



As I entered
The Army.



Present
Condition.



Peace

Declared!

Simon Harold Walker

PHYSICAL CONTROL,
TRANSFORMATION
AND DAMAGE
IN THE FIRST
WORLD WAR

War Bodies

Physical Control, Transformation and Damage in the First World War

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Simon Harold Walker

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For my sons, Oliver and Isaac:

You are my heroes.

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Preface

This book examines the processes by which British male civilians became soldiers during the First World War. It contributes to the historiography on the British experience of the war by placing the human body at the centre of the analysis and considering the impact of bodies under the control and care of the British army. It expands upon the sociological literature of 'the body' by establishing how these theoretical concepts are evident within the empirical research. Through an analysis of official records and publications, it explores how the state sought to transform the male civilian body for military purposes. A significant aspect of this research stems from the personal experiences of the men who served by painstaking consideration of their letters, diaries and oral testimonies.

This research illustrates that the body was a core concern for the British military as well as being central in perceptions of physical worth within British society during the First World War. Between 1914 and 1918 British men's bodies were assessed, categorized, improved, damaged, recovered, repaired and destroyed. From enlistment to the end of service, soldier's bodies were repurposed for the pursuit of victory as the British military and the government focused on constructing, conditioning and controlling the bodies of regular, territorial, volunteer and conscript soldiers. In a letter to his mother, Lieutenant Godfrey classified the war as a 'different existence altogether' and indeed it was for many men whose bodies became fitter, healthier and more skilled, while paradoxically also allowing them to resist military control, be wounded, harm their own bodies and die. This work, therefore, explores the male military body within the chaos of the First World War, not simply as a faceless man in uniform but as an individual whose 'war body' was a site of conflict focused upon the struggle for agency, indoctrination and military action.

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Abbreviations

AMAB	Army Medical Advisory Board
AMS	Army Medical Service
ASC	Army Service Corps
ATA	Army Temperance Association
AWOL	Absent Without Leave
BMJ	British Medical Journal
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
CB	Confined to Barracks
CO	Conscientious Objector
CO	Commanding Officer
DCM	District Court-Martial
GOC	General Commanding Officer
IMS	Indian Medical Service
IWM	Imperial War Museum
JRAMC	Journal of Royal Army Medical Corps
MO	Medical Officer
MOH	Medical Officers of Health
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
POW	Prisoner of War
RAMC	Royal Army Medical Corps
RFC	Royal Flying Corps
TNA	The National Archives



Figure 1 Private Broadhead and his surprise bedfellow, sketch by William Broadhead. Sheffield Archives. Private Papers of W. Broadhead.

Introduction: 'A different existence'

In 1917, 19-year-old Lieutenant Godfrey wrote to his mother and claimed, 'The war is an extraordinary life altogether: one feels as if one had got right out of the ordinary world one knows, and been pitched into a different existence altogether.'¹ Godfrey's experience of the First World War was not unique, the experiences that he described in his private papers are echoed repeatedly in the accounts of thousands of men who experienced similar trials and tribulations as they served their country between 1914 and 1918. Godfrey's words succinctly encapsulated the reality of serving during the First World War as men's bodies were recruited, assessed, categorized, adapted, improved, organized, wounded, praised and rejected over the course of the war between 1914 and 1918. It is this association between the First World War and the British soldier's body that this book considers while questioning who held control over the transforming bodies as these men became, not always entirely willingly, soldiers.

Having joined up in 1915, Godfrey was eventually dispatched to the Western front to take charge of a labour company bound for Mt Kemmel. His letters home and diary entries invoke images of the adventures typical of a British soldier during the First World War. Within these pages he described marching, basic training, sleeping in shared and single officer billets and being disgusted with frequently insanitary conditions such as when he passed through 'the filthiest port I have ever seen.'² As an officer Godfrey's experiences were often more varied than that of his rank and fellow brethren. He recounted 'shepherding a mob of [drunk] miners' onto their ship for France', eating fine meals and drinking 'occasional champagne' as he and his fellow officer chums found fun and sport in their postings abroad. His experiences in the war were certainly not all fun and games. Later, Godfrey described how the thundering of field guns made his body tremble, 'the occasional 60-pdr really shook you', and explained that during the most intense battles the bodies of the dead remained where they fell as 'it was pointless to get more people killed burying corpses.'³ As time wore on, Godfrey wrote in his diary how the constant pressure of war and particularly the regular gas attacks were affecting him. 'I am in a funk most of the time; but we are only mortal, and everyone admits the same at first. I don't think I show the fact more than anyone else, which is the main point.'⁴ Godfrey endured combat and injury several times, and was finally wounded off the frontline to be returned home to recover in England after a severe gassing.⁵ Once his body had healed he returned to the frontline and saw the rest of war out in Belgium until being demobilized in January 1919 while suffering with the Spanish influenza.⁶ Godfrey's account continually reiterated the importance the individual body played in the creation and implementation of the

British soldier during the course of the First World War. As Godfrey himself stated, the physical experience of the war was like a completely different world. Men found their bodies transformed and changed while also losing control over them as they were harnessed and dispatched for combat. By the end of the war, no individual man's body returned in the same condition in which it had left. Damaged, transformed or destroyed, the scars of the First World War bore deep physically and psychologically after long periods of service and hardship that placed the British male body at the centre of the conflict.

War bodies: Locating the male British body within the First World War

It is the focus of this book to explore the creation and translation of these scars by viewing the First World War from the perspective of the British bodies that fought within it. The body and the physical experience of the war was a unifying factor of the First World War that affected all associated with it. Unquestioningly, no matter what occurred to an individual during this period, it is certain that the impact of the first all-encompassing global war was felt through, demonstrated upon and often changed their bodies. This book expands on this assertion by considering the First World War from the perspective of the British male militarized body as a vehicle to understand the experience of transformation, conditioning, destruction and rehabilitation for the British men who served. New soldiers like Godfrey found themselves clothed, directed, abused and controlled as they adapted to military service. From the food they ate, the haircut they wore, to the places that they served and the way that they relaxed, the British Army remained a constant controlling presence. Persistent attention was paid to soldier's bodies by the army from enlistment to demobilization as men were tailored for service. Men's behaviours were continually controlled by the threat of negative consequence being enacted upon their bodies. This book builds upon the existing historiography and social theory to explore the extent to which the militarized body was central to the experiences of men in the first decades of the twentieth century and how this focus impacted on men's self-reflected identity as they served. It also investigates how soldier's bodies became sites for conflict as men's agency clashed with the agenda and control of the British Army. During enlistment, the army, the British government and the public colluded to project a physical and masculine ideal that many men appropriated for presentation and validation in exchange for a uniform and service number. Within training and active service, conflict was not limited to antagonist armies but occurred between individual soldiers and their military leaders as men endured significant physical transformations as well as extensive restrictions. With each curtailing of liberty, the British Army often faced a breach in conformity elsewhere as soldiers conspired to find ways to damage, often inadvertently, the bodies that their military trainers and commanding officers had so intrusively sought to improve. Furthermore, combat and the conditions unique to the First World War proved particularly destructive upon the army's designs on the body as mud, disease

and wounds incapacitated men and removed them from the fray. As a result, this meant in contrast that the men became a burden on the institution that had tailored them so carefully for battle.

Central to the theme of this book is the argument that the First World War heralded a new level of scrutiny, control, categorization, cultural consideration and state-level interference of the British male body. This is evident in the ways that men's bodies were continually assessed, reviewed and directed as part of the process of selection, improvement and regulated military life. Yet, this does not mean that there was blanket acceptance over the loss of physical autonomy that accompanied indoctrination and military service. Godfrey's assertion that the war was a 'different existence altogether' was just as true for the British Army as it was for soldiers who served within it.⁷ Not only did the British military face the largest conflict in its recent memory but it was also required to meet the enemy with a combination of volunteer, conscript, territorial and regular soldiers. With each group of men came unique physical idiosyncrasies, priorities and demands which the British Army attempted to overcome through training, indoctrination, patriotism and control. The New Armies presented significant issues for maintaining discipline as new 'soldiers' often complained and protested vociferously about the army's inability, or apparent reluctance, to meet their physical needs, despite the promises to the contrary often made during recruitment. This was behaviour that was less likely to be witnessed in the professional soldiers who preceded them, although said men were also not without their ability to challenge the British military. Particularly as these regulars had significantly more practice historically. Faced with a fighting force constructed from all aspects of British society, the First World War raised new questions for the British Army on how to best prepare and control men's bodies as it was forced to adapt to the range of new soldiers under its command. To further complicate the issue, 1914–18 also brought new tactics, weaponry and challenges. Never the best at adapting quickly historically, the British Army had to become increasingly adept at incorporating these changes into the indoctrination and leadership of their soldiers to best direct, control and protect men's bodies at the front and behind the lines.

To explore the physical experiences of the First World War is to attempt to consider some of the most personal aspects of an individual's thoughts, actions and motivations. When engaging with the history of conflict often it is best to interpret the world that was from the words of those who experienced it first-hand. Godfrey's view of the world is clearly conveyed through the remains of his letters that were sent home as he served. His narrative as a dialogue between writer and reader presents a unique perspective of the war, personalized by Godfrey's own history and coloured by his individual experience. Alone, Godfrey can only recount an infinitesimally small aspect of the war; yet it is his voice, combined with many other voices retained through testimonies, diaries and oral history recordings, that provides the multilayered analysis that resonates throughout this book. Together these glimpses of the past allow this book to engage with the lived experiences of the men who witnessed first-hand the calamity of the First World War and crucially described their experiences through recollections of their physical hardships and transformations. For validity, official

records, newspaper articles, images and parliamentary debates provide context for these personalized, and therefore likely heavily biased, accounts. Yet, authenticity is also affirmed through repetition of events and experiences as often within testimonies men recount similar accounts of physical encounters. This is also not the first academic work to consider the body as a framework for analysis of historical conflict. It follows in the wake of several seminal investigations that will be discussed further in this chapter. However, originality stems from the detailed examination of the lived experience of the men who served and the engagement of social theories of masculinity, agency and physical control that reiterate the role of the male body at the centre of British society during the militaristic and industrialized war period at the beginning of the twentieth century and the impact of industrialized war on British society.⁸ The First World War was very much a physical conflict with a revolving cycle of preparation, stagnation and destruction of the male militarized body. It is therefore the focus of this book to explore this cycle and its impact on the British male body between 1914 and 1918.

The Victorian and Edwardian military body in public perception

In order to successfully consider the male body within the context of the First World War, it is first important to recognize that the relationship between the assessment and transformation of the body and the British military long predated 1914. The complicated relationship between the British public, the state and the military in the nineteenth century cannot be understated in terms of importance to the perceptions of the male military body within the coming war. As a prophetic social norm for the inequity that was to follow during the First World War, in the nineteenth century men of the higher classes typically enjoyed a level of respect for their military service and societal admiration long before such accolades were paid to the rankers under their command. Despite the abolishment of purchasing under the Caldwell reforms, officer service remained the purview of the gentry. Those who accepted military roles often did so as an aid to social standing, for the aesthetic of the uniform or the glamour of military command and power.⁹ According to Cunningham, class determined every minutia of the service experience in the nineteenth century as 'soldiering was traditionally an aristocratic calling and a lower-class way of life'.¹⁰ Still, in nineteenth-century Britain, soldiers and the military had maintained a tumultuous relationship with the general public which ranged from disgust and mistrust through to admiration and pride. This relationship often centred on perceptions of the men's bodies, particularly in relation to their appearance and behaviour while including aspects of class imperceptibly within the considerations of physical prowess and masculinity.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, British soldiers were more commonly considered to be licentious, drunken reprobates. This view was seemingly shared by civilians and military leaders alike, as the Duke of Wellington once famously described the rank and file as the 'scum of the earth'.¹¹ This distrust and negative image of the armed forces was made worse in the early nineteenth century after the British Army violently subdued civilians during the Peterloo 'massacre' of 1819 and the Kennington

Common Chartist rally in 1848.¹² According to John Keegan these views were also influenced by the discrepancies in class within Britain, and that by 1914 the country still remained the polarized nation for the classes it had been seventy years earlier.¹³ For the lower classes motivation for enlistment regularly lay in escapism over patriotism prior to 1914. Spiers argues that before the First World War military service stood as indicator of an individual's inability to progress successfully in society. The military was often the final option for the lowest class of men where the alternatives when work was not possible were death through poverty, the workhouse or prison.¹⁴ Both Bourne and Miller separately reiterate this lack of choice for the lowest classes but also consider that life within the rank and file could be just as bad as living on the poverty line, particularly physically in terms of sustenance, comfort and life expectancy.¹⁵ This disparaging view of servicemen came to a head around the same time in 1877 that a heartbroken mother wrote to her newly enlisted son, 'I would rather bury you than see you in a Red Coat.'¹⁶ Barnard argues that prior to the outbreak of the Boer War, upon which military personnel became heroes, voluntary soldiers were believed to have been socially deficient in some way. She quotes Frank Richards, a war veteran and author of *Old-Soldier Sahib*, who claimed, 'It was commonly believed ... that any young man who entered the Army did so either because he was too lazy to work or because he had got a girl in the family way. Hardly anybody had a good word for a soldier.'¹⁷

The rank-and-file soldier resided within a climate of ever-increasing control throughout the nineteenth century and beyond the First World War. This is reminiscent of Foucauldian notions of lost agency within institutions such as the military or prisons. Poor food and nutrition, insanitary conditions and institutional control were often part of the daily existence for most of the rank and file.¹⁸ These controlling factors on the individual were also to be found outside of the military as they were increasingly incorporated into factories and workplaces in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

By 1914 much of this attitude had changed while focus on the physical body of the soldier had exponentially increased as militarized masculine fitness dominated within British culture. Graham Dawson explains that by the start of the First World War the British military had significantly risen in cultural popularity as historical and fictional figures such as Gordon and 'Tommy Aitkens' attained hero status accompanied by growing perceptions of physical fitness in relation to military training and combat.¹⁹ This heroic visage for the British soldier, John Peck argues, owed much to the celebration of victory following the Crimean War (1853–6) and the Indian Mutiny (1857).²⁰ This ties into shift of the British military diverting its attention from domestic troubles to reinforcing colonial control. As is alluded to by John MacKenzie, gone were the aggressors against British society, replaced by the stalwart protectors of the British Empire.²¹ This public relation transition was aided, Anne Summers explains, by the growing Victorian obsession with the governing of Empire. This internalizing of militaristic ideals, she continues, would ultimately contribute to the mass voluntary move to recruitment for the war that occurred after 1914 driven by notions of 'patriotic soldiering'.²² Summer's argument is also backed up by Michael Brown, who reiterates that esteem of the military improved as a reflection of the changing political landscape

within Victorian Britain. As a beacon of the adventurous masculine heroic figure, such depictions helped to make military service a much more desirable career.²³

By the turn of the twentieth century, the popularity of the military in Britain had led to an adoption of military rhetoric and practice within society. Paramilitary groups such as Baden Powell's Scout movement which advocated enhanced fitness and military physical prowess were significantly growing in popularity. Military training regimes and drilling had also become a regular aspect of many boys' lives in private schools at the end of the nineteenth century.²⁴ Paul Deslandes considers the increasing obsession with militarized healthy bodies within his exploration of students at Cambridge and Oxford in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He argues that militaristic masculinity was intrinsically linked to the experience of young men actualizing at university prior to the war.²⁵ Deslandes uses the example of the boat race to draw similarities between terminology, training and perceptions of self that existed within the militarized indoctrination into student life at Oxbridge. He notes that students used pseudo-military terms and compared the race using terms similar to considerations of soldiers in battle.²⁶ Additionally, he claims that the rivalries between the two colleges developed the same cultural tone as was usually associated with what Dawson explains was the perception of the soldier hero.²⁷ Andrew Warwick makes a similar argument and discusses how studies and physical ability were intrinsically linked at Cambridge in the Victorian period. He notes how students were expected to maintain a peak level of fitness, by using their recreational time to hone their bodies through exercise and regularly contribute to sports and games.²⁸ Additionally, Warwick notes the ethos of endurance that students were expected to maintain resiliencethroughout. This obsession with physicality and fortitude would continue throughout the First World War as men's bodies were continually assessed for effectiveness and suitability for service.

Suitable bodies for service: 1900–14

At the heart of this book is the underlying argument that the First World War was very much experienced through the physical bodies of those within it. Within this perspective resides the means of recruitment and training that make the First World War unique in British history. Between 1914 and 1918 a vast array of men entered the armed forces, differing in class, background, education, region and religion as well as method of enlistment – be they a conscript or a volunteer, a territorial or a regular, rank and file or officer. Differences even existed in the way that they served, such as if they were infantry or artillery, combatant or non-combatant, support or frontline. It is within these significant differences that this book seeks to uncover the individual experiences of the men as their bodies interacted, were conditioned and directed during the First World War.

The militarized obsession with civilian physical prowess in Britain in the twentieth century predated the First World War by over a decade. Reform had very much been the watchword of the military since the end of the Boer War in 1902 after so many hopeful British enlistees had been declined entrance on a range of health and physical

deficiencies. In 1899, for every 1,000 enlisted men for the Boer War, 330 were rejected as unfit. In 1900, 280 out of every 1,000 men were rejected for military service.²⁹ This prompted the British government to quickly re-evaluate the state of physical fitness and health within British society. In search for a solution to the deteriorated health, particularly evident in the lowest classes, Searle argues that state turned to the military to provide a 'solution to a problem which had such grave military implications.'³⁰ This began an increase in state-directed intervention into wider public health under the objective of increasing physical effectiveness and contribution to society at the turn of the twentieth century. One of the immediate victims to this robust platform of health improvement was alcohol. Assisted by several long-standing campaigns for temperance Duncan maintains that the British public were increasingly encouraged towards physical improvement through a 'perversion of social Darwinism'.³¹

Diet also received much attention for much the same reason. Zweiniger-Bargielowska argues that in the early twentieth century the British had been forced to 'take stock of the health and physique of (its) manhood', leading to a range of improvements in relation to diet and nutrition.³² Drawing comparisons to the large numbers of rejected men for the Boer War campaign between 1899 and 1902, she notes that lower-working-class men were particularly unsuitable for military service on grounds of ill health through malnourishment. As the First World War began, much was still misunderstood about the importance of nutrition in relation to health. Searle argues that Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree's attempts at the turn of the century to determine the requirements for calories, proteins and fats for an effective healthy body were hampered by this lack of knowledge.³³ Lynda Bryder also highlights this increasing state involvement, noting that medical officers in Britain prior to the war had instituted nutritional programs in schools as an aid to improving health. The impact of the 1913 Educational Act was that by 1918 one in every three children received a meal every day at school.³⁴ According to Richard Titmuss, this focus on nutritional improvement for children also contained a wartime focus on preparation for the 'next generation of recruits', particularly as the population in Britain was also beginning to decline.³⁵

Despite the increasing attempts by the British state to improve the bodies of its citizens, by the outbreak of war in 1914, there was a significant discrepancy between the number of men willing to serve and the number of men that the British military considered physically suitable for service. In Chapter 1 the opening stages of physical assessment and military categorization upon civilian bodies during enlistment will be explored from the perspective of the men who experienced their bodies subjected to the process. This process of inclusion or exclusion proved to be significantly more complicated than perhaps hoped by the British military. David Silbey explains that despite the programmes which focused on improving national efficiency after 1901, many working-class volunteers still failed to meet the requirements for military service in 1914.³⁶ From the first moment that a British military official ordered a man to disrobe, his body began a continual series of questioning, classifications and measurement against standards that rose and fell according to the need for men on the front lines. The significance of this first stage of many men's experience of the armed forces in relation to individual acclimation and actualization within wartime British society cannot be understated. In *Civilians into Soldiers*, Newlands explains

how during the Second World War this visual and written indication of effectiveness could ostracize or glorify men as their value was determined by a military-trained medical officer.³⁷ During the First World War, this process of validation was not as complicated as what would follow two decades later. Yet, this did not make the first physical inspection any less formative for most men who served in the First World War, as their worth was decided on the appearance and capabilities of their bodies for the rest of the world to see.

Choosing men and masculinity

Interwoven with the cultural conception of the physical soldier in Britain in the years preceding and during the First World War is the impact of idealized masculinity which became synonymous with soldiering between 1914 and 1918. The scientific and popular focus on physical fitness that had arisen as part of the cultural obsession with militaristic heroics in Britain was underscored by lasting interpretations of masculinity.³⁸ Within her examination of the link between men's bodies and masculinity during the First World War, Bourke argues that men who were accepted for service often experienced a sense of social belonging and camaraderie.³⁹ Bourke explains that the men's new uniforms were an important aspect of the transitional process from civilian to soldier as they enhanced men's physicality by allowing them to present the masculinized soldier ideal.⁴⁰ Paris agrees that the wearing of a uniform served as a demonstration of masculinity but concludes that the adorning of the body in military clothing carried a message of patriotic collusion with state and irrefutable proof of physical prowess.⁴¹ This link between the presentation of the desirable body and military epitomizes the imagined socially constructed ideal of the 'proper man' within the context of the First World War that would be used to shame those who could not or would not don the uniform.

Nicoletta Gullace continues the argument by explaining that the act of wearing a uniform was regarded by many as an overt symbol of masculinity.⁴² Gullace's seminal book *The Blood of Our Sons* takes pains to demonstrate how men's citizenship became threatened as women were enlisted by the British state to sacrifice their brothers, fathers, husbands and lovers for the war effort. This war on masculinity waged by women, but directed by the British government, Gullace argues, was merciless as masculinity was welded to military service with the unenlisted civilian branded 'a coward beneath contempt'.⁴³ Added to this association was the issue of sexual viability enhanced by the projection of idealized masculinity. In her consideration of 'khaki fever' in Britain during the war, Angela Woollacott dispels the myth of sexual histrionics apparently brought on by a flash of khaki, while reiterating that a worn uniform communicated an individual's conformity to the state in a way that surpassed any other blatant demonstration of patriotism and bravery during this period.⁴⁴

Unlike any other British military conflict that came before 1914, British soldiers during the First World War were separated into four distinct groups, regulars, territorials (reservists), volunteers and conscripts.⁴⁵ These groups would contextually draw judgements within British society about the levels of heroic masculinity and

physical prowess ostensibly associated by the means by which a man gained his military uniform. Despite the emphasis on the bravery and patriotism of the volunteers, the use of volunteer men in times of war was by no means a new phenomenon within British society. From 1905, under the direction of the new war minister Richard Burton Haldane and the director of military training Major-General Douglas Haig, the British military underwent a period of significant improvement across the board, ranging from distribution of command and organization of the regiments to training and physical preparation of men's bodies.⁴⁶ Mallinson argues that much of this process focused on how to 'echelon the regulars and the auxiliaries at home', as opposed to a focus on how to organize and utilize them in the most effective way.⁴⁷ The ultimate result of these changes was the distribution of new service manuals which directed men's bodies in a variety of new ways including new tactical directions and mobilization instructions.

By the time that Lord Kitchener assumed the mantle of secretary of war on the 5 August 1914 the vastly improved British Expeditionary Force (BEF) had already been committed to service in France. A product of a decade of training and improvement, Brigadier Sir James Edmonds considered the BEF in 1914 to be 'incomparably the best trained, best organised and best equipped British Army which ever went forth to war'.⁴⁸ Still, as highly trained and skilled as the BEF were considered to be, what they held in fortitude they lacked in numbers. In 1914, Britain only had around 150,000 regular soldiers with which to field for battle and many of those were dispersed around the world as guardians of the British Empire. Recruitment had also been a continual concern as despite the widespread reforms and the increasing popularity of the military, during the interwar period of 1902–14 the regular army had consistently failed to achieve its annual target of thirty thousand recruits.⁴⁹

Support was also not to come from the newly reformed territorial forces that were theoretically supposed to fill this breach. Beckett argues in *Britain's Part Time Soldiers* that the new secretary of state for war was extremely distrustful of 'amateur' soldiers.⁵⁰ Dismissing their masculinity and physical readiness for fighting, Kitchener overtly referred to them as a 'town's clerk army' rather than actual 'soldiers' who enjoyed unprecedented levels of independence and autonomy.⁵¹ This relaxation of physical control and direction meant that the territorials, at least according to Kitchener, were unsuitable for front-line combat. Kitchener's solution instead was to raise a whole new army of volunteers as had been the traditional practice. Despite having been training and preparing their bodies for the moment they were needed; Kitchener dismissed the territorials from his plans in 1914. These part-time soldiers were dispersed into several regiments around the world in order to free up regulars from colonial outposts or to shore up gaps at the front until his army of volunteer men were physically prepared enough for battle.⁵² In an excellent demonstration of irony, the mantra of 'those who cannot, teach' is applicable, as much of the responsibility for training initially fell to territorial men. This state of affairs would continue until war pressures ironed out this prejudice and increasingly territorial trainers were replaced by returning men from the front line. By 1918, the segregation imposed by Kitchener had eroded completely. Serving in the same capacity as their fellow regulars, volunteers and conscripts, territorial men ultimately saw as much action as the rest with their bodies serving in uniformity and solidarity as a combined force with the aim of victory on the battlefields.

In terms of sheer numbers, most of the British men who served during the First World War were either volunteers or conscripts. Coming first between August 1914 and January 1916 were the volunteers encouraged by notions of duty, patriotic fever, recruitment promises, propaganda, societal pressures surrounding worth and masculinity and a sense of adventure augmented by an increasingly militarized culture. Volunteers often receive the most attention within historiography as they were the everymen, physically fit enough to pass the enlistment criteria and inexperienced enough to actively look forward to their 'adventures' abroad. Simkins argues that the Pals Battalions represent the last manifestation of 'late Victorian and Edwardian Liberalism' in that they illustrated a blend of social, political, military and economic factors that were forever changed by the continuation of war and the creation of conscription in 1916.⁵³ One hundred and forty-five service and seventy reserve battalions were eventually created, which made up 40 per cent of the British Army in the first two years of the war.⁵⁴ Motivations for enlistment are wide and will be given due consideration in the first chapter; however, it is important to note that Clive Hughes argues that for some men the war offered 'a brief respite, [and] an exciting and adventurous opportunity'. He is also keen to point out that the conception of the 'rush to colours' may be inaccurate as many men with commitments at home such as family or well-paid jobs did not immediately choose to sign up.⁵⁵ Krisztina Robert adds to this argument the role of women in aiding the war office to recruit soldiers, highlighting the link between the women's movements and the military campaign. She argues that 'in the first half of the conflict, they invited the volunteers to lead army recruiting marches hoping that the sight of female soldiers would shame "slackers into enlisting"'.⁵⁶ This is an important aspect of the construction of the British military during the war, which includes an extensive focus on the male body to be explored in detail through this book.

Finally, in 1916 conscription was introduced to meet the continually lowering rates of enlistment and to replace the partially successful Derby scheme. Mitchinson argues that this relatively unsuccessful programme implemented by Lord Derby throughout 1915 had sought to stave off full conscription by allowing men aged 18–41 to attest and then wait to be called up.⁵⁷ On 27 January 1916, the Military Service Act came into force which allowed the enforced enlistment of every British man aged between 19 and 40. Ilana R. Bet-El has conducted one of the most definitive investigations into the final selection of British soldiers during the Great War in *Conscripts*. She argues that conscripts came from all elements of life just like their regular and volunteer counterparts and that they were by no means a minority with 2,504,183 men being conscripted between January 1916 and the end of the war.⁵⁸ These conscripts joined with the 2,466,719 volunteer soldiers to become an essential part of the British Army over the course of the war. Yet, Bet-El argues that conscripts experienced particular hardships as they were enlisted as their entry after 1916 occurred during extreme pressure on the army which resulted in reduced training that was frequently made more difficult by the increasing inclusion of less physically able men to meet staffing shortages.⁵⁹

Within the four armies that served for Britain, there was a significant amount of diversity among the men. They received different training, had different experiences

and even wore different uniforms as a result of their entrance into the war effort. However, their end goal remained the same, to undergo the process of transitioning the civilian man into a fighting soldier capable of fighting the enemy and achieving victory. While there were discrepancies in the way that they were treated, all the enlisted men received some aspect of physical assessment, training and experience of service which promoted physical uniformity, compliance and efficiency. This will be considered further within this book's investigation into how men's bodies were improved, indoctrinated and controlled over the course of the war.

Care and causality: Taking care of men

As this book moves with the enlisted men into service and beyond training into conflict, the focus on the body fixates on to the pleasures, irritations, transformations and damages that men's bodies experienced as par the course of military service during the First World War. Within the rigid command structure accentuated by class status in the British Army in this period, Victorian traditions of upper-class officer paternalism spilled over into the First World War despite the unprecedented expansion of serving men. Within his examination of officer-man relations, Gary Sheffield reiterates how often officers took a paternalistic outlook for the rankers under their command.⁶⁰ This could consist of asserting and dogmatically pursuing policies that kept men from damaging the bodies that the military had trained so hard to create, or extend to the protection of said bodies through forced medical treatments or turning a blind eye to deviant behaviours. In extreme cases this could even include protecting men's bodies from physically debilitating punishment as exhausted sentries would be woken and quietly reprimanded by the NCO or the subaltern in charge rather than endure a court martial and punishment.⁶¹

This notion of care and the battle for control over the body of the serving British soldier is recurrent within the centre chapters of this book as it follows men progress through training and continued experience in service through interpreted by a myriad of physically oriented events. A pertinent example is the constant obsession with food that seemingly makes up part of every British soldier's account of the conflict. The famous expression often attributed to Napoleon that an army marches on its stomach seems correct as countless memoirs and oral testimonies reflect on the role of 'hard tack' and bully beef as a soldier's primary and often despised daily sustenance.⁶² Chapters 2 and 3 of this book take an extended look at the role of food in the sustaining, hardening and satisfying of the male military body in the First World War. The obsession with diet and food throughout the First World War demonstrates that physical sustainability and improvement within and beyond the climate of the war was an important focus for the British government and the military.

Several historians have considered the role of food within the confines of the First World War including Rachel Duffett and Andrew Robertshaw who both have reiterated that how the military scrutinized food provisions and intake minutely for the purpose of keeping the fighting men fit and healthy.⁶³ Campbell agrees with this and recognizes within *The Army Isn't All Work* how food was essential in conditioning and preparing