the present world conflict.”\textsuperscript{118} Indeed, in pulpits all over

\textsuperscript{117} Quoted from, Marcus Tanner, \textit{Ireland’s Holy Wars: The Struggle for a Nation’s Soul, 1500-2000} (Cambridge: Yale University Press, 2012), 276.

\textsuperscript{118} Quoted from, Fielden, Kevin Christopher, "The Church of England in the First World
England the message from the Church of England to young men was go.\textsuperscript{119} In the beginning, Irish Catholic priests were of the same mind. These men, Catholic priests, both in terms of status and as paternal figures, had tremendous influence over illiterate and semi-literate working class Irish men who were taught to look up to them. This was an important factor when war broke out. “The priests themselves advised us to go and fight,” said one Irish recruit.\textsuperscript{120} The \textit{Church of Ireland Gazette} proclaimed, “South and North have sunk their differences in a passionate determination to spend their strength in the crushing of the common enemy of themselves and all civilisation.”\textsuperscript{121} A war blessed by the church offered many young Irish Catholic men a cause painted as a crusade against the German Huns. As an institution, British and Irish men found that their religious affiliation, or the institutions that ran them, were pro-war and pro-nationalistic.

Millions of lives lost by the British Army by 1918 led to efforts at Whitehall to get more men, and in early 1918 parliament adopted a revised Military Service Bill to include Ireland, as well as older men and workers in fields previously thought essential for war production. At hearing that Irish men would be called up in draft form, the Catholic Church in Ireland shifted their opinion on fighting an English war. Along with Irish nationalists, trade unionists and Sinn Fein

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{120} From RTÉ Archives, clip “In the Morning” accessed October 21, 2013, \url{http://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/1011-ireland-and-the-great-war/1012-call-to-arms/293249-and-in-the-morning/?page=1}.

supporters, Catholic Bishops called for a refusal of British demands. A General Strike was called and anti-conscription rallies were effective in response. Irish men held an allegiance to the church, a masculine identity with fellow workers, and a form of patriotism that very much depended on success in the war. There was the possibility of German collaboration with Ireland, and Britain was keenly aware that Irish sentiments were very much dependent on Irish beliefs, Irish institutions, and the way in which Irish men could be affected by their religion. Playing on this understanding, the Minister of Information implemented a suggested plan by Lord Northcliffe. Stuart Hay, a British Army Captain, proposed to Lord Northcliffe that a connection be established between the Irish Catholic Church and the French Catholic Church, and young men could be conscripted into the French rather than British Army, thereby diffusing the conflict young Irish men had with Protestant Officers and British loyalties. The plan came to very little as the war was over by November, but the plan gives a clear indication that in calls to fight other men, Irish nationalism and religious conviction had to be approached carefully as these cultural specifics could keep men from fighting and therefore abandon masculine ideas about duty.

IV

The First World War was truly the first global conflict. The Empire of Britain was at its zenith in 1914, proudly claiming that the sun never sets upon it. Operating with maritime supremacy, the concerns of the British outside of Europe were naval. The British believed they could bring a speedy conclusion to the war
by a few strategic naval battles and the entire war would be over. In her colonies, most the King’s Rifles regiments were designed for internal conflict and ill-equipped for a global war. At the outset the British were able to dominate German colonial interests, despite continued fighting in Africa. The administration of the colonies was largely taken care of by colonial regiments, however, the Empire began to request men from their colonies from all over the world. Over the course of the conflict at least eight and a half million men fought for the British Empire. British colonial soldiers were recruited in similar fashion as the British, playing on a grander patriotism and particular regional identity of warrior. The potential loss of India, the Jewel in the Crown, preoccupied Whitehall and Parliament. It would be held regardless of any infighting, even as the British put out a call to arms. Britain enlisted what it called “the martial races” of India, tapping into their reserve of males from where they originally had borrowed their moustaches.

Loyal to Britain, men came from Canada, from the West Indies, from Australia and New Zealand. Australia and New Zealand contributed over four-hundred thousand men to fight for the British Empire, collectively known by their acronym ANZAC (figure 15 and figure 16); they were sent in large numbers to their deaths at Gallipoli (plate 16) in the Ottoman Empire during the Dardanelles

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122 Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck remained a fighting force in colonial Africa, where he was successful at antagonize British units in British East Africa and elsewhere, creating a colonial war, evidence of the nature of the first global war. See, Hew Strachan, The First World War in Africa (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Campaign. The seven Victoria Crosses earned by Australians and New Zealanders served to increase mythology in Australia as to the nobility of their deaths. Private Roy Howard Denning wrote in a letter to his mother, “In spite of the dirty and in some cases ragged uniform covering tired bodies the men were cheerful and laughed at their plight, some jokingly saying, ‘Oh, if only my girl could see me now’... I felt that God would be good to men who had so nobly given their lives in such a cause for they had given their lives for their friends.”

In death the men who fought at Gallipoli became “worthy sons of Empire,” and were considered men who had the best deaths. “Your son gave good service and no one regretted his death more than I did except of course his own family. He died nobly and in a good cause bravely doing his duty and after all in which better way can one go. I sometimes wonder whether a splendid death like his is not more a matter for congratulation than of condolence, but of course it is hard for the loved ones left behind to see it in this light.”

What this cause was for Australia was of primary concern to the mother country.

While this paper concerns itself with Britain, men throughout the British Empire experienced the same kind of insistence on men who were patriotic, who prized their physically developed bodies, and who were dutiful and obedient to

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the crown. Supplied with the best from her colonies, the men fighting on behalf of the British Empire that she called up were of a similar mind to their dedicated duty. They also brought their own understandings of what it meant to be a man to the conflict. Continuities within the construct of masculine expectations of patriotism, duty, and camaraderie (plate 17) allowed the British government to spread the net far and wide. What happened to those who chose not to conform to the masculine ideal? Did the men who stayed home and refused to take part have the courage to abstain from the hysteria of hyper-masculinity, rabid patriotism and obsession with duty? In the next chapter, the discussion will focus on the men who refused to take part in their country’s war and the price that was paid for being un-manly.
Chapter Four

Dulce et Decorum Est Pro Patria Mori

England, you have been here too long,
And the songs you sing are the songs
you sung on a braver day.
Now they are wrong.

Stevie Smith, 1957

Nothing except a battle lost can be half
so melancholy as a battle won.

Duke of Wellington, 1815

Attached to one of the official unit diary entries made after the First Battle of the Marne in early September 1914, was an addendum made by Captain C. J. Paterson of the 1st South Wales Borderers who wrote:

Here I sit outside our headquarters trench in the sun. The rain which we have had without a break for the past two days has now stopped and the world should look glorious. The battle has stopped here for a bit...as I say all should be nice and peaceful and pretty. What it actually is is beyond description. Trenches, bits of equipment, clothing (probably blood-stained), ammunition, tools, caps, etc etc, everywhere. Poor fellows shot dead are lying in all directions...all the hedges torn and trampled, all the grass trodden in the mud, holes where shells have struck, branches torn off trees by the explosion. Everywhere the same hard, grim, pitiless sign of battle and war. I have had a belly full of it...Ghastly, absolutely ghastly, and whoever was in the wrong in the matter which brought

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127 Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington, letter from the field at the Battle of Waterloo, June 18, 1815.
Paterson’s words clearly are ones of disbelief and horror at the actual fighting that took place during the war he both witnessed and participated in; his first thoughts after seeing the true nature of war moved him to blame those who were responsible for the conflict in which he found himself. Yet those responsible for the conflict were also the ones that helped shape the attitudes and concepts of what it meant to be a British man, and in doing so, created men obligated and duty bound to fight for their society. British society had to be defended and the men that she sent into battle were the product of the masculine culture the British government had been helping to create since the Victorian period. British masculinity and the ideas of manhood were, in part, created and exploited by the British government through law and organizations, increasing patriotism’s association with maleness in schools, making duty an attribute of manhood, and in exploiting the male traditions of participating in war through propaganda and policy.

When war was declared in 1914 it was thought there would be an endless contingent of men ready to enlist and fight, extending British patriotism indefinitely. Men enlisted in the hundreds of thousands in 1914, driven largely by their perceptions of duty as men; however as the war dragged on many men

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refused to enlist and patriotism, so fervent in the beginning days of the war, waned. British Officer Stapleton Tench Eachus noted this firsthand and recorded in his diary on the 24th of May, 1916:

> Coming along by train I particularly noticed the flag of St. George and the good old Union Jack flying sincerely from the tops of numerous buildings. I was impressed with the fact too for my mind was reverted back to the early days of the war. When I remember people were flag mad at the time my regiment came through London on its way to Newbury in Berkshire, our progress all along the line was marked by continual bursts of cheering and every house was bedecked with flags of many colours. This was mad London's attitude then, how different are things now.\(^{129}\)

Euchus had initially volunteered and felt later that his own personal experience of the war mirrored that of the larger social order which was growing tired of war. By the time Parliament enacted the Conscription Act of 1916, many in uniform and many civilian British had tired of war. In 1916 for example, 200,000 people in Britain signed a petition for a negotiated peace with the other powers.\(^{130}\)

Britain had never previously had any conscription into its armed forces, and compulsory military service began to create pockets of resistance. Perhaps the most convincing evidence of the trend in British society encouraging British masculinity is how the British government and British society as a whole treated those who failed to live up to the British masculine ideal. Men who were of military age and not in uniform received the dreaded white feather, a symbol of cowardice, handed out primarily by women, and were vilified by the press and

\(^{129}\) Eachus, Stapleton Tench, *War Diaries of Stapleton Tench Eachus*, Diary One 1916.

their family and friends. Those British men who refused to heed their country’s call and refused conscription were known collectively as conscientious objectors - men who refused to participate in war on moral, political, personal or religious grounds. As many as 20,000 British men refused to fight in the conflict. Some were given alternative ways to serve, but some 6,000, refused all service and ended up in prisons under some of the harshest conditions of incarceration.\textsuperscript{131}

Scrutinizing the ways in which men were treated when they did not fulfill the expectations of their gender, it becomes clear that the British government and British society sought to weed out those who would not act in accordance with established male rules of conduct. Those men who refused to participate in the masculine qualities laid out for them by the state, felt the power of that state and its ability to not only make war and make men want to fight in that war, but make men into the one thing men were taught from the earliest age to be fearful of, to hold in the highest contempt of, and to avoid at all costs, the threat of seeming feminine or to be regulated to the same status as women. British men who gave up their patriotism, who failed at their duty, were to be associated with and equated with women.

II

James Lovegrove was 16 when the war broke out in 1914 and remembered going with some friends to see a movie around that time:

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid, 188.
Well the four of us, we were known as the three musketeers (I was the odd man out) went to the film that night, and at the end of the pictures a woman came out dressed as Britannia, and sang ‘we don’t want lose you; we think you out to go,’ and we were to follow her, with the band, down to the town hall and I was one of those full of joy. I went down and we were lined up outside (the other three didn’t come), and to my dismay the recruiting sergeant came out and said, “Hello sonny are you looking for your father?” and everybody laughed and I could have fallen through the floor.¹³²

Lovegrove was too young in appearance and physical size even for the recruiting standards of 1914, and it would be another year before he enlisted when, "On my way to work one morning a group of women surrounded me...they started shouting and yelling at me, calling me all sorts of names for not being a soldier! Do you know what they did? They struck a white feather in my coat, meaning I was a coward. Oh, I did feel dreadful, so ashamed," and Lovegrove immediately, “went to Whitehall to the War Office, no Scotland Yard, and private doctors were there behind screens.”¹³³ This time he was accepted by the medical inspectors, and at 17 he had successfully joined the British Army. The white feather that Lovegrove and a great many men out of uniform received was a powerful symbol that only men who were deemed unmanly received. In August of 1914, Admiral Charles Fitzgerald had founded the Order of the White Feather, an organization encouraging British women to hand out white feathers to young men who they suspected or knew had not joined the British Army. The white feathers that were given to these men symbolized shame in the implied lack of manhood of the


¹³³ Ibid.
recipient; it made these men feel unworthy for not enlisting and made them feel that they were not good enough for the women who gave them the feathers.

Dating to the eighteenth century in Britain, the white feather became the symbol of cowardice and feebleness, traditionally associated with the practice of cock-fighting. Largely assigned as a function of women, young ladies would attend large social gatherings both in urban areas and in rural communities to shame men into joining up to fight by presenting them with a feather. William George Bruty recalled an episode in the English countryside, “I do remember these recruiting parades that used to have all these elegant young ladies, [they] used to get up on farm carts, and exalt the young men, agricultural workers in some cases to join up, and they used to prance and sing on this sort of platform on the wagon, and they used to say, ‘we really don’t want to lose you, but are afraid you ought to go, for your country needs you so,’ some jingle like that.”

Bruty was exposed to the shaming attacks that forced many men to abandon wives, ill children, elderly parents, careers and families. “This was not unusual. This was a crazy gang [of young women] who used to go around with white feathers to fellows they thought should be in uniform. It was a peculiar form of

134 White feathers had been traditionally a sign of weakness in cock fighting, in which a rooster with white feathers was deemed unsuccessful at fighting. Popularized in the nineteenth century by A.E.W. Mason’s work *The Four Feathers*, a tale about a man who receives a white feather in his refusal to go to war, only to save his fellow soldiers who had been sent to the Sudan.

attack you might say, rightly or wrongly,” Bruty recalled.

Another recruit, 17 year-old H. Symonds was given a white feather by an attractive woman. After receiving the feather, Symonds went directly to the recruitment office. A few days after he signed up Symonds remembered the same woman giving a recruitment speech and that she yelled for Symonds who was in uniform this time to join her on stage. With tears streaming down her face, the woman took back the feather and gave him a kiss in return. Not all were as moved by these attacks on their manhood as Symonds, for example, the editor of the socialist newspaper in London, the *Labour Leader*, Fenner Brockway, who would eventually go to jail for his refusal to fight, said that he had been handed so many white feathers that he could make a fan. Yet men were the targets of this practice designed to play on the fears of their insecurities as men.

As it grew in popularity, an unintended consequence of the practice of the Order of the White Feather was a backlash towards women and their attack on Englishmen’s masculinity. The British were well aware of the power that playing on gender roles and personal relationships between the sexes might have, “Many correspondents point out that recruitment lectures are not the best means

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136 Ibid.


of reaching the workingman as that all-important recruiting agency, his sister or sweetheart.”¹³⁹ The government’s recruitment drives were also keenly aware of the power of playing on women to target men and enlisted their help to encourage men to fight; this is reflected again in war propaganda, with the poster “Women in Britain say GO!” (figure 17). British womankind, represented by a mother and child, is seen without tears in her eyes as she watches the men march off to the front. Gender roles, so defined in pre-war Britain provided a source of exploitation of these differences, making them targets exploiting the fears of each gender. The White Feather Campaign was so successful because it implied that there was a masculine role that was quite distinct from the female role; the male characteristics of duty, patriotism, the sexual role of dominant masculinity, of physical perfection, and fear of being equated with the feminine were wrapped up in a simple symbol. An unforeseen problem arose for the British government regarding who received these feathers: civil servants, returning veterans, and as those who were previously given clearance from fighting were being given feathers.

Although predictably the government initially took little interest in putting a stop to the White Feather Order, it became a real problem for the civil servants and persons working in the government itself. It also created issues for those who had returned from the front and received such treatment. Men who committed suicide as a result of receiving the White Feather are difficult to trace,

however from some of the recollections of returning soldiers, the effects of the White Feather movement became clear to those giving and receiving such potent symbols of cowardice and lack of manliness. Soldier R.W. Farrow returned home from the front without one of his hands, which he had lost in an explosion. Riding in a tramcar in civilian dress, he had the stump of his hand hidden inside one of his coat pockets. Approached by a young woman with a white feather, Farrow removed his stump to try and receive the feather, causing the giver to run from the tram crying. Another English officer returned to London to receive a Victoria Cross at Buckingham Palace by the King himself in recognition of bravery on the front. Receiving his medal, he returned to the hotel where he was staying and changed into civilian clothes. As he left the hotel for a walk around the city, a young woman presented him with a white feather. The officer was struck with the irony that on the same day he was presented with his country’s highest award for bravery on the front, he was also given the most recognizable symbol of cowardice. Instances of mistakenly identifying potential men who lacked the adequate quotient of masculinity rose as the popularity of handing out feathers peaked. As more men who had already proven their masculinity grew evidenced by their return from the front with wounds, the drawing of attention to that lack of masculinity was escalating.


It was a combination of mistaking wounded men for men unwilling to fight and the attacks on civil servants necessary for the war effort that made the British Government act. In 1916, the British War Office began issuing Silver War Badges, small silver badges with the King’s initials emblazoned on them, that drew attention to the members of the White Feather Order to the fact the men who wore them had served or were serving their country to their fullest male capacity. Nevertheless, the symbolic giving of the white feathers points to the association these feathers had to the men who received them. The association of weakness, of being womanly, of being a sissy, or of lacking the necessary qualities of men were plainly clear to the receiver, and many of those who received them were men who were not going to fight risking the penalty for not living up to the masculine standard.

III

Largely unknown outside academia, conscientious objectors, or the men that refused to participate in their country’s war, had experiences that give a clear indication of how far and to what lengths the British government would go to secure the necessary qualities of manhood that it had been emphasizing for men in British society. The head of the British War Propaganda Section of the *Morning Post*, the author Rudyard Kipling wrote on the 22nd of June, 1915, “However the world pretends to divide itself, there are only two divisions in the
world today - human beings and Germans.” Yet there was a subset of men who disagreed with Kipling’s assessment, and were not going to fight because of their religious beliefs, moral disagreement with fighting, or because they simply didn’t wish to kill other men. These men numbered in the thousands, as many as 20,000, and their options during the war were limited by the government’s insistence that qualified men should be forced into uniform. When the Conscription Act of 1916 was passed, exceptions were made for conscientious objection to the war; however any man who decided that he was not going to fight, had to appear before military tribunals set up in local areas to deal with any objections to the war. Because Britain had never had military conscription in the past and they were a new phenomenon, these tribunals were foreign to British men, and often worked as clearing houses to induct potential objectors into the British Army. The men who appeared before these tribunals were given two options, either be inducted into the army against your will or be given sentences and sent to prison.

The Conscription Act of 1916 emboldened the nation’s anti-war movement. The largest group of anti-war backers formed the No-Conscription Fellowship, or NCF which drew 2,000 supporters to a convention in April of 1916. The organization’s chairman was Bertrand Russell, the lifelong pacifist and activist, who insisted that he did not want cheering or noise in the hall to incite

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the angry crowd outside into violence, and so when he took the podium, the crowd waved thousands of white handkerchiefs in place of cheers. Russell’s efforts during the war, defending those who were imprisoned as a result of their objection, losing his post at Cambridge and denied a passport to lecture at Harvard, belied sentiments that a growing minority felt towards war and the death tolls and maiming that were taking place daily. Although the country had a small anti-war movement, the men in Britain who did not want to participate in the war were still required to submit to the ultimate authority of the state if they wished to avoid conscription. Anti-war activists suffered from public opinion, and later as they became non-combatants, received threats in addition to contempt from their neighbors. Wilfred Owen Littleboy, who would not fight, recalled having one of his neighbors tell his mother, “you have four boys not in the army, and I have lost two.”

Government propaganda targeted effeminate conscientious objectors, in print and again in their propaganda campaign, for example the poster, “The Conscientious Objector at the Front.” (figure 18) The ultimate decision to refuse to fight led to ostracizing, prison, and hard labor sentences. Walter Griffin from Leamington Spa near Warwick was of recruitment age when the war broke out, and as a Pentecostal Christian held firm to the belief that “you cannot overcome


evil with evil, you can only overcome, as Jesus said and which I stood up for, overcome evil with good. How that could be accomplished during the war, I don’t know, except that I could show my love and devotion to the people I knew.”

Griffin refused to fight, appeared before a military tribunal, and was offered alternate service, or work of national importance; however Griffin objected to any work under military supervision - the absolutist position. Absolutists would not work for the military under any guise. The Pelham Scheme, introduced after conscription, offered conscientious objectors the possibility of working in non-combat occupations like munitions factories or on farms or at the docks. Of the contentious objectors, nearly 20,000, only 6,000 were absolutists, while the others accepted alternative war service in non-combat roles. However men like Griffin refused fill the home-front role of a conscripted soldier. Griffin was arrested and taken almost immediately to Woodbrook Barracks in Suffolk where he was present during bayonet practice, where the Commanding Officer, yelled “Show that conchie over there what we are going to do to the Germans!” Griffin was made an example of for the first year at Woodbridge, where earlier other contentious objectors had their clothing forcibly removed and uniforms of British soldiers placed in their barrack, the other objectors refused to put on the uniforms and were paraded naked along with other men who refused to fight in front of the soldiers in uniform as an example. Imprisoned in Wormwood Scrubs Prison, then Fort Burgoyne in Dover, then in Canterbury prison, Griffin was subjected to the poorest conditions, evidence of the contempt that the army and British
government felt towards conscientious objection.\textsuperscript{145}

Other prisoners were sent to France in hopes that they could be induced into service by being near those fighting. One prisoner, Robert Price, recalled treatment in the French prison of Etaples and Les Attaques No. 5 towards conscientious objectors, “On the ‘compound’ at Etaples, we were horse-whipped, half-choked by sand-bags slung around our necks, and thrown into dark cells. Later, for an hour and a half, ten or twelve of the army’s biggest bullies set about five of us, for refusing to obey the order to “double” - and we were whipped, struck and kicked, with fists and boots, thrown down, kicked whilst down, thrown against the railings, shaken as a dog would shake a rat, pushed and dragged about until totally exhausted, and we were all on the point of collapse...At Les Attaques, I saw a youth chained hands and feet, stripped naked, doubled over an officers knees, and then thrashed by two or three others with their metal mounted belts.”\textsuperscript{146}

Prisoners in England fared the same, stories of constant marching, of being placed in shackles for days at a time, of forced labor, of torture and poor nutrition are many. The deplorable conditions of the prisons were of little concern to the government, as they made their opinion of these men who were not real


\textsuperscript{146} Peter Brock ed. \textit{These Strange Criminals: An Anthology of Prison Memoirs by Conscientious Objectors from the Great War to the Cold War} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 81.
men clear. Stephen Hobhouse recalled that, “Since April of 1917, the prison rations have been severely curtailed; and there is good evidence to show that many men are suffering seriously from underfeeding...nearly all of us constantly know what hunger means.” The British government set up alternatives to prisons in the form of work centers as part of an effort to make the criminals work for the government.

Dartmoor Prison, located next to a granite quarry in south Devon, provided the setting for around a thousand of the contentious objectors who refused to fight in the war. Originally built to house prisoners of the Napoleonic wars, the abandoned quarry was re-opened in 1916 in order to fulfill the sentences meted out to objectors. Only hard labor sentences were handed out to absolutists, those unwilling under any circumstances, or so the government felt, to risk their lives in defense of their society. These sentences of hard labor were given to those objectors who were in prison, as the objectors were causing a scandal for sitting idle in prisons and not contributing to the war effort. The Home Office Scheme passed by parliament in 1916 gave prisoners the option of hard labor sentences. At Dartmoor, the prisoners broke rock at the site for nine hours a day (plate 18), and in the middle of a moor, the Commanding Officer in charge of the prisoners ordered them to construct a seven-foot wall around the moor that served no purpose. A prisoner at Dartmoor, Henry Firth, a conscientious objector died from pneumonia, as another objector Mark Hayler, who had been beaten

147 Ibid., 14.
and tortured himself recalled “He was only a boy, 21, a preacher of the Methodist...He had pneumonia. He’d been badly treated, sent out to work on the moor in bad weather.” Although the conditions were difficult for most, and the sleeping arrangements meant lying on boards with thin mattresses, little heat, and no medical care, there were consolations. At Dartmoor, the prisoners were forbidden use of the church by the Bishop of Exeter; however there was a gymnasium, library, the prisoners didn’t have locks on their doors and there was sufficient food. These conditions angered the general public, which felt that these men deserved a far worse punishment than hard labor.

Conditions at other internment camps for objectors, Wakefield and Warwick were much the same as Dartmoor, but still did nothing to curry favor with those who believed in worse penalties for shirkers. An MP in parliament suggested that objectors should be exchanged for wounded English soldiers behind enemy lines as German prisoners. Another suggested that they be pushed to the front where a few bombs might make them change their minds. The diversity in which the prisoners themselves were dispersed and the means by which they served the state to meet the penalty of failing in their manhood is expressed by the contempt many of these prisoners were held by the general public.

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Many of the men who were singled out because of their convictions, were recipients of the white feather and government contempt, evidenced by the numerous attacks in print and poster (figure 19 and figure 20). For the men who refused to fight the ultimate price to be paid was in questionable manhood.

IV

Opposition to the war effort, and more importantly opposition to British masculine ideals, was deemed an affront to manhood by the members of the Order of the White Feather, it was punishable by prison and hard labor camp for those who refused outright, and for desertion during wartime, by death. Given the carnage, most of the three million British troops realized that they faced almost certain death if they remained on the front lines. Whole battalions were wiped out; some with psychological wounds like shell-shock that many men felt were just excuses not to fight. If the British soldiers ran from the German guns they knew they would be shot by the British ones. Yet over three hundred men were executed by British military command, Thomas Highgate being the first.

The men on the front who deserted were shot; the humiliation on the home front and penalties for objecting were severe enough to drive home the British masculine ideal to the majority of men in the trenches. To the men who rejected the masculine ideal, there was no escaping the wrath of the state. Many who had served as prisoners during the war felt that the experience had shaped their lives, as Mark Hayler recalled, “It produces thoughts that disrupt one’s
character. No-one to talk to, men shouting out in the night, month after month, it seemed there would never be an end.” Yet his experience shaped his life after the war as well. Like many conscientious objectors he was marked by being a prisoner, and he was denied employment after asked the common question, “What did you do during the Great War?”149 For a generation of objectors, the First World War proved to be a model to the next. During the Second World War there were nearly 60,000 men who refused to fight in the war. While the majority of males inducted into the army fulfilled their duty, it is the measure of how important the government felt that its masculine ideal was to its success on the battlefield, that the treatment of conscientious objectors and those unwilling to make the ultimate sacrifice becomes clear.

149 Ibid.
Conclusion

Only the dead have seen the end of war.

Plato, 5th century BC

At dawn the ridge emerges massed and dun
In the wild purple of the glow'ring sun,
Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud
The menacing scarred slope; and, one by one,
Tanks creep and topple forward to the wire.
The barrage roars and lifts. Then, clumsily bowed
With bombs and guns and shovels and battle-gear,
Men jostle and climb to, meet the bristling fire.
Lines of grey, muttering faces, masked with fear,
They leave their trenches, going over the top,
While time ticks blank and busy on their wrists,
And hope, with furtive eyes and grappling fists,
Flounders in mud.
O Jesus, make it stop!

Siegfried Sassoon, Attack, 1918

Siegfried Sassoon took his bicycle, rode it to the recruitment office and joined up with the British Army the day before England declared war against Germany. Sassoon had led a privileged life in a wealthy Jewish family, had chosen a career as a writer and poet, and with a sizable allowance from his family, had no need to work or volunteer in the armed services. He had been raised as many of his compatriots had been believing war was a struggle

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between good and evil, and that British soldiers were involved in a heroic struggle against a foe that must be vanquished. His earliest poems, like Absolution, epitomize this role British men felt they were duty bound to honor as men. Sassoon wrote of the coming conflict, that this anguish of the earth absolves our eyes and that war has made us wise, asking What need we more, my comrades and my brothers? Yet as the war progressed, and the reality of warfare affected England’s young men, the war came to shape their outlook to reflect an understanding of not only warfare, but the role as men in it.

The first day of the Somme on July 1st, 1916 was a day that changed Siegfried Sassoon. The London Times printed that the first day on the Somme was a rousing British success. In reality, it was the bloodiest day in the history of the British Empire. Over the course of the day the British Army suffered 57,000 casualties with nearly 20,000 deaths. Sassoon kept accounts of his experience in the war, and was awarded twice for his bravery. The men in his unit only felt safe when he was leading them in battle. During his convalescence from a wound received at the Battle of Arras, Sassoon began to write about war as it really was for men. He was one of the first writers to write about the brutality, the destructive horror, and indefensible waste of human life war made. In his frustration he composed a statement to his Commanding Officer in July of 1917, and refused to fight any further. His statement was read in the House of

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Commons and published in the *London Times*. The British public was shocked that a war-hero, a decorated soldier, and an officer who had written so forcibly about the glory in war was now facing court-martial. It was then that his friend, the poet Robert Graves, intervened to save his life. Sassoon had given Graves some of his early poetry, and Graves who had been in the trenches knew that Sassoon would change his mind. Sassoon was put in the mental hospital at Craiglockheart, where he threw away his Military Cross and in doing so was also saying goodbye to the masculine ideal. His poems after 1918 are critical of war, expose the fraud of glory, and also of the fruitlessness of conflict for human beings. Men and the perception of manhood were changed by the war, now too the image of men as war hero. Sassoon survived the war and lived to tell the story of the conflict; many men did not return, or in many instances wished they had not.

II

A young John Kipling, only 17, left for war in August of 1915, sporting a freshly grown mustache, a new British uniform, and a commission in the Irish Guards. His father, Rudyard Kipling, noted author of *Kim* and *The Jungle Book*, used his influence with friends in the British government to get his son into service despite his age. Kipling was a seller of the war, a proponent of British *brotherhood*, and a cheerleader for British Imperial strength and stature. He wrote that heroic men were meant to be in the war, that Oxford should be shut down and all undergraduates inducted into the military, and was disdainful of
men who were not fighting, “What of his family, and, above all, what of his
descendants, when the books have been closed and the last balance struck of
sacrifice and sorrow in every hamlet, village, parish, suburb, city, shire, district,
province, and Dominion throughout the Empire?”153 Kipling was frustrated that
he was too old and that his son John, whom the family nicknamed Jack, was too
young and myopic to enlist. When Jack’s commission was approved by one of
Kipling’s old friends from his colonial India days, Lord Roberts, he was ecstatic.
Jack was sent off to war in 1915, his parents received a telegram after the Battle
of Loos that he was missing in action. Rudyard Kipling’s only son was believed
to have had his face ripped off by an explosion, and his body was never clearly
identified. He was one of many British soldiers never identified for burial.

Men like John Kipling died in the hundreds of thousands during the Great
War. Of the men who did came back, many had physical wounds, others, like
Siegfried Sassoon, psychological wounds. Fully a million-and-a-half British men
came back wounded from the Great War. More than half-a-million didn’t return at
all. It is these staggering numbers that make monuments in small towns and
British cities so prevalent. The war made men confront their role in it, and the
politicians and government and private citizens who drove the patriotism, the
demand that men fight for their society, that they paid for in physical terms. The
wounded men who returned from the conflict quickly absorbed the money set

153 From Rudyard Kipling’s work on the new army and their role in the Great War, “The New
rg_newarmy_chapter1.htm.
aside by the government for their care.\textsuperscript{154} The government turned to charity, further demeaning the male cripple, and unemployment was common as maimed men filled the jobs that could accommodate men with missing arms, legs, or faces. Just before the Second World War, over 222,000 officers and 419,000 servicemen were still receiving disability pensions from the British government.\textsuperscript{155}

The First World War created so many mutilated male bodies, because the belligerents had developed technologies designed to maximize casualties. The men in the First World War were not only victims of bombs and guns, but they were the victims of a society bent on making men who would face those weapons of destruction. Mass mutilations normalized amputation and disfigurement, the wounded became common sights around London and in British towns. Men were sent to medical hospitals to receive prosthetic legs and arms or masks to cover their mutilated and disfigured faces. These masks took on aspects of high artwork, new faces for men received at the Masks for Facial Disfigurement, a part of the London General Hospital, that the wounded soldiers referred to as the Tin Noses Shop (plate 19) to receive prosthetic noses and chins and eyes that covered their war wounds. Limbs were expensive and wounded men competed with people who were born disabled. The cost of a

\textsuperscript{154} Joanna Bourke and Jessica Meyer each give fascinating accounts of the post-war period and returning vets facing unemployment, disability and re-entry to society, see Joanna Bourke, \textit{Dismembering the Male: Men’s Bodies, Britain and the Great War} (London: Reaktion, 1996) and Jessica Meyer, \textit{Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain} (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

wooden limb was about £18, while the average worker took home £2 a week. The British government refused to approve applications for metal limbs that were lighter and more comfortable because the average cost was normally £120 to make. Metal limbs were provided to disabled men after a commission was set up by the Ministry of Pensions, but this didn’t occur until the mid-1920’s. Men had to be put back together, many had to get used to their new parts, new arms, new faces, and their new legs (plate 20). Yet some wounds were not visible.

The hellish responses from the returning soldier or officer who had witnessed any of the action on the front lines make for harrowing reading. Dick Tafford was an example of Britain’s man, he had been a miner before the war by profession, but at the age of fifteen he enlisted. Tafford fought at the Somme, Passchendaele and at Loos where John Kipling had been declared missing in action. During the Battle of Loos, Dick Trafford remembered, “I saw this officer, what was left of his face was shot away. He’d been hit by a forward burst of a German machine gun. Six or seven bullets through his face, he’d no face left. And this other pointed out that a Priest wanted me, he was talking about Hell, I said, ‘Don’t talk to me about Hell Father!’ I says, ‘I’ve been through hell once, I don’t want to go through it again!’”

The experience of the war, far from increasing feelings of bellicosity, patriotism, and duty, instead aroused feelings of

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revulsion and dread of the immensity and terror of the conflict. The first cases of nervous collapse were recorded by the BEF after Mons, men suffering from shell shock. Men exposed to the barrage of shell bursts achieved what their enemies wanted to achieve, to destroy men; but shell shock also tore apart identities. Men were reduced to quaking wrecks rendering them unable to fight, sleep, or even walk.\textsuperscript{157}

The Great War changed the image of the masculine soldier-hero, but it would never be fully extinguished; he would now have to share the stage with the conscientious objector, the scared little boy, and the shell shock victim.\textsuperscript{158} World War destroyed British masculine identities when it destroyed a generation of British men.

\section*{III}

In October of 2001, British soldiers joined under NATO command, led primarily by the United States, in an invasion of Afghanistan. This was not the first time British soldiers had invaded there. Previous attempts at subduing opposition to British authority in Afghanistan had occurred in the nineteenth century, and in May of 1919 another Anglo-Afghan war sought to re-establish British control in the area. This invasion, however, was a decisive British defeat, largely because of the exhaustion of British manpower from the Great War.


Following the British defeat, Afghanistan earned its independence in August 1919. British soldiers invading Afghanistan in 2001 took with them some of the masculine expectations that the men of the previous century were expected to act on. Some of the same qualities that were expected of men in both conflicts reflected the attitude that a degree of masculine virility and heroism are treasured in any conflict. Yet today there is a very different attitude that men and women have towards masculinity and its exclusive links with militarism. Unlike in 1914, men and women today don’t rely exclusively on the military to define what masculine traits are, rather these masculine identities can be purchased.

Following the Great War there was a feeling in Britain, and in Europe more generally, that mirrored the thoughts of the American President Woodrow Wilson, who famously argued that the world’s powers had fought a war to end all wars. Ten million men had died, principally because three dynastic rulers had refused to put the interests of their subjects above their own. The Second World War proved to outman the First, physically because nearly twice as many casualties were reported than in the First World War, and also in its masculine ideals. The rise of Italian and German fascism rekindled the militarized masculine ideal both in Germany and Italy, so much so in fact that masculinity and the military were thrown into hyper-masculine mode. Mussolini had to make marriage a precondition for becoming a fascist; for fear that the hyper-masculine environment created by fascism would become so homoerotic that there would be a crisis in
the social order.\textsuperscript{159} After the Second World War, the consumerist culture of the United States permeated the world, created markets that enriched and impoverished, as well as shaped identities that mirrored that culture.

Walking from High Oxford Street to Piccadilly Circus in London today, one is inundated with male images. Billboards and shop advertisements of shirtless torso's, soccer players next to cologne bottles, and every body-building potion can be purchased so that the masculine ideal is as easy to achieve as the swipe of a credit card. Masculinity, or the implied lack thereof, sells products. It can be manipulated to form insecurities that until recently were the purview of teenage girls. No longer is the military the only option of obtaining the masculine ideal, and yet there still persists a link between sex and war. That irreconcilable link between Eros and Thanatos is a costly fact of life. A soldier and historian of the Great War, Basil Liddell Hart, once wrote “The historian's rightful task is to distill experience for future generations, not to distill it like a drug. Having fulfilled his task to the best of his ability, and honesty, he has fulfilled his purpose. He would be a rash optimist if he believed that the next generations would trouble to absorb the warning. History at least teaches the historian a lesson.”\textsuperscript{160} Hart is


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