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Middle-Class Masculinity in England: Examining Citizen-Soldier Volunteers of the First World War

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MIDDLE-CLASS MASCULINITY IN ENGLAND:

**Examining Citizen-Soldier Volunteers
of the First World War**

By

Connor Litchman

Accepted in Partial Completion
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Kathleen L. Kitto, Dean of the Graduate School

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MASTER'S THESIS

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Connor Litchman
July 22, 2016

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A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the origins of the idolized masculine archetype known as the citizen-soldier in Edwardian era England. It shows the process of its construction during the Victorian era and how it was maneuvered by the state and middle-class population to cultivate consent for volunteerism during the First World War. To claim that men volunteered to fight due to a sense of patriotism or thirst for adventure is too simplistic, and fails to account for historical processes. The educated middle classes did not enlist into England's army unthinkingly. They were motivated by anxiety or the possibility of attaining citizen-soldier status, which the middle class revered above all other constructs of masculinity. Despite the differing perceptions of duty within the middle class all shared a common impetus to volunteer. This, I argue, is because each man was a product of his middle-class upbringing, which demanded of him deference to authority, patriotism, stoicism in the face of danger, pride, camaraderie and honor. The violence of trench warfare did not dismantle citizen-soldier hegemony. Stoic attitudes and fatalism allowed men to maintain their manliness when faced with the horrors of war. When they reflected on violence in the trenches or their fallen friends, soldiers described their service as an experience that made them better men. Thus, the citizen-soldier construct which attained hegemony in decades before the First World War lived on as a dominant masculine archetype even after men's wartime service was complete.

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INTRODUCTION

Sitting in a trench in France during the Battle of the Somme, nineteen-year-old volunteer Arthur Graeme West wrote in his journal. “I don’t definitely feel able to say that I fear the infliction of pain or wound,” he explained. “It is the knowledge that something may happen with which one will not be able to cope or that one’s old resolutions of courage etc., will fail in this new set of experiences... One may be called upon to bear or perform something to which one will find himself inadequate.”¹ While the “infliction of pain” was not a concern for West, he expressed anxiety about his ability to perform the virtues attributed to his manliness. Months prior, he had been denied enlistment due to his poor eyesight; yet he did not let up until he found a doctor willing to approve his physical condition for service. Like West, the volunteer Harold Macklin was at first denied service due to his height, but eventually found a doctor more sympathetic to his will to fight and joined anyway; he never regretted his decision. Infantryman Frank Earley insisted that he was “quite prepared to give my life as so many have done before me,”² expressing an eagerness to see battle, but Alexander Patterson professed reluctance, claiming to only have volunteered due to the “irresistible social pressure.”³ Regardless of biological circumstances beyond their control, each of these men understood that the citizen-soldier archetype demanded a degree physical perfection. Driven both by anxiety and eagerness to

¹ Arthur Graeme West, *The Diary of a Dead Officer: Being the Posthumous Papers of Arthur Graeme West* (London: Greenhill, 2007), 155.

² Frank Earley, “Letters Home, ‘Pray for me,’” *BBC NEWS* (November 3, 1998): http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/special_report/1998/10/98/world_war_i/194954.stm.

³ Alexander Patterson, “Bravery in the Field?,” in *Everyman at War: Sixty Personal Narratives of the War*, ed. C.B. Purdom (New York: E.P. Dutton & co inc., 1930), 239.

attain this status, they refused to let up until they were assessed physically fit enough to fight, allowing them to acquire a masculine status that positioned them above other men.

Despite their various motives for joining, each man belonged to England's middle class. In 1914, at the start of the First World War, England's land army—the British Expeditionary Force—was the smallest of all the participating European powers. Field Marshal Lord Kitchner was convinced that England would need a larger army to compete against Germany and its allies. In an effort to increase the size of the standing army sixfold, Lord Kitchner issued a general call to arms on 7 August 1914; by early September, it was answered by over 500,000 Englishmen composed mostly of young middle-class men and schoolboys much like the soldiers introduced above.

The English middle class in the late Victorian and early Edwardian eras is in many respects the first of its kind. Simon Gunn remarked that “England is, of course, renowned for its class system.... The middle classes themselves are frequently seen as a peculiarly English phenomenon.”⁴ Though this thesis uses social privileges and material wealth to distinguish middle-class from working-class men, the notion of being middle class was not based solely on materiality; it was also an identity. The ability to traverse the class spectrum was rare until the mid-twentieth century — to be a part of the “great middle class,” who claimed for themselves the authority to lead the nation, was as much to belong to a fairly rigid social structure as to possess material wealth and privilege. Moreover, the middle class in England is better understood in terms of “middle classes.” Some clerks only made one hundred pounds a year, while a chairman of the board might earn up to one thousand pounds. By 1871 over 118,000 middle-class men

⁴ Simon Gunn and Rachel Bell, *Middle Classes: Their Rise and Sprawl* (Kindle-Book, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2011), 123.

earned their living as clerks; this number would double by the start of the First World War. Working with numbers and statistics set middle-class men apart from their working-class counterparts.⁵

Profession was not the only factor that differentiated middle-class from working-class men in the first decades of the twentieth century. Middle-class privilege also included access to private education at “public schools,”⁶ a variety of different kinds of literature, household appliances and leisure amusements, all of which comprised the resources necessary for a prosperous life.⁷ Yet between August 1914 and January 1916 these men volunteered by the hundreds of thousands for the opportunity to make the ultimate sacrifice for the nation; England’s volunteers during the First World War were “disproportionately middle-class.”⁸ Despite only representing twenty percent of England’s population, the middle class comprised sixty percent of the volunteers during the First World War. Men in commercial and clerical occupations were the most common, as they represented twenty-seven percent of the volunteers, while students represented eighteen percent and other middle-class professions fifteen percent.⁹

⁵ Liza Picford, “The Victorian Middle Classes,” *British Library*, <http://www.bl.uk/victorian-britain/articles/the-victorian-middle-classes>.

⁶ Public schools were not “public” in the sense that schools are today, they were exclusively middle- and upper-class institutions. J.A. Mangan contends that “there has never emerged an exact and universally acceptable definition of a public school.” Mangan adopts Vivian Oglivie’s definition since it “combines clarity, comprehensiveness and qualification and would meet with widespread understanding and acceptance.” I follow suit by using her definition, which qualifies public schools as: “for the well-to do, expensive, predominantly boarding, independent of the state, but neither privately owned nor profit making.” There are of course schools that are irregular to this definition.

J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian School*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 2.

⁷ Gunn, 123.

⁸ Alexander Watson, “Recruitment: Conscripts and volunteers during World War One,” *British Library*, <http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/recruitment-conscripts-and-volunteers>].

⁹ Gary Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 31.

The question becomes, if the middle classes were endowed with such privilege and material wealth, why did they constitute an exorbitant number of England's volunteers?

Dominant narratives of English volunteerism in the First World War tend to emphasize nationalism as the primary incentive motivating men to join. However, this analysis is too simplistic and does not account for historical processes of identity-construction that shaped men's understanding of masculinity and sense of self. Historians who attribute volunteerism to ardent nationalism maintain that soldiers emerged from the First World War disillusioned and hating the war. While this is true, such analysis sets up a dichotomy between men's identities before and after the war, and emphasizes the transformation that occurred due to the violence of trench warfare. I question presumptions of identity-transformation by taking gender as a category of analysis to examine how constructions of middle-class masculinity endured the war, and why.

This thesis explores the origins of citizen-soldier virtues of masculinity that attained hegemony in England during the Edwardian era. I use this information to illustrate what it meant to be a middle-class man in England, and how notions of class and masculinity contribute to our understanding of volunteerism and the effect of trench warfare on the identity of middle-class volunteers. I argue that notions of patriotism and adventure were intimately entwined with a broader internalized middle-class masculinity. Rather than dichotomize this masculinity into pre- and post-war identities, which presumes the occurrence of rupture, I examine its continuity before, during, and after men's service: my research indicates that even though they hated the war, middle-class soldiers' masculinity and sense of self remained unchanged. Contrary to prevailing explanations of volunteerism, I insist that middle-class men volunteered due to anxiety or desire to conform to hegemonic constructions of the ideal man that had begun to

develop a half-century prior, which celebrated the virtues of the “citizen-soldier” and cultivated volunteerism amongst the middle class. By tracking the external factors shaping this process of hegemony, I find that — unlike narratives emphasizing rupture and change — middle-class men emerged from the war embodying this construct of masculinity, which continued to operate unquestioned as the middle-class ideal even after their service was complete.

This thesis analyzes the production and reinforcement of hegemonic citizen-soldier masculinity in England and its durability in trench warfare on the Western Front. It contends that between 1840 and 1914, the militarization of leisure activities for boys assisted in creating an ideal middle-class stereotype for men, which I refer to as the “citizen-soldier” archetype, which entailed such virtuous traits as honor, selflessness, courage, and duty to the nation. This particular construction of masculinity attained hegemony in the decades preceding the war, and in 1914 served to cultivate consent for volunteerism: anxiety regarding the threat of emasculation persuaded middle-class men to capitalize on this opportunity to embody middle-class virtues, and empower themselves through the particular ideals of contemporary English society. This construction of masculinity was durable enough to maintain hegemony through combat service in France: personal documents penned by men during the war evince their individual struggles to uphold societal expectations from the home front, even as they fought and died in an unprecedented war of attrition.

My research reveals that middle-class men's initial eagerness to see combat, along with their sense of camaraderie, was instilled through public school athleticism and boys’ literature which lauded adventure and homosocial bonds. As the war progressed and men survived their first encounters with death, these sentiments evolved into emotions such as stoicism, which

served as a means to perform manly virtues of courage and bravery in the face of industrial war, and fatalism, which allowed men dealing with violence and desultory death to preserve their masculinity as citizen-soldiers, and kept them dutifully obeying orders until death or discharge. These traits illustrate an ideological continuity amongst middle-class volunteers, as pre-war notions of pride and honor remained intact despite the disillusioning reality of trench warfare.

I analyze the letters and diaries penned by soldiers at war, and occasionally their memoirs, for emotional introspection and masculine taxonomies to show that while they hated the nature of trench warfare, most middle-class men viewed the war itself as character-building. This perception, I contend, indicates that most men continued to measure their own masculinity against the citizen-soldier construct that had achieved hegemony between 1840 and 1914. Thus, the middle-class virtues of masculinity which persuaded many men to volunteer in 1914 continued to function as common sense during and after the war. I conclude that narratives of rupture, transformation and change elide the actual durability of middle-class masculinity and the citizen-soldier construct, which retained hegemony despite middle-class men's encounters with violence during the war.

My understanding of hegemony consists of both a process and an endpoint, which facilitates the domination of certain masculine archetypes over others through a combination of coercion and consent. This definition exceeds traditional Gramscian notions by elaborating a distinctly Foucaultian understanding of power as existing “everywhere at all times.”¹⁰ The processes through which citizen-soldier hegemony was constructed in England are elaborated in

¹⁰ Mallon describes the process of hegemony in a political framework. This thesis adapts her understanding of hegemony and applies it to cultural processes.

Florencia E. Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 6-7.

the first chapter of this thesis, which examines the militarization of boys' leisure activities and the development of citizen-soldier virtues from 1840 to the outbreak of war. By accounting for the historical processes by which hegemony as an endpoint is established, space is created to understand how and why the citizen-soldier construct attained dominant status, making volunteerism common sense. The second chapter elaborates this "common sense," explaining how society at large expected and demanded these virtues of middle-class men when war broke out. I contend that the intense social pressure exercised by state and civilian actors alike evince the "endpoint" or attainment of citizen-soldier hegemony in Britain, which persuaded and coerced men otherwise reluctant to enlist. Finally, I examine how this dominant archetype functioned as the standard to which men held themselves accountable, as illustrated through their volunteerism and perceptions of their experience during and after the war. My research shows that citizen-soldier hegemony survived the war, as middle-class men took pride in their participation and considered their experience valuable to their characters and identities as men.

Instead of arguing that nationalism did not significantly shape men's decision to volunteer, I approach it as a facet of society that cannot be extracted from class and gender, as each are intimately intertwined. Rather than examine how nationalism dictated middle-class manliness, I explore how men internalized their masculinity as being, in part, nationalist (English), which bore certain gendered responsibilities. As Benedict Anderson argues in his seminal work *Imagined Communities* (1983), literature, uniforms and symbols all function to reify the idea of the nation. In the context of my research, such concepts were gradually adopted and applied by public schools, which produced newspapers, pennants, distinguishable uniforms, and chants to create a sense of school pride that was easily transferable to a broader notion of

being English, rather than a particularly Lorringtonian or Eton boy. My focus on middle-class masculinity illustrates that nationalism was inextricably a part of men's identity formation in the late Victorian and early Edwardian eras.

Middle-class nationalism, inextricably intertwined with gendered responsibility, was founded on a particular understanding of citizenship and belonging to the nation. I use the word "citizen" in this thesis to represent a relationship between the political body of England and its classed historical subjects. The notion of citizenship itself was heavily contested in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries; a privilege afforded to a minority of English subjects. The aristocracy and middle classes, who represented no more than twenty-seven percent of the population, were typically the only men allowed to vote. Voting rights and thus citizenship were contingent upon men's status as landholders, as the ability to manage a piece of property was thought to evince rationality and the ability to vote properly. At least in theory, these men participated in determining the laws passed by parliament. Citizenship did more than just endow men with the right to vote, however; it also afforded them social status and privilege, positioning them above their working-class counterparts. Just as middle classness was an identity, so too was men's status as a "citizen" who contributed to English society. To that effect, my thesis analyzes the diaries of some men who were too young to vote, or who did not hold property at the time of their enlistment. Nevertheless, I contend, these men still associated themselves with the status and privilege of the "citizen" bestowed upon their families, which they could realistically expect to attain after completing their service to the nation.

My focus on this particular construct of middle-class masculinity and the secular processes that created it intentionally refrains from incorporating the role of religion in

militarizing boys' leisure time. Instead, I examine the effects of this militarization on social expectations of masculinity. In the early Victorian era, muscular Christianity played a formative role in the institutionalization of games at public schools, stressing bravery, cleanliness and physical strength as the ideal virtues of a Christian boy. Charles Kingsley, head priest of the Church of England, historian and well-selling novelist, was a fierce proponent of muscular Christianity and helped spearhead this ideological belief. Muscular Christianity incontrovertibly played a role in the institutionalization and cultivation of ideal middle-class masculinity in early nineteenth century England.

This thesis deals with secular, rather than Christian, masculinity because middle-class society in England began a gradual process of secularization during the Victorian era. Historian J.A. Mangan shows that by the 1860s “manliness came to be gradually divorced, in fact if not from intent, from religion and found itself anchored secure in an obsessive love for games.”¹¹ By the time middle-class Robert Lindsay Mackay volunteered for the First World War, this separation had become even more pronounced: he notes that “My parents were Victorian in taste and outlook, staid, sober, reliable, loyal to each other as well as to my sister and to myself. Not dogmatic about religion or politics.”¹² While I acknowledge that religion greatly influenced the militarization of leisure activities for boys,¹³ my research focuses on the effects rather than the

¹¹ J.A. Mangan and James Walvin, *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 4.

¹² Robert Lindsay Mackay, “Autobiography of Robert Lindsay Mackay,” *Mackay Family Genealogy*, <http://lu.softxs.ch/mackay/Couples6/C3006.html>.

¹³ For more information on the influence of religion on English masculinity please see: *Embodying the Victorian Age*, by Donald E. Hall; *Manliness and Morality*, by J.A. Mangan; *Sons of the Empire*, by Robert MacDonald; *Soldier Heroes* by Graham Dawson; and “The Imagined Crusade: The Church of England and the Mythology of Nationalism and Christianity during the Great War,” by Shannon Ty Bontrager, *Church History* Vol. 71, No. 4 (Dec., 2002), pp. 774-798.

causes of this process, and how they contributed to the construction of a particular dominant archetype for middle-class masculinity.

In order to argue that the primary incentive motivating middle-class men to volunteer for war was their anxiety regarding a particular construction of masculinity that became dominant between 1840 and 1914, which retained hegemony even after the violence they endured on the Western Front, I engage theoretical debates surrounding concepts of the “ideal man” and how they developed and functioned within English society. I bring into conversation different theories of masculine hegemony by authors such as Michael Messner, George Mosse, and R.W. Connell to explain the development of the citizen-soldier as a particular middle-class ideal, characterized by such traits as courage, stoicism, aggression, risk-taking, endurance, competitiveness and success.¹⁴ Throughout this thesis I treat the citizen-soldier stereotype as the ideal middle-class man who could work and contribute to the nation as a citizen during times of peace, and perform his duty of service to the state as a soldier in times of war.

George Mosse’s 1996 publication *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* theorizes that foundations for male stereotypes emerged from Enlightenment thought. His research explores how major changes in popular notions of gender in Western Europe conceived self-improvement as a means by which men could make themselves ‘manly’ according to Greco-Roman standards. Such notions of self-improvement in Victorian-era Britain included the development of characteristics such as honor, duty, courage and physical strength, among others. Significantly, Mosse claims that society's ideal “image of man” was the product of the “evolution of a stereotype that became normal.” He defines this newly “normal” construct

¹⁴ Mike Donaldson, "What is Hegemonic Masculinity?" in *Theory and Society* 22 (1993), 5.

as the “ideal man;”¹⁵ or the cultural stereotype regarding what men (and women) should be. In the context of my research, this normalized archetypal “image of man” was embodied in the figure of the citizen-soldier.

The effect of Enlightenment thinking on European notions of gender is essential to my argument. The scientific rationalism that defined the Enlightenment did for gender what it tried to do with the rest of the world, namely categorizing, labeling and often declaring abnormalities where categorization did not suffice. In the case of gender, notions of “man” and “woman” were defined more narrowly after 1830 than ever before. Men and women alike were no longer understood as individuals, but as a homogeneous type.¹⁶ Mosse argues that “Stereotypes came into their own with the modern age as a part of a general quest for symbols in order to make the abstract concrete within the bewildering changes of modernity. Modern stereotypes did not exist in earlier ages, even if appearances mattered and men were supposed to walk and stand in a proper manner.”¹⁷ Moreover, he explains, “those who were said not to fit into settled and respectable society were transformed into countertypes to the ideals that society cherished and that manliness represented so well.”¹⁸ In my thesis the “countertype” to ideal citizen-soldier masculinity is the unpatriotic, unfit civilian man who could not or would not perform his duty as a soldier in uniform to evince his service to the nation.

Gendered stereotypes were produced and their meanings reified and compounded with each generation until previous ideas of gender had been forgotten. Over time, Enlightenment

¹⁵ George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

romanticization of the ancient Greeks and Romans brought about particular ideas of what a man should do and be: notions of self-improvement of body and mind, the rationality of man, citizenship and civil service became paramount to defining the modern ideal man. Cultural historians often refer to a “crisis of masculinity” in the late Victorian and early Edwardian eras due to a general anxiety concerning the English Empire’s loss of vitality. This reified the need for strong men to act selflessly and soldier to serve the nation. By the Second Industrial Revolution (beginning in the late nineteenth century), ideas of proper masculinity were reified through material goods, as mass production of popular literature and affordable toys made intangible concepts concrete and widely accessible to the public. Boys’ literature and play toys glorified a particular type of masculinity, and in turn dictated what kind of man a boy should aspire to be. The dialectical relationship between the production and consumption of ideas and material depictions of masculinity helped the citizen-soldier ideal attain hegemony after generations of evolution throughout the Victorian era.

Mosse argues that gendered constructs of masculinity differ from more abstract forms of hegemony, explaining that “The stereotype of true manliness was so powerful because unlike abstract ideas or ideals it could be seen, touched, or even talked to, a living reminder of human beauty, of proper morals...”¹⁹ Near-universal participation in stereotyping meant that there was little room for gender variation; manliness was defined by a particular set of hegemonic characteristics that men were expected to strive to uphold. R.W. Connell concurs, noting that “the identification of a cluster of hegemonic attributes does not, of course, mean that all men conform to them in practice: many might be physically below standard or unable to maintain

¹⁹ Ibid., 19.

domestic dependents. But it is a measure of hegemony that such men feel they must struggle to attain these goals and that to the extent that they must fall short of them they do not count in their own eyes as ‘men’....”²⁰ My research shows that many men who were at first denied the opportunity to enlist due to physical attributes beyond their control — such as short stature, or poor eyesight — sought to overcome these perceived obstacles to their status as “ideal man” by soliciting doctors and physicians who would overlook their supposed shortcomings and declare them fit for service. With written affirmation of their physical capacity to fight, volunteering became for middle-class men the primary means of attaining “ideal man” status. This incentive proved just as compelling as nationalism and other popular explanations for the disproportionate enlistment of the middle class in 1914.

Since Mosse wrote before theories on masculine hegemony achieved widespread popularity, he did not have the language with which to describe this “evolution,” but it can be understood in Gramscian terms of a cultural hegemony which produces an ideal stereotype.²¹ Connell adapts Gramsci’s theory to explore the processes by which a particular construction of masculinity could achieved hegemony. Her work identifies the cultural practices that guaranteed certain men a position of power over women and other men by striving to achieve Mosse’s “ideal man.” Malcolm Waters contributes by suggesting that this hegemonic stereotype is subject to change by external factors. My own research builds on Waters’ to identify external factors such as the introduction of public school athleticism, popular literature, and cultural materialism as

²⁰ Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and John Tosh, *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004), 48.

²¹ Mosse, 5.

factors that shaped middle-class constructs of citizen-soldier masculinity in the half-century preceding the First World War.²²

Historical interpretations of the “ideal man” require an examination of the intersection between race, class, and gender; any historical argument regarding gender must account for social class, as they are not mutually exclusive and thereby produce different versions of the “ideal man” through different processes. Just as Ann Laura Stoler argues that the state engages in projects to educate the proper distribution of sentiments and desires across the class spectrum,²³ I understand expectations of the “ideal man” in England, as elsewhere, to vary according to class. To understand the relationship between masculinity, class, and the nation in England, historians must examine the inscription and fluidity of gender over time.

John Tosh contends that Victorian middle-class masculinity was divided into three categories or “components”: associations, work, and home, and that a balance of each represented the ideal man.²⁴ Sonya Rose builds on his work to propose that the “military” be added as a fourth component during the Edwardian era, and redefines Tosh’s “components” as “performances.”²⁵ Her article “Fit to Fight but not to Vote” explores in great detail English citizenship and the political and ideological dichotomy between the English middle-class

²² Malcolm Waters, “Patriarchy and Viriarchy: An Exploration and Reconstruction of Concepts of Masculine Domination,” *Sociology* 7 (1989): 143-162.

²³ Laura Ann Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009), 69.

²⁴ John Tosh, “What Should Historians do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth Century Britain,” *History Workshop Journal* 38, (1994): 70-72.

²⁵ Sonya R. Rose, “Gender and Male Citizenship: Fit to Fight but not to Vote,” in *Representing Masculinity: Male Citizenship in Modern Western Culture*, ed. Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and Anna Clark (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 132.

civilians and the disfranchised men of the English military.²⁶ Her research expands on Tosh's work (which locates Victorian middle-class masculinity in the domestic sphere) to include its transition into a new era of citizen-soldiers defined by the ability of the middle-class man to be a proper domestic gentleman while also possessing the traits of the trained soldier, in the Edwardian era.²⁷ Thus by the early twentieth century, the ideal middle-class man had four performances, of which the "military" was only necessary when faced with a call to arms. Graham Dawson has described the military performance of the "soldier-hero" or the idolized citizen-soldier, as "one of the most durable and powerful forms of idealized masculinity," defined by virtues such as endurance, pride, honor, duty, strength, selflessness, emotional control, violence, risk-taking, and an eagerness to see battle.

To elaborate on the long-term processes of hegemony that inform my argument, I engage theories of masculine inscription and imagination that emphasize the importance of childhood. Michael Messner's theory on the "gendering process" contends that boyhood comprises the formative years in which gender is constructed, particularly by sporting culture. My own research corroborates this claim, as I find the introduction of organized games in public schools since the 1840s influential in shaping the masculinity of boys and men who would later volunteer for war. Moreover, Messner defines gender identity "not as a 'thing' that people 'have' but as a process of construction that develops, comes into crisis, and changes as a person interacts with

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Rose notes that soldiers were disenfranchised in the Victorian era because they did not hold property. Middle-class men were enfranchised before the First World War while their working-class comrades were not granted the same right until 1918.

Ibid., 133.

the social world.”²⁸ My research examines the increasing militarization of boyhood leisure activities as a means to trace the fluidity of masculine gender norms inscribed and codified during an exceptionally influential period for middle-class volunteers of the First World War.

Along with youth sporting culture, my research also examines popular boys’ periodicals in order to address the relationship between masculinity, middle-classness, and the nation. This methodological approach is informed by the work of Graham Dawson, who applies literary theory to a historical interpretation of masculine imagination by examining childhood literature from the Victorian era and beyond. Dawson claims that rising literacy rates and the introduction of adventure novels and patriotic literature created popular imaginations of the soldier hero. He contends that beginning in the mid-nineteenth-century popular literature idolized adventure, and acted as a catalyst for boys to imagine themselves as soldiers: for “Adventures became illustrative of a single uniform masculine type.”²⁹ More importantly, he argues that “masculine identities are lived out in the flesh, but fashioned in the imagination.”³⁰ Thus men who volunteered in 1914 first had to imagine soldiering as a facet of their masculinity, before they could perform it in reality.

Yet the relationship between class, nation, and notions of masculinity are far from fixed. Cynthia Enloe’s work *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives* (2000) details the maneuverability of class and gender, asserting that in times of need “military officials and civilian state authorities . . . tried to maneuver different groups of women [and in the

²⁸ Michael Messner, “Boyhood, Organized Sports, and the Construction of Masculinities,” in *Reconstructing Gender: A Multicultural Anthology*, ed. Estelle Disch (Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2009), 120.

²⁹ Graham Dawson, *Soldier-Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 149.

context of my research, men] and the ideas about what constitutes “femininity” so that each can serve military objectives... The concept of national security has in turn been used to define the social order supposedly necessary to ensure the national security.”³¹ Enloe’s theory supports my own argument that middle-class masculinity was constructed and reified in the decades prior to the First World War to ensure that England could field a sufficiently large army. More directly, it gives impetus to forms of popularized social pressure on the home front such as the White Feather Campaign and music hall songs, which functioned to persuade ambivalent or unwilling men to enlist. Her claim that military policymakers “acted as though most men [were] not natural soldiers, as though most men needed to be reminded that their tenuous grasp on the status of a ‘manly man’ depends on women thinking of them as such”³² supports my analysis of social pressure and state propaganda, which were constructed to remind men of their privilege, and served to reinforce expectations of masculinity by eliciting guilt and doubt to cultivate consent for volunteerism. Dawson echoes Enloe’s claim by arguing that as masculinity creates the nation, “so too has that nation played a part in constituting preferred forms of masculinity.”³³

My research treats the citizen-soldier archetype that attained hegemony in Britain in the early twentieth century as the product of processes beginning in the 1840s, when the “ideal man” was a domestic figure with no prerogative or precedent to be a soldier. It traces the introduction of external factors — such as athleticism, class-materialism, and popular literature during formative boyhood years — in the decades preceding the war, and broadly examines social

³¹ Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000), 36.

³² *Ibid.*, 46.

³³ Dawson, 7.

expressions of masculine expectation through the White Feather Campaign, music hall songs, and state propaganda posters produced in 1914, to argue that the state maneuvered traits of the “ideal man” to include qualities Britain felt it needed in the event of a large scale War.³⁴ Thus, I argue, men volunteered primarily because their sense of patriotism was inscribed within a broader masculine ideal constructed over decades in a deliberate attempt to cultivate middle-class consent for war. This changes not only understandings of volunteerism, but also of masculinity: for while men indeed emerged from war disillusioned, they nevertheless remained proud of attaining the status of “ideal man.”

Though much has been written about the First World War, few authors have directed their attention towards the middle-class construction of the citizen-soldier. While volunteerism and soldierly identities have been explained through a variety of historical lenses, this thesis discusses dominant middle-class masculinity and the secular processes that created it. The historiography surrounding the citizen-soldier stereotype and the First World War is both recent and dichotomous; histories tend to focus on either the production of middle-class masculinity, or the function of masculinity in wartime. My research is unique in that it spans both former and latter categories, and extends beyond to examine how men viewed their own masculinities even after experiencing battle.

Graham Dawson’s *Soldier Heroes* (1994, discussed above) provides the bedrock theory of militarized English masculinities. He historicizes literary theory and uses cultural materialism to demonstrate how English masculinity “underpinned imperialism and militarism, fundamentally shaping the experience of modern war as a social, embodied, psychological

³⁴ For the purpose of this thesis I define boyhood as ages three to seventeen. At eighteen males were able to legally enlist into the armed forces, though parents could sign for their children as young as sixteen.

experience.”³⁵ His definition of the “soldier-hero” is characterized by virtues often attributed to hegemonic masculinities (physical strength, courage, self-sacrifice, etc.); he contends that its “apogee is only obtainable in battle.”³⁶ Dawson’s work comprises a cornerstone of gender studies on the First World War, and informs my own understanding of the citizen-soldier as the dominant masculine construct of 1914 that inspired and convinced middle-class men to volunteer for war.

To explore the construction of this archetype, my argument draws on Stephen Heathorne’s work *For Home, Country, and Race: Gender, Class, and Englishness in the Elementary School, 1880-1914* (2000), which provides an insightful overview of how “Englishness” was fostered in public school lectures and textbooks with attention to gender roles and nationalism. As Heathorne illustrates, notions of duty and honor were paramount to a boy’s education; my own research considers childhood gender inscription through the introduction of compulsory games and athleticism in public schools as one facet that shaped the construction of the citizen-soldier archetype. Robert MacDonald’s book *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890-1918* (1993) offers a formative study on Britain’s uniformed clubs for boys, along with the public school philosophy of Baden Powell, as sites of militarized masculine inscription. His work on the particular masculinities created as a result of the German Turner movement (which promoted gymnastics as a form of military training) inform my own research on the scouting movement’s contribution to the citizen-soldier successor.

³⁵ Ana Carden-Coyne, “Masculinity and the Wounds of the First World War: A Centenary Reflection,” in *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique*, 1 (2015), <http://rfcv.revues.org/305> ; DOI : 10.4000/rfcv.305.

³⁶ Dawson, 1.

Despite a shared interest in gender, class, and the nation, neither Heathrone nor MacDonald apply their analyses to the battlefield. My research fills this historiographical gap by asking how childhood gender inscription informed men's decision to volunteer in 1914, and how it shaped their actions and reflections on the front line. By examining the letters and diaries penned by men at war, I draw connections between the militarization of boyhood leisure activities since the 1840s, and men's conceptualizations of self as they measured their masculinity against, and struggled to uphold, the virtues of the citizen-soldier standard in battle.

Eric Leed's 1979 book *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in the First World War* argues that military participation comprised not only a rite of passage into manhood, but also an escape from the industrial world of materiality.³⁷ Leed contends that after combat experience, volunteers and conscripts alike became disillusioned and their previous identities died out of necessity to survive.³⁸ Helen McCartney disagrees; she argues in *Citizens' Soldiers: The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War* (2005), which analyzes the letters of a territorial battalion from Liverpool (composed of middle and working class), that domestic identities were maintained during the war through letter-writing. Moreover, she claims that the citizen-soldier identity was a product of the war itself.³⁹ My thesis disagrees with both Leed and McCartney, for I argue that the citizen-soldier was not a product of war but rather constructed through

³⁷ The industrial world of materiality referred to here is the "modern" world of industrial manufacturing which fueled middle-class lifestyles by mass-producing products for consumption. Moreover, the modern man found himself subject to the monotony of a daily routine of which work occupied the majority of his time. Leed's research examines American, British, German and French soldiers, he does not use gender analysis as a foundation for his research.

Eric Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

³⁸ Leed, 61.

³⁹ Michael Roper's work *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (2012) supports McCartney's claim by arguing that letters between mothers and sons were necessary for the emotional survival of the domestic-man.

processes of hegemony beginning in the half century prior and I find that even as middle-class soldiers became disillusioned with war, most continued to subscribe to the citizen-soldier construct, evincing a continuity in their identities as middle-class men.

Continuity of domestic identities and the complexity of masculinity is the focus of Jessica Meyer's book *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (2009). She argues against Leed's hypothesis using diaries, letters and memoirs, to claim that domestic identities existed alongside the military identities created during and beyond the war. Despite her book's title, Meyer fails to define what it meant to be a man in Edwardian era England. As Stuart Halifax notes, her work is about "the complexities of what it meant for British soldiers and ex-servicemen of the First World War to be men at war, which more accurately reflects the content of the book."⁴⁰ My research relies on her claim that soldiers constructed a dual identity, the domestic-man-soldier-hero couplet⁴¹ as an identity during the war (which I refer to as the "citizen-soldier"), and takes it as a subject of analysis to explore why middle-class men felt compelled to volunteer, and how their masculinity fared during and after battlefield experience. Jay Winters, famed historian of the First World War, and Mosse propose a theory of cultural continuity which supports my claim, arguing that battle continued to be seen as a noble adventure until the end of the Second World War.⁴²

I build on Winters' and Mosse's theory of continuity by narrowing the scope of inquiry to focus specifically on middle-class masculinity and its ideal archetype, the citizen-soldier. I ask

⁴⁰ Stuart Halifax, "J. Meyer: Men of War," *H-net Reviews in the Humanities and Social Sciences*, <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showpdf.php?id=25305>.

⁴¹ Meyer, 2.

⁴² Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory Sites of Mourning: The Great war in European Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

not only how this construct cultivated consent for volunteerism in 1914, but also how it endured combat in the world's first industrial war of attrition. My research shows that the middle-class men who volunteered in 1914 generally continued to believe in the virtues they had been inculcated to idolize since boyhood, even as they became disillusioned with the war itself. As such, this thesis argues against popular theories of blind patriotism, as well as claims that men's identities either died or were constructed during the war itself. I expand Meyer's work by providing a wholistic analysis of what it meant to be a man in Edwardian-era England, and particularly a middle-class volunteer. I do not treat the citizen-soldier as an interaction between two distinct masculinities as does McCartney, but rather, like Meyer, as an inseparable couplet whose virtues came to represent the ideal middle-class man prior to — and following — soldiers' service on the Western Front.

This thesis develops in three parts. The first chapter explores the processes and factors — such as the institutionalization of athletics in public schools, cultural materialism, and the rhetoric and imagery of boys' periodicals — which produced the citizen-soldier ideal between 1840 and 1914, to show how middle-class masculinity was tied directly to British nationalism. I argue that compulsory athletics in public schools acted as an external force that changed the standards of middle-class masculinity (from domesticity, free-thinking, and nature-walking) to uphold virtues of discipline, adventure, fighting for school and Empire, pride, duty, honor, endurance, and self-sacrifice, all of which were later reified in boys' imaginations through toys, periodicals, and (by 1908) uniformed clubs like the Boy Scouts.

My analysis focuses on the militarization of boyhood leisure activities because the soldiers I analyze in later chapters were no older than twenty-three when they volunteered (b.

1891); thus boyhood gender inscription was formative to shaping their perceptions of war. I argue that by 1914, dominant middle-class virtues of citizen-soldier masculinity functioned to elicit volunteerism as this generation of boys became men. By illustrating the processes that constructed this hegemonic ideal in the decades leading up to the war, I show that the patriotism that induced middle-class men to enlist was not isolated in the present, but rather the result of historical processes that conceived soldiering as the ultimate test of their identity as men, the “apogee [of which] is only obtainable in battle.”⁴³

Chapter two builds on this analysis to show that processes beginning in the 1840s to produce a particular construct of middle-class masculinity served in 1914 to pressure men to become soldiers. It examines the functions of the White Feather Campaign, music hall songs, and state propaganda posters to ask how dominant expectations of the ideal man (i.e., the citizen-soldier) were utilized by civilians and the state alike as a gendered tool to induce men to volunteer. I argue that widespread expectations of middle-class men to be courageous, physically fit, selfless etc., made it more difficult for able-bodied men who were not a part of the industrial work force to stay home than to enlist.

This chapter shows that the outbreak of war created new space for men to exercise or perform the virtues of middle-class masculinity, as (per Rose’s argument, above) the fourth performance of the ideal man was to answer a call to arms. The introduction of this new sphere for manly conduct came with concurrent expectations, as it allowed society to cast doubt on the masculinity of men who declined to participate or behave according to the ideal standard. Thus, I argue, English society actively undermined the manliness of middle-class men, to persuade them

⁴³ Dawson, 1.

to regard the army as one of the few available options to redeem their status. In this chapter many of my primary sources derive from the work of other historians; however, their analyses generally do not address masculinity and theories of hegemony. These secondary sources connect sporting chants and other primary source evidence to contemporary imperialism, without illustrating its impact on the masculinity of boys, or its promotion of citizen-soldier traits such as stoicism. My argument provides a concrete link between Victorian athletics, gender, and the First World War. I show that social pressure at home contributed to inscribing men with expectations of masculinity they would later struggle to uphold on the battlefield.

Chapter three builds on the first two chapters, which explore the construction and deployment of citizen-soldier archetypes at home, to examine how this ideal endured the realities and lived experiences of war. I use diaries and letters to show that middle-class men struggled to adhere to the standards of the ideal man both in England and on the Western Front. I use a masculine taxonomy to examine men's personal reflections for specific traits and emotions, tracking their evolution through different stages of wartime experience. I find that most middle-class volunteers, having enlisted willingly or to escape social pressure first expressed an eagerness to see combat and a sense of homosocial camaraderie; but as the war progressed and they bore witness to extreme violence, chaos and death in the trenches, many began to articulate a growing sense of disillusionment. This is expressed both through stoicism (which I read not as a lack of emotion, but rather an expression of emotional restraint) and fatalism, which enabled them to continue serving in spite of their distaste for the war itself. My research shows that even as most men struggled to perform citizen-soldier virtues in battle, they nevertheless considered combat experience to be “character-building,” evincing a continued adherence to the ideals that

inspired or coerced them to volunteer in the first place. Thus, I argue, the citizen-soldier construct retained hegemonic status for middle-class men even after their service was complete. Though they became disillusioned with the violence of trench warfare, most middle-class soldiers took pride in their wartime participation, and their identities as masculine citizen-soldiers continued to function undisturbed.

The diaries and letters (and memoirs where needed) analyzed in this final chapter were all selected for particular attributes. As Meyer notes, “the ideal of a reflective life was predominately middle class.”⁴⁴ Correspondingly, all of my sources were authored by middle-class men who made time to reflect on their firsthand experience with volunteering and trench warfare in France. Historians Gunn, Mangan, and Tosh all attribute the exclusiveness of public schools, universities, and the practice of reading to middle-class privilege, and I follow suit here. Each of the soldiers from whose diaries I draw the majority of my evidence had a “typical” middle-class life, meaning that they were born into a small family, held jobs as clerks, or attended public school or university before they volunteered. Many of these young men played cricket and rugby as students; some were varsity captains.

Most diaries from the First World War do not typically offer detailed descriptions of trench life. Many men only reported on each day in a sentence or two. Thus the diaries I have selected in my research were authored by those who chose to reflect more extensively on their experiences, who perhaps liked or felt compelled to write. In effect, they may reflect a particular type of middle-class Englishman. Moreover, soldiers’ letters home also pose complications to consider, as it is often difficult and sometimes impossible to distinguish reality from imaginings.

⁴⁴ Meyer, 48.

Sons' letters to their mother were likely to express different sentiments than discussions with schoolmates. As soldiers wrote letters to a particular audience, self-censorship frequently occurred and was reinforced by real censors who read all outgoing mail.

The majority of these documents were published posthumously by friends or relatives in digital format; the rest were bound by small publishing houses whose distribution was limited within England or Europe. As I did not have the ability to travel to London to visit the Imperial War Museum (IWM) — which contains the largest archive of First World War service records, diaries, and letters in the world — my thesis relies primarily on online sources. Advantageously, this refined my search to roughly one hundred diaries instead of thousands. Some online archives also provided abstracts (which the IWM does not do), further facilitating this process. Fortunately, many of the propaganda posters referenced in chapter two have been digitally archived by the Imperial War Museum and the Mcallister University Library in Ontario, Canada.

Each man examined in this thesis formed a subjective identity that he preserved, in part, through his personal writing. This identity, the product of a half-century of cultural conditioning, could only seem natural to many of them. Common sense dictated that a proper middle-class man would join the army after a call to arms, as war was viewed as an experience to hone one's masculinity and position him above other men who could not muster the same courage. Despite the violence of trench warfare, the citizen-soldier archetype endured the service of many. The lives of a handful of men are illuminated and scrutinized within the scope of this research, against a backdrop of cultural conditioning and boyhood gender inscription.

Chapter I

The Militarization of Boys' Leisure Activities: Fostering Citizen-Soldier Virtues in England

(1840-1914)

Modern stereotypes did not exist in earlier ages, even if appearances mattered and men were supposed to walk and stand in a proper manner.⁴⁵

This chapter examines how the militarization of boyhood leisure activity shaped middle-class imaginings of masculinity in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century England. The first section explores how, in the first two decades of the Victorian era, schools for middle-class boys embraced teaching pedagogies that fostered solitary exploration of nature as a form of exercise, which left boys great swaths of time for unstructured activity. Public schools were strictly male institutions, so the addition of “athletic” education to curricula demonstrated a shift in societal expectations of what a middle-class boy should look like and how he should behave.⁴⁶ With the institutionalization of organized games, public schools gradually transitioned away from unstructured activities like walking and stretching, towards organized sports such as cricket and rugby. This led to changes in educational pedagogy that demanded obedience, discipline, and bravery of all its students. By the 1890s, England’s pervasive militarism was evident in sporting chants and periodicals that “fed on images of heroism and military triumph.”⁴⁷ Stars of organized games like rugby were lauded for their Englishness, leadership skills, and dedication to physical self-improvement. Thus, the introduction of Victorian-era athleticism began a

⁴⁵ Mosse, 5.

⁴⁶ See Mosse’s theory, discussed above.

⁴⁷ Robert H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement 1890-1918*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 16.

systemic shift in middle-class masculinity towards a brawny physical appearance and a sense of pride in school sports and the nation.

Boys' periodicals also reflect this changing masculine norm, and act as signposts for popular boys' activities, games, literature, and poems throughout the Victorian era. The subsequent section examines the impact of popular teen literature in mid-nineteenth century English society on expectations of masculinity. I show that in 1840, a middle-class boy's imagination relied on his natural surroundings, hand-made toys, oral histories, a novel or two, the bible and little else. Toys consisted primarily of homemade dolls, hoop and stick and marbles.⁴⁸ As contemporary markets remained limited, most manufacturers did not produce toys; but of the few that did, toy trains were most popular. The appeal of the toy train in the late 1880s reflects England's obsession with steam power, industrialism, and maintenance of Empire. Similarly, I argue, the popularity of toy soldiers in the early twentieth century reflects the middle class's veneration for the virtues of the citizen-soldier.

The widespread printing of periodicals transformed how English boys imagined their masculinity by providing them with a new set of tools. They were the primary media by which a boy could escape the physical world and imagine himself as Robinson Crusoe, or a star rugby player, explorer, knight or soldier. While athletics enabled the physical manifestation of masculinity, a boy's imagination made him a part of a community of adventurers and soldiers. Literature like the *Boy's Own Magazine*, published by S.O. Beeton, outwardly encouraged aggressive sportsmanship, courage, duty, self-sacrifice and pride. The one-cent price of the

⁴⁸ Antonia Fraser, *The History of Toys*, (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1966), 63, 166.

weekly issue made it affordable only to the middle-class.⁴⁹ Moreover, boy's periodicals combined historical fact with myth as a way to "justify the inevitable progress of Empire," as Robert MacDonald argues in his work *Sons of the Empire* (1993).⁵⁰ In turn, these magazines helped cultivate a generation of middle-class men who regarded the vitality of England as a personal concern for which they should tailor their bodies and minds. When a late-Victorian boy, reading about heroic charges and epic battles, imagined himself a soldier, he unwittingly equipped himself with the mindset and values to become a volunteer for war. These imaginings also instilled in boys a sense of nationalism by commending the heroism of Englishmen against perceived national enemies. This section also explores the new materialism of middle-class boyhood in the early 1900s — as mass-produced toys added yet another facet through which middle-class boys could imagine their masculinity as soldiers and explorers of Britain's Empire

In response to Britain's perceived lack of vitality, some civilians took matters into their own hands by reaching out to the younger generation. The final section of this chapter examines the *Scouting for Boys* manual published in 1908 by founder of the Boy Scout Movement, Baden Powell. Powell wanted to "save boys from a domestic life," and to ensure that when war came, England's youth would be ready to defend her. Many of the middle-class soldiers who joined out of school were as young as seventeen, making them thirteen years old when the scouting movement began. The movement combined the ideology of public school athleticism with Baden Powell's patriotic ideals to articulate a new masculine ideal; boys in the movement

⁴⁹ Periodicals became available to boys in 1837 with the repeal of the 1712 Stamp Act on newspapers and similar print items. The tax had long supported a few well-funded papers while ousting the availability of alternative literature. With its repeal, publishers began marketing books and literature to every class and interest that could be found in Britain. The first publication of *The Boy's Own Magazine* appeared in 1855.

⁵⁰ MacDonald, 16.

learned skills such as woodworking, orienteering and middle-class virtues like honor and selflessness. *Scouting for Boys* was a patriotic touchstone for the boys of England; a guide to becoming a true Englishman. The manual's blatant celebration of self-sacrifice and discipline makes it an exemplary indicator of middle-class patriotism and sense of duty to king and country. The scouting movement's explosive popularity is an indicator that its masculine philosophy, which promoted the virtues of the citizen-soldier hero, was well-received by society at large. Thus, I argue, whereas middle-class boys once enjoyed whole days of unstructured leisure time to socialize and imagine freely, transforming hegemonic values of self-improvement and self-sacrifice in the nineteenth century, combined with a new sense of "properly" athletic male bodies, produced a generation of boys ready and willing to serve the nation through pride, courage, duty and sacrifice.

A: ATHLETICISM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS (1835-1914)

The institutionalization of athleticism in schools was prolific in the twentieth century. Headmaster's saw great potential in the panoptic qualities of supervised sports, which also facilitated the self-improvement of students through both body and mind. At the turn of the nineteenth century schools were highly focused on the success of their organized sports and inter-school rivalries were utilized to induce school pride. This thesis takes schools and headmasters as subjects of analysis because they were formative in molding the mindsets of students and eventually, fostering the citizen-soldier virtues that inspired so many middle-class men to volunteer their lives for England's army during the First World War.

In the first three decades of the nineteenth century, physical exercise was not performed on the playing field. Boys at boarding school were expected to exercise by exploring nature, rough housing, and (in the words of naturalist T.D. Boony) by “rambling,” or pursuing unstructured exploration of the countryside.⁵¹ Lansing Boarding School pupil Boscowan Somerset wrote in his diary about the ample free time in which he “bathed... ‘laid up in field’ ... walk[ed] in school fields,” and engaged in “egg blowing”; others participated in “bird shooting...nesting...hares and hounds... and ‘toozling,’” the act of hunting and killing birds in hedgerows.⁵² Lansing Boarding School would not offer organized games for another fifteen years. Until then, boys “amus[ed] themselves with marbles, or ‘chiving’ or climbing trees.”⁵³ These were all passive sports, and encouraged unstructured wandering, free-thinking and solitude. British public schools were not yet the institutions of authoritarian pedagogy that would define the late Victorian and Edwardian eras; dominant trends in educational pedagogy began to shift in the 1840s, when a few “radical” schoolmasters introduced organized games to the curriculum. By instating supervised games, schoolmasters demonstrated their support for philosophies of individual self-improvement, and gained an unprecedented degree of social control over their pupils.

This authority over students was the primary reason for institutionalizing sports and games. In 1839 the newly appointed schoolmaster of Harrow, Charles Vaughn, was appalled by the “poaching,” “trespassing,” and other mischievous behaviors of his students. Schoolboys frequently drifted off campus and onto private property, causing damage and tarnishing the

⁵¹ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 19.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 21.

school's reputation. Vaughn's negative reaction to these once-normal and previously supported activities demonstrates the shift in dominant notions of proper masculine behavior over time. To gain control, he instituted a number of organized sports and expanded the gaming grounds. Sports and activities simultaneously instilled in students values of discipline and self-improvement, and provided schoolmasters with a panopticism ideal for social control: those who behaved aggressively were encouraged to do so on the playing field. The "discipline-like nature" of Vaughn's pedagogy was quickly embraced by similar institutions as a means to keep boys occupied and disciplined under the watchful eye of the schoolmaster.⁵⁴ Vaughn's program marked the beginning of self-discipline as a virtue required of middle-class schoolboys.

When Vaughn abandoned unregulated outdoor activities in favor of organized sports for boys, he unwittingly pioneered a shift hegemonic masculine traits. Schoolyard inscription of gender expectations transitioned away from observing nature and walking in the woods, to games that encouraged pride and required strength, aggression, and endurance. This corroborates Water's theory that external factors — in the context of my research, the introduction of institutionalized games and sports — can change the process of hegemonic masculine construction. As gender is fluid, the introduction of these virtues changed how schoolboys were expected to behave and think, making them increasingly more competitive, fraternalistic, and disciplined.

By the mid-1860s organized games had become a staple of many public-school curricula. Exercise manuals were increasingly used to teach boys rudimentary physical fitness. After opening a gymnasium at Oxford, Scotsman Archibald MacLaren (1820-1884) published a three-

⁵⁴ Ibid., 27.

volume series on physical instruction which became the primary referent for schoolmasters: *A Military System of Gymnastic Exercises and System of Fencing for the Use of Instructors* (1868); *A System of Physical Education Theoretical and Practical* (1869); and *Training in Theory and in Practice* (1874).⁵⁵ These manuals called for conformity, dress codes and strict social discipline. MacLaren's 1868 publication had a special section called 'Awkward Men,' which offered instruction to train "weak and awkward men" to raise them to the "standard of efficiency."⁵⁶ It also stated that gymnastic training's objective was to "harden and strengthen the trained soldier."⁵⁷ MacLaren's conceptualization of the "standard" man as efficient — and not weak or "awkward" — along with his explicit reference to trained soldiers evinces the continued shift in dominant notions of masculinity towards ever more soldierly virtues. MacLaren's series marked a new era in middle-class educational pedagogy, combining public school code with military code to portray a masculine ideal of fitness, discipline and conformity. Widespread adoption of military pedagogy in public schools marks the beginning of an era in which masculinity, educational philosophy and service to the nation became inseparable in England.

After the 1860s, schools militarized students not only through physical fitness programs, but also by means of symbolic representation. Sports teams invested in better uniforms to create a sense of pride and unity in their players, which fostered inter-school rivalries. The images used to support school athletics began to evolve as well; by the late nineteenth century, homemade signs proclaiming school pride were largely replaced by pennants and flags that demonstrated

⁵⁵ Ibid., 279.

⁵⁶ Archibald MacLaren, *A Military System of Gymnastic Exercises and System of Fencing for the use of Instructors* (London: The Superintendency of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1868), <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433008594966;view=1up;seq=9>.

⁵⁷ Ibid., viii.

pride and allegiance through the uniformity of shapes and colors. Benedict Anderson argues that schooling is one of the earliest stages of nationalist inscription, as it familiarizes youth with symbols of community and allegiance including flags, school colors and uniforms.⁵⁸ Thus by the late 1880s, organized games such as rugby and football drew large crowds to regional competitions where students proudly displayed their school's colors and mascot. By 1900 the only dress more admirable than a rugby uniform was the formal uniform of the English soldier.⁵⁹

At the same time, popular fears in England maintained that the British Empire would lose its vitality unless it continued to expand and strengthen defenses against rival European nations. F.D. Lugard's essay *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893) provides a concise summary of concurrent national sentiment: "It is inherent that a great colonial and commercial empire like ours go forward or go backward."⁶⁰ Lugard's essay is focused on the commercial prospects of Britain's African Empire, but it propagates the popular notion that England was in danger of "going backward." A strong empire is founded on militarism as well as successful commercialism. This widespread belief raised fears that English men were incapable of supporting the Empire as soldiers; social expectations thus fell on the youth to meet the physical and moral standards necessary to preserve the Empire. To combat this perceived lack of vitality, the generation of the 1890s was identified as future soldiers who would have to fight in the event of a European war. As such, the increasing institutionalization of mandatory exercise, self-

⁵⁸ Benedict R. O. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Rev. and Extended ed., London: Verso, 1991).

⁵⁹ Mangan, *Athleticism in Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 68-96.

⁶⁰ Karl Pearson's *National Life From the Standpoint of Science* (1900) is another example of this anxiety.

F.D. Lugard, "Capt. F.D. Lugard, The Rise of Our East African Empire, 1893," *Modern History Sourcebook*, <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1893lugard.asp>.

discipline and patriotic rhetoric in schools can be understood as part of a particular political project to prepare British boys for war.

In 1891 schoolmaster R.F. Freeman published a fictitious piece of propaganda called *Steady and Strong: A School Story* which glorified his position as headmaster at Loretto, as well as his own efforts to create the “most manly school.” Freeman's expectations for his students reflect the archetypal traits associated with middle-class masculinity in the 1890s. He writes: “I wish to make Chudleigh the most *manly* school. I only value skill in athletics so far as it is a token of genuine manliness. Be careful to understand well what I mean by this term ‘manly’ ... I want each of my boys to be foremost in braving pain, facing danger, to take a licking without flinching, to stop the most violent rush at cricket, [and] to play an uphill game pluckily.”⁶¹ The virtues described by Freeman as “manly” are all aggressive traits which require fortitude and emotional restraint; his language suggests that experiencing a violent confrontation is necessary to become the ideal middle-class man. Over the course of the next two decades, such emotional restraint and violent rites of passage would become the primary earmarks of masculinity for the citizen-soldier. Freeman continues: “...a robust healthy frame, straightened by constant air and exercise and tempered by the wholesome toils of an athletic life, is the best safeguard against the most deadly form of moral degradation, which has wrecked so many thousands of our English boys.”⁶² Here Freeman is referring to masturbation, which was often attributed to homosexuality (or a cause of it) in the late Victorian era. Thus, he hierarchizes different expressions of middle-

⁶¹ The cover of *Steady and Strong: A School Story* is illustrated with three boys, two running and one swimming. They are bordered with a rugby ball and cricket bat (See figure one). Chudleigh is a fictional school used in Freeman's novel.

R.M. Freeman. *Steady and Strong: A School Story* (London: Henry Frowde, Hodder and Stoughton, 1911), 7.

⁶² Ibid.

class masculinity, privileging self-discipline, exercise and heterosexuality as the ideal expression of middle-class masculinity. Freeman's description illustrates how the citizen-soldier archetype began to reach hegemony near the turn of the century.

By the early 1900s, games dictated the life of every middle-class male in Britain. Society expected boys and young men to participate in competitive, aggressive games that adhered to strict codes of conduct. Catching birds and exploring nature were no longer part of a young man's life; rather, popular notions of adolescence evolved into expectations of a strong and disciplined body. According to Mangan, the innovations of previous schoolmasters were extended and perfected by 1900, and came to be "taken for granted." He explains that "early antipathy towards compulsory games, as demonstrated with particular vehemence at Lancing and Harrow [two public schools in England], should never be interpreted as antipathy to games themselves."⁶³ As generations aged and abandoned pursuits like walking and observing nature, boys' resentment over their circumscribed freedom waned. The once-radical reforms of the 1840s were "taken for granted" by the turn of the century, as "the enthusiasm of many pupils for the game field was expressed more strongly than ever."⁶⁴ This cultural shift evinces Connell's theory of hegemony, according to which expectations of appearance and performance appear natural rather than constructed.

By the Second Boer War (1899), sporting team chants sounded more like songs men would sing in the army than high school rugby ditties. Organized games were increasingly militarized as "football, too, was a direct form of military education."⁶⁵ In the *Lorretonian*, a

⁶³ Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 86.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 192.

public school newspaper, one headline read: “Football brings out all the qualities that ought to be innate in the brave soldier.”⁶⁶ With this statement the paper articulated a trend that had been in progress since the 1860s, as athletic pedagogy and militarism became increasingly inseparable: both demanded similar qualities of obedience, agility and leadership. Following the start of the Second Boer War, the *Lorretonian* again displayed its patriotism with a poem — “To Loretto from her volunteers” — in which the young heroes on the field assured the school that, though the colors might be changed from red to khaki,

*For the bowling we are ready
And we will keep the right foot steady
And try not to flinch as they hum past our head.*⁶⁷

This lurid description of bowling in cricket connotes imagery of bullets, alluding to the courage men were expected to uphold on the battlefield. It shows how stoicism was an honored trait even before the First World War by emphasizing emotional restraint as a “manly” response in the face of danger. Moreover, the poem notes that the school's colors became “khaki” – a color associated exclusively with the army.

The *Lorretonian*'s poem, together with the examples analyzed above, show that public schools served as preparatory institutions for patriotic volunteerism in 1914. The institutionalization of games and sports in middle-class public schools between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries initiated a shift in dominant notions of masculinity to favor increasingly militarized archetypes. Instead of scientific exploration and walks in the woods, society came to expect from men physical strength and the ability to act stoically in the

⁶⁶ *Lorretonian*, vol. XXIV, no. 6, February 1, 1902, 24, quoted in Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 192.

⁶⁷ *Lorretonian*, vol. XXII, no. 5, March 17, 1900, 23, quoted in Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, 193.

face of danger, to evince England's readiness for war. Thus the introduction of organized sports and games in public schools constituted one avenue through which citizen-soldier virtues were fostered. Yet the militarization of boys' leisure time was not limited to the gaming grounds, for it also transpired through popular literature (such as boys' periodicals) designed to shape their imaginations. The following section explores how periodicals published between 1855 and 1912 contributed to constructing the citizen-soldier ideal that eventually persuaded middle-class men to volunteer for war.

B: IMAGINING MASCULINITY: BOYS' PERIODICALS (1857-1912)

The Boy's Own Magazine first appeared in 1855. Written for a middle-class audience, this weekly periodical was published in annual editions which contained more than three hundred pages filled with activities and instruction for boys on an encyclopedic scale.⁶⁸ Analyzing successive publications of *The Boy's Own Magazine* over the course of several decades reveals a shift in masculine expectation from passive to aggressive activities, as well as an increasingly diverse array of thematic patriotic venues through which a boy might imagine his masculinity. I use periodicals like *The Boy's Own Magazine* to illustrate what hegemonic English masculinity looked like prior to the soldier-hero archetype, in order to show its transformation to citizen-soldier masculinity between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The third edition of *The Boy's Own Magazine* (1857) typifies early issues of the periodical. The subtitle reads "Fact, Fiction, History and Adventure," preparing readers for a

⁶⁸ The six-cent price of the annual edition made it unobtainable for working-class consumers.

variety of themes. This edition celebrates the natural sciences and philosophy, along with stories of discovery and adventure. It encourages the same activities that Charles Vaughn sought to discourage at Loretto boarding school, when he instated organized games. The section titled “Sports and Pastimes” is filled with activities such as “magic-lamp,” “charades,” “Polish Stones,” and the “whistling club.” It shows that in 1857 middle-class masculinity was still exercised through passive games rather than aggressive sports; only one short story about organized sports (cricket) can be found under the “miscellaneous category.”⁶⁹ In 1857, sporting was not yet considered a popular pastime.

The “Tales and Adventure” section is largest both by number of articles, and by page volume. Its heroes and protagonists are primarily from different European countries and America — indicative that the popular imperialism which glorified the citizen-soldier had yet to develop in boyhood periodicals. The first and longest adventure story, for example – “Pym’s Narrative” – is about a boy “whose father was a respectable trader in stores at Nantucket, where I was born.”⁷⁰ Another story, bolded in the index to emphasize its worth, bore a caption that read: “The successful struggle of America to gain her independence will furnish many episodes of Bravery and Fortitude.”⁷¹ This piece celebrates America’s defeat of the British Empire, evincing that it was written before the rise of popular imperialism in England. It also hails “Bravery and Fortitude” as projections of English masculine expectation, exemplary of the dominant domestic archetype of the 1850s whose “masculinity, after all, was essentially about being master of one’s

⁶⁹ S.O. Beaton, *The Boy’s Own Magazine Issue III* (London: S.O. Beaton, 1853), v-viii, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101017760453;view=1up;seq=9>.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, i.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, iv.

own house” while also possessing the “qualities they might need if threatened by the outside.”⁷²

This article about the American Revolution reinforced the contemporary notion that “manly” men were those who possessed the bravery to face the industrial world, as well as the fortitude to defend hearth and home against attack.⁷³

Five years later, the 1862 edition of *The Boy's Own Magazine* features a similar organization and identical cover, but exhibits a dramatic shift in content. The number of articles about natural sciences and philosophy declined sharply, as the magazine made space for pieces featuring organized games such as football, “raquetts” and rugby, each of which demanded the virtues of pride, endurance, strength and discipline. That same year, Archibald Maclaren published his *Military System of Gymnastic Exercises for the Use of Instructors*, employed by many schoolmasters in England. It contains a section titled “**MANLY EXERCISES**,” bolded and capitalized for effect, which listed twelve gymnastic exercises for home learning.⁷⁴ He dedicates an entire section to walking, with articles on the benefits of different styles. This shift in thematic content of boys’ periodicals is the first strong indicator that masculine hobbies were transitioning away from rambling walks in the country, which begat observation and reflection, towards a world of regimented, competitive games. For as Archibald notes, the object of organized sports was to “harden and strengthen the trained soldier.”⁷⁵

⁷² John Tosh, *A Man's Place Masculinity and the Middle-class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 6.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁷⁴ S.O. Beaton, *The Boy's Own Magazine Issue VIII* (London: S.O. Beaton, 1862), v, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433082180674;view=1up;seq=15>.

⁷⁵ MacLaren, viii.

The “Tales and Adventure” section, so dense in the 1857 edition, makes up a fraction of its former length and the articles’ themes have changed. Pieces titled “Courage,” and “How I Won My Spurs; or “Boys Adventures in the Barons’ Wars” combined adventure with themes such as warfare and chivalry. Other tales also emphasize chivalrous exploits, and a thematic short celebrates English greatness. Poems had also changed since the 1857 edition; no longer quirky or nature-based, they now addressed Waterloo and other themes of nationalism and imperialism.⁷⁶ In the 1870 issue, Sir Richard Greenville’s “Last Sea-Fight” appears bolded in the index. The ballad relates an English crew’s heroic feat which “kept fifty ships at bay.”⁷⁷ “The Englishmen for England, and Spaniards fought for Spain” reads one line, clearly defining sovereign nations and identifying the men as English, embedding this history — and a reader’s masculinity along with it — into a sense of English pride. As such, they formed part of an imagined community of men who would presumably fight and die together. The poem ends with: “defeat is not dishonor where cowardice is not, and veering gales of fortune are a weary sailors lot.” Although England is defeated in the end, the poem locates the enduring courage of “her [the nation’s]” sailors as the hallmark of manly honor,⁷⁸ acknowledging that victory in competition is not requisite to contemporary notions of proper masculinity. In 1862 and subsequent issues, few poems or articles celebrate men who made the ultimate sacrifice, whether in victory or defeat. This differs from future themes of patriotism that will appear in Baden Powell’s 1908 manual *Scouting for Boys*. Over the course of the 1860s and 1870s, the content of

⁷⁶ Beaton, *The Boy’s Own Magazine Issue VIII*, vi.

⁷⁷ S.O. Beaton, *The Boy’s Own Magazine Issue XI* (London: Ward, Lock, Tyler and Worwick House, 1870), 311, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433082273156;view=1up;seq=13>.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

The Boy's Own Magazine exhibits a growing trend of popular imperialism, as its articles increasingly promote endurance, strength, and self-sacrifice as traits that boys should hone.

By the late 1870s, *The Boy's Own Magazine* faced stiff competition from other boys' periodicals and was taken off the press. *The Boy's Own Paper* (1879 -1967) — the most successful of the periodicals to fill the market gap — thus provides the most accurate reflection of boys' demand for literature content. The publisher subsequently released bound editions of each year's issues and replaced the word "paper" with "annual"; so the *The Boy's Own Annual* (though I will refer to the individual issues within it) serves to conclude this investigation of periodicals as indicators of masculine expectation, and producers of masculine imagination.

Issue one, volume one of *The Boy's Own Paper* first sold on 18 January 1879 for a penny, a price still out of reach to the lower classes. On the front page was a group of fit-looking young men engaged in a scrum. Beneath it, the headline article reads: "My First football Match," by "An Old Boy."⁷⁹ The publishers' decision to privilege this image to cultivate a first impression reflects the popularity of organized sports in male culture at the time. Moreover, the story below it is riddled with comparisons between war and rugby: upon hearing of his selection to the school rugby team, the author commented that it was "a proud moment in my existence" and he "could have knighted [the rugby captain] on the spot." He was ecstatic to be one of the "picked fifteen whose glory it was to fight the battles of their school in the Great Close"; his "hacks and bruises" were proof of his bravery. He writes in detail of an officer who served in

⁷⁹ See figure two for the cover illustration.

The Boy's Own Annual, "My First Football Match," ed. James Macaulay (London: "Leisure Hour" Office, 1879), 1, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.c2723970;view=1up;seq=11>.

Crimea, who claimed that the battles he fought were much like his rugby matches back home.⁸⁰ In this article, public schools — and particularly sports teams — are portrayed as a microcosm of the English state (much like the cricketers from the poem above, whose colors changed from red to khaki). This comparison invited sports-playing boys to imagine themselves performing a soldier's task. Underneath the story by Old Boy is a poem titled "Brave and True," which details a man's obligations to society, that he should be brave and honest in all his endeavors. The other articles share similarly patriotic themes, with color pages of national flags and stories of earning rank in battles on the colonial frontiers.⁸¹

The magazine clearly subscribed to Lugard's philosophy that the British Empire needed to expand or risk collapse, and settled its expectations on the younger generation. It presumed that middle-class boys would willingly shoulder the responsibility of training their minds and bodies to fight, and printed articles and images to reinforce this belief. Printed just three decades before the outset of war, the first issue of the *The Boy's Own Annual* celebrated and encouraged the militarization of able-bodied youth and their designated role to preserve the nation.

The Boy's Own Paper continued to publish periodicals reflecting contemporary national sentiment, and thus served to channel boys' imaginations into the fervor of national militarism developing in the decades before the First World War. For example, the 1911 issue ran an article proclaiming: "BAYMOUTH SCOUTS...Britons, never, never, never shall be slaves"⁸² — demonstrating that publishers and middle-class boys alike were comfortable with the prospect of

⁸⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² *The Boy's Own Annual 1911-1912* (London: "Boy's Own Paper" Office, 1912), <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.c2724003;view=1up;seq=19>.

a European War. As the changing content of boys' periodicals over the second half of the nineteenth century shows, boys' imaginations were directed away from "Tales and Adventure" toward stories about sports and war, effectively producing a new masculine imagination of soldiering. As masculinity is first fashioned in the imagination, and since childhood is a critical age for gender codification, boys who grew up reading such periodicals would have glorified perceptions of war. Periodicals served to shape masculine imaginations of the citizen-soldier; in the years prior to the First World War, both physical fitness (organized sports) and popular literature for boys (periodicals) reified a dominant male archetype of strength, courage, selflessness, pride and honor. The next section examines an aspect in the rise of middle-class consumerism and the uniformed club known as the Boy Scouts, to show that the virtues they promote support the citizen-soldier as the ideal middle-class man in English masculine hegemony.

C: TOYS AS TOOLS FOR IMAGINING MANHOOD AND THE RHETORIC OF THE BOY SCOUTS (1900-1908)

This section offers a snapshot of middle-class boyhood in the first decade of the twentieth century, using popular games, toys, and social clubs (funded by the government and by parents) to show how the masculine virtues that attained hegemony in the 1900s cultivated consent for war. Games and toys allowed middle-class boys to imagine themselves amongst a community of soldiers, while the incipient scouting movement let them perform the role of the citizen-soldier with a badged uniform and an oath to "help others at all costs." Middle-class boys' imaginative

and social worlds alike were shaped by patriotic virtues personified by the citizen-soldier archetype, promoting characteristics of physical strength, stoicism, and self-sacrifice.

By 1900, innovations in manufacturing and the availability of cheap materials gave rise to an unprecedented toy industry in England. This industry catered to middle-class consumers; manufacturers and civilians produced patriotic toys, books and games that simultaneously reflected and produced the militarized masculinities presented to the youth of the time. In the concluding case study, this chapter examines the rhetoric of the Boy Scout movement and its popularity within middle-class society to argue that the middle-class man was expected to possess the virtues of the ideal citizen-soldier, positioned at the pinnacle of masculine hegemony.

When a middle-class boy learned to read, he may have used “Mrs. Ernest Ames”’s *An ABC For Baby Patriots* (1899). This educational book contained phrases such as:

*A is the Army That dies for the Queen It's the very best Army That ever was seen... B stands for battles by which England's name has for ever been covered with glory and fame... C is for Colonies, Rightly we boast That of all the great nations Great Britain has the most... V's Volunteers Who can shoot very straight; They are drilled now and then Between seven and eight.*⁸³

This book—produced to help children learn the alphabet—was also a guide to patriotism for young boys. It makes clear that “volunteers,” training, and the English army were the reason for Britain’s perceived greatness. Educational tools like Mrs. Ernest’s *ABC*’s reinforced notions of British imperialism in a boy’s imagination at a young age, thus beginning his ability to imagine himself as a soldier “that dies for the queen.”

Popular imperialism was reinforced not only through literature, but also the production of manufactured toys. By 1905 trains, once central to imaginations of empire, were no longer the

⁸³ Ernest Ames, *An ABC for Baby Patriots* (London: Dean and Son, 1899), <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00086056/00001>.

most popular toy among the middle class: instead parents bought their sons toy soldiers. This trend further illustrates a shifting masculine norm, for whereas boys once idolized steam-powered technology as a means to strengthen the empire, they now glorified soldiers and battle, demonstrating a shift from industrialism to the rise of militarism. The primary manufacturer of toys in England, Britain's LTD, began to produce hundreds of unique soldier casts, and over five million figurines a year.⁸⁴ Another indication of rising commercialism and popular imperialism were the famous *Deans Rag Books* for children. The publishing company released *Patriotic Pinafores for Children* in 1903, which allowed young boys to dress as an officer and command toy soldiers. The packaging bore the image of a boy in an officer's uniform brandishing a jockey-whip, and proclaimed in bold lettering: "I'm the Officer!"⁸⁵ This toy won a gold medal at the Festival of Empire Exhibition in 1911, which attests not only to the toy's sustained popularity, but also to contemporary national sentiment.⁸⁶ With *Pinafores for Children*, a middle-class boy's ability to imagine himself as a citizen-soldier gained a performative quality. As will be shown in the third chapter of this thesis, receiving even a piece of uniform as a newly registered volunteer was a prideful moment, when he too would imagine himself clad together with his unit in Europe.

Lastly, H.G. Wells' *Floor Games* (1911) is evidence of popular imperialism and militarism in home entertainment.⁸⁷ Wells' book contains three do-it-yourself floor games that

⁸⁴ Dawson, 235.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁸⁶ The Festival of Empire Exhibition was used as a "historical pageant" according to Peter H. Hoffenberger, author of *An Empire on Display*. The festival promoted the wellbeing and glorification of the British Empire. It was attended by thousands of visitors and a main event involved athletics; athletes from all over the British Empire competed the Inter-Empire Championships.

⁸⁷ This book was produced for middle-class children, as it mentions requirements such as flat floors, linoleum floors, carpet and other facets that would only be affordable to the middle class.

the author played with his children between 1885 and 1911. This bound manual instructs boys on how to create worlds and use strategy to conquer an opponent. For example, “The Game of Wonderful Islands” told children to “land and alter things and build and arrange and hoist paper flags on pins, and subjugate populations, and confer all the blessings of civilization upon these lands.”⁸⁸ The word choice encouraged England’s youth to embrace soldiering and imperialism by making it a “wonderful” concept that was worth fighting for and dying to protect while also underscoring the racial superiority of Englishmen over other peoples.

Toys reified to their consumers the supposed “naturalness” and normativity of English strength, patriotism and colonial subjugation. Moreover, they told the child exactly how he should perceive the army—as honorable and glorious—while playing dress-up and toy soldiers personalized the action. Thus, the middle-class volunteer’s boyhood was inundated with patriotic imagery from an early age. When he transitioned into his early teenage years, he would have the opportunity to read the *Boy's Own Paper* and like magazines, and to participate in a variety of social groups and clubs that instilled the same sense of masculine patriotism.

When boys outgrew children’s games and Sunday school, they typically joined any number of groups like “The Jewish Lads,” the “Catholic Brigade,” “The Boys Brigade,” and dozens of others, most of which were established in the mid-1880s.⁸⁹ Like church and school, these associations reinforced principles of discipline and honor through organized games and other physical activities. Social groups for middle-class youth served as a precursor to the

⁸⁸ This book was one of two in a series. The other was titled *Little Wars* (1913), which was a guide for how to use toy soldiers in and around the home.

H.G. Wells, *Floor Games* (London: Frank Palmer, 1911), 35.

⁸⁹ Mangan, *Manliness and Morality*, 53-57.

associations they would be expected to belong to as men. Like organized games, these groups were meant to occupy a boy's free time and keep him out of trouble. Many of them promoted military values. After the Second Boer War, as soldiers suffered public ridicule for their ineptitude on the battlefield, the Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration endorsed funds for "all clubs and cadet corps in which physical or quasi-military training, on an approved scheme, is conducted."⁹⁰ The government's interest in the vitality of clubs for boys and social groups reflects an attempt to maneuver popular expectations of masculinity to favor hegemonic virtues of military prowess.

The most popular of these youth groups was the Boy Scouts, which formed as "a direct response to the debate about national efficiency."⁹¹ Estimates suggest that by 1914 one in twelve English boys belonged to a group affiliated with the Boys Scout movement, with higher densities in urban areas.⁹² Newspapers idolized the group's founder, Sir Arthur Baden Powell, as a national hero who epitomized the military frontiersman for his exploits during the Boer Wars. Disgusted by the lack of courage and pride he saw on the battlefield, Powell wrote a variety of pamphlets on manliness and eventually *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction on Good Citizenship*, convinced that England's youth was the last hope for maintaining the British

⁹⁰ MacDonald, 18.

⁹¹ Ibid., 20.

⁹² "History," *Scouts*, <http://scouts.org.uk/about-us/history/>.

Empire.⁹³ His intention was to train boys to give back to the nation at any cost.⁹⁴ Powell founded the Boy Scouts (1907) on the middle-class virtues of public school code, athleticism and work ethic.⁹⁵ The movement was exclusive only to those in the middle and upper classes, due to the price of uniforms and necessary camping equipment. It served as quasi-military training, allowing boys aged five to eighteen to don uniforms, give orders, take orders, practice military drill and hone their skills in shooting, orientation, and camping. It glorified military life and demanded from boys patriotism and discipline. The success of the scouting movement demonstrates that the masculine virtues of the citizen-soldier — selflessness, emotional restraint, camaraderie, and duty — were embraced by middle-class families throughout England, and helped cultivate consent for war among the thousands of active scouting.

The manual *Scouting for Boys* reinforced the patriotic rhetoric of middle-class virtues of the citizen-soldier. *Scouting for Boys* reveals the militarism of the organization as well as its founder, whose “language was the diction of public schools” and the “cult of athleticism.”⁹⁶ The knights and chivalry of the *The Boy's Own Annual*, when re-examined in a similar context, further evince that *Scouting for Boys* was produced to shape boys’ imaginations, to make them visualize themselves as soldiers, so that they could perform these duties later in life. The

⁹³ Powell’s book was one of many militaristic guides to citizenship that were produced during this decade. *Aids to Scouting for N.C.Os and Men* (1899) was Powell’s precursor to *Scouting for Boys*. *The Birch Bark Roll of the Woodcraft Indians* (1902) by Ernest Thompson Seton inspired Powell to focus on the younger generation. Both of these publications lacked oaths, codes, and games. The scouting movement endured the longest and is the most prosperous boys organization. According to the Boy Scout’s international website it is currently the most popular scouting movement with a presence in two hundred and sixteen countries and territories with over thirty-eight million members.

⁹⁴ MacDonald, 163.

⁹⁵ This same year the Officer Training Corps was formed. Both of these institutions evince the popular imperialism and cultivation of the citizen-soldier in the years before the First World War.

⁹⁶ MacDonald, 161.

qualities Baden Powell expected from scouts had fully departed from Victorian era constructs of masculinity; Powell himself thought that “many people seem to think that a gentleman must have lots of money. Money does not make a gentleman. A gentleman is anyone who carries out the rules of chivalry of knights.”⁹⁷ Thus, the manual marks the end of the domestic Victorian era gentleman, and indicates the new ideal middle-class archetype had become the citizen-soldier.

In the first few pages of *Scouting for Boys*, the Scout Oath is printed:

*Will do my duty to God and the King.
Will do my best to help others, whatever it costs me.
I know the scout law, and will obey it.*⁹⁸

The Scout Oath emphasizes the basic principles of scouting. It reinforces duty to the nation, respect for law and order, and sacrifice, “whatever it costs” — all hegemonic virtues of the citizen-soldier. According to the 1908 Scout Law, orders from a patrol-leader or scoutmaster were to be obeyed “without question.” If lower-ranked scouts disagreed with an order, Powell tells them to “do as soldiers and sailors do, [who] must carry it out all the same because of [their] duty... That is discipline.” The importance of obedience is emphasized throughout the book; adherence to orders from any scout leader, familial or political figure was an essential cornerstone of expectations for a scout. Powell concludes that with orders come duty, meaning that scouts “give up everything. Their personal comforts, and desires, in order to get their work done. They do not do all this for their own amusement, but because it is their duty to their King, fellow-countrymen, or employers.”⁹⁹ This description reflects the living conditions many English soldiers experienced serving abroad in colonial outposts, and glorifies the English citizen who

⁹⁷ Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden Powell, *Scouting for Boys: The Original 1908 Edition* (New York: Dover Publications, 2007), 243.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

could perform more than the domestic duties of man. The *Scouting for Boys* manual venerates the idea of self-sacrifice in the context of imperial duty. War is clearly emphasized as a glorious hardship.

Much of Powell's manual reinforces soldierly expectations. The first section of his book, "Scout's Work," declares that boys should "be accustomed to taking their lives in their hands and to fling them down without hesitation if they can help their country by doing so."¹⁰⁰ Powell advocated for selflessness as a virtue to which all scouts and good citizens should aspire, to such a degree that he asked others to denounce those who did not fit his mold of the ideal man:

*So, too with a boy who has been accustomed to obey orders at once, whether there is risk about it or not; the moment you order him to do a thing on active service, no matter how great the danger is to him he does it, while another chap who has never cared to obey would object, and would then be despised as a coward even by his former friends.*¹⁰¹

In order to fit the ideal male stereotype — selfless and unflinching in the face of danger — Powell recommended that boys uphold his expectations for scout's work. Not only does he reiterate that boys should risk their lives for the nation, he openly condemns those who do not, encouraging boys to stereotype others as cowards if they do not meet soldierly expectations. Additionally, Powell uses military terms like "active service" to describe routine life for scouts, allowing them to imagine their duties as tasks a soldier might perform. The lifestyle he proposed urged boys to further regiment their lives in order to better serve the state, indicating that nationalist traits also comprised the masculine archetype in the years before the war.

The *Scouting for Boys* introduction contains moral guidelines and expectations for scouts to uphold, including the Oath analyzed above. Middle sections include articles on camping skills,

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

drill instruction, activity guides, the importance of appearance, treatment of the Union Jack, and other scout traditions. The final sections reinforce a scout's duty to the Empire. One, titled "Chivalry of the Knights," includes sub-sections such as "Unselfishness," "Self sacrifice," "Self-discipline," "Honor," "Obedience," and "Courage." Each of these characteristics is synonymous with the virtues of the citizen-soldier. This section urges boys to "be prepared to fight in defense of England," for it is better to "die honest than live shamefully."¹⁰² Powell also declares that "few men are born brave, but any man can make himself brave," and this brave man could be caught "dashing into danger without hesitation."¹⁰³ He sees no room for "cowards" in England; for him, any man could be brave by choosing to die for his country. Powell makes it the personal responsibility of the individual to hone his bravery and other "manly" qualities for the betterment of the Empire.

Powell created an image of manhood that middle-class British families embraced as ideal; in order to fulfill these expectations, I argue, young men like Arthur Graeme West would volunteer for war. Powell's final section, titled "How the Empire Must Be Held," asserts that the best way to keep the peace is to be prepared for war. "Don't be cowards and content yourselves by merely paying soldiers to do your fighting and dying for you. Do something in your own self defense,"¹⁰⁴ Powell admonishes. Published less than a decade before the war, his book reproduced dominant masculine virtues among the middle class and convinced young men that when a European war erupted, they must volunteer in order to become the ideal man: the citizen-soldier, who embodied virtues of selflessness, courage, endurance, pride and honor.

¹⁰² Ibid., 242.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 249.

English boys' material and social culture, from toys and games to social groups like the scouting movement, reveal that the citizen-soldier archetype attained hegemony between 1900 and 1908. Toy soldiers and floor games served as tools with which to imagine a particular construct of masculinity, and together with social clubs and organizations like the scouting movement, they allowed boys to imagine and perform the roles and duties of the citizen-soldier in their free time. Though most men who fought in the war were too old to have been a scout, the popular existence of the scouting movement illustrates that in the decade before the First World War the citizen-soldier was a venerated archetype among the middle-class.

In the half-century leading up to the war, external factors ranging from the institutionalization of athleticism and the printing of popular literature to the introduction of toys, games, and homosocial movements increasingly militarized leisure time for boys. In the process, constructions of middle-class masculinity gradually came to expect minds and bodies honed for war. The institutionalization of athleticism for social control in the 1840s meant that boys played out their roles as men on the playing field rather than by "rambling." Popular literature celebrated the athletic virtues of emotional restraint, duty, honor and courage, encouraging boys to imagine themselves as rugby stars and, by 1908, as soldiers. Middle-class materialism and fear of England's international vulnerability inundated boys with toy soldiers and uniformed clubs like the scouting movement, evidence that citizen-soldier virtues had attained gendered hegemony. The chapter to follow explores how these now-dominant citizen-soldier expectations were reinforced during the early years of the war in public spaces by the state and society alike, cultivating consent among (and coercing some) middle-class Englishmen to volunteer.

Chapter I Appendix

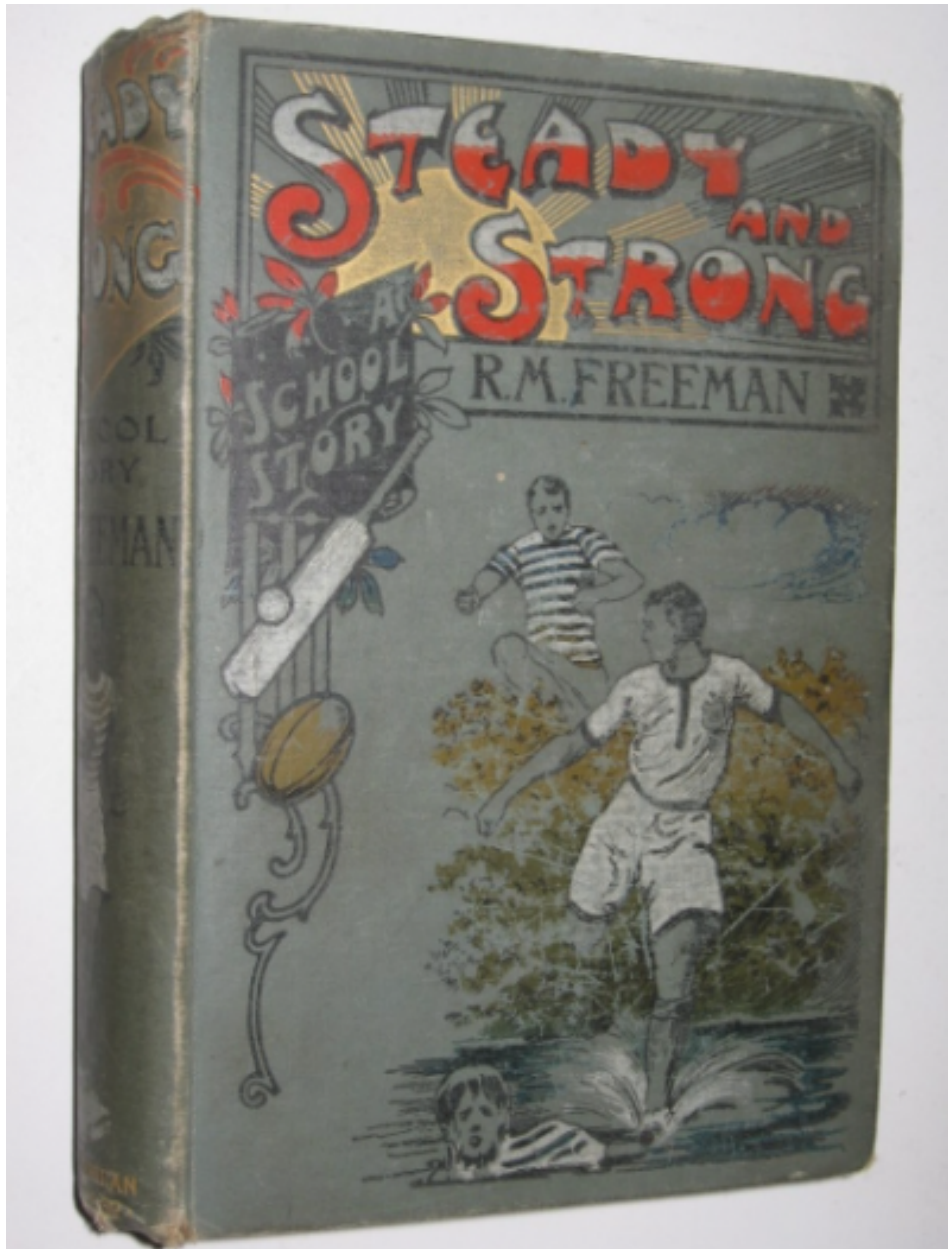


Figure One
R.F. Freeman's *Steady and Strong, Second Edition* (1900)¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ "Steady and Strong; or A Friend in Need: A School Story," *Manyhills Book Store*, http://www.manyhillsbooks.com/?page=shop%2Fas_results&isFrom=1&author=&title=steady+and+strong&description=&sortby=product_author.

THE BOYS' OWN PAPER

No. 1.—Vol. I.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 1879.

Price One Penny.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

MY FIRST FOOTBALL MATCH.

BY AN OLD BOY.



to-morrow.

It was a proud moment in my existence when Wright, captain of our football club, came up to me in school one Friday and said, "Adams, your name is down to play in the match against Craven

I could have knighted him on the spot. To be one of the picked "fifteen," whose glory it was to fight the battles of their school in the Great Close, had been the leading ambition of my life—I suppose I ought to be ashamed to confess it—ever since, as a little chap of ten, I entered Parkhurst six years ago. Not a winter Saturday but had seen me either looking on at some big match, or oftener still scrimmaging about with a score or so of other juniors in a scratch game. But for a long time, do what I would, I always

seemed as far as ever from the coveted goal, and was half despairing of ever rising to win my "first fifteen cap." Latterly, however, I had noticed Wright and a few others of our best players more than once lounging about in the Little Close where we juniors used to play, evidently taking observations with an eye to business. Under the awful gaze of these heroes, need I say I exerted myself as I had never done before? What cared I for hacks or bruises, so only that I could distinguish myself in their eyes? And never was music sweeter



Digitized by Google

"Down!"

Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Figure Two
The Boys Own Paper, First Issue (1879)¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ *The Boy's Own Annual*, "My First Football Match."

Chapter II

Worthless Men in Mufti: Shame and Coercion in Public Spaces (1914-1916)

The New Army was called into being by Lord Kitchener and his advisers, who adopted modern advertising methods to stir the sluggish imagination of the masses, so that every wall in London and great cities, every fence in rural places, was placarded with picture-posters... "What did you do in the Great War, Daddy?"... "What will your best girl say if you're not in khaki?"¹⁰⁷

Building on the previous chapter, which argued that expectations of middle-class masculinity were constructed through the introduction of organized athletics and popular boys' literature in the half-century preceding the war, this chapter explores civilian life from 1914 to 1916 as middle-class men likely experienced it. Though the middle class accounted for the highest rate of volunteers in England, most men did not dash to enlistment offices — rather, they had to be persuaded to act as selflessly as Powell prescribed in his public school rhetoric. Few middle-class men would have been unaware of the social pressure that demanded they conform to the citizen-soldier archetype that reached hegemony in their lifetime. Infantryman Harold Macklin penned in his diary that he “thought it better to go with the crowd” and that he “was awfully afraid of being thought a malingerer, dodger, or whatever you like to call them.”¹⁰⁸ The soldier Alexander Patterson, too, wrote that he joined due to “irresistible social pressure.”¹⁰⁹ Both men reveal their anxiety to conform to the notions of the ideal man. This chapter examines the White Feather Campaign, music halls, and state-issued propaganda, each of which reinforced middle-class virtues such as duty and selflessness. It demonstrates how public spaces occupied by state

¹⁰⁷ Philip Gibbs, *Now It Can Be Told* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1920), 68.

¹⁰⁸ Harold Macklin, “The Diary of Harold Macklin,” *Shall I Get To Blighty?*, <http://www.shalligetoblighy.co.uk/page16.htm>.

¹⁰⁹ Patterson, 239.

and society alike served to reinforce masculine expectations of the citizen-soldier in attempt to cultivate consent for war amongst middle-class Englishmen. While it is impossible to measure the effect of such propaganda in eliciting volunteerism, the mere fact of its presence and the actions of women shows that these ideals were hegemonic, and thus inescapably present for middle-class men.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the White Feather Campaign, a loose composition of English women who perceived their femininity in terms of patriotic duty to the state. The relationship between perceived roles of femininity and masculinity was essential for mobilizing volunteers in the first two years of the war; when a general call to arms was issued in 1914, some women took it upon themselves to publicly denounce men who did not outwardly look like the citizen-soldier ideal. As discussed above, men had to be outwardly recognizable as the ideal man in order to achieve the respect of English society. In her work *Maneuvers* (2000), gender historian Cynthia Enloe argues against dominant narratives that portray women as invisible in cultural military histories, emphasizing the relationship between genders as necessary to understanding the war itself. Enloe contends that “in scores of different societies, [women] have acted as though most men are not natural soldiers, as though most men need to be continuously reminded that their tenuous grasp on the status of ‘manly man’ depends on women thinking of them as such.”¹¹⁰ In England a “manly man” willingly enlisted to fight when called upon by the state and in so doing personified the virtues of the new-dominant citizen-soldier ideal.

¹¹⁰ Enloe, 36.

The next section analyzes music halls, where male and female singers alike sang about the virtues men were expected to uphold, often conflating soldiering with the ability to get a date. Though the messages of music hall songs varied widely, one overarching theme emerges between 1914 and 1916: a middle-class man should do his duty by volunteering to become a soldier and the only way he could attain the respect of a woman. Music hall songs particularly emphasized that the ideal man was dressed in khaki and therefore physically appeared as the citizen-soldier. Music halls reinforced the same hegemonic virtues as the women of the White Feather Campaign, and created an atmosphere of judgment and expectation which cultivated consent for volunteerism among the middle class. The men who visited these establishments internalized messages that reinforced their lifetime of lessons about selfless duty to the nation. After 1916 music hall songs were less supportive of the war effort because men returning to England from the front-lines could not bear to hear civilians singing about soldiering when they were ignorant to the horrors of modern war; songs reflected this attitude by speaking to the disillusionment and loss many men felt. As I argue below this attitude was distinct from their identity as middle-class men.

The final section of this chapter shifts analysis away from the propaganda promulgated by society at large, to posters produced by the state. Thoroughfares of busy cities like London and Woolwich were littered with posters that asked men to judge their manliness against the hegemonic ideal of the citizen-soldier. As the White Feather Campaign and music hall songs reinforced virtues that had become dominant by 1914, so too did propaganda posters. In lieu of focusing on how the state portrayed the relationship between men and women, this section

analyzes how the state emphasized the privileges of middle-class citizenship, the family and other middle-class values to persuade men to enlist.

A: THE WHITE FEATHER CAMPAIGN: FEMININE DUTY AND MALE MALINGERS

This section explores the most abrasive of all civilian propaganda campaigns: the White Feather Campaign (beginning in 1914). This movement comprised a call to arms for young women, encouraging them to question the masculinity of men who had not yet volunteered for military service by handing them a white feather. As Nicoletta Gullace makes clear, this form of propaganda has only received “passing attention” from historians, despite its role in indicating nationalist sentiment in England at the time.

Cynthia Enloe argues that military and civilian authorities have “tried to maneuver different groups of women and the ideas about what constitutes femininity so that each can serve military objective. Sometimes these maneuvers have thoroughly succeeded. Women have so internalized the militarized sense of their duties that they have virtually no awareness that they have been maneuvered.”¹¹¹ Moreover, she argues, the status of “manly man” is wholly dependent on women viewing them as such. Building on Enloe’s work, this section argues that the White Feather Campaign was one such instance of government manipulation that effectively utilized notions of femininity in order to cultivate male consent for the war effort, illustrating how the White Feather Campaign created yet another forum of gendered social pressure for men to fulfill the ideal role of citizen-soldier.

¹¹¹ Enloe, 36.

The White Feather Campaign emerged in equal part from popular literature, and state projects to maneuver gender roles and expectations, which in turn mobilized young women who believed it their patriotic duty to recruit men by whatever means necessary. In Bonnie White's research on recruitment tactics in Devon she presents an excerpt from the *Daily Gazette* in which a young woman states: "I am a proud member of the White Feather Brigade¹¹² and it is my patriotic duty to convince the young men of this town that they are needed for Kitchner's Army."¹¹³ White argues that "women attempted to shame men into enlisting by calling into question their masculinity... A woman offering to enlist or calling men cowards were explicit acts on their patriotism."¹¹⁴ The women of the White Feather Campaign, by adhering to their own standard of patriotism, effectively acted as informal recruiting sergeants.

The premise for the loosely organized White Feather Campaign (also known as the Order of the White Feather, or the White Feather Brigade) came from the popular English adventure novel *The Four Feathers*, by A.E.W. Mason (1902), which depicts a man shirking his perceived duty during the First War of Sudan (1882). In turn, his fiancé and three fellow officers present him with white feathers to symbolize his cowardliness and failure to support his comrades-in-arms. To redeem his honor, the man fights his own guerrilla war on behalf of the British and — after successfully saving the lives of many Britons — requests that each person who gave him a feather take it back. The novel was a resounding success and led to similar pieces of fiction: for example, popular English author P.G. Wodehouse wrote *The White Feather*

¹¹² Some women referred to the movement as a "brigade" rather than a "campaign."

¹¹³ *Dawlish Gazette*, quoted in Bonnie J. White, "Volunteerism and Early Recruitment Efforts in Devonshire, August 1914-December 1915," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (2009), 665, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40264194>.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

(1907), which first appeared in the popular boys' magazine *The Captain* before it was bound and published. In this story, a boy shirks a fight which discredits his school's honor and his own personal pride. To redeem himself, he slips away into the country and trains under a legendary prizefighter. In the end he successfully restores his dignity by beating boys who had previously challenged him.¹¹⁵

Like Powell's *Scouting for Boys*, stories of the infamous white feather and its inherent symbolism cast English masculinity into a refined mold that required aggression, courage, duty, honor and pride; all qualities of the ideal middle-class man. These novels held tremendous sway over masculine and feminine imaginations alike, further evincing the power of popular literature to reify masculine hegemony. The Whiter Feather Campaign of the First World War worked because those women who participated viewed themselves as patriotic defenders of England's honor. It became a primary means for women left with few other avenues to channel their energies in support of the war, and shows how female patriotism was effectively mobilized to recruit young men to enlist.

The practice of handing out white feathers to civilian men became a nationwide campaign as early as 1914. On 30 August, Admiral Charles Penrose Fitzgerald organized thirty women to distribute white feathers to men dressed in mufti.¹¹⁶ Openly supporting this movement were well-known female authors Emma Ward and Mary Orczy.¹¹⁷ Soon after, an article titled

¹¹⁵ Eileen McIlvaine, Louise Sherby and James Heineman, *P.G. Wodehouse: A Comprehensive Bibliography and Checklist* (Detroit: Omnigraphics Inc, 1991), 17.

¹¹⁶ Mufti is a commonly used term during the First World War in England, which means "civilian clothing," rather than a military uniform.

Nicoletta Gullace, "White Feathers and Wounded Men; Female Patriotism and the Memory of the Great War," *Library of Social Science*, <https://www.libraryofsocialscience.com/essays/gullace-white-feathers.html>.

¹¹⁷ Jon Simkin, *First World War Encyclopedia* (Kindle-Edition, London: Sparticus Educational, 2012), 25689.

“White Feathers a Novel Method of Making Young Men Enlist” appeared in the *Chatham News*. The article stated that a shrieker had been seen about town crying out “Oyez! Oyez!! Oyez!!! The White Feather Brigade! Ladies wanted to present the young men of Deal and Walmer the Order of the White Feather for shirking their *duty* [emphasis added] for not coming forward to uphold the Union Jack of Old England! God Save the King.”¹¹⁸ This article marked the first public announcement of the White Feather Campaign, and inspired the practice to be taken up by women across England. Soon after Admiral Fitzgerald’s instigation an article appeared in the 10 October 1914 issue of *Collier’s Weekly*. The caption of the picture read: “Suddenly producing large white feather, she jabbed it into his waistcoat. And in another tone, fierce and scornful she added... ‘You coward! Why don’t you enlist?’”¹¹⁹ Stories like this produced a similar expectation for masculinity as did popular literature from the nineteenth century like boys’ periodicals and *Scouting for Boys*, which provided a template for what the ideal middle-class man should be and do. Just because a man was no longer in school did not give him the freedom to act passively while England was engaged in an active war, as there existed for boys a gendered pressure to be a star athlete or a selfless scout, so too were men expected to be patriotic and willing to selflessly fight.

In a 1993 interview, First World War veteran William Brooks vividly describes his own encounter with the White Feather Campaign. “Once war broke out, the situation at home became awful, because people did not like to see young men or lads of army age walking out in civilian

¹¹⁸ “White Feathers' a Novel Method of Making Young Men Enlist," *Chatham News* (September 5, 1914), 8, quoted in Nicoletta Gullace, “White Feathers and Wounded Men; Female Patriotism and the Memory of the Great War,” *Library of Social Science*, <https://www.libraryofsocalscience.com/essays/gullace-white-feathers.html>.

¹¹⁹ *Colliers Weekly*, (October, 10 1914), quoted in Nicoletta Gullace, “White Feathers and Wounded Men; Female Patriotism and the Memory of the Great War,” *Library of Social Science*, <https://www.libraryofsocalscience.com/essays/gullace-white-feathers.html>.

clothing, or not in uniform of some sort, especially in a military town like Woolwich.”¹²⁰

According to Brooks, Woolwich was not a welcoming place for unenlisted men after 1914. “Women were the worst,” he added; “they would come up to you in the street and give you a feather... It got so bad it wasn’t safe to go out.”¹²¹ In response to gendered pressure — particularly from young women — he decided to volunteer for a reserve battalion (called Lord Derby scheme) at the age of seventeen. He was issued a blue armband with a red crown on it, which “told people that you were waiting to be called up, and that kept you safe, or fairly safe, because if you were seen to be wearing it for too long the abuse in the street would soon start again.”¹²² It was not Brooks’ sense of duty or patriotism that caused him to enlist, but the fear of emasculating harassment by women and other members of society. Brooks’ experience was not an isolated incident, but rather became the norm (as he mentions in his interview), so much so that participants in the White Feather Campaign would take notice of men perceived to be “hiding” in active reserve for too long.

Even men whose jobs were crucial to the war effort (such as munitions workers) and soldiers who had already returned from active service were berated by women with white feathers. The magnitude of this campaign is evinced by the fact that English Home Secretary Reginald McKenna had to issue buttons, pins and armbands to protect workers and veterans from emasculating harassment by women: the badge for workers read “King and Country,” and a “Silver War Badge” protected those who had been honorably discharged; with this came a certificate that listed the man’s name and read, “served with honour and was disabled in the

¹²⁰ Simkin, 38441.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

Great War. Honourably discharged on [date]...”¹²³ The use of the word ‘honor’ appears twice, reinforcing to the soldier and society alike that his experience with violence made him ‘honorable’ — for which he and others should be proud. The fact that the government had to issue armbands to protect men from harassment or judgment speaks to the incredible social pressure exerted on men to be directly involved in the war effort, and in so doing, to fulfill the expectations of the ideal man.

Often the humiliation induced by the White Feather Campaign was not issued directly, but through a newspaper advertisement in the personal columns. In one case, a message from a certain Ethel M. appeared in the personal column of the *The Times* on 8 July, 1915. The message read: “Jack F.G. If you are not in khaki by the 20th I shall cut you dead. Ethel M.”¹²⁴ Rather than berating this man on the street, Ethel opted to publicize to the entire village that “Jack F.G.” was shirking his duty and thus falling short of his role as a proper middle-class man. A similar article appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* in June 1916, written by a man and addressed to the entire male population of the town:

*The Final Test of Sincerity is the willingness to face consequences, and the supreme test the perseverance to death. We hope that people will now be satisfied that the conscientious objector may at least be what he professes to be, and is not necessarily a mere coward masquerading under fine pretense.*¹²⁵

While this article acknowledges the honesty and boldness of conscientious objectors in England, it simultaneously harasses men who do not identify as such, who have nevertheless refused to join the ranks of the English military. Even though this is not a direct attack on an individual,

¹²³ Fergus Read, “Silver War Badge and Kings Certificate of Discharge,” *Imperial War Museums*, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/silver-war-badge-and-kings-certificate-of-discharge>.

¹²⁴ “Personal Column,” *The Times* [London], July 8, 1915.

¹²⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, June, 1916, quoted in *The Review of Reviews, Two Thousand Questions and Answers About the War* (New York: George H. Doran Co, 1918), 244.

and was written by another man, it shares the White Feather Campaign's intent to publicly humiliate and emasculate English men who did not volunteer for war.

The militarization and mobilization of femininity in Britain is one indicator of the ways in which society (and, following suit, the state) used gender expectation and humiliation to persuade young men to volunteer for war. Women perceived the White Feather Campaign as their participation in the war effort, just like the recruiters who tried their best to coerce other men into service. The campaign provided a language through which civilians and other non-combatants could exert direct social pressure on those men deemed capable of — and thus responsible for — defending the empire. The individual actions of women in the White Feather Campaign evince that a fiercely nationalist sentiment had engulfed England at the outbreak of war, and show that nationalist inscription was not limited to the masculine. Women, too, were conscious of the social expectations for middle-class men, readily reinforcing ideal masculine archetypes of the citizen-soldier through harassment in public spaces.

B: Music Halls: Songs of Affinity and Coercion

This section explores how middle-class men experienced other forms of social pressure to volunteer by examining how music halls celebrated the citizen-soldier as an ideal male archetype. Music halls served as a primary form of entertainment for the middle class in the first decades of the twentieth century, as radios would not be available to the public until after the First World War, and record players called gramophones were affordable only to the wealthy. For the middle class, music halls provided a place to relax and socialize in the public sphere.

Laurence Senelick explains in his book *Politics as Entertainment: Victorian Music Hall Songs* (1975) that music halls “took concerns and made them laughable rather than fearful,”¹²⁶ arguing that the music hall should be “regard[ed] . . . as the instigator and not the receptor of popular opinion.”¹²⁷ As this section shows, music halls produced songs that “caroled a common belief that combat duty could redeem even the most unregenerate lounge lizard or derelict”;¹²⁸ as such, they constituted a form of popular propaganda. Moreover, English economist and sociologist John A. Hobson shows that “among large sections of the middle and laboring classes, the music hall, and the recreative public houses into which it shades off by imperceptible degrees, are a more potent educator than the church, the school, the political meeting, or even the press.”¹²⁹ Music halls served as producers and conduits of public opinion, reifying popular notions of the ideal middle-class man who volunteers for war.

Music halls first promoted propaganda in 1899 during the Second Boer War. The earliest well-known hit, *Mafeking Night*, celebrated British victory at the end of a long siege; its unprecedented success introduced an onslaught of patriotic songs intended to promote the war effort. A poster depicting Dan Leno, a popular music hall singer dressed as a recruiting sergeant marching with an air of authority, reads: “With soldiers like this to fall back upon, England will never be in danger,” illustrating music halls’ promotion of the ideal middle-class man at the turn of the century and the ability of music hall singers to cultivate consent for volunteerism among

¹²⁶ Laurence Senelick, “Politics as Entertainment: Victorian Music-Hall Songs,” *Victorian Studies* Vol. 19, No. 2 (1975), 151, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3825910>.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 150.

their audience.¹³⁰ Though the body of Leno is cartooned, he is portrayed with a wide chest, broad shoulders and a comically stoic stare. As movies today often portray glory and heroism in war, so too did the music halls for the young men of England.

Recruitment songs performed in music halls during the first two years of the war persuaded young men to volunteer by reinforcing hegemonic expectations of middle-class masculinity. Before the First World War, some English music hall songs promoted patriotic values; nevertheless, they were interspersed with others that reflected local culture, tradition, current events and love. After England entered the war, music hall songs became focused almost exclusively on the war effort. John Mullen notes that “the stars of popular music joined this patriotic movement with enthusiasm.”¹³¹ Music hall stars were no different from Union men like Ben Tillet,¹³² who had long opposed government regulation but supported the war itself, or women suffragists who put down their picket signs to support the empire. Popular musicians like Harry Lauder and Vesta Tilley organized national tours with military marching bands in order to recruit young men for war. “The songs they sang were a panegyric to England... spewing contempt and vindictiveness at all other nations,” argues Senelick.¹³³ Mullen agrees

¹³⁰ “War and Music Hall,” *The Popularity of Music Hall, Special Collections University of Kent*, ed. Charlotte King, Alexander Page, Rebecca O’Brien, Amy Hackett, Daniel Haswell, Stephanie Hazelwood, <https://sites.google.com/site/thepopularityofmusichall/war-and-music-hall>.

¹³¹ John Mullen, “Propaganda and Dissent in British Popular Song during the Great War,” 1 (2006), <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.394.9202&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

¹³² Ben Tillet is best known as the prominent union organizer who opposed the English government’s policy towards the working class. When the First World War erupted, he promptly put down his picket sign and became a well known supporter of the English war effort.

¹³³ Senelick, 156.

that these songs were “not fabricated from a government office, but born from imperial feeling, and commercial skill, in a patriotic milieu aiming at respectability.”¹³⁴

In the months following England’s pledge to join the war, popular recruitment songs bore titles such as: “For the Honour of Dear Old England,” “We Don’t Want to Lose you (but We think You Ought to Go),” “Men of England, You Have Got to Go,” and “You Ought to Join.” These titles reflect social expectations of the citizen-hero: honor, duty, and sacrifice for although he will be missed, he still “ought to go.” Well-known singer Marie Lloyd sang the hit song “Now You’ve Got Yer Khaki On!” which tells of a man who cannot attain the affection of a woman, but who — once he joins the army — is instantly received by her. Lloyd’s song mentions “honour bright,” and explains that she “didn’t like you much before you joined the army, John. But I do like yer, cocky, now that you’ve got your khaki on!”¹³⁵ Lloyd typifies how music hall singers expounded social expectations of masculinity, using notions of femininity to imply that women only desired soldiers. A popular song composed by Herman Finck and sung by Minnie Love went:

On Sunday I walked out with a soldier/ On Monday I’m taken by a tar/ On Tuesday I choose a baby boy scout/ On Wednesday a hussar/ On Thursday I go out with a Scottie/ On Friday the

¹³⁴ Mullen, 4.

¹³⁵ An original recording of this song can be listened to at: <http://www.firstworldwar.com/audio/1914.htm>.

Mullen, 5.

*Captain of the crew/ But on Saturday I'm willing, if you'll only take the shilling/ To make a man of any one of you!*¹³⁶

Finck's lyrics proposed that the only way for a man to get a date would be as a soldier. He references the "baby boy scout," evidence of the above argument that the audience of potential infantryman would have been involved in, or at least exposed to, the scouting movement in their youth. The singer professes attraction for this man, implying that the masculinity of a man in mufti was less than that of a boy in uniform. The last line of the song emphasizes this point, offering an ultimatum: become a soldier or you will never be a man. Songs like the two shown above illustrate how notions of feminine desire were used as a gendered tool to make men feel like they were worthless unless they donned the khaki uniform and personified the virtues of the citizen-soldier by enlisting. As prominent entertainment venues, music halls helped cultivate consent in the first two years of the war, and their lyrics were internalized by middle-class men.

Recruitment songs, like the White Feather Campaign, were expressions of public pressure exerted upon middle-class men. They at once produced and reflected the prevalence of citizen-soldier expectations amongst society at large by humiliating those who did not embrace their perceived duty to the nation. State propaganda posters served the same function, but unlike recruitment songs, they were produced and publicized by the state. The following section

¹³⁶ According to Mullen the phrase to "take the shilling" refers to a man's enlistment in the army. The stanza following the one presented above is just as revealing, particularly the use of the word tenderfoot (second rank in scouting) and the last line that reinforces that a man should join the army even if he does not want to:

*I teach the tenderfoot to face the powder
That gives an added lustre to my skin
And I show the raw recruit how to give a chaste salute
So when I'm presenting arms, he's falling in
It makes you almost proud to be a woman
When you make a strapping soldier of a kid
And he says, "You put me through it and I didn't want to do it
But you went and made me love you, so I did!"*

Ibid.

examines state propaganda produced and distributed in wartime England to demonstrate another means through which characteristics of the ideal man were used to persuade middle-class men to enlist.

C: RECRUITING POSTERS: INDUCING SHAME AND COERCION

First World War propaganda historian Meg Albrinck refers to state propaganda tactics during the early years of the war as “shame and coercion to question the virility of the unenlisted man.”¹³⁷

Propaganda in England took on a variety of forms: atrocity propaganda was designed to influence public opinion about Germany; international news was maneuvered to convince other countries (like the United States) to loan money, arms and soldiers; and most importantly to this thesis, posters encouraged men to evaluate their manliness based on expectations that they should be courageous, dutiful, and willing to sacrifice their own lives for the honor of England. The posters examined in this section specifically targeted middle-class citizens, as evinced by the posters’ imagery and word choice: i.e. the clothing depicted, scouting activities referenced, and other clues that would not be lost on the intended audience.

The text and imagery used in recruiting posters served as yet another medium of social pressure that required men to judge their manliness according to hegemonic standards. In some cases, a poster's message was so overt that it explicitly asked men to judge themselves, encouraging the belief that they were not good Englishmen and undesirable to women. The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (PRC) produced a majority of the government-issued posters that will be examined in this chapter. Albrinck shows that “The PRC’s materials made

¹³⁷ Meg Albrinck, “Humanitarians and He-Men,” in Pearl James, *Picture This* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 314.

use of authoritative speakers and authoritative content. They bore the stamp of the PRC and often employed images or quotations from state representatives, including Lord Kitchner, Lord Roberts and Prime Minister Asquith, thus presenting their arguments as institutional truths.”¹³⁸ In effect, masculinity was tied directly to state authority and to the virtues of the citizen-soldier. The famous Lord Kitchener image that read “Your Country Needs You” was adapted by Americans for their depiction of the fictitious Uncle Sam. To focus this section’s analysis, I examine only several of the hundreds of government-issued posters, as well as a wall on Fleet Street, London, painted with hand-written questions directed at men.

Figure one is simple in its design, yet holds clues regarding its intended audience.¹³⁹ The furniture in the room and the clothing donned by the father and his family evoke a sense of middle-classness; the inclusion of papered walls and curtains also indicate a degree of wealth that could not easily be attained by working-class families. The man in this image has clearly done well for himself, and the poster asks implicitly, “how will you give back to the country that has afforded you such luxuries?” The young boy on the ground is pictured playing with toy soldiers, the most popular toy for middle-class children and a symbol of England’s imperial militarism. Having identified its middle-class audience, the poster induces a feeling of guilt from any male reader, since it is supposedly a privilege for the middle class to fight for the state: the father touches his hand to cheek in a thinking pose, and bears a stoic glare away from his daughter, unable to look her in the eye. He ruminates in response to her question, printed at the bottom: “Daddy, what did you do during the Great War?” The dialogue serves as a device to

¹³⁸ Albrinck, 315.

¹³⁹ Lumly Saville, “Daddy, what did you do in the Great War?, No. 76,” *Peace and War in the 20th Century* (London: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, 1915), [http:// pw20c.mcmaster.ca/lumley-savile-poster-1915](http://pw20c.mcmaster.ca/lumley-savile-poster-1915).

shame men into upholding the archetype of the ideal citizen-soldier, to make them believe that — should they decline to volunteer — they would not be able to live with themselves as fathers and as Englishmen.

Similarly, figure two shows a father scratching his head to ponder a question fielded from his son, who asks: “Father.—what did YOU do to help when Britain fought for freedom in 1915?”¹⁴⁰ Despite the two figures’ silhouetted appearance, it is evident from his uniform that the son is a Boy Scout, undoubtably familiar with the civic duties associated with middle-class manliness. As such, his question functions as one of authority; like the music hall song that positioned a “baby boy scout” above the civilian man, this image promotes a similar masculine hierarchy. The Boy Scout movement was in full swing by the beginning of the First World War, and would have been readily identifiable by the urban English population as a physical manifestation of nationalism with their khaki uniforms, patches and wide brimmed hats. The son, in full military garb, stands juxtaposed with a father in mufti. The rhetoric of this poster is more judgmental than figure one; for instance, the focus is not on a daughter but a son, who refers to the war as a “fight for freedom.” The text goes on to ask the reader: “WHAT WILL YOUR ANSWER BE...ENLIST NOW.” By separating the father from the rest of the dialogue, this poster emphasizes his role and simultaneously casts doubt on his abilities to perform it. Like figure one, the poster was designed to induce guilt that would extend beyond the duration of the war. Both posters underline the word “you,” making it a personal question for the reader.

Propaganda simultaneously reflected and shaped expectations for the citizen-soldier ideal, in a dialectical process that dictated duty and honor as essential qualities for “true” male

¹⁴⁰ “What Will Your Answer Be ... No. 61,” *Peace and War in the 20th Century* (London: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, 1915), <http://pw20c.mcmaster.ca/parliamentary-recruiting-committee-no-61-poster-1915-or-after>.

Britons. The posters examined below shift away from a familial focus, instead targeting men's sense of duty, honor and privilege. Figure three states that, "no price can be too high when honor and duty are at stake - The Prime Minister," suggesting that self-sacrifice and death are risks that any male Briton should be willing to take to ensure his honor (and, implicitly, his manliness, as they became synonymous).¹⁴¹ Moreover, the implication that the Prime Minister said these words reifies duty and honor as "institutional truths" (referenced above). Figure four attacks yet another aspect of middle-class manhood: citizenship.¹⁴² At the start of the First World War, most men were "disenfranchised," or unable to vote.¹⁴³ This social exclusivity reified notions that citizenship was a privilege, not a right; propaganda posters preyed on the vulnerability of men's class position to guilt them into volunteering. In bold and capitalized lettering, the title (of figure four) reads: "RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP," informing the reader that the following rights are exclusive to men of certain status. "Your rights of Citizenship give you the Privilege of joining your fellows in defense of your HONOR and your HOMES. Join under the group system and safeguard both." The words "citizenship" and "privilege" are capitalized to emphasize that with citizenship comes rights (and responsibilities) not accessible to others — therefore, enlistment should be considered the privilege of a select and worthy few. The juxtaposition of bolded and capitalized words "Honour" and "Homes" also encourages men to uphold the expectations of the ideal citizen-soldier. For those who remain unconvinced, the poster ends by stating "YOUR DUTY, your duty is to Fight the COMMON FOE and to get your comrades to join you." This

¹⁴¹ "No Price Can Be too High, No. 99," *Peace and War in the 20th Century* (London: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, 1915), <http://pw20c.mcmaster.ca/parliamentary-recruiting-committee-no-99-poster-1915>.

¹⁴² "Rights of Citizenship, No. 144," *Peace and War in the 20th Century* (London: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, 1915), <http://pw20c.mcmaster.ca/parliamentary-recruiting-committee-no-144-poster-1915>.

¹⁴³ Rose, 131.

assured that, for those who shirked the idea of fighting as a privilege, an element of guilt was involved to coerce enlistment. Figure four echoes the last statement in figure three, calling for men to fulfill their duty to King and country by becoming trained soldiers.

Not all posters were professionally illustrated and printed. Often, people would paint messages in freehand on neighborhood walls, or alongside billboards with other propagandist material. The final image, figure five, is a candid photo of two men examining a wall of propaganda on Fleet Street, London.¹⁴⁴ This image is particularly valuable due to its multitude of messages, each of which explicates male hegemony in different ways. Atop the wall a poster reads “WAR...Enlist for the defense of home and country,” promoting a sense of guilt to inspire men — both citizens at home, and soldiers for their country — to enlist. Underneath it on the right, a poster which reads “Help me to wipe out this black spot on Europe,” and pictures a soldier grabbing Germany like a dirty rag. Next to it sits a piece of graffitied propaganda which elicits feelings of patriotism and superiority through race: “If you are a whiteman, prove your color and courage now.”¹⁴⁵ It portrays the war as a noble, rather than barbaric, cause — a war of honor. Whiteness is often used within masculine hegemony as a tool to unify other whites and to subordinate non-white populations. The poster relies on color — black, the opposite of white — to characterize a foreign foe as “cowardly” or evil, thus distinguishing heroes from villains. It locates Britain within a racial hierarchy that makes them superior to their German counterparts. The hand-written sign next to it encourages the (white) reader to assume that because he is white, he should have courage, and to prove this courage, “whitemen” should enlist.

¹⁴⁴ “Come and Fight,” *Hulton Archive-Getty Images*, <http://www.gettyimages.com/photos/come-and-fight?artist=hulton%20archive&excludenudity=true&family=editorial&page=1&phrase=come%20and%20fight&sort=best#license>.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

The final graffitied message at the bottom left of the billboard exhibits harassment by presupposition. The poster contains a pair of eyes, measured at five feet three inches high (the height required to join the British Army), and asks if the reader is able to see through them. Those who can are encouraged to enlist, for they “are big enough and surely brave enough to serve” their country.¹⁴⁶ Per usual, the propagandist uses bravery as a presupposed expectation for all English men. Plastered with enlistment propaganda, this billboard exemplifies the ways in which the government antagonized masculine expectations of the citizen-soldier, promoted them in the public sphere through words and imagery, and encouraged English men to scrutinize themselves.

The posters analyzed in this section show that prevailing social expectations in 1914 held the ideal masculine archetype to be achievable by any middle-class man. They were designed to encourage men to examine their own manliness, and assess it according to dominant expectations of bravery, courage, honor, and whiteness. For those who proved unwilling, recruitment posters elicited feelings of guilt and social judgment to coerce them to join. In addition, posters expressly listed the traits men should be assessed for: “duty,” “citizenship,” “rights,” “courage,” and other “manly” qualities attributed to the soldier-hero. Public pressure exhibited through music hall jeering, the White Feather Campaign, and hand-painted propaganda on walls all worked together to create the nationalist sentiment of volunteerism that permeated middle-class English neighborhoods in the early years of the war.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

Civilians and the state alike used public spaces at the outset of war to reinforce the citizen-soldier virtues which had reached hegemony at the turn of the nineteenth century. As the final chapter of this thesis shows, many middle-class men felt obliged to enlist despite a personal inclination not to, in order to conform with gendered social expectations for the ideal man; others were proud to enlist, having internalized music hall songs and the rhetoric of their schoolmasters and propaganda posters. Public projects including music hall songs and the White Feather Campaign, alongside blatant state propaganda, were visible manifestations of gendered social pressure in England's middle class. For while masculinity creates the nation, as Dawson insists, "so too has that nation played a part in constituting preferred forms of masculinity."¹⁴⁷ Such public and state campaigns were designed to shape men's perception of the citizen-soldier as the only male archetype worth aspiring to, perpetuating widespread expectations that men should enlist. Moreover, they illustrate the interconnectedness of nationalism and masculinity, as men are represented as having a duty to fulfill to the country that had afforded them such a comfortable life.

¹⁴⁷ Dawson, 7.

Chapter II Appendix



Figure One¹⁴⁸



Figure Two¹⁴⁹

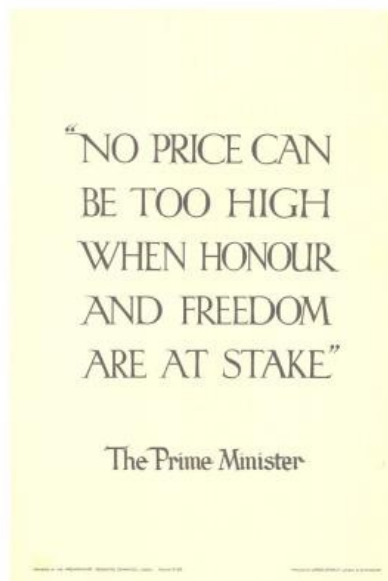


Figure Three¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Saville, "Daddy What Did You Do In The Great War?, No.76."

¹⁴⁹ "What Will Your Answer Be..., No. 61."

¹⁵⁰ "No Price Can Be Too High, No. 99."

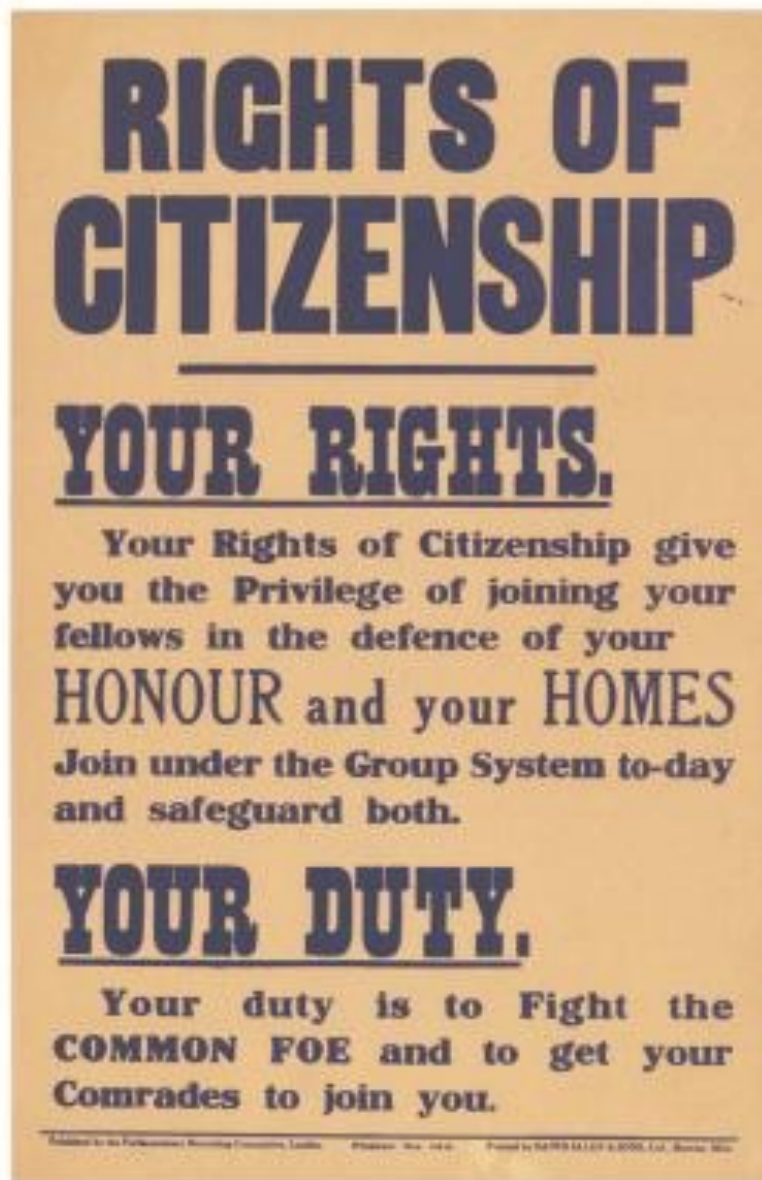


Figure Four¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ "Rights of Citizenship, No. 144."



Figure Five¹⁵²

¹⁵² "Come and Fight."

CHAPTER III

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE MIDDLE-CLASS VOLUNTEER

*When I made my debut in the line I had a cheerful conviction that nothing would hit me. And I remember standing on the fire-step for the first time and saying to myself exultantly: "You're in it at last! You're in it! The greatest thing that's ever happened!"*¹⁵³

The first chapter of this thesis examined the construction of middle-class male hegemony through the militarization of leisure activities, which increasingly reflected the citizen-soldier archetype. The second chapter examined how middle-class men experienced this hegemony in public spaces including music halls and the streets, where could be found the women of the White Feather Campaign, as well as propaganda posters which encouraged men to participate in the war effort as soldiers to achieve the status of the ideal man. In this chapter, I argue that by the 1900s the processes and endpoint of masculine hegemony produced a new generation of men who sought to embody the ideal middle-class man by exhibiting specific traits and qualities, including an eagerness to fight, endurance, patience, stoicism, aggression, strength, camaraderie and a clean appearance (identifiable by their dress uniform). These virtues represented the ideal middle-class man, who acted as a citizen during times of peace, and selflessly volunteered to respond to perceived military threats to national security. Middle-class volunteer Harold Macklin, who was raised in this generation, kept a newspaper clipping of “Lord Kitchner’s Noble Words to the First Expeditionary Force” as a bookmark in his diary. It read: “you are ordered abroad as a soldier of the King...you have to perform a task which will need your

¹⁵³ Harold Saunders, “Trenches At Vimy Ridge,” in *Everyman at War: Sixty Personal Narratives of the War*, ed. C.B. Purdom (New York: E.P. Dutton & co inc., 1930), 55.

courage, your energy and your patience, remember that the honor of the British Army depends on your individual conduct...Do your duty bravely. Fear God and honor the King.”¹⁵⁴

England's declaration of war on Germany created a unprecedented venue for middle-class men to position themselves above other men in a social hierarchy of masculinity. Whereas varsity sports at the university level had once been the only way to perform “manly” virtues of physical strength, discipline and endurance, the army now provided an avenue for those who wished to attain the same traits. This chapter examines the new realm of masculinity produced by the war, and the thoughts and reflections of the men who entered it. I examine diaries, letters and occasionally memoirs as a new set of sources to show the anxiety and desire by men to personify the characteristics of the citizen-soldier and often struggled in spite of themselves to uphold masculine virtues in the face of the first industrial war. The chapter is organized chronologically and by theme, composed of three parts: soldiers’ experience with volunteering, fighting on the frontline, and reflecting after engaging in battle. Within each section, I analyze relevant virtues of the citizen-soldier to show that middle-class men struggled to uphold them in war. I show that while soldiers were disillusioned in the face of modern combat and came to hate the war, they took pride in their role as citizen-soldiers. Thus, I claim, the hegemonic archetype of the citizen-soldier that had existed as an expectation among the middle class before the war continued to function uninterrupted, despite the horrors experienced by men who strove to embody this ideal.

In their diaries, letters and memoirs, middle-class soldiers reveal their inner struggles to uphold expectations of the ideal man. These documents show that while some men volunteered because they considered their duty to the nation common sense, others joined begrudgingly as a

¹⁵⁴ Macklin, 5.

result of gendered social pressure. More importantly, they show that those who survived the war were proud of their service, perceiving their encounters with violence — which allowed them to display strength, endurance, discipline, etc. — as more beneficial than not. These sources demonstrate that middle-class masculinity was malleable, allowing for ideological continuity in the traits and values of middle-class men despite the horrors of the First World War. Stoicism and fatalism served as life rafts — both for their sanity, and to maintain widespread social perceptions of their manliness on the front line and home front alike. Evidence of continuing citizen-soldier idolization can be found in letters to the parents of dead soldiers, as well as the post-war doctoring of one man’s journal to make it a piece of pacifist propaganda. Citizen-soldier hegemony survived the war in the minds of soldiers, officers and civilians at home.

A: VOLUNTEERING: EMBODYING THE CITIZEN-SOLDIER

Within two days of the outbreak of war, Harry Drinkwater became one of the first 500,000 men to volunteer for the British Expeditionary Force.¹⁵⁵ A month later he was called in for a routine medical examination to determine his eligibility, found to be shorter than the five foot, six inch minimum height requirement, and subsequently refused for service. Determined to join, Drinkwater recorded in his diary that “half an inch short in height was not going to stop me getting into the army. The following Monday morning I again applied to Birmingham hoping that this time I might find a different medical board.”¹⁵⁶ Drinkwater understood that his ability to

¹⁵⁵ Harry Drinkwater, *Harry’s War*, ed. Jon Cooksey and David Griffiths (London: Ebury Press, 2013), xvi.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

enlist was based on physical stature, and likely felt emasculated when denied. Completing his entry, Drinkwater penned: “not disappointed and taking my turn I was passed fit for general service and so, on paper at least, I was a soldier.”¹⁵⁷ This statement illustrates Drinkwater’s pride and determination to become a soldier (the army registered him as a private). Passing the medical exam marked the first stage in his goal to personify the citizen-soldier virtues that middle-class men were expected to uphold. The rhetoric of his diary indicates that Drinkwater understood soldiering to require more than a signature on a piece of paper; nevertheless, his persistence to become a soldier was unshaken — to the extent that he actively circumscribed and transgressed the rules, exhibiting an adamancy shared by other middle-class men.

Arthur Graeme West struggled to enlist as well, despite three years’ participation in Oxford University’s officers training program. West’s eyesight was deemed insufficient by the first medical examiner he visited; but like Drinkwater, he refused to capitulate until he found a doctor to judge him fit for service. Regardless of biological circumstances beyond his control, West understood that the citizen-soldier archetype demanded physical perfection. In order to attain this status himself, West continued his efforts to enlist. In February 1915, a sympathetic doctor granted him permission to join a public school battalion as a Lance Corporal, thus fulfilling West’s desire to be assessed as “physically fit” to fight.¹⁵⁸

When news of England’s participation in the war reached Bernard Joseph Brookes, he cut short his cycling holiday. Returning home to London, he learned that the firm where he worked as a clerk had offered job security to any worker willing to enlist. Soldiering offered an escape

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Lance Corporal is the lowest ranking non-commissioned officer (NCO) in the British Army.

from the mundanity of clerical work, along with the opportunity to be recognized as a man who could perform the duties of a soldier, thereby fulfilling his masculine expectation. Two days after war was declared, on 6 August 1918, Brookes took advantage of this opportunity and “tried to join the West Kent Yeomanry, but they were full up.”¹⁵⁹ Like West and Drinkwater, Brookes refused to desist until he was a registered soldier; he, too, understood that attaining the status of ideal man was contingent upon successful enlistment. The diary entry following his initial rejection reveals Brookes’ renewed determination to join:

I immediately took steps to join a regiment and on Friday 7th August 1914, with Frank Croxford and George Steptoe (two colleagues from the Office) I went to the Headquarters of the 16th Battalion of the County of London Regiment, the Queens Westminster Rifles and after waiting outside 58, Buckingham Gate for two or three hours we struggled and pushed our way inside as soon as the door was opened - we were all so eager to join the Army.¹⁶⁰

So determined was Brookes to prove his worth, he “immediately” set out to remedy the initial denial. This eagerness to join, rather than demonstrate an ardent support for the war, resulted primarily from his desire to perform the proper duties of a middle-class man.

Middle-class volunteer George Culpitt was also a clerk, then employed at The Palmyra Manufacturing Co. Ltd. He too was granted a leave of absence for perceived selfless service to the British Expeditionary Force. Culpitt’s grandson later wrote that his “Grandad Culpitt... was actually in the crowd outside Buckingham Palace on the night of August 4th 1914 singing along with “God Save the King,” “La Marsaillaise” and “God bless the Prince of Wales.””¹⁶¹ Culpitt's sense of patriotism — his willingness to partake in singing propagandistic war songs — reveals

¹⁵⁹ This note is faint in appearance as it was written in pencil in the original document.

Bernard Joseph Brookes, “Original Diary Pages,” 4, *My Grandfathers First World War Diary*, <http://www.bobbrookes.co.uk/Diary%20Original.htm>.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ “A Short Biography,” *The War Diary of George Culpitt, Royal Welch Fusiliers*, <http://www.culpitt-war-diary.org.uk/biography.htm>.

his internalization of middle-class gender inscription, instilled throughout childhood (as discussed in chapter one) and contemporarily on the home-front (see chapter two). Moreover, employers' willingness to grant men a leave of absence from work shows that English society revered the man who was willing to fulfill his duty to the nation, and judged him worthy of special honors and privileges. It also meant that middle-class men had fewer reasons to refuse the call to arms: if job security — and, implicitly, the family's financial stability — was thus provided for, men had less cause to shirk their perceived soldierly duties. The eagerness and persistence of these four men — Drinkwater, West, Brookes, and Culpitt — to enlist for the army in spite of physical limitations and potential economic disadvantages shows that the First World War was powerfully enticing to middle-class men. Their determination to volunteer resulted from a deeply entrenched (and perhaps even subconscious) belief in the masculine virtues of the citizen-soldier.

Drinkwater's diary reveals his own internalization of citizen-soldier virtues. On 21 September 1915 he penned his thoughts regarding his decision to volunteer. "If I could find a job in England and with a clear conscience and have taken it, I would have done so... [but] we were conscious that this was all in order and in a way it was impressive for we were starting on a game that very few of us had played before...."¹⁶² Drinkwater acknowledges his own inability to stay home and "find a job...with clear conscience," implying that he felt compelled by duty to enlist. With the comment that he and his peers "were conscious that this was all in order," Drinkwater demonstrates his perception that volunteering was the natural decision for a middle-class man

¹⁶² Drinkwater, 8.

during times of war. His comparison of war to “a game” evinces his athletic conditioning, which (as discussed above) often compared sporting events to war.

Despite many men's eagerness to enlist, some middle-class fathers were not comfortable sending their sons off to war. The next two diaries examined illustrate the generational tension between fathers and sons, the latter of whom came of age at the height of citizen-soldier hegemony and faced the greatest social pressure to conform. Interfamilial and intergenerational struggles between young men, who aspired to fulfill their soldierly responsibilities, and their fathers, who sought to prevent them from doing so, evince different conceptualizations of middle-class masculinity and its change over time.

When England first entered the war, seventeen-year-old Robert Lindsay Mackay had just enrolled in a university and the Royal Technical College.¹⁶³ In his autobiography Mackay remarked, “My friends were joining the Army, my mother was ill, my father against me enlisting.”¹⁶⁴ At this turbulent time in Mackay’s life, he desired to enlist but was unable to do so due to familial circumstances. However, “The deaths of five boys from my school at Achi Baba in the Dardanelles in July, one of them a great friend, decided the matter,” he wrote. “Having about a year in the University Officers' Training Corps I was ready for a commission, anytime.”¹⁶⁵ Mackay perceived his friends overseas to have become true citizen-soldiers by demonstrating their will to participate in the defense of the nation over their domestic duties, and he evidently felt excluded from opportunities to do the same. Mackay eventually persuaded his father to sign his enlistment papers, which he did with a “heavy heart.” His father’s reluctance,

¹⁶³ Mackay’s diary does not reveal the name of the university.

¹⁶⁴ Mackay, “Autobiography of Robert Lindsay Mackay.”

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

juxtaposed with Mackay's eagerness, demonstrates the intergenerational struggle surrounding social expectations for middle-class boys living at home during the war. Nevertheless, Mackay emerged successful in his endeavor: he wrote in his diary of the fortune of receiving his "sentimental choice of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders" as his regiment. Mackay's word choice — "sentimental" — demonstrates his idolization of the army regiment stationed nearby, and implies that he had long imagined himself as a Sutherland Highlander, thus contextualizing his passion to enlist. Moreover, this thought was noted in his autobiography which shows his lasting veneration for the regiment. Mackay's ardent desire to become a soldier compared with his father's disinclination to let him shows that the virtues of the masculine citizen-soldier were internalized primarily by the younger generation of England's middle-class.

An anthology of letters from the military service of infantryman Paul Mainwaring Jones's provides fascinating insight into his life prior to enlistment, through a narrative relayed by his father. Jones Senior paints a vivid picture of his son's patriotic personality, demonstrating a permeation of middle-class virtues from the outset of war. Reminiscing about his son's writing in the *Alleynian*—a school newspaper— Jones Sr. wrote, "Very characteristic is the emphasis placed in it on the ideas of duty and unselfishness. The passion for sacrifice was in his blood."¹⁶⁶ Jones' father lists the virtues promulgated by Baden Powell as the most important characteristics of an Englishman in *Scouting for Boys* (analyzed above) to describe his son, evincing that even before the war, when Jones was still in school, he fully embraced middle-class virtues of the citizen-soldier.

¹⁶⁶ Henry Paul Mainwaring Jones, *War Letters of a Public school Boy* (Kindle-Book, Digitized by Project Gutenberg, London: Cassell and Company Ltd. 1918), 697.

Jones' father recalled that his son "had never cared for military exercises, much preferring free athletics" as captain of the varsity football club. Yet with the outbreak of war in 1914 Jones' philosophy changed, and he immediately joined the OTC at his College, "assiduously appl[y]ing himself to drill and [taking] part in many marches and several field-days."¹⁶⁷ Jones' decision to make such a dramatic transition — when he had previously "never cared for military exercises" — demonstrates his awareness of middle-class expectations. The outbreak of war left Jones with two choices: he could embrace the identity of the citizen-soldier, or watch his friends go off to war without him. He chose the former. Jones' commitment to military drill shows that the outbreak of war provided an opportunity to compete, in the words of Harry Drinkwater, in a much larger "game" — where he could captain a battalion of soldiers rather than a team of teenage rugby players.

In the "first flush of enthusiasm" after the outbreak of war, Jones begged his father to let him enlist in the Public Schools Battalion. His father dissuaded him by "pointing out that he had been preparing hard for an Oxford Scholarship, and that there would be ample time for him to join the Army after the examination early in December."¹⁶⁸ Like Mackay, Jones' primary concern was to become a soldier, for he understood that recognition as an outstanding Englishman depended upon enlistment. The outbreak of war allowed schoolboys to circumvent the athletic hierarchy by becoming citizen-soldiers. As captain of his varsity team, Jones was undoubtedly aware of the precariousness of his position as the ideal schoolboy when his peers

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 1334.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 1326.

went off to war. Unrelenting in his bid to volunteer, Jones held his father to his word and, after his December exams, successfully enlisted in the Army.

Jones' father describes his son's lust for combat as evident in his outward demeanor. He recalled a particular "outburst" that was "indicative of something more than a fugitive mood."¹⁶⁹ As an officer, Jones was often saluted by men of lesser rank, including those who had combat experience: "I can't stand receiving the salutes of men who have fought or are going out to fight while I spend my time about wharves and warehouses," wrote Jones. His father noted that his son's "eyes filled with tears" and "to appease him was not easy."¹⁷⁰ As combat experience constituted a necessary prerequisite to the soldierly ideal, Jones considered himself an imposter compared with men who had proven their ability to embody citizen-soldier virtues in encounters with violence. His supposedly "fugitive mood" illustrates his internalization of social expectations for middle-class masculinity, and his own assessment to have failed to meet them.

Not all middle-class volunteers relished the idea of military service like those examined thus far. Yet those men reluctant to join would have been aware of the citizen-soldier ideal. Propaganda posters, music hall songs, the "sneer of a comrade in khaki,"¹⁷¹ the White Feather Campaign, and a lifetime of exposure to patriotic toys and magazines served as motivation for those unwilling to enlist. The consequence of this social pressure demonstrates the unshakable hegemony of the citizen-soldier during war: for even those men who were hesitant to enlist still volunteered in order to uphold social expectations of the ideal middle-class man.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 1427.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 1427.

¹⁷¹ Gibbs, 69.

Harold Macklin, born in 1894, was an avid cricket player and worked as a clerk. Like West, he tried to enlist shortly after the outbreak of war but was denied due to his eyesight. Yet unlike the men discussed above, Macklin made no attempt to circumvent his medical examiner's decision. A year later, in 1915, a reserve army called Lord Derby Scheme was introduced (the same outfit for which Brookes had enlisted to prevent harassment from the women of Whalmer, discussed in chapter two). Macklin recalled in his diary: "November 1915 came however, which brought us the Derby Scheme and I, thinking I had better go with the crowd, duly presented myself at the town hall where I quite expected to get a certificate of rejection."¹⁷² Macklin's statement attests to his internalization of middle-class virtues despite their opposition to his own personal values; he decided to "go with the crowd" not because he wanted to fight, but rather to earn the approval of his peers. In so doing, Macklin sought to secure his image as a proper man by behaving as society expected middle-class men to act: by volunteering to become the citizen-soldier.

To Macklin's unfortunate surprise he was accepted into the army on this unplanned second attempt. "Anyhow," wrote Macklin, "I was rather looking forward to the army training and open-air life as a change to my sedentary existence."¹⁷³ Even though Macklin's volunteerism was a product of social pressure rather than explicit eagerness for war, he justifies his situation by reflecting on the benefits concurrent with contemporary notions of masculine self-improvement. His decision to accept his fate rather than become a conscientious objector further illustrates his internalization of middle-class virtues and expectations.

¹⁷² Macklin, 16.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

Many middle-class men like Macklin felt pressured to “go with the crowd” in accordance with prevailing expectations. Alexander Patterson recalled in an article he wrote after the war that at eighteen years old he “had entered the Army grudgingly, but in obedience to irresistible social pressure. I had strife yet lacked the courage to be a pacifist.”¹⁷⁴ Patterson’s enlistment account is striking. His reflection, penned after the war and thus fully digested and tempered with perspective, describes courage differently than the diaries of young men at war. Whereas in 1915 courage was lauded as a willingness to die for “King and Country,” Patterson retrospectively defines courage as the ability to declare oneself a pacifist. Moreover, Patterson writes that “Military service seemed not so much an adventure but as a disagreeable, inescapable task. I coveted neither rank nor glory.”¹⁷⁵ Unlike the clerks who eagerly volunteered for adventure and self-improvement, Patterson is not enticed by notions of glory and honor. Rather, he views the war as “disagreeable.” His word choice — describing service to the state as “inescapable” — evinces the magnitude of pressure he felt. Nevertheless he too joined, preferring to risk death than suffer public emasculation.

Despite their subjective perceptions of enlistment, middle-class volunteers were universally conscious of the ideal citizen-soldier archetype for masculinity. For some, it provided incentive, to the extent that they circumvented and transgressed the rules to obtain such status, and lamented a missed opportunity when they could not. For others, it functioned to coerce, so that even those who found military service “disagreeable” elected to join rather than fall short of the masculine ideal, and suffer the consequential social pressure. Yet whether they embraced or

¹⁷⁴ Patterson, 239.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 239.

resented this archetype, the citizen-soldier ideal ultimately increased middle-class volunteerism in the first two years of war.

Military Training and Uniforms

After a routine medical exam and the necessary physician's signature, volunteers awaited a basic training program which lasted about six months (this timeframe was flexible and often shortened, for periods when more men were needed on the front than were available). Dr. Johnathan Boff explains in "Training To Be a Soldier" that a completely formalized method was not instituted until after the first year of the war, and the intensity of the training received by early volunteers depended on factors ranging from location to the predominant social class of a unit.¹⁷⁶ In John Stemples' *Six Weeks: The Short Gallant Life of the British Officer in the First World War*, he comments that officers' training was a "crash course lesson on how to be a public schoolboy...it was to make lower-class rankers think like public schoolboys and have the self-confidence of public schoolboys."¹⁷⁷ His statement demonstrates that training effectively reinforced middle-class virtues of masculinity — strength, endurance, self-sacrifice and honor — which men were expected to uphold on the battlefield, as they had once done on the playing field.

The purpose of basic training was to build physical fitness and confidence; instill traits of discipline and obedience; and teach the fundamental military skills needed to function in the

¹⁷⁶ Jonathan Boff, "Training to Be a Soldier," *British Library*, <http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/training-to-be-a-soldier#sthash.SreSbbJg.dpuf>.

¹⁷⁷ John Lewis Stemple, *Six Weeks: The Short Gallant Life of the British Officer in the First World War* (London: Weindfield and Nicolson, 2010), 60.

army.¹⁷⁸ In effect, training reinforced soldierly norms and performances that middle-class men had been exposed to since boyhood. After basic training, men proceeded to more advanced training which taught them to maneuver in large groups, dig trenches, fill sandbags, and complete route marches. Next, soldiers would typically be trained in the use of a specialty weapon to become a machine gunner, sniper, or wire layer, among others.¹⁷⁹ But most importantly, training camp tested soldiers' masculinity: a man successfully became a soldier only if he could uphold expectations of stoicism in the face of battle, adherence to duty and physical strength. These expectations were not foreign to middle-class volunteers, as they had already been supplanted in their leisure time and imaginations. Training camp was a bridge between the civilian world and military lifestyle that demanded bravery and honorable behavior of men, who — if they failed to comply — faced consequences such as a military tribunal or social harassment from their peers.

On his first day of officer's training, Henry Ogle recorded in his diary that his commanding officer "told us that it was his job to make us Officers *and Gentlemen*."¹⁸⁰ The officer's introductory statement demonstrates how career soldiers charged with training new recruits viewed them: not yet as proper men. Only by completing their training could citizens become soldiers, and thus attain the status of ideal man. Training also functioned to forge solidarity amongst men stationed together. As with public school sporting teams, military uniforms provided a physical manifestation of unity which helped facilitate camaraderie. Harold

¹⁷⁸ Boff, "Training to Be a Soldier."

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Henry Ogle, *The Fateful Battle Line - The Great War Journals and Sketches of Captain Henry Ogle, MC.*, ed. Michael Glover, (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books Ltd. 1993), 152.

Saunders remarked that during his training he “was aware only of the glamour of War...I prepared myself for it with enthusiasm, and bayoneted and clubbed the stuffed sacks representing the enemy with a sort of exalted ferocity. I was as jealous of my regiment as I used to be of my school.”¹⁸¹ Saunders explicitly linked his feelings about his regiment to his earlier feelings toward school, epitomizing the ways in which military training served as an extension of public school sports for middle-class men.

Drinkwater, introduced above, was stationed in England for thirteen months while he trained for war. He and his comrades eagerly awaited their uniforms, which were in short supply due to an initial lack of resources to field the new armies. Drinkwater did not conceptualize soldiers as disillusioned men in tattered garb, but rather like the toy soldiers from his youth and the state-issued propaganda posters (universally depicted in class A uniforms, looking prim and proper). When Drinkwater’s unit received a hat as their first piece of uniform, it was reason enough to gather around and take a photo in the style of university rugby players. This moment shows the physical manifestation of pride among the men, a symbol of their camaraderie and national solidarity. Just as Brookes kept Lord Kitchner’s words as a place holder in his diary, so too did Drinkwater use this photo to bookmark his entries during the war (see figure one).¹⁸² This shows the value he placed on this photo as evidence of his own masculinity while also evincing his affinity with camaraderie.

Brookes also records the significance of receiving his uniform during training: “My pride reached its height when on Saturday 22nd August I got into my uniform.”¹⁸³ The uniform

¹⁸¹ Saunders, 55.

¹⁸² Drinkwater, 7.

¹⁸³ Brookes, 5.

allowed him to physically perform his manliness, eliciting the same pride that Drinkwater described when issued his cap. Brookes explicitly refers to a music hall song in his next diary entry, linking it to the self-worth he derived from his new uniform: “but in the words of the song ‘What did I care?’ for I had my rifle and khaki and a fairly good opinion of myself as a soldier.”¹⁸⁴ His reference to a popular music hall song has two implications. First, it shows that soldiers understood and internalized the masculine ideals lauded in music halls (as discussed in chapter two); catchy songs encouraging men to wear khaki imbued the uniform with meaning recognizable to society at large. Second, Brookes’ reference reveals that men yearned to be recognized as soldiers in order to set them apart from their uncommitted peers — a feat accomplished by donning the khaki and brandishing a rifle. Each of these eager trainees found his masculinity tested on the front line, where they struggled to uphold the virtues of the citizen-soldier in the face of sustained artillery barrages, night patrols and exposed attacks against enemy machine guns.

B: ACTIVE SERVICE IN FRANCE: DISILLUSIONMENT AND THE STRUGGLE TO UPHOLD CITIZEN-SOLDIER VIRTUES

This section shifts to explore how middle-class men struggled to uphold the virtues of the citizen-soldier during active service on the Western Front. I use a masculine taxonomy including such categories as eagerness; stoicism; glorification of self, comrades and officers; fear of emasculation; and pride, to analyze the personal documents penned by soldiers on the front for citizen-soldier virtues. Young men’s willingness to volunteer was typically followed by an

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

eagerness for combat experience, as Jones' father recalled (above), for an Englishman could not consider himself a true soldier without violent confrontation. Combat experience proved the true test of manliness, evidence that one could uphold and embody virtues of strength, courage, endurance, and stoicism under duress. Soldiers rarely identified themselves as "eager" explicitly; nevertheless, the tone of their journal entries and letters home convey a desire to see combat. I use signs of eagerness to argue that men had been inculcated since childhood with values that glorified battle, which shaped perceptions of their own participation in it. For this reason, men faced with the prospect of living (and dying) in the trenches expressed eagerness and anticipation, rather than fear or dread, of their impending encounter with violence.

Mackay's experience in an active military unit began on 4 September 1916, when he was "Recalled from Leave. Ordered out."¹⁸⁵ He wrote that he "felt very 'bucked' with life," demonstrating an excitement for mobilization in anticipation of combat experience. Reflecting a similar sentiment, Brookes wrote on 17 November 1914 of his disappointment when he and the rest of his unit were held back from the trenches due to a man with a "touch of fever." "We could have 'bitten our heads off' with disappointment when seeing the men leave for Griespot, and the trenches at Bois Grenier,"¹⁸⁶ penned Brookes. He considered this denial to see combat a missed opportunity to experience a masculine rite-of-passage; his athletic upbringing made him competitive and eager to fight.

When the seventeen-year-old officer Wilbert Spencer arrived at the front his letters reflected an eagerness for battle as well. Like Brookes, Spencer was thwarted in his first

¹⁸⁵ Robert Lindsay Mackay, "Somme 1916," *Robert Lindsay Mackay's First World War Diary*, <http://lu.softxs.ch/mackay/Text/Diary2.html>.

¹⁸⁶ Brookes, 20.

opportunity to be sent to the front line; in a state of anticipation he wrote to his father on 1 December 1914: “I am sitting in a tent. Yesterday I had orders to go to the Front but these were cancelled ten minutes later, worse luck. I wept heavily to see my men going to the Front today and me having to stay behind to look after others.”¹⁸⁷ Spencer’s assessment that his denial for combat was the “worse luck,” causing him to “[weep] heavily,” illustrates an eagerness to accompany his men into battle to prove himself a worthy officer. He understood that he would not earn the respect of his men if he did not suffer alongside them; middle-class virtues of duty and sacrifice instilled in both Spencer and his men alike meant that denial for combat impinged his masculinity, as measured against the citizen-soldier standard.

After another week of waiting Spencer had still not reached the front line. His aggravation is evident in a subsequent letter to his father on 9 December 1914: “I am very fed up as I have not got to the Front yet. Here one has too lenient a time and spends too much money in the town.”¹⁸⁸ Spencer clearly embraced the discipline promoted by his public school and military training, and was upset by the lack of danger and responsibility; he could not fulfill his duty as a man until he saw combat. Days later, on 16 December 1914, his wish was granted. Spencer proudly reported back to his mother, “I am just off to the Front at last. In charge of 300 men until I get up there. How are you all at home?”¹⁸⁹ His change of tone is evident as he boasts of responsibilities as a leader positioned above the average soldier, further demonstrating the fulfillment of his manliness.

¹⁸⁷ Wilbert Spencer, *War Letters 1914-1918 Volume I*, ed. Mark Tanner (Lancaster: War Letters.net, 2014), 200.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

On 27 July 1915 the soldier Paul Jones embarked for France. After months of being denied for service, his unrelenting eagerness to experience the war firsthand makes his diary an excellent source with which to examine middle-class men's desire to perform their masculinity by becoming combat veterans. Jones' diary reveals him to be envious of soldiers who had already proven willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for England, and his letters home show that middle-class schools fostered notions of pride and duty that equipped young men with an eagerness for battle. Repeated references to his steadfast school pride suggest that he was not only fighting for the nation, but also for the honor of Dulwich college.

On 6 August 1915 Jones reported home that "In the short time I have been out here I have been struck with the glorious English coolness and the steadfast refusal to get flurried that marks all our tribe."¹⁹⁰ He may have read the wall on Fleet Street (analyzed in chapter two) plastered with state propaganda portraying Englishmen as supremely capable of stoicism in battle. He does not consider — at least in writing — that this "refusal to get flustered" may have been (at least in part) the result of the emotionally numbing experience of industrialized warfare. Two days later, Jones' eagerness to see combat is evident again in a letter to his mother:

*Only four out of the fifteen A.S.C. officers who left London on Monday last came up-country, and I was one of the four. Eureka! also Banzai! There ought to be a chance of some excitement, anyhow. I am in glorious health and spirits and feel very pleased with life. Isn't it fine that my desire to be really close to the thick of things should be so fully gratified?*¹⁹¹

Jones explicitly acknowledges his "desire" to be close to the front line, and that fulfillment of this goal brings him full gratification. Moreover, he presents himself as the ideal man by

¹⁹⁰ Jones, 1763.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 1771.

mentioning his “glorious” health and spirits (perhaps alluding to his own bravery and courage) in light of his recent mobilization to the front.

Much to his dismay, when it came time for Jones’ unit to move out he was reassigned as a grocer and requisitions officer. His disappointment with this new post is telling: the prospect of combat experience and its concurrent rite of passage now improbable, Jones’ hopes of fulfilling social expectations of the ideal man were dashed. This illustrates that eagerness of middle-class men to see battle was not founded on patriotic notions of service to the nation, but rather a self-interested will to prove their masculinity by upholding citizen-soldier virtues in encounters with violence.

Eagerness and School Pride

Like Brookes and Spencer, Jones had a burning desire to experience combat. After weeks of working behind the lines and watching his comrades return from battle, he wrote: “The war is taking a frightful toll of the best of our race.”¹⁹² His statement demonstrates a conceptualization of war as “survival of the fittest,” played out through masculine competition between national subjects. He refers to his comrades-in-arms as “the best of our race,” again demonstrating that the “best” type of man — and perhaps the only one worth aspiring to — is the citizen-soldier.

Witnessing the return of dead and wounded from the front line did not cause Jones to rethink his desire to see combat. Rather, he was inspired by the selflessness of his English

¹⁹² Ibid., 2573.

brethren and hoped to contribute more directly to their cause. In the fighting during the battle of the Somme he wrote:

The scenes I have witnessed during and since this great attack—the Somme Battles—have confirmed my resolution to go into the fighting line. You who have not seen the horrors of a modern campaign cannot possibly know the feelings of a young man who, while the real business of war is going on at his very elbow (for we are not far from the centre of things), and who is longing to be in the thick of the fighting, is yet condemned to look after groceries and do work which a woman could do probably a great deal better.¹⁹³

Jones describes the torture he feels watching comrades become heroes on the front, while he spends his time bargaining with supply officers; his use of the word “condemned” makes clear his lack of choice in the matter. To further express his dissatisfaction, Jones emasculates his position by denouncing it as a job a “woman could do better.” By genderizing his role in the war effort, Jones demonstrates an awareness that the particular duties he has been assigned will not permit him to attain the status of the ideal man: a citizen-soldier tested by combat who successfully maintains his masculine demeanor. Jones could not become a bonafide citizen-soldier without experiencing combat.

Jones idolized boys from his school who had served selflessly in the war, for they epitomized the virtues of the middle-class man. “It is not only my own desire and my own temperament that influence me, but the example of others,”¹⁹⁴ he wrote, referring to his celebrated schoolmates. Formerly great leaders on the playing field, they demonstrated their manliness during the war in the most epic and heroic game of all. Upon receiving news of an old schoolmate who was killed in action and awarded the Victoria Cross, Jones deemed it “a

¹⁹³ Ibid., 2583.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 2606.

glorious end!”¹⁹⁵ Even in death, men like this inspired Jones, for he expressed admiration for and envy of his schoolmate’s ability to make the ultimate sacrifice for England.

Jones’ relentless desire to fight emboldened him to seek permission to transfer to a battalion that would see combat. Jones was aware that, due to his nearsightedness, this might not be possible: he wrote that “if denied I shall be broken-hearted, but my conscience will be clear. If I am accepted, it will be the happiest day of my life.”¹⁹⁶ Jones’ discussion of conscience further illustrates his internalization of the middle-class virtues that lauded the dutiful citizen-soldier as the ideal man; his statement evinces a desire for fulfillment that could not be attained by performing the duties of a requisitions officer. His statement here bears a resemblance to the story by “An Old Boy” in the *The Boy’s Own Paper*, who expressed excitement for being chosen as the latest addition to his school’s rugby team.

Many schoolboys who entered the First World War felt a sentimental attachment to their educational institutions. Apparently Jones did too, for two days after the above statement he wrote in a letter: “August 14th, 1916. The Dulwich Army List makes very interesting reading, though I notice some omissions and errors in it. Everyone seems to be doing something. It is as good a record as that of any other school or institution of any kind in the country.”¹⁹⁷ In this passage, Jones implies contempt for his own perceived lack of importance to the war effort. Nevertheless, he is proud to have come from a school that contributed so much to the war, further evincing how he conceived the war as a competition among peers.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 2618.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 2627.

After applying to transfer to an artillery unit, Jones explained his decision in a letter to his father. “I don’t pretend to be doing the "young hero" stunt,” he wrote; “I am not out for glory.”¹⁹⁸ He repeatedly justified this decision, citing his service record near the line and arguing that he knew the war “for the dull, sordid, murderous thing that it is.”¹⁹⁹ Thus Jones portrays himself as capable of performing the duties required of the soldier who endures the hardships of war without “glory” or individual reward; he considers selfless sacrifice to be a greater contribution than acquiring groceries. He elaborates: “I don't expect for a minute to enjoy the trenches. But anything is better than this horrible inaction when all the chaps one knows are undergoing frightful hardships and dangers.”²⁰⁰ The inability to act selflessly in combat begets a sense of guilt for Jones; he describes “inaction” as far worse than death or life in the trenches, evidence of his inculcation in masculine virtues of courage and endurance.

His letter continues to boast about his transfer, and links it directly to the duty of the schoolboy:

*I have now been passed fit for general service, and this being so I would be a craven to hold back from the fighting-line. If we are to win this War it will only be through gigantic efforts and great sacrifices. It is the chief virtue of the public school system that it teaches one to make sacrifices willingly for the sake of esprit de corps. Well, clearly, if the public school men hold back, the others will not follow.*²⁰¹

Jones regards the boys of the public school (and, by implication, those of the middle class) to be England’s best hope for victory. He understands the middle class to lead the fight against Germany; rather than cause resentment or fear, this imparts a sense of pride. Jones’ reflections

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 2892.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 2893.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 2894.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 2896.

reveal his awareness that public schools instilled in boys the value of self-sacrifice; but rather than question the motive behind this project, he embraces it as a matter of honor, viewing the war as a noble cause for which his schooling has aptly prepared him. Jones was eager and ready to martyr himself for England to prove himself the ideal middle-class man, who performed his duty to the fullest.

Camaraderie and Duty

Middle-class men often wrote about the manliness of their comrades, or narrated stories of their own bravery and fortitude. Officers typically reserved such written recognition for the men they commanded, as the unit's performance and morale in battle reflected upon officers' ability to lead as both "a gentleman and an officer." Homosocial bonds that originated in public school sports teams and uniformed clubs like the scouting movement were undoubtedly reified by the shared struggle of war. Youths' participation in disciplined leisure activities that promoted individual self-improvement and selflessness for the greater good thus contributed to a middle-class understanding of group solidarity and communal endeavors to overcome obstacles.

Many of Harry Drinkwater's early journal entries from France compliment the "manly" qualities of his comrades. In an entry after his regiment's first long march through the mud-ridden roads of the Western Front, he commended his peers (3 December 1915): "I do not think any men could have done better especially when one remembers that 18 months before none of us had properly done a route march or handled a rifle. Only one dropped out during the journey."²⁰² In this statement Drinkwater praises his comrades' ability to endure their first long

²⁰² Drinkwater, 17.

march, thereby lauding them as the epitome of the “true” soldier and regarding them more highly than other units. His pride in his battalion also illustrates a sense of communalism, which reflects on his own abilities to soldier and command.

Arthur Graeme West entered the war as an officer and his writing reflects this positionality, frequently citing the battalion’s ability to overcome hardships and secure triumphs as a reflection of his own character. After relating a woeful story when his men were “covered in mud” and malnourished, he ends with the statement: “But are we down hearted? Not one!”²⁰³ The morale and resolve of West’s men to endure hardship without being “down hearted” is a testament to his leadership skills, for their duty as ideal men is to obey him without question. His decision to record the incident reveals his pride in them, and — more importantly — his ability to lead. Even if this perception is inaccurate, it nevertheless indicates a refusal to appear disorganized and downhearted in his service to the nation.

In another instance, Spencer recorded a near-death experience to relate his own steadfast ability to perform dutifully under any circumstance:

*The other day I did a silly thing. I had just come back from putting up wire with a volunteer party in front of the trenches...suddenly a fire rocket went up and illuminated the place. In these cases one has to hurry up or one gets shot. Well, in my hurry I jumped down on top of a bayonet which ran about ¾ of an inch into my arm. Not serious but quite painful.*²⁰⁴

Spencer portrays himself as the ideal man who can face battle with a stiff-upper-lip attitude, describing his wound — however “silly” — as a badge of honor. His letter illustrates his pride for volunteering to go in front of the trenches (the most dangerous place to be) where it is easy to get shot if you are not aware and agile. Moreover, it testifies to the sporadic incidents of danger he endures, as well as his ability to brave pain. Although his wound was not serious enough to

²⁰³ West, 17.

²⁰⁴ Spencer, 225.

warrant dismissal from combat, his acknowledgment that it was nevertheless “quite painful” affirms to potential readers (as well as himself) that he had overcome injury. Spencer thereby represents himself as a man who could endure pain and injury without neglecting his duty as a soldier.

Spencer’s letter proceeds to describe his present situation. “Accidents apart, there is not much doing at present. We lost two men. One gets quite used to having bullets whizzing about one. Snipers are very dangerous and hide themselves well.”²⁰⁵ Spencer's comment evokes the chants propagated by cricket players in public schools; it affirms his ability to remain calm and stoic in the heat of battle. Moreover he describes the presence of German snipers, who posed a constant threat to lives and morale, as normal, further lauding himself as a conditioned soldier capable of weathering the horrors of war with a degree of stoicism.

After a short leave in England in 1917, Harry Drinkwater returned to the front line, promoted to officer and charged with a battalion of his own. His journal entries concurrently shift to focus on the men in his command, rather than himself. On 2 October 1917 he wrote:

*I can nearly always admire their discipline and always the disciplined self and on this occasion, the latter was very evident. Although the platoon NCOs must have been as conscious as I was of the improbability of the attack being successful, they made no word or comment but studied the scheme, took their orders and then went up the steps and out into the night to their sections. I did admire them. They showed every sign of fatigue but did not express it in words.*²⁰⁶

Drinkwater’s emphasis on discipline — both communally as a regiment, and individually — demonstrates his respect for men who could take orders stoically and selflessly in the face of impending danger. Moreover, he describes this somber moment as he might a cricket team who

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 229.

²⁰⁶ Drinkwater, 247.

plays “an uphill game pluckily,” committed to the final minute despite an anticipated loss.

Drinkwater was not alone in comparing the war to a giant “game”; Ogle, too, described his first battle as an “outsize football ground with spectators crowding up to touchlines on each side but none at the ends.”²⁰⁷

Later in the same entry, Drinkwater writes:

Each individual man could if he wished have slunk into some shell-hole and away from danger, but he did not do so, he took his place in the line and awaited the oncoming of the Germans. There was no outward glory attached to it, it was all done in the dark and done so readily and passed unnoticed. But to me in that instance we justified ourselves a service battalion, for when we were called upon we were found ‘not wanting.’²⁰⁸

Drinkwater’s statement reveals how the citizen-soldier archetype served to shape men’s behavior and decision-making during battle: for “each individual man” chose to risk death rather than emasculate himself by “[slinking] into some shell-hole and away from danger.” His battalion successfully upheld the virtues of courage, discipline and sacrifice demanded by the citizen-soldier ideal, evinced by his final comment that “we were found ‘not wanting.’” Drinkwater considers his battalion composed of proper men for having withstood violent combat, and credits himself for upholding such virtues as well, using the plural “we” to describe the battalion as a whole.

Like Drinkwater after being promoted to an officer, Mackay also reflected more often on the men under his command than upon himself. In one entry he admires his men’s ability to endure the violence of no-man’s land under his leadership: “The effect on many would have been most demoralising, but our ranks kept absolutely steady. The men didn’t even quicken their

²⁰⁷ Ogle, 96.

²⁰⁸ Drinkwater, 249.

pace.”²⁰⁹ Mackay’s description of his unit — as praiseworthy for adhering to soldierly traits of discipline and stoicism in the face of danger — implicitly reflects upon his own ability to command and keep discipline among the ranks. He finishes the entry by complimenting his men: “never heard a murmur or a complaint, even though they had taken all their objectives and now had to take another Division's objectives.”²¹⁰ Mackay’s decision to record this last line shows that he was proud of the stoic attitude of the men under his command, implying that they embodied virtues of discipline and stoicism demanded of the citizen-soldier.

While officers generally lauded the indefatigable endurance of their men, some occasionally wrote of demoralization as well. In one passage West notes: “Depression is merely a passing mood with most of the men, and comes rarely even so.”²¹¹ Although eagerness for battle is the proper sentiment for soldiers, and depression exhibits the limits of this trait, West describes it as “passing” and “rare.” His decision to include this seemingly counterintuitive sentiment serves to affirm his capacity as a leader, and emphasizes his men’s usually stoic disposition. West’s description reveals that — despite temporary lapses — he considered his men to be veritable citizen-soldiers.

Fear of Emasculation

As men were expected to perform heroically to conform with the standards of the ideal man, fear of emasculation in combat was widespread amongst middle-class volunteers.

Nevertheless, it was rarely recorded in diaries for a number of reasons. For some, diaries served

²⁰⁹ Robert Lindsay Mackay, “Soissions-1918,” *Robert Lindsay Mackay’s First World War Diary*, <http://lu.softxs.ch/Mackay/Text/Diary9.html>.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ West, 50.

to record a man's ability to uphold the virtues of the citizen-soldier; as men did not want their diaries to depict them as cowards, they practiced a degree of self-censorship. Yet for others, “diaries became spaces in which [they] could record reactions to war experiences in which they displayed fear and weakness.”²¹² These diaries, written for the authors own self-reflection, have the potential to reveal soldiers’ innermost thoughts, fears and perceived weaknesses.

West’s diary is one of the few that reveals anxieties concurrent with upholding citizen-soldier virtues in an unprecedented war of attrition. Despite recognizing his men’s ability to endure, West had doubts about his own capacity to uphold social expectations. Throughout his diary it is apparent that he fears emasculation in the face of battle. As an officer, West’s letters were not censored, which provided him the freedom to write whatever he liked to friends and family. In the first weeks of his service in the front line trenches, West reports a moral quandary to his family in a letter home: “I am almost certain I do wrong to go on — not quite certain, and anyhow, I question if I am of martyr stuff....Write Soon A.G.W.”²¹³ In this instance, West reveals his struggle to live up to the expectations of the citizen-soldier by questioning his own ability to act selflessly. His claim that it would be “wrong” to continue his service — and his immediate repudiation of the statement — underscores an internal struggle to perform his masculinity. A few days after sending the above letter, West clarified his thoughts in his journal:

I don't definitely feel able to say that I fear the infliction of pain or wound...It is the knowledge that something may happen with which one will not be able to cope or that one's old resolutions of courage etc., will fail in this new set of experiences...One may be called upon to bear or perform something to which one will find himself inadequate.”²¹⁴

²¹² Meyer, 55.

²¹³ West, 107.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 128.

This passage, like the one above, shows that West was self-conscious about his ability to uphold the expectations of a middle-class officer. He expresses anxiety regarding his capacity to uphold virtues of courage and obedience in a war made famous by its large-scale mechanical slaughter. Yet it is not the threat of physical harm or pain that dissuades West from his post, but the fear that he will not be able to perform, as is expected of him, the virtues required of the citizen-soldier.

West understood that his opinions of the war were best kept to himself due to the prevailing atmosphere of judgment and expectation. “One sees, of course, that all the society in which one may at any moment find oneself is very fluid, and one doesn't like to hazard opinions, and they are not easily elicited,”²¹⁵ he wrote. “I have mentioned the feeling against conscientious objectors, even in the minds of sentimental and religious people. Even R speaks sneeringly of Bertrand Russell.”²¹⁶ West's comment that even religious and “sentimental” people support the war — as illustrated by their disdain for conscientious objectors like Bertrand Russell — demonstrates his perception that everyone, even those bound to a higher moral authority, saw the war as just, and therefore contributed to a culture which celebrated the virtues of the citizen-soldier as an ideal measure of masculinity. West concludes his entry:

...even if anybody feels regret for having enlisted, he does not like to admit it to himself. Why should he? Every man, woman and child is taught to regard him as a hero. If he has become convinced of a wrong action it lands him in an awkward position which he has much better not face. So everything is intended to discourage him from active thinking on this important and, in the most literal sense, vital question.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Ibid., 55.

²¹⁶ Bertrand Russell was a well known pacifist and conscientious objector in First World War England.

Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

West's thoughts are astonishingly candid. He acknowledges that some men — perhaps including himself — regret enlistment, and thus contradicts popular opinion celebrating citizen-soldiers as the embodiment of ideal masculinity. He also recognizes that men in uniform are regarded as heroes by the public, eliciting the dichotomy between a veteran's experience with the realities of war, and the unrealistic portrayals of soldiering which informed public opinion. Moreover, he notes that “every man, woman and child” are “taught” to celebrate soldiers — affirming that the citizen-soldier archetype was a learned construct reinforced through athletics, propaganda, speeches, music halls and other public installments of patriotism. West's statement speaks to the negative repercussions of being perceived a “hero,” which prevented soldiers from reconsidering their middle-class masculinity during war.

Stoicism and Fatalism

The social pressure described in West's letters home was felt by most middle-class men to some degree. The nature of trench warfare caused widespread disillusionment among soldiers on the Western Front: their initial combat experience and first encounter with death changed how many men wrote about the war. Stoicism was an emotional response that allowed them to function in a world of chaos and destruction. Unprepared for the carnage of the first industrial war, dutiful middle-class volunteers became stoic in order to retain their masculinity. They embraced fatalistic outlooks, as this helped remove them from the daily torture of an uncertain death. So frequent are the instances of stoicism and fatalism in middle-class men's writing that they appear in almost every diary that contains self-reflection. Some men have the introspective capacity to recognize their own stoicism in retrospect. For example, Alexander Patterson noted

after the war that “My mood during 1918 changed to a stoicism which looked on and, with difficulty, conquered fear....”²¹⁸ Though Patterson was able to recognize his own emotional restraint after a period of reflection, this is not typically illustrated in diaries penned during the war. Nevertheless, his statement reveals that stoicism functioned as bravery on the Western Front, supporting this thesis’ claim that emotional restraint during extended periods of bombing and sniper fire served as an emotional response to violence, rather than a lack thereof.

Drinkwater first encountered death a month after entering the trenches. His drill instructor, Sergeant Horton, perished from a German artillery shell. Drinkwater and another man dug in the rubble in attempt to save his life: “-he was our first casualty and our first experience with death...I’m tired out, and with the death of Horton sick of everything,” Drinkwater wrote.²¹⁹ The tone of this particular entry differs from previous ones, demonstrating that his initial eagerness to enlist and see combat was shattered by the realization that war was not, in fact, like a game of cricket. It also illustrates that their previous experiences as middle-class men did not prepare them for death. This encounter with violence and death marks a crossroad in Drinkwater’s perception of his own masculinity: he could either abandon his reverence for the citizen-soldier (or at least question it as West did), or resort to stoicism in order to retain his outward composure. Drinkwater opted for the latter. This entry provides a telling example of how men grew to hate the war itself, but as this thesis argues, continued to subscribe to citizen-soldier hegemony.

²¹⁸ Patterson, 239.

²¹⁹ Drinkwater, 28.

In short time, Drinkwater became accustomed to death on the front line. He wrote stoically of the loss of his friends in June 1916:

*At 9.30pm, Raper and Middleton went down, killed by a rifle grenade...Then Jinks was hit by another as we lay next to each other...he was going fast. His leg had been practically blown off. I could do little else than kneel by his side. He recognized me almost to the last moment and asked me not to leave him. I stayed with him until the end and saw him go West...It was quickly over.*²²⁰

Drinkwater not only portrays Jinks as stoic until death, making no mention of the pain and agony he likely felt, but also emphasizes his own ability to accept death with the emotional restraint prescribed by citizen-soldier expectations. The last line of this passage depicts Drinkwater as divorced from anger, surprise and lament. Whether or not this was accurate, it evinces his awareness that the ideal man did not respond emotionally to death. A few days later, he wrote in his diary that one hundred and twenty men were lost on the day Raper and Middleton died, and that the roll call was “somewhat pathetic,” for “as a name was called and unanswered, we had to say if we saw the fellow killed or gone down the line wounded.”²²¹ Again, Drinkwater demonstrates the stoic attitude sustained in spite of chaos and death; his use of the word “pathetic” shows a distaste for the war, while the rest of the statement reveals that the members of Drinkwater’s battalion, like ideal men, nonchalantly accepted the deaths of their peers.

Mackay’s entries, too, became increasingly stoic over time; like Drinkwater, he comments on the death of his men with an air of restraint. On 9 April 1917 he remarked: “Poor Alan Whyte killed. Shankland and Eric Duncan wounded. Jock Stewart seriously wounded but still able to swear, which he did all the way down to the Casualty Clearing Station. Hunnybun

²²⁰ Ibid., 96.

²²¹ Ibid., 98.

got shell-shock. Went into my valise at 7 p.m. with indigestion.”²²² Just as the schoolmaster Freeman (author of *Steady and Strong*) wanted his boys to be the most “manly” men by taking blows without flinching, many officers in the First World War expected the same of their soldiers. In this instance Mackay demonstrates his stoicism towards death by penning his thoughts without emotional context. He describes the verbal slurs of Jock Stewart in a comical tone, eliding the reality of pain and suffering he likely endured, and thus honors him as a true citizen-soldier rather than a coward who might have called for his mother. Despite the day’s casualties, Mackay concludes his report by mentioning his “indigestion,” making it equally worthy of note and demonstrating a desire to naturalize his lackluster attitude towards death.

As Drinkwater’s service on the front line continued, his stoicism paired with a fatalistic mindset which served as an additional coping mechanism and enabled the preservation of his image as a citizen-soldier. On 15 June 1916 he wrote: “this afternoon we lost four more of the old originals...we are quite resigned nowadays to losing old originals. It seems as if the fates have decreed that they have had a good run and it is time they went.”²²³ Apparently unfazed by the loss of “old originals” like himself, Drinkwater no longer professed to be “tired out, sick of everything” as he had after his first experience with death. Six months later, before going on leave in December 1916, he recorded that “it is impossible to stay cheery under these conditions...today I have a fit of acute depression. I see or I think I see the uselessness of it all; of all these useless bombardments....”²²⁴ The horrific nature of trench warfare had corrupted his

²²² Robert Lindsay Mackay, “Arras 1917-1918,” *Robert Lindsay Mackay’s First World War Diary*, <http://lu.softxs.ch/mackay/Text/Diary7.html>.

²²³ Drinkwater, 103.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 202.

belief that the war was a noble cause, winnable through the “manly” attributes of endurance, honor and courage alone. Instead, he perceived himself and his men to be forced to rot in the trenches “uselessly,” suffering the regular bombardments of artillery shells and sporadic sniper fire. At this point in Drinkwater’s service, he seems to have reached a state of disillusionment with the war. Nevertheless, he exhibits stoicism and fatalism towards death in order to uphold his citizen-soldier demeanor, evincing that men’s distaste for the war was divorced from their perception of ideal masculinity.

Brookes experienced combat for the first time in a region of Belgium known as the Ypres Salient. In June 1915, after a large-scale assault, Brookes recorded in his diary: “I doubt if there was a day passed without a number of casualties whilst the Battalion was in the trenches in the Salient so I will not refer to the casualties except on special occasions, otherwise this will prove too sad and monotonous reading.”²²⁵ Brookes' diary describes his lived experience as rife with chaos and arbitrary, sporadic death; moreover, he admits to censoring his entries so that they do not become a tale of constant sorrow. His reflections reveal that trench warfare forced men to deal with death by disregarding it, and by adopting instead an air of stoicism to keep their composure. Despite the reality of life in the trenches, Brookes’ spirit did not falter; that same day, he wrote about an encounter with a fellow sentry: “I enquired the way to the part of the trenches which were being occupied by the Queen's Westminsters. His reply to the effect that he had never heard of them, rather upset my dignity.”²²⁶ Still prideful of his regiment and his role within it, Brookes found the encounter with the sentry upsetting enough to record in his diary.

²²⁵ Brookes, 67.

²²⁶ Ibid.

The agitation regarding his regiment's recognition (or lack thereof) demonstrates a self-consciousness about his position in the army's masculine hierarchy. Moreover, it reveals that Brookes continued to subscribe to citizen-soldier ideals even after his first experience with death.

Later during the same battle, Brookes wrote:

*...this one shell killed nine of my chums, wounded seven others, and three sustained shell-shock. I would like to mention the names of three killed, who were particularly my "pals", they were:-
Corporal Matthews
Rifleman Kerl, and
Rifleman Mac. Gillervray
R. I. P.²²⁷*

Despite his previous promise to refrain from listing the dead, Brookes felt the need to reference these particular casualties, so the men listed must have been important to him. And yet he refers to these friends in quotation marks, perhaps alluding to the fact that life was fleeting and friendship uncertain on the Western Front. His entry is blunt and direct, with no emotional response to the loss of these "pals." Thus Brookes establishes himself as a strong man not outwardly troubled by death, striving to uphold the courageous ideal propagated by citizen-soldier hegemony.

Though the majority of middle-class volunteers survived the war, many were physically maimed and understood their injuries from within a fatalistic mindset. When Culpitt arrived at the front line at Arras, he engaged in heavy fighting until suffering a battle injury some months later. To his relief, he was sent back to England to recover; yet he takes care to note in his diary that this arrangement was not of his own accord:

²²⁷ Ibid.

*Well I was now back in England after nearly thirteen months spent amongst the dangers and hardships of modern war and it was indeed good to feel that for a time at least one was safe, and I thank God that He has seen fit to preserve my life and send me home. He is indeed good for to Him I owe my life.*²²⁸

Culpitt's fatalism is apparent; perceiving no control over his own life, he entrusts it instead to God's master plan. This excerpt marks the beginning of a growing sense of fatalism that is evident later in his diary. Moreover, Culpitt is careful to include the hardships he has endured, to lend credence to his self-depiction as a battle-proven citizen-soldier.

Due to an officer deficit during the first two years of war, Culpitt was reassigned after his recovery to serve once more on the front line. Soon after arriving in France, he faced combat action again. Upon returning to his quarters after a particularly brutal battle, he noted:

*We went to the same billets as we had left before making the attack, and it was here that we really felt the loss of our comrades, for where they had been before, now their places were empty, some killed, some wounded, still it was the fortune of war and perhaps next time some of us would not be there to answer the roll call.*²²⁹

Culpitt's fatalism is fully developed by his second tour; he refers to the deaths of his comrades as the "fortune of war" and muses that he might be the next man absent from roll. He exhibits this mentality again upon hearing that he and the rest of his unit would no longer be relieved after a hard day's fighting. The news came as a "great surprise to the men," and he shared their sentiment, noting: "we began to console ourselves with 'what is to be will be' and if you are going to get hit you will get hit."²³⁰ Culpitt's reaction to the unwanted news attests to the fatalism he and his comrades strategically adopted in order to maintain their citizen-soldier

²²⁸ George Culpitt, "Chapter 11," *The War Diary of George Culpitt, Royal Welch Fusiliers*, http://www.culpitt-war-diary.org.uk/the_chapters.htm.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

masculinity in the face of imminent death.²³¹ Though they lamented the duties assigned to their unit, Culpitt and his men nevertheless strove to uphold the virtues of the ideal man, evincing the continued prevalence of this middle-class construct despite the realities of war.

In a letter home to his family, Lance-Corporal Frank Earley professed to be “quite prepared to give my life as so many have done before me. All I can do is put myself in God's hands for him to decide, and you and the little ones pray for me to the Sacred Heart and Our Lady.”²³² Like Culpitt, Earley portrays himself as the ultimate example of the citizen-soldier, willing to act selflessly, assisted by the fatalistic attitude that put his life in his God’s hands. The day after he wrote this letter he turned nineteen, and received a fatal chest wound.

Even as fatalism spread rampant throughout the ranks, many soldiers addressed positive aspects of the war in writing. By January 1915, Spencer’s diary reflects the stoic attitude needed to cope with trench warfare, yet he also writes that “it is quite apparent that war and hardship bring out the very best of men’s characters.”²³³ Spencer does not opine whether or not the war is just, but rather focuses his attention on the benefits it provides “men’s characters.” He continues to view the war — as he did upon enlistment — as an opportunity for self-improvement. Thus, while his opinion of the war itself may have changed, his perception of proper masculinity did not. Spencer’s notion of ideal manhood still revolved around citizen-soldier virtues brought out by “war and hardship,” evincing that despite disillusionment with war, his belief in citizen-soldier masculinity remained intact.

²³¹ In Philip Gibbs’ *Now It Must Be Told*, he also uses the phrase “fortune of war” as a reference to a soldier’s life and the passing of friends.

²³² Frank Earley was a middle-class journalist from Derby, England.

Earley, “Letters Home, ‘Pray for me.’”

²³³ Spencer, 241.

On 10 March 1915 Spencer wrote a letter home to his parents. “Well, this is just a last line before I go into the trenches again. Be cheerful and let the fate of us all rest with a greater and more responsible power. Whatever happens will be for the best. Your loving son, Wilbert.”²³⁴ Spencer’s “last line” proved ultimately true; for later that day he died in combat. Barely eighteen years of age, Spencer exceeded the six week life expectancy of a subaltern officer by surviving for two months.²³⁵

The diaries and letters penned by men at war indicate that volunteers who enlisted in 1914 — whether eagerly, to prove their worth, or unwillingly, due to irresistible social pressure — nevertheless struggled to meet social expectations that they embody the citizen-soldier ideal, to endure hardships, act selflessly, and strive to uphold their middle-class masculinity in battle. Even as experiences with death fostered in men a growing sense of disillusionment, they nevertheless adopted stoic and fatalistic mindsets in order to retain their masculine composure, revealing that citizen-soldier hegemony endured and continued despite the realities of war. The next section corroborates this through the reflections of men who survived, and letters home to the parents of the fallen.

²³⁴ Ibid., 249.

²³⁵ Stemple, 5.

C: CONDOLENCE AND REFLECTIONS: THE CITIZEN-SOLDIER LIVES ON

Of the soldiers who survived the war, some left written recollections of their service in diaries. These reflections are valuable because they show that despite hating the nature of modern warfare, most men in fact valued their experience and — like Spencer and others examined above — retained a sense of honor and pride in their accomplishments. The parents of those men who did not survive received letters which almost universally depicted their sons as the ideal citizen-soldier: selfless, dutiful and courageous. Such letters illustrate that comrades and officers continued to subscribe to hegemonic notions of middle-class masculinity during and after their service: they presumed that the greatest consolation for parents would be to know that their sons died upholding the traits of the ideal man constructed in the half-century leading up to the war. Condolence letters and retrospective reflections reveal that soldiers' disillusionment with the war itself did not unsettle citizen-soldier masculinity as the ideal archetype for middle-class men, which retained hegemony even after the war amongst soldiers and civilians alike.

The diary of Arthur Grahame West is atypical, as it was published in 1919 under the title *The Diary of A Dead Officer, Being the Posthumous Papers of Arthur Graeme West*, by West's long-time friend "Joad." A decade after this initial publication, the original diary was recovered, and it was revealed that Joad had edited the transcript of the diary before submitting it for publication. Joad's edited version of the document was created as a piece of pacifist propaganda; he opted to embellish the details of West's experience by inserting events and details that were not present originally. More importantly, Joad also chose to distort certain information: for

example, his introduction to the 1919 edition claimed that West had never been interested in sporting culture or school pride. He notes that West was “obviously unathletic...in a community where skill at games was the only passport to popularity and the only measure of worth...worse than this he was clever—at least he was concerned with books; he was also a naturalist.”²³⁶ Joad attempts to illustrate to his readership that West did not conform to the dominant male archetype associated with athleticism, by painting West instead as the ideal man from the early Victorian era: the well-read naturalist. In reality West was an avid cricket player, and had been enrolled in the OTC at Oxford for four years before joining the military. Jode reinforces his false contention soon after, mentioning that West was “conspicuously unathletic...but a great walker,” which again lauds the attributes of the early Victorian schoolboys who spent their leisure time rambling in the countryside.²³⁷ Furthermore, Jode attempts to justify the absence of pacifism in the diary by arguing that West’s “feeling of hatred for violence rarely comes out in the diary,” because “it was always there, but somehow it was taken so much for granted, even by himself, that it rarely finds expression...”²³⁸

Joad’s revisions reveal that he clearly understood how athleticism and officers’ training programs fostered in students the virtues of the citizen-soldier. To question and challenge this form of masculinity, Joad used West’s death (and life) to falsely portray his friend as having rejected this culture wholesale. In order to construct a narrative to support his own political agenda, Joad strategically depicted West as a reluctant volunteer who — like Harold Macklin —

²³⁶ Arthur Graeme West, *The Diary of A Dead Officer, Being the Posthumous Papers of Arthur Graeme West* (London: George Allen & UNWIN, Ltd., 1919), ix.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, xi.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, xiii.

thought it best to “go with the crowd,” rather than as an eager recruit who embraced the virtues celebrated in the citizen-soldier ideal. The fact that Joad found it necessary to commit this act of forgery after the war had ended illustrates that the citizen-soldier hegemony still existed and was challenged by ardent pacifists.

Two weeks prior to war’s end, Harry Drinkwater (now an officer) found himself face-to-face with a medical inspector who judged him fit to continue service after a light injury. “I was somewhat surprised at their decision,” wrote Drinkwater, “but the war was still on and I could only conclude that the need was great...I almost shrank from going back to France...I left with very mixed feelings.”²³⁹ Though Drinkwater had tired of the war itself, he was nevertheless willing to perform his duty, for that was the job of the citizen-soldier; he returned to his post without protest. Fortunately for Drinkwater, the war ended before he returned to the front line, so he did not fight in France again. Still considered fit for duty, the Army transferred him to Egypt to serve another year, which extended his service beyond the First World War. During this time, he did not record his thoughts on his collective experience in France.

Years later, in 1927, Drinkwater wrote a brief memoir of his life which included the following passage about his service during the First World War:

I did not feel the elation and relief that possibly one might think would follow the strain of so long a time...for those who had done any great amount of service in the fighting area, had left one, as a legacy, with dulled senses and a lack of ability to appreciate the conditions which one might be in for the moment, good, bad or indifferent. When I contemplated the many incidents that had taken place since November 1915 when I first crossed to France, I was inclined to believe Shakespeare when he wrote: ‘There’s a divinity that shapes our ends, Rough-hew them how we will’.²⁴⁰

Drinkwater neither condemns England’s involvement in the war, nor expresses regret about his decision to enlist in the military. Rather, this passage indicates that his masculinity was

²³⁹ Drinkwater, 372.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

malleable, adapting to the violence of trench warfare even as it eroded his senses and extended his stoicism back to the home front. Drinkwater concludes his brief recollection of wartime experiences with a quote from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, demonstrating a continuing fatalism: in Act Five, Scene Two of the play, Hamlet comes to terms with his inability to control the events of his life, accepting God's will in planning his fate. This moment is significant to the plot, as it indicates a transformation in Hamlet's character from a brutish, unsettled soldier into an honorable man. Drinkwater's decision to include this passage shows that he understood his survival of the war to depend on fate, rather than a particularly masculine skill set. His memoir therefore illustrates the transformation undergone by many middle-class men after enlistment: from eager volunteers motivated by a fervent sense of duty and patriotism, to a necessarily stoic attitude as they struggled to uphold the image and expectations of the citizen-soldier in the chaos of battle.

Unlike West, who expressed uncertainty about his own ability to fulfill masculine expectations as an officer, Mackay never questioned his role in the military despite the carnage and bloodshed he witnessed. Even after years of service, Mackay's diary reveals him to revere officers and other military men. This sentiment is evident in his entry on 12 May 1918: "Major Wilson now promoted Lieut. Colonel. Thank God! He is a magnificent fellow, a splendid gentleman and a born soldier."²⁴¹ Mackay's word choice is particularly telling, as he honors the Lieutenant Colonel Wilson by describing him as both a "gentleman," referring to his domestic role on the home front, as well as a "born soldier." Perhaps unconsciously, Mackay expresses idolization for citizen-soldier masculinity. His sustained interest in military affairs and his

²⁴¹ Mackay, "Arras, 1917-1918."

excitement regarding promotions demonstrates a continued devotion to the military, and the associated virtues of the citizen-soldier.

In the last month of the war, Mackay's journal entries appear contented and cheerful, reflecting his ample amount of leisure time. On 30 August 1918 he commented "THE WAR IS SPLENDID!," referring to all the rugby he was playing. Each week thereafter began with a bolded title. From 11 October to 11 November 1918, titles read "BOCHE RETIRING ALONG WHOLE FRONT," and: "WAR AS I LIKE IT TO BE, (22nd October 1918) Easy day. Played football against the sergeants. Won by 5 goals to 2."²⁴² Such entries suggest that the end of the war was relaxing for Mackay, who found great joy in playing games and hearing news of the enemy's retreat. His comment that this constituted "war as [he] liked it to be" alludes to his distaste for the violence of trench warfare to which he was subjected for the past three years; clearly, he had had enough of the bombardments and mental torment, yet nevertheless remained happy and proud of his identity as a citizen-soldier. Mackay's last entry reflects on his wartime experience:

I was there when he [the German Kaiser] made his last bid for that city, when the Division was hustled down to Champagne, and pitched into line at Compiègne, and where we had to carry out our counter-attacks on July 23rd. and succeeding days, which, carried on at every point of the line, have sent the enemy back over his much-vaunted Hindenburg line, cleared the coast of Belgium, and taken us into territory we have not seen since August, 1914. Now we have pushed forward over the Loos Battlefield of 1915, past Lens and Lille, and up to the gates of Tournai. In all my experience there has not been such an eventful period. It has been great for a mere schoolboy like myself to be present during these great shows.²⁴³

Mackay's final entry shows him to be proud of his service on the Western Front. Like Drinkwater, he never condemns the war, instead emphasizing that it was a great experience for a

²⁴² Robert Lindsay Mackay, "Loos-Scheldt 1918," *Robert Lindsay Mackay's First World War Diary*, <http://lu.softxs.ch/mackay/Text/Diary10.html>.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

“schoolboy.” Mackay understands the war and its horrors to constitute the ultimate test of manliness and views it as a profitable experience, evincing a continued belief in the citizen-soldier ideal. Moreover, his careful description of each stage of the war — from Champagne to Tournai — illustrates his pride in his unit for defeating the German enemy. Overall, Mackay’s diary depicts a young man who strove to record his honorable service to God and country. In spite of the friends he lost and the brutality of trench warfare, Mackay continued to believe in the virtues promoted by the citizen-soldier ideal. He spent the last day of the war searching for the grave of his friend, John McIntosh, who was “killed at Neuve Chappelle,” but only found “gun pits,” with “No graves nearby.”²⁴⁴ The next day he recorded: THE END OF THE GREAT WAR 11 a.m. 11th. NOVEMBER, 1918.²⁴⁵ Afterwards, Mackay led a prosperous life and eventually served as an army surgeon during the Second World War. He was undoubtedly a man who continued to harbor great faith in the masculine virtues of the citizen-soldier.²⁴⁶

After months of fighting, Brookes spent his last days in the military as a patient and then as head orderly in a hospital at Epsom Downs. Brookes was not confident that he would soon be relieved of his duties: “As far as I can see, I will be here for “duration of war,” but one never knows what will turn up and upset my calculations.”²⁴⁷ Brookes’ last entry provides valuable insight on his final thoughts about the war, as well as his mental disposition at the time of demobilization:

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Mackay, “Autobiography of Robert Lindsay Mackay.”

²⁴⁷ Brookes, 105.

*I regret to say, that since the 1st July 1916, none of my letters have been answered by my friends, for they are either killed or missing, as I have seen from the letters returned with this marked on them. My best chum rifleman G A Dear, I much regret to say is missing, and I fear that he is dead...However, I will never regret joining the army so early in the war, nor my going to France and spending the winter of 1914/1915 in the trenches, although conditions were so bad. It has certainly made me take a different view of human nature and life in general, and more than ever appreciate the benefits of HOME...*²⁴⁸

Although Brookes mourns and worries about his dead and missing friends, he nevertheless establishes a stoic citizen-soldier tone. He depicts his soldierly experience as a hardship successfully endured: neither bullets nor the harsh conditions of Winter 1914 in the trenches had crushed him, and he claims to personify the virtues of endurance, pride, and teamwork instilled in him since public school. Yet even as he describes the war as a character-building experience, he, like Drinkwater, entertains mixed emotions about it: though proud of his service, Brookes loathes the nature of trench warfare and seeks to avoid it without losing face:

*... although it may not seem Noble, I must say I am quite willing to finish my soldier's career in this campaign [as a hospital orderly], the beauties of the country around the famous Epsom Downs, having certainly had enough of active service at the Front during the 10 months I spent in Flanders. FINIS*²⁴⁹

Brookes prefaces the confession that he no longer wants to fight by acknowledging that “it may not seem Noble” to his readers. He is aware that this sentiment might be perceived as lacking the qualities required of the citizen-soldier ideal, and takes care to explain his willingness to continue dutifully as a soldier, even as he considered his dues on the front line paid: he had “had enough of active service.” Brookes’ last lines emphasize his service record and ability to endure the hardships of war, with references to his service at Flanders (renowned for the slaughter of over a million Allied and German soldiers). His diary serves to record and reinforce his successful adherence to the virtues of the citizen-soldier.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Brookes, 106.

Macklin, who thought it best to “go with the crowd” and subsequently found himself enlisted, recalled in his memoir that “Somehow I managed to keep a sense of honour and dignity and sometimes even found humour in my life as a soldier.”²⁵⁰ Despite his antipathy towards volunteering, and his regret for not complaining more to the medical examiner at the time, he takes pride in keeping a “sense of honour and dignity” throughout the war. In this instance, Macklin — like Drinkwater, Brookes and Mackay — found his experience in the war rewarding and character-building, evincing his continued belief in the masculinity proscribed by the virtues of the citizen-soldier.

The men who survived the war and reflected on their experiences afterward all shared mixed feelings about their role as soldiers. Even as they expressed pride in their service, and viewed battle as a valuable rite of passage to their identity-formation, middle-class men could not escape the mental stress that accompanied witnessing constant violence and destruction. Their individual struggles to perform middle-class virtues of masculinity in an atmosphere of relentless chaos and death irrevocably shaped their identities as middle-class men; in effect, the war became part of a ritual maturation that made it impossible to return to the lives they had led in their youth.

Letters of Condolence

The families of fallen soldiers received a letter from the government to notify them of their sons’ death, which typically included a few generic lines about his duty and heroism in battle. But the most meaningful letters were sent by the deceased’s comrades, for men did not take the loss of

²⁵⁰ Harold Macklin, “Shall I Get To Blighty?,” *Shall I Get to Blighty?* <http://shalligetoblighy.co.uk>.

their friends lightly and often felt compelled to write their relatives in condolence. Men rarely included in these letters the horrid details of death, instead describing their fallen comrades as the ideal citizen-soldier who performed his duty so selflessly and well that it cost him his life.

Letters of condolence thus provide a useful source to examine the prevalence of citizen-soldier virtues during and after men's service, as they elicit not only the values and mindset of their authors, but also those perceived to be harbored by intended audiences on the home front as well.

When Wilbert Spencer was killed in action, his family received three separate letters. One came from the officer in charge of letters home; it was vague and stoic, and he apologized for not being able to find the body or report sooner. The other two letters were penned by the men Spencer commanded, most of whom were much older than their seventeen-year-old officer. They described Spencer's character and performance by lauding his soldierly virtues, using the language of masculinity to honor the fallen. After explaining the circumstances in which he died, one soldier penned:

In expressing my own personal sympathy I am also voicing the feelings of the whole of D Company; no officer was more liked by his men than he; he had endeared himself to us all by his fearlessness in action, his never failing cheerfulness and devotion to the men at all times. So fond were the men of him that some of them actually wept when they heard of his death – and these were strong brave fellows who earned the commendation of the Commanding Officer by their courage and steadfastness under heavy fire and in difficult circumstances.²⁵¹

The traits listed to describe Spencer align with the values middle-class men were charged by society to uphold: he endeared himself through fearlessness in action and a selfless devotion to his men. Additionally, the author emphasizes that “strong brave fellows” who were “courageous” and “steadfast” “actually wept” when he died. This detail demonstrates the degree to which

²⁵¹ Spencer, 417.

Spencer was respected as a citizen-soldier; the stoicism of his peers could only be broken by his death.

The other letter Spencer's family received was authored by a Major who comments that their son's soldiering abilities were admired despite his short experience in the trenches:

*I feel I must write and tell you how greatly we all deplore the loss of your gallant son. He was universally liked... He met his death gallantly leading and urging his men on. His death is a great loss to the Regiment and he could be badly spared. He was always cheery and bright, never down-hearted... Always willing to do anything he was asked, and did it well too. He had the makings of a fine soldier who would have been a great credit to the Regiment and the Army. But it has pleased God to call him to his own.*²⁵²

On two separate occasions the Major identifies Spencer as "gallant," a word often associated with performance on the rugby field, and which can be found frequently in the boy scout manual and other popular literature. He, too, describes Spencer as "cheery and bright," "willing to do anything he was asked." Such a statement evinces the Major's notion of the ideal citizen-soldier as willing to follow orders without question. Yet he uses the perfect continuous conditional tense, "would have been," to demonstrate his own perception that Spencer never fully achieved this status due to his untimely death. His statement shows that conceptualizations of the citizen-soldier varied within the military hierarchy. The letter's final sentence indicates that fatalism served as a comforting mechanism, attributing death to the workings of fate rather than the consequence of war.

The parents of Paul Jones, the reluctant grocer who requested a transfer, received dozens of letters expounding remorse for the loss of their son after he was shot by a sniper through the porthole of his tank. Many of the letter-writers were his instructors from public school and former Dulwich schoolmates; others came from the men he served alongside. An officer for

²⁵² Ibid., 429.

whom Jones served as a subaltern wrote: “No officer of mine was more popular. He was efficient, very keen, and a most gallant gentleman. His crew loved him and would follow him anywhere. Such men as he are few and far between. I am certain he didn't know what fear was.”²⁵³ The author portrays Jones as the ideal citizen-soldier by attesting to his leadership, wit and fearlessness. The inclusion of the entire company and the use of “we” displays the sense of camaraderie amongst these men. In similar fashion, another friend described him as “much loved and admired, and so sadly missed by so many. He was fearless, strong and capable.”²⁵⁴

Another comrade wrote:

*What appealed to me most in Paul was the combination in him of boyhood and manhood. There was not the slightest attempt at pretense, not the slightest sign of precociousness, no desire to ape the tone or the airs of those among whom he worked. On another side of his character he was in every respect a man. He tackled all problems of a serious nature with a grasp of the subject which might well be the envy of a thoughtful man...His hours off duty were spent well and wisely. A certain period was always given to healthy exercise, and then would come, almost as a matter of course, hours of fruitful reading.*²⁵⁵

This comrade, who clearly knew Jones well, dichotomizes his personality into boyhood and manhood. He uses the term “boyhood” to evoke positive qualities of modesty and humility, but spends the bulk of the letter complimenting Jones’ “manliness” by attributing to him all the characteristics of the ideal middle-class man. The author understands this ideal masculinity to comprise both physical strength and intellectual prowess, as evinced by his comment that Jones spent his free time “well and wisely,” in exercise and “fruitful reading.” Thus he identifies the cornerstone attribute of the ideal middle-class man: a mixture of athleticism and intellectualism dedicated to self-improvement.

²⁵³ Jones, 3326.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 3385.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 3367.

Even on the home front in 1917, after the realities of war had been made more apparent to civilians, a classical teacher at Dulwich sent Jones' family an illustration of their son and a letter, which read in part "...He was indeed, as he grew older, just one of those men whom we could least of all spare in these days, the very embodiment in himself of all that is best in the public school spirit, the very incarnation of self-sacrifice and devotion."²⁵⁶ Although the war had claimed many former Dulwich students' lives, this Classical teacher still retained a belief in the "public school spirit," and thought it the best means to console Jones' bereaved parents. This excerpt, also printed on the inside cover of the 1918 publication of his letters to offer a first impression of Jones, further evinces that his embodiment of the citizen-soldier was idolized by society at large.

Two excerpts from the autobiography of H.E.L. Mellersh (published 1978) directly address the role of the middle-class, and serve to substantiate my claims. Mellersh demonstrates an awareness of the origins of middle-class volunteerism, distinguishing soldiers' disillusionment with the war from their belief in their cause (and, implicitly, themselves). He writes:

The generation that came of age in England in time to fight in the First World War was trained to it with a sort of sublime unconsciousness. There was no conscription in the land, no propaganda - or not so that you would notice it...but on the other hand there was a tradition of loyalty and a thing called the OTC, both of which one accepted as unquestioningly as compulsory games... I and my like entered the war expecting a heroic adventure and believing implicitly in the rightness of our cause; we ended it greatly disillusioned as to the nature of the adventure but still believing that our cause was right and that we had not fought in vain.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 3404.

²⁵⁷ The title of this publication reads "book 2" as Mellersh originally published, *Schoolboy Into War 1914*, a novel about a First World War infantryman based on his own experiences. Mellersh's autobiography (referenced here) was first published in 1978.

H.E.L. Mellersh, *Schoolboy Into War 1914: Book 2: The Autobiography* (Kindle-Book, Leicester: Matador, 2015), 167.

Mellersh describes citizen-soldier hegemony as a “sublime unconsciousness” to which his generation was trained, affirming not only that it was constructed, but also that it functioned as common sense to society at large. His reference to compulsory games verifies my claim that the militarization of leisure time contributed to the construction of middle-class masculinity, and — most importantly to this thesis — he distinguishes between disillusionment with the war, and the widespread belief that “our cause was right.” This continued belief in the justness of the English cause speaks to the continuance of citizen-soldier hegemony, and the ideal virtues of middle-class masculinity to which soldiers like Mellersh still aspired.

In the decades following the war, many came to regard English volunteerism as the propensity to follow blindly. This belief lends itself to historical narratives attributing volunteerism to a sense of patriotic duty, and which — I have argued — do not account for the historical processes of masculine hegemony. Mellersh addresses and debunks this myth by stating: “We were not mere starry-eyed morons, incapable of thinking for ourselves... We grew up and were trained in an atmosphere of seriousness, and regard for duty and loyalty; and, by in large, we responded to that atmosphere.”²⁵⁸ Mellersh’s reflections authenticate my claim that many middle-class men volunteered for war in response to social pressure to embody the ideal man, defined by duty, loyalty, and other citizen-soldier attributes. This problematizes the notion that men who answered Lord Kitchner’s call were “starry-eyed morons” who left the war disillusioned and regretful, as well as narratives that maintain the citizen-soldier identity was constructed only after men’s experience with combat. Instead Mellersh attests, as this thesis has shown, that middle-class men had long been inculcated with the citizen-soldier mindset. The

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

militarization of leisure activities since 1840 and intense social pressure from both state and society in 1914 made the idea of soldiering appear to be common sense.

Building on the first two chapters, which tracked the rise of citizen-soldier hegemony in the half-century preceding the First World War, this chapter has argued that citizen-soldier virtues remained dominant even after middle-class men experienced war. From the militarization of their leisure time, to the propaganda promulgated by the White Feather Campaign, music halls, and state posters, middle-class volunteers were inundated since boyhood with rhetoric and symbolism promoting the figure of the citizen-soldier as the ideal man, which functioned to induce volunteerism in 1914. This chapter has shown that soldiers internalized citizen-soldier virtues as the apogee of ideal masculinity, and struggled to uphold social expectations that they conform to them in the violent and deadly environment of stagnant industrialized war. Despite the violence of trench warfare and the disillusionment it produced, the men examined in this chapter held fast to their sense of duty and pride. Their masculine identities, inscribed since birth, weathered the hell-fire of service in France and followed them home to England.

CONCLUSION

To claim that men volunteered to fight in the First World War due to a sense of patriotism or thirst for adventure is too simplistic, and fails to account for historical processes. This thesis has shown that the educated middle classes did not enlist into England's army unthinkingly. Instead, they were motivated by anxiety and the desire to attain citizen-soldier status, which English society revered above all other constructs of masculinity. Performance in combat, opportunities for adventure, and the ability to lead beyond the playing field all qualified middle-class men to embody the ideal archetype. Despite their differing perceptions of duty — for men who joined due to “irresistible social pressure” had internalized expectations of masculinity just as much as those who expressed eagerness to see battle, expressing it instead as a form of anxiety — all shared a common impetus to volunteer. This, I argue, was because each man was a product of his middle-class upbringing, which demanded deference to authority, patriotism, stoicism in the face of danger, the ability to endure violence, pride, camaraderie and honor.

Contrary to dominant historical narratives, the violence of trench warfare did not dismantle citizen-soldier hegemony. Stoic attitudes and fatalism allowed men to maintain their manliness when faced with the horrors of war, as was expected of ideal middle-class men. When they reflected on violence in the trenches or their fallen comrades, soldiers described their service as an experience that made them better men; by fulfilling social expectations (as well as their own), middle-class men became celebrated heroes. Thus, I contend, the citizen-soldier construct which attained hegemony in decades before the First World War lived on as a dominant masculine archetype even after men's wartime service was complete.

The argument made in this thesis does not intend to deny the harrowing effects of war. As soldiers' stoicism and fatalism shows, the war itself was a violent, deadly, chaotic experience. Rather, this thesis seeks to contribute to a growing niche of historical research on the construction and durability of a particular masculine construct. Gender studies has increasingly recognized the contributions made and challenges faced by women during the First World War, but analysis of the masculine is often neglected and folded into traditional narratives of naïve patriotism. I hope that this research can emphasize the essentiality of masculinity to understanding the First World War and its largest group of volunteers: the middle class. For individual men with subjective identities fielded the British Army; men who understood their gender not only through two decades of inscribed life experience, but also a half-century of culturally constructed hegemonic virtues which must be accounted for when analyzing the volunteerism and experiences of the citizen-soldier in battle.

The research presented in this thesis can be read in a positive or a negative light. With respect to the security of the nation-state, cultivation of citizen-soldier identities is essential. The modern nation-state depends on the ability to field a military occupied by hundreds of thousands of men and women in active service, with a large stock to draw from the national reserves as well. On the other hand, this thesis has shown how masculine hegemony — socially constructed and influenced by external factors — created anxiety for men, and made military service seem like common sense. Even though most men consider the military as one of many possible career paths, and understand the decision to be a choice, there remains a strong possibility (even, as this thesis has shown, a probability) that their decision has been informed by toys, games, literature and other environmental exposure from childhood. It is the subliminal nature of how society

cultivates consent for volunteerism in times of war or peace, as well as the volition of the individual to volunteer, that makes citizen-soldier masculinity so scary.

This thesis is useful because the phenomenon of volunteerism is not isolated to England in the First World War; this methodological framework can be applied to many Western nations in various wars throughout the twentieth century and into the present. Studies of masculinity provide alternative explanations for psychological disorders that plague men, the nature of revolutions, as well as the prolonged nature of uprisings such as the Palestinian Intifada, as historian Julie Peteet illustrates. Masculinity deserves more attention as a category for analysis, especially regarding the First World War. As Mosse and Winters show, idolization of militarized masculinities was present in all of the Western nations that participated in the First World War. The presence of citizen-soldier masculinity among Western nation-states may be an under-appreciated catalyst for the start of the First World War.

During the interwar years (1918-1938), citizen-soldier masculinity remained a hegemonic archetype in England. The nation's success in 1918 reaffirmed citizen-soldier masculinity as a necessary means to safeguard the nation-state. Additionally, England's victory in the largest Western conflict to date further secured the idolization of battlefield heroics and men dressed in khaki. Yet while England may have won the war, they were heavily in debt, and the empire stretched thin; consequently many of their colonies gained independence in the interwar years. The English regarded this loss of territory, as they had in the 1890s, in terms of diminishing vitality: an empire on the verge of collapse. The rise of the Third Reich in Germany, the Communist Party in Russia and the United States as a world power reified the need for strong men who would willingly sacrifice themselves for their national community. Thus the

conviction of war as a noble cause, and the necessity of citizen-soldier identities were embodied in English culture throughout the Second World War as well.

As this thesis has shown, gender is always constructed. The citizen-soldier masculinity analyzed above has not been dismantled. It is cultivated and exists today as it did one hundred years ago, and will continue to so as long as the nation-state exists. Evidence of cultivating consent through childhood gender conscription is evident in many facets of society. The aisles of children's toy stores are separated according to gender, with pink colors emphasizing femininity and blue the masculine. In each aisle the toys are dramatically different: boys' aisles contain GI Joes, toy cars and trains, action figures and toy soldiers, celebrating industry and war. Girls, on the other hand, are encouraged to play with barbies, toy horses and kitchen sets, emphasizing beauty and domesticity. Even though toys are offered in a greater variety today than in the 1890s, and often molded in plastic, they continue to embody similar meanings. An obvious parallel can be drawn between the toys of the late nineteenth and early twenty-first century. The modern "gamer" belongs to a community that is only just starting to break the gender barrier, as the field is dominated primarily by men. The American Armed Forces increasingly look to young gamers as the future body of their drone warfare units, for these boys hold the prerequisite skills and have already spent hundreds of hours imagining themselves as soldiers through virtual role-play and competition.

While the experiences of most cannot speak for all, prevailing trends of middle-class volunteers have been presented in this thesis. Middle-class men were the products of their militarized upbringing, and their belief in the honorable nature of their service continued even after the war's end. While they may have hated the violence of trench warfare, the loss of their

friends, combat injuries, sleepless nights, poor food, rats, etc., they did not hate the role they played in defeating Germany and its allies. Middle-class men were proud of their service: so much so, that even the “disillusion[ment] as to the nature of the adventure,” as Mellersh states, could not unsettle their masculinity. The continuity of this masculine archetype into the present, despite disillusionment and the changing nature of boyhood toys and literature, speaks to the inherent nature of the problem as well as the advantages of using masculinity to adapt our historical understanding of the nation, volunteerism and war.

Chapter III Appendix



Figure One²⁵⁹

Drinkwater is pictured with his comrades after they all received a hat as their first piece of uniform.

²⁵⁹ Drinkwater, 7.



Bernard Bernard Joseph Brookes²⁶⁰



Arthur Graeme West²⁶¹



Wilbert Spencer²⁶²

²⁶⁰ Bernard Joseph Brookes, "My Grandfathers First World War Diary," *My Grandfathers First World War Diary*, <http://www.bobbrookes.co.uk/index.htm>.

²⁶¹ "Arthur Graeme West," *Discover War Poets*, <http://warpoets.org.uk/worldwar1/poets-and-poetry/arthur-graeme-west/>.

²⁶² Spencer, cover illustration.



Harry Drinkwater²⁶³



Paul Mainwaring Jones²⁶⁴



Harold Macklin²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Drinkwater, 8.

²⁶⁴ Jones, 9.

²⁶⁵ Macklin, "Shall I get to Blighty."



George Culpitt²⁶⁶



Trench life, Drinkwater and his comrades²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶ Culpitt, "Chapter 11."

²⁶⁷ Drinkwater, 25.



Robert Lindsay Mackay (right) with “Poor Alen Whyte” (left: KIA)²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ Mackay, “Autobiography of Robert Lindsay Mackay.”

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