THE VARSITY MAN: 
MANHOOD, THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO AND THE GREAT WAR 

by 

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the relationship between masculinity and recruitment at the University of Toronto during the Great War. Through a gendered framework established by historians such as Judith Butler, masculinity is approached as a constructed process that encompasses a variety of complex relationships between the individual subject and social processes. The following questions are explored: What motivated the administration the University to instate policies that first encouraged, and then forced, male students to enter active service? How did dominant discourses of masculinity influence recruitment efforts and the subsequent movement towards mandatory military training? The research reveals that gendered understandings of war and recruitment on campus presented active service as the defining moment of manhood. Enlisting, then, was understood as more than a willingness to take up arms; it publicly signified that a man was committed to the defense of democracy and to securing the freedom of generations to come.
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INTRODUCTION

MANHOOD, THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO AND THE GREAT WAR

The grey tower of Varsity has looked down on many important happenings in the last half century, but on none so eventful as the training of earnest student soldiers on the academic grounds, or the entering of khaki-clad groups into Convocation Hall to say farewell to their Alma Mater. They moved hither and thither or marched away in light or adventurous spirit, but under the constraint of duty.

- Robert Falconer, President of the University of Toronto, 1915

During the Great War, the University of Toronto transformed itself into a military institution. The campus became home to training military troops as the Overseas Training Company, Engineering Corps and Royal Air Force took up residence on university grounds. Laboratories began producing large amounts of vital anti-toxins and chemicals as needed by the army. Student groups and associations came together to raise funds for the Canadian Red Cross and sell Victory Bonds. Classes ended early each day so that men could train and drill with the Canadian Officer’s Training Corps (C.O.T.C.) on campus, a program designed to provide military training to students alongside their academic courses. The declaration of war not only altered the purpose of university activities; it altered the very purpose of the university as the institution engaged its facilities and resources in war work.

In effect, the administration of the University of Toronto sculpted a landscape of militarism during the Great War. Every student was expected to “do their bit” and give the best part of themselves to the war effort. To this end, expectations of war work were largely dependant on gender. Gender theorists and scholars situate gender, like sexuality and race, as

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1 “The President,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1915, 2.
being ‘socially constructed.’ Rather than accepting biological classifications of male and female, gender is increasingly approached as a human construction framed by “scientific efforts to explain the cultural or social attributes or expectations imposed on human bodies.” A critical analysis of gender includes the study of how ideas of masculinity, like femininity, are socially constructed and historically constituted; gender is not static or fixed, and it varies according to time and place.

All students at the University, including men and women, were expected to give something of themselves to war work; however, guidelines and expectations of appropriate war service varied across gendered lines. Female students on campus became engaged in a variety of different wartime activities. They were instrumental in running Red Cross sewing rooms across the city and in helping prepare supplies for No. 4 University of Toronto General Hospital Overseas. Women from the university canvassed Toronto to raise funds for the war and promote the sale of Victory Bonds. Each summer, women students filled positions at banks and offices while others worked in munitions plans, woolen mills, dairy farms, and fruit farms. They also went overseas and held positions as working as nurses, volunteers or translators in England and France.

In the case of male students the message concerning acceptable war work was more singular: Enlist for active service. The administration of the university encouraged its students to

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3 Ibid., 5.

4 “War Work of University Women at Home,” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1918, 134.

5 *The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper*, February 6, 1918, 2.
enlist on the basis of what they believed to be the principle values of war. Robert Falconer, President of the University of Toronto, boldly stated, “the students were standing side by side in a noble cause. They were one in their purpose, and that purpose was not to play and exercise, but training so as to be fit to serve.” The Great War was touted as being fought on behalf of democracy and the rule of law, while Germans were accused of threatening to “extend [their] military power over a great portion of the world.”\(^6\) War was believed to allow students a “new kind of education” that encouraged them to think “about the deep things that constitute citizenship and human worth.”\(^7\) Enlisting, then, signified more than a commitment to fight for one’s country overseas; enlisting signified that a man was committed to the defense of democracy, to the protection of British values and to securing the freedom of generations to come. Moreover, war was believed to provide men with the opportunity to display their bravado, test their courage and take part in a great adventure on a global scale. Yet if the decision to enlist embodied the commitments listed above, what did this imply about those who decided not to go to war?

This thesis will explore the gendered discourses of war that motivated recruitment efforts at the University of Toronto during the Great War. I argue that through its actions and polities, the university created a landscape of militarism that sought to encourage all members of its community to participate in war work. In the case of men, I argue that part of the University’s commitment to militarism included reinforcing the belief that eligible men had a duty to enlist. Men from the university community, including students, staff and alumnae, were encouraged to enlist through formal and informal means. Military training was formally encouraged by the

\(^6\) “Ontario and the War,” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1915, 3.

\(^7\) “The President,” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1915, 2.
administration of the University of Toronto and its policies. Students who enlisted were granted the completion of their year, and staff members were approved for leaves of absence. Speeches delivered on campus congratulated those who enlisted for participating in “what will be the University’s proudest traditions” and fulfilling “the first, and for most the highest duty of man [by] going to the front…”8 Men were also encouraged to enlist through informal means such as peer pressure. Military drilling on campus was presented as a social affair and the descriptions of early recruitment activities signify that men participated in military training alongside their classmates and in a recreational, and often jovial, atmosphere. By 1918, the annual President’s Report recorded 5,308 graduates and undergraduates from the University on active service.9

The concept of duty lay at the heart of recruitment appeals to students at the University of Toronto. President Falconer declared that “the meaning of the war was set forth in the University by a series of addresses and lectures which had their effect in impressing upon the students the seriousness of the struggle not only for our Empire, but for our ideals of freedom and civilization.” As a result, “men and women were deeply pondering the issues and their duty.”10

The close association of war and duty relates to larger cultural understandings of gender and appropriate behaviour for men. Therefore, my examination of recruitment activities at the University of Toronto will be framed by a larger discussion of the prevalent attitudes and beliefs concerning gender, specifically masculinity, in the decades before the Great War. Understanding

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9 University of Toronto, President’s Report for the Year ending 30th June, 1918, 7.

10 “The President,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1915, 2
the dominant cultural meanings of manhood and gender relations is essential both to explore the motives behind early voluntary recruitment initiatives and justifications for their later transition into conscription and compulsory military training. Moreover, a discussion of dominant gender ideology will help illustrate the collective structures that tried to define conceptions of masculinity, and the social consequences for those who failed to comply with this dominant structure.

My exploration of gendered discourses and practices during the Great War will examine the activities and associations present on the grounds of the University of Toronto between the declaration of war in August 1914 and the signing of the armistice in November 1918. My research asks the following question: what motivated the administration of the University of Toronto to actively instate policies that first encouraged, and then forced, male students to enter into active service? Throughout the course of my discussion, my first research question becomes closely intertwined with two important secondary questions: what did it mean to be “a man” in early twentieth-century English Canada, and how did dominant social constructions of masculinity influence recruitment tactics and the subsequent movement towards conscription?

My first chapter explores the social and political climate of Ontario at the outbreak of the Great War. Here, I examine how recruitment during the war was a gendered process that presented active service as the defining moment of manhood. Recruitment policies during the war were generally an extension of the pre-war social climate as many of Ontario’s minority groups, especially those labeled ‘enemy aliens,’ experienced discrimination and violations of their civil rights based on imperial and ethnic-based prejudice. In my second chapter, I examine the relationship between militarism and education in the late nineteenth century. This includes an enquiry into the influence of militarism in Ontario schools and the prevalence of beliefs that the
province’s male students needed to learn the duties and responsibilities of manhood through military training. Chapter Three demonstrates that the University of Toronto encouraged students to enlist by presenting military training as a social activity and granting academic leniency to those who enlisted during the first two years of the war. I also analyse how the University itself fulfilled its duty to aid in the war effort by lending its facilities, as well as its men, to war work. In Chapter Four, I evaluate the effects of national high casualty rates and low enlistment numbers, both of which facilitated a shift in university policy towards the forceful participation of men in military training. This chapter details how, in the midst of national debates over conscription and the Military Service Act, male students at the University were required to undergo mandatory physical inspections and compulsory drill practices in addition to their academic studies. However, I argue that not all students willingly complied with forced military training, and that there was debate over the notion that all men had a duty to enlist for active service. Finally, I will end my dissertation with a wider discussion of the legacy of the Great War at the University of Toronto, and the ethical and moral implications of the University’s active encouragement of enlistment during the war. However, the goal of this introductory chapter is to provide a general introduction to the literature, theories and methodologies that frame my research and outline the narrative journey that will unfold over the next four chapters.
CANADA, THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO AND THE GREAT WAR

Your King and Country Need You... the Empire is on the brink of the greatest war in the history of the world, and it appeals to all unmarried men between the ages of eighteen and thirty to join the army immediately.

- The Toronto Globe, 1914

On the widely observed Bank Holiday Weekend spanning the first weekend in August 1914, many in Toronto escaped their sweltering homes to wander the streets, talk to their neighbours and participate in local gossip. Again, there were rumors of an impending war in Europe. Unrest in the Balkans, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey in the years leading up to 1914 had kept the threat of a European war provocatively close to the surface. During that summer, most Canadians were preoccupied with their own domestic concerns as the country grappled with the greatest economic depression since the 1890s. Two consecutive years of drought had turned the prairies to dust. The ranks of the unemployed swelled as Canada’s new transcontinental railways - the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern - sank further into debt. Ontario employers complained they were operating at half-capacity.

By Saturday, August 1, news of war began creeping onto the front pages of Canadian newspapers. The Toronto Globe published a “War Summary” on its front page stating that, “a general European war is still greatly feared, though it may yet be averted. The day’s developments revealed many widespread precautions and preparations, and intensified anxiety and uncertainty.” Over the next few days, newspapers across the country detailed the

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11 The Toronto Globe, August 5, 1914, 1.


14 The Toronto Globe, August 1, 1914, 1.
unraveling of diplomatic relations in Europe. Since the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at the hands of Bosnian terrorists in Sarajevo at the end of June, European relations had risen to a dangerous breaking point. The diplomatic and military actions of Austria against Serbia in July ignited the web of crisscrossing diplomatic alliances forged during the nineteenth century that eventually brought Germany, France and Russia into the conflict. Canada remained out of the conflict until August 4 when, at dawn, the country learned that Britain’s ultimatum attempting to secure Belgian’s neutrality against German military advances had expired.\(^{15}\) The Empire was at war.

When the news of war broke on August 5, crowds that had been gathering at newspaper offices to wait for Britain’s official declaration of war took to the streets. In Toronto, patriotic fervor was high and celebrations continued well into the night. *The Toronto Globe* received a letter on August 6 outlining the prevailing patriotic sentiments in the city:

> Is it against the law to show patriotism in this city? I ask this apparently foolish question because last night at the corner of Bay and King Streets I saw the police… break up a perfectly harmless, very fine-spirited procession of men… It was 11.30 p.m., there was no traffic being disturbed, the men kept to the side of the road and were simply showing the spirit and feeling that leads to prompt volunteering when the need arises. And I have never been in a country where such a demonstration would be objected to…surely the Chief of Police issued no order to maltreat people who wish to show their loyalty to the Empire in a way that is accepted as proper all the world over.\(^{16}\)

Scenes such as the one described in *The Globe* were repeated in towns and cities across English Canada. At the national level, Canada’s Parliament was not consulted about Britain’s decision to go to war, nor did it seem to care. Prime Minister Borden reconvened Parliament on August 18 and without significant division or debate, approved the formation of an overseas contingent of


\(^{16}\) *The Toronto Globe*, August 6, 1914, 6.
25,000 men that would cost $50 million to raise and equip.17 Sir Wilfrid Laurier, leader of the opposition, declared in Parliament that “When the call comes, our answer must go at once, and it goes in the classical language of the British answer to the call of duty, ‘Ready, aye, ready!’”.18

At the outbreak of the Great War, Ontario was a very British province. Most immigrants who arrived in the province during the early twentieth century arrived from Great Britain or other parts of the Commonwealth such as New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. In Toronto, these various ‘British’ groups accounted for about eighty-five per cent of the population.19 Mark Moss discusses the existence of an Anglo-Protestant cultural hegemony in early-twentieth century Ontario. He explains that “an informal Protestant alliance” was forged between Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists that allowed for common ground to be found on a variety of spiritual, secular and political issues.20 Moreover, the Protestant culture forged in Ontario coincided with the sustained popularity of imperialism in the politics of the province. As an ideology, imperialism effectively favoured British settlers against all others and sought to structure Canada around British ideas and values. The dominating influence of imperialism and Protestantism fuelled recruitment initiatives throughout the war, and will be further discussed in Chapter One.

During the Great War, Canadians turned to newspapers, magazines, printed pamphlets and bulletins as a lifeline to inform them of the progress, developments and outcomes of the war.

17 Morton and Granatstein, Marching to Armageddon, 6.
18 Ibid.
The Varsity War Supplement in 1915 claimed that “we open our eyes in the morning only to think first of what our newspapers may say about the war; we are indeed so conscious of living amidst the greatest historic event of all time…” In his book Hometown Horizons, Robert Rutherford illustrates that that Great War was a largely local phenomenon. He argues that “public rallies, parades, city newspapers, schools, churches were appropriated in purposive ways to convey particular meanings at particular moments.” Therefore, the public parades, ceremonies and campaigns that occurred in Toronto during the war were not only demonstrative of the patriotic sentiments of the city; they were public displays of militarism that urged the population of Toronto to participate in war work and support the war effort. Similarly, the military activities occurring on campus at the University of Toronto both demonstrated acceptable standards of behaviour and called students to join in their efforts. Displays of militarism were not passive exhibitions of Toronto’s commitment to the war effort. Rather, local militarism demanded something of its spectators; it demanded that spectators become participants in the war effort by devoting the best parts of themselves to war work.

By engaging in war work those who were unable, or unwilling, to enlist for active service could contribute to the war by serving on the homefront. Desmond Morton’s book, *Fight Or Pay: Soldiers’ Families in the Great War*, explores the experiences of wives, mothers and children left behind by men in active service. He illustrates that these dependants, left at home while their main monetary providers were enlisted, served and suffered in warfare as did those overseas and were as much a part of Canada’s war effort as nurses and munitions workers.

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23 Desmond Morton, *Fight or Pay*, xi.
Morton’s book raises the question that plagued many would-be student soldiers at the University of Toronto: how could men support their families, their lifestyle and their goals if they enlisted for active service? *Fight or Pay* examines the concessions made to support the families of soldiers through the establishment of the Canadian Patriotic Fund. Morton explains that “to save the government from paying…men devised a source of family funding that would reassure any women who released her man for war and would legitimate a responsible man’s decision to leave her and his children…Men must ‘fight or pay.’” Yet, financial pay was never really enough to compensate for the emotional and fiscal costs incurred by those families that sent a man into war. Moreover, such payment often proved difficult to secure and certainly failed to compensate for the death of a husband or son, or the return of a family member wounded by the war in mind, body or spirit.

In his book *Our Glory and Our Grief: Torontonians and the Great War*, Ian Miller documents how Torontonians gathered to bear witness to a war that was not only a cause for remembrance, but also for celebration. He argues that Torontonians were not an uninformed, ignorant and disengaged populace. Rather, they were deeply committed to the war effort and believed the nation was engaged in a life and death struggle. Miller’s narrative presents the war as a unifying force between the many social and economic divisions present in Toronto. He claims “there were certainly important divisions of class, gender and ethnicity within wartime Toronto, but the conflict proved to be a remarkably unifying force.” Moreover, Miller suggests, “the city and its people…and been consistent in their dedication to the war. They believed in its

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24 Ibid, xii.


26 Ibid., 200.
necessity, supported its prosecution, sacrificed in its name, and celebrated their achievement when victory finally arrived.”

While Miller’s work provides a comprehensive survey of Toronto during the Great War, he presents an overly simplified understanding of the city’s unity and support of the war effort. Although my research centers upon the University of Toronto rather than the city as whole, I believe that the Great War served to animate divisions of gender, class and ethnicity both in Toronto and in communities across the country. Debates over concepts of duty and commitment to the war effort agitated old, uncomfortable conflicts about national unity and appropriate behaviours for men and women. Though the war unified certain segments of English Canada, this unification occurred at the expense of others such as minority groups labeled as “enemy aliens” and French Canada. I argue that the Great War tore communities apart as much as it brought them together. Moreover, the Great War served as a catalyst that placed stress on men to live up to the demands of war service and the belief that war was the ultimate test of manhood. The unification of purpose present in some segments of English Canada came at the cost of divisive practices and racial tensions.

There have been numerous and weighty volumes written about the military, political and social history of Canada during the Great War. Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein’s book Marching to Armageddon: Canadians and the Great War 1914-1919 provided an invaluable introduction to the national trends and events in Canada during the war. Another of Morton’s works, When Your Number’s Up, presented an overview of soldiering in Canada, a glimpse into the phenomenon of recruitment and hinted at the themes of manliness and soldiering examined through my research. Ian Miller’s narrative about Toronto and the Great War outlined in his

27 Ibid.
book, *Our Glory Our Grief*, enabled me to advance my own research into the divisive as well as unifying themes of the Great War. Tim Cook’s recent two-volume work on Canadians during the Great War, *At the Sharp End* and *Shock Troops*, offered a comprehensive account of the political leadership of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces and their great, and costly, contributions on the battlefields of France. Robert Rutherford’s book *Hometown Horizons* emphasised the important local dimensions and importance of the war effort in communities across Canada, while Desmond Morton’s account of the plight of soldier’s families in *Fight Or Pay* highlighted the emotional and financial suffering of Canadians both during and after the war. The work of Jonathan F. Vance on memory and the Great War, particularly his book *Death So Noble*, urged me to remember that, “the subjects of historical study tend to view their past in terms that do not always correspond to our own imagines of it. When we assume that they perceived events as we have reconstructed them, we deduce at our own peril…we must realize that those people who lived under the shadow of war may have had a very different understanding of it than we have expected them.”

The questions of gender examined in my research are ones not readily explored in the existing literature mentioned above. The relationship between gender and recruitment is sometimes briefly referred to, but more often the focus is shifted to political and social motivators for the war effort and enlistment numbers. Mark Moss’ doctoral dissertation and later book, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War*, provided an invaluable introduction into the relationship between militarism and schools in late-nineteenth century Ontario. His work presented me with a framework to approach the pressures and policies

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at the University of Toronto as a window into the views of middle-class youth and the war. Moreover, the University represented a site where nuances of dissent, debate and criticism of the war effort were presented over issues of compulsory military drilling and conscription on campus. To this end the doctoral work of James Leatch, *Military Involvement in Higher Education: A History of the University of Toronto Contingent, Canadian Officers’ Training Corps*, offered insight into the history of military service on campus and the organization and debates concerning the establishment of officer training both during and after the Great War. By approaching the University of Toronto as a unique site to explore the relationship between gender and recruitment, my research will explore how the unification of purpose and cause during the Great War created pressures, both real and perceived, on eligible men to enlist.

**METHODOLOGY AND GENDER AS A CATEGORY OF ANALYSIS**

All Canada’s soldiers needed, insisted Sam Hughes [Minister of Militia and Defense], were manliness, patriotism, a good rifle, and enough skill “to pink the enemy every time.”

- *Desmond Morton, When Your Number’s Up*\(^{29}\)

George Mosse writes that the Great War was “an invitation to manliness.”\(^{30}\) Masculinities are performed, constructed and reproduced through a variety of sites and activities, yet perhaps none as direct as those associated with war and the military.\(^{31}\) War as an activity conjures up

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\(^{29}\) Desmond Morton, *When Your Number’s Up*, 6.

\(^{30}\) Paul James Maroney, “The ‘Peaceable Kingdom’ Reconsidered: War and Culture in English Canada, 1884-1914” (PhD diss., Queen’s University, 1996), 217.

strong ideas about the characteristics and proper roles of women and men. Traditional military and combat experiences separated women, who were barred from active service, from men who were expected to enlist in military service, undergo military training and be prepared to fight. By definition, a soldier was a certain kind of man. Therefore military activities did not only separate women from men, they also separated men from one another.

In her seminal article Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis, historian Joan W. Scott explains that gender “provides a way to decode meaning and to understand the complex connections among various forms of human interaction.” Scott’s definition of gender rests upon two assertions: first, that gender governs social relations based on perceived differences between the sexes and second, that gender constitutes a primary way of signifying relationships of power. She argues that through symbols, and subsequent interpretations of these symbols, society constructions its own understandings of the differences between men and women. These differences then correspond to ideas of appropriate roles for men and women in society, and thus help to construct relationships of power. In this way, “concepts of gender structure perception and the concrete and symbolic organization of all social life.” Moreover, theorist Judith Butler writes that:

Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts.

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33 Ibid., 166.
35 Judith Butler, Gender Trouble (New York: Routledge, 1999), 179.
Gender is not universal. Rather, it is the product of a specific time and place; gender constitutes one of the key elements in defining who a person thinks they are, what activities they may or may not do, what those actions should be and when they should do them.  

To relate these concepts to my research, Scott and Butler provide a framework by which to approach “the soldier” as a symbol that defined differences not only between men and women, but also between men themselves. The idea of the soldier, which came to symbolize manliness, then helped shape relationships of power that highly valued the prescribed characteristics such as courage, endurance, strength, and, perhaps most importantly, a willingness to risk death to defend their convictions. Relationships of power were demonstrated through the demands placed on men by ‘official’ sources such as government officials, educational administrators and acts of policy that sought to encourage, or even force, men to comply with the characteristics of manhood valued by structures of power. In my research, I will argue that the administration of the University of Toronto used its position of authority over students to first encourage, and later force, men to comply with their socially constructed obligation to enter into active service.

Masculinity does not exist as one single entity; it is an inherently subjective process. Therefore the individual subject, and his or her relationship to social organizations, is an essential part of understanding how gender works. As Michael Kimmel writes, “manhood means different things at different times to different people.” Although each man ultimately constructs his own sense of self, men engage with a singular vision of masculinity that is held up by society as the model for all men. However there is no one single source that can account for

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36 Morgan, “Theatre of War,” 166.

its origin, as the processes that create social “models” of masculinity are too interconnected to be separated. Scott argues that historians must recognize that:

… “man” and “woman” are at once empty and overflowing categories. Empty because they have no ultimate, transcendent meaning. Overflowing because even when they appear to be fixed, they still contain within them alternative, denied, or suppressed definitions.

Therefore, the construction of gender encompasses not only a variety of complex relationships between the individual subject, social processes, and organizations that govern social interaction, but also the repression of opposite elements in order to fit into the common understanding of gender. For example, men may repress certain characteristics considered feminine in order to better fit into dominant ideas of manhood and masculinity. The need for men and women to repress or ignore certain thoughts and feelings illustrates that people do not, or cannot, always literally fulfill society’s prescriptions of gender. Therefore, gender is not a static identification. Rather, it is incessantly being contested and constructed by society in addition to the feelings and desires of the individual.

Manhood is something that is judged and qualified through the way a male behaves or presents himself in society. ‘Men’ are expected to exude a particular countenance and behaviour; they are expected to prescribe to certain values and uphold certain traditions. Thus, not all males are necessarily defined by society as “men.” Conceptions of gender (including conceptions of masculinity and femininity) constitute one of the key elements that help a person situate their identity and position in society. Gender helps to define not only “who does what but who is

38 Ibid., 5.

39 Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 1074.
In her book *Dismembering the Male*, Joanna Bourke explores the relationship of masculinity and the Great War in Britain through a study of the male body. She suggests that there is no distinctive separation between the study of masculinity and the study of men’s bodies. The capabilities of a man were evident through the capabilities of his body:

Men could be able-bodied: fortified, forceful, vigorous. Yet their bodies could also be mangled, freshly torn from the war and competing for economic and emotional resources with civilians. Although men might possess useful bodies capable of performing their allotted civic and military functions efficiently, they might choose instead to malinger by refusing to acknowledge their duties in the workplace and in the armed forces.41

Therefore, manliness was judged on the basis of external qualities such as physical stature and composure.42 The body constituted a socially constructed ‘frame’ in which men lived. It served as a signifier of age, class and ethnicity; the capabilities of a man, and what he chose to do with them, were evident in how he chose to use his body. Bourke stresses that although concepts of masculinity in Britain did shift slightly during the Great War, these changes were not necessarily novel or completely new. Therefore it is important not to view ‘war’ as a period significantly different or separate from that of peace. Even the subtle alterations that occurred often contained elements of pre-war societal norms.43

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43 Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, 20.
The importance of war lay in the manly virtues it taught such as duty, endurance, strength and respectability.\textsuperscript{44} By the late nineteenth century, these virtues formed the cornerstones that prescribed socially acceptable conceptions of manliness. Anthony Rotundo’s book, \textit{American Manhood}, outlines the dominant “phases,” or ideological conceptions, of manhood in middle-class America in the century before the Great War. In the early nineteenth century, men were expected to fulfill themselves through personal success in their profession and the value of public service decline. The resulting growth of the middle-class and market-economy gave rise to the emergence of \textit{self-made manhood} where “male passions” such as aggression, rivalry and ambition were gloried. As men strove to become superior, dominant and independent from external authority older virtues, such as self-restraint and self-denial, became less important.\textsuperscript{45} In Canada, increasingly aggressive and secular ideals replaced the characteristics of “muscular Christianity” prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century. Where muscular Christianity had placed emphasis on qualities, such as fairness, compassion and benevolence, the masculine imperial ideal of the late nineteenth century idolized such virtues as courage, resourcefulness and endurance.\textsuperscript{46}

By the end of the century \textit{passionate manhood} emerged to extend the values of \textit{self-made manhood} and place even more emphasis on male passions like ambition and combativeness.\textsuperscript{47} Moreover, there was increased importance placed on leisure activities as many middle-class men


\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 3-4.

\textsuperscript{46} Roper, “Between Manliness and Masculinity,” 347; Moss, “Manliness and Militarism: Education Young Boys for War,” 249.

\textsuperscript{47} Rotundo, \textit{American Manhood}, 5.
increasingly defined themselves, and their self-worth, through their “modes of enjoyment” and membership in various clubs and associations.\textsuperscript{48} Leisure associations promoted the rise of militarism by combining military training, social networking and recreation in the various military clubs that were present across Ontario. Militaristic leisure associations also helped to associate manly behaviour with a willingness to defend the nation, either physically or financially.\textsuperscript{49} Moreover, notions of acceptable war service became closely related to conceptions of manhood and masculinity. As will be discussed in Chapter One, certain men were discouraged, or even prevented, from enlisting based largely upon prejudiced notions of “the other” in Canadian society. Alternatively, war also became a mechanism that sought to challenge men to publicly support the war effort to the best of their abilities. For eligible men, this meant enlistment for active service.

The city was engulfed by military fervor by the time University of Toronto students returned to campus for the start of the fall academic term in September 1914. Waves of volunteers were leaving the city daily to make their way to Valcartier military training camp in Quebec, and were bid farewell by crowds packed onto train platforms and lining railway tracks. Men lined up outside recruiting stations to enlist, and local contingents practiced marching along city streets and struggled with learning new drills as they waited for their orders to march out.\textsuperscript{50} Within days of the beginning of the academic term, over 700 students and staff were training and

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\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 6.

\textsuperscript{49} Desmond Morton argues that those on the homefront (including women, children and men not eligible to enlist) were active participants in the war through their volunteer activities and financial support. See Desmond Morton, \textit{Fight or Pay: Soldiers’ Families in the Great War} (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).

\textsuperscript{50} Miller, \textit{Our Glory and Our Grief}, 16.
drilling on campus grounds with the help of the University of Toronto’s Rifle Association. The physical distance of the homefront and the battlefront did little to extinguish the message that was shouted from the pulpits and paraded down the streets: Enlist! Or, in the very least, help those that do.

By virtue of their education and training, students at the University of Toronto were expected to be patriotic students who were supportive, and protective, of their nation and Empire. Throughout the nineteenth century, students at the University of Toronto participated in a virile and stimulating student life that revolved around social functions, sporting activities and initiation practices. These associations and affiliations ushered impressionable students into their new life at university as they looked for advice on how to dress, how to act and what to believe. Yet university life was not without its responsibilities. Students on campus at the University of Toronto were expected to embody particular traits associated with leadership such as courage, self-discipline and integrity. Male students on campus at the University of Toronto were expected to become future leaders in government, business and society. As such, students were expected to act as leaders both in the classroom and in society by prescribing to the highest standards of morality and duty.

I chose the University of Toronto as the subject of my inquiry into the relationship between masculinity and the Great War for three main reasons. First, as a publicly funded institution, the University of Toronto was subject to the scrutiny of the media and public officials in ways that more private institutions were not. Public officials and the public at large held the university administration, comprised principally of the President of the University, the Senate and the Board of Governors, accountable for its actions due to the use of public funds to finance

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51 Leatch, “Military Involvement in Higher Education,” 77.
university operations. Since the administration was responsible for outlining official policies governing the functioning of the institution, the influences and responsibilities of being a publicly funded institution pressured the university to encourage its students to display exemplary commitment to and enthusiasm for the war effort. Second, the University of Toronto was the largest university in Canada. In the early twentieth century enrolment doubled from 2,000 in 1901 to over 4,000 in 1910. In comparison, McGill had 2,500 students and Queen’s had only 1,500. Moreover, the student body at Toronto was comprised mostly of middle-class urban men. As will be discussed through the narratives of the first three chapters, the prevalence of middle-class values at the University of Toronto presented campus as a site where, at least initially, recruitment appeals to adventure and masculine duty were successful. Finally, I chose the University of Toronto as my subject of study based on the large number of students, staff and alumnae that enlisted for active service. The transformation of the university into a military landscape encompassed all aspects of social and academic life on university grounds. Militarism on campus introduced acute pressures to enlist, but it also fostered nuances of debate and criticism over perceived notions of duty and service.

At the University of Toronto, students turned to their campus newspaper The Varsity for the latest information about the University and the war effort. Published by the Students’ Administrative Council, The Varsity joined the other University publications such as alumnae magazine The University Monthly and yearbook Torontonesis in chronicling the events organized on campus and encouraging University students, graduates, staff and faculty to enlist. Each year during the war, the Student’s Administrative Council published their annual Varsity Magazine War Supplement which provided an account of the war activities and service on

campus. These supplements form the basis for my research into the policies, associations and activities of the University of Toronto during the Great War. A total of four war supplements were published between the years 1915 and 1918 and contained articles describing war work at the University and detailed lists of men who were either away on active service or had already perished in the war. Moreover, *The Varsity’s War Supplements* were created as an official record of the work of the University during the war. In 1915, a letter written for publication in the *War Supplement* stated that “the proposed publication of the Honour Roll of the students of Toronto University will not only prove an interesting record of the University’s part in the present war, but cannot fail to be an incentive to others to follow so inspiring an example.”

As much as one third of the *Supplements* were devoted to the Honour Rolls listing men who had lost their lives in the war or were currently engaged in active service. The Student’s Administrative Council made appeals through *The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper* for pictures, biographies and information about fallen university men to include in their publication. The large amount of space detailing the credentials, pictures or names of every man who had perished or was currently engaged in active service suggests that the supplements acted as a kind of yearbook for those engaged in military service. Moreover, the mission of the supplements to remember and honour the military service of university men would have been particularly meaningful to the families and loved ones of those who had enlisted. Therefore, I believe that the primary patrons of *The Varsity War Supplements* were the families, friends and peers of university men who had enlisted. The sale of the supplements were advertised through *The Varsity* newspaper and could be purchased at a cost of twenty-five cents either on campus or by

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mail, and all proceeds were used to support the British and Canadian Red Cross Societies and other patriotic and relief funds.

The publication of *The Varsity War Supplements* as an official record of the University’s war service, and its probable patronage from soldiers’ families, suggests that they presented a narrative that highlighted and supported war work at the University. In the supplements, there is practically no mention of dissent, disagreement or criticism over the commitment of the University towards the war effort. Much of my discussion of dissention on campus seeks to fill in the “empty spaces” left by possible critics at the university. However, criticism emerges in *The Varsity* as a kind of devil’s advocate, in order to provide readers with ammunition against critiques of the war effort. Generally, criticism is mentioned only to present arguments and reasoning against the validity of such arguments. However, such articles present the opportunity to examine the criticisms outlined, albeit covertly, and to explore the often silenced voices that disapproved of militarism on campus.

There are a few other important limitations to my research. First, the student body at the University of Toronto presents only a small segment of the population of the city and the province. Only 0.5% of the Canadian population attended university. Of these, only half of students who enrolled as freshmen would complete their degrees to graduate.\(^{54}\) Moreover the socioeconomic base of the University of Toronto was largely urban middle-class, as by the 1890s only one third to one-quarter of university students grew up in rural areas.\(^{55}\) However, the specificity of the student body at the University of Toronto permits me to explore why so many

\(^{54}\) *University of Toronto Monthly*, February 1913, 17.

young men in this demographic were willing to risk death by volunteering for active service during the Great War. A second important limitation centers on my use of published primary sources, such as *The Varsity* and other newspaper and university publications, rather than personal primary sources such as diaries and letters. Where possible, I do include excerpts of printed letters and poems from the front that lend insight into the experience of the student-soldier at war. However, I have chosen to focus primarily on the events and circumstances that led so many students, alumnae and faculty from the University of Toronto to enlist. To achieve this I explore the public rhetoric that presented active service as a masculine duty; I also explore the representation of this notion in the formal and informal policies and associations of the administration and associations at the University of Toronto. In many ways, then, my examination ends once university men enlisted for active service overseas. Finally, by exploring the activities and obligations of men at the University of Toronto the scope of my research can only briefly mention the great contributions of women students and associations to war work both on campus and throughout the nation. Throughout the war the number of women on campus remained constant as male enrollment plummeted, and by 1918 women students formed fifty-seven percent of the student body.\(^{56}\) Where possible, my research does attempt to mention the meaningful war work and service conducted by university women both at home and overseas while acknowledging that the subject deserves further study and devotion by scholars interested in gender and war.

As illustrated above, my research approaches the University of Toronto as a case study to examine the relationship between manhood and recruitment between 1914 and 1918. Recruitment initiatives across Canada during the Great War presented a challenge to men across

\(^{56}\) University of Toronto, *President’s Report*, 1918, 13.
the country: if war was a test of manliness, who was “man enough” to enlist? I believe that notions of the relationship between duty and active service were rooted in prevalent ideas about manliness as society constructs a version of who - or what - a man should be. George Mosse writes that “like any human creation, manhood can be shaped and reshaped by the human imagination; that is, manhood has a history.”57 My research attempts to explore the history of manhood during the Great War by pulling out the nuances, understandings and public promotion of the relationship between manliness and active service at the University of Toronto. Both on and off campus, male students were expected to embody moral convictions and a commitment of duty that conformed to the highest ideals of acceptable behavior and serve as an example to inspire others. At the University of Toronto, these students were referred to as “Varsity Men.”

57 George L. Mosse, Nationalism and Sexuality, 1.
CHAPTER ONE

CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDINGS OF MANHOOD

We have enjoyed under British rule the blessings of peace, liberty and protection, and now that we have an opportunity of repaying in some measure the heavy debt we owe the Mother Country we will do so with cheerfulness and courage. Never before in our history has the call of duty and of honour been so clear and imperative, and Canada will neither quail nor falter at the test.

-Dr. R. A. Pyne, Minister of Education for Ontario, 1915

For many in early twentieth-century English-Canada war was perceived the ultimate test of manhood. Modern life provided few opportunities for the displays of courage, honour and virility believed necessary to build the foundations for manliness. ‘Men’ needed to engage with one another to “be men, to struggle, survive and dominate,” and war was believed to provide such opportunities. This chapter will explore how war, and specifically recruitment, was a gendered process that presented active service as the defining moment of manhood. Those who supported the imperial tie believed that men were called to action with Britain’s declaration of war in August 1914. However, rather than forging new social and political developments the war effort was driven by pre-war understandings of race, class and gender relations. When recruiters, politicians, officials and civilians encouraged some men to enlist during the Great War and refused to accept others, they were upholding imperial and racialised notions of Canadian manhood and war service. These notions framed recruitment efforts across English Canada, and on campus at the University of Toronto.

1 “Ontario and the War,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1915, 3.


“BRITISHNESS” AND THE MEANING OF WAR IN ENGLISH CANADA

Although Ontarians identified themselves through various personal, regional, national and imperial identities, British values were pervasive in the formalized governments, institutions, media and associations of the province.⁴ The commitment to British values, or Britishness, encompassed a general acceptance and respect for constitutional monarchy, Protestantism and the rule of law.⁵ Through provincial institutions all inhabitants of Ontario, almost one-quarter of whom were not of British descent, came into contact with the values of Britishness.⁶ Ontario’s minority population was made up of a variety of different communities including Germans, Ukrainians, Blacks, and Austrians; the province also included a range of different Aboriginal communities. Unlike such groups in Western Canada, non-British communities in Ontario were largely Canadian born. Some groups, including German-speaking and African-Ontario communities, could date their settlement back to the very beginnings of Upper Canada.⁷

The presence of ‘non-British’ groups, and their interactions with the institutions of English Canada, indicates ways in which British sentiments reached across static definitions of a “white, Anglo-Celtic, Protestant Britishness.”⁸ Although the Ontario’s minority population did present a possible counter-weight to a hegemonic British-Protestant culture, Britishness also

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⁵ Ibid., 2.


⁷ Ibid., 247.

helped to define “a common terrain of interest” between different groups in Ontario. Todd Stubbs argues that the presence of non-British ethnic groups in the province indicate patterns where minorities came to identify with and accommodate Britishness. He suggests that “Britishness was indeed a crucial, and highly complex, element in Canadian life… [and] while often divided by historic differences, most notably linguistic and religious conflict …Canadians (including many French-Canadians) continued to identify with and generally support British institutions.” Yet, Britishness was also predicated on historical rivalries and prejudices that separated those of British descent from the “others.” It simultaneously encompassed a conflicting narrative that appealed to large segments of Ontario’s population despite the fact that it also separated “others” of non-British heritage. In Ontario, these “Others” were largely Americans, Catholics, French-Canadians and recent Irish immigrants. As will be discussed below, the Great War exacerbated the contradictory nature of Britishness as recruitment initiatives displayed prejudiced and racialised notions of Canadian citizenship and war service.

To be British meant to uphold the belief that Canada was a respected member of the British Empire. However, the country’s membership in the British Empire was believed to come with certain duties and responsibilities to “Mother England,” ones that encompassed both loyalty to the Crown and a willingness to come to her defence. English Canadians looked to earlier military conflicts as evidence of the country’s military heritage, commitment to British values, and combative strength. The repression of the Métis and Native resistance in the “little

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9 Ibid., 3.
10 Ibid., 15-16.
11 Ibid., 3.
12 Ibid., 2.
war in the Northwest” in 1885 was perceived as the logical victory of British ideals in the Canadian West. The crowds bidding Canadian troops farewell during the Boer War (1899) lined the streets singing “Rule Britannia” and “God Save the Queen” along parade and procession routes. During the Northwest Rebellion, cheering crowds in Toronto were packed so closely together that it was difficult for police to clear a path for a volunteer contingent leaving for the West to reach the stand at their going-away rally. In 1899 the Toronto Globe chronicled similar scenes of exuberant crowds sending off volunteers to the Boer War:

We on the train saw your countless faces swim past us as the cars glided out of the station. A bank of faces on the north side, a glance over the shoulder and a bank of faces to vision on the south side. Faces, faces everywhere, and every face meant a living human being, pulsating with life, instinct with affection for the departing ones. It caught one at the throat to think of it.

Therefore, the subsequent fanfare and parades of the Great War were the continuation of military traditions started during the nineteenth century. Moreover, these experiences with military campaigns in the nineteenth century helped form the symbols, myths and characters that moulded the meaning of war in English Canada as the defence of British ideals.

War, and the associated glorification of martial imagery, profoundly influenced the consciousness of late-Victorian English Canada. Daniel Coleman argues that the meaning of

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14 Ibid., 110.

15 *The Toronto Globe*, October 26, 1899, 5.

16 Ibid., 1.


18 Ibid., 109.
war as the defence of British values has its roots narratives told about the influx of loyalists to Canada after the American Revolution and the influences of the War of 1812 and the Rebellions of 1837. In order to remedy the divisions between British colonists incited by these conflicts, loyalists argued the absolute virtue of their position by employing codes of military honour and self-sacrifice to counteract any rebel sympathies. The complex events of war were rationalized as familial disputes in an attempt to fortify the similarities among British colonists and mend past differences. As a result, loyalists constructed a narrative that of fraternity that helped to strengthen the damaged ties between British colonies by establishing “white British masculinity as the assumed norm for Canadian citizenship.”

The country’s participation in military conflicts during the nineteenth century further solidified the belief that war was fought to uphold the ideals of Britishness. A Winnipeg pastor, the Reverent J.B. Silcox, addressed the values backing British suppression of the rebellion in 1885:

> British justice has truly been represented as blind...It accords to the meanest subjects in the realm the same rights and liberties that are granted to the Queen on the throne. It champions the rights of the ignorant Indian as truly as the most cultured peers in the realm. Subjects of Great Britain, men living under the flag of England, should be slow to believe that their rulers have any hostility toward them or are unwilling to grant them their fullest rights. It is the glory of the British Government that it seeks the highest good, the fullest liberty of all...there is no place on God’s earth where men are protected in their rights and liberties as they are under the clear old flag of England.

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20 Ibid., 132.

Fighting on behalf of Britain justified war as a necessary, and perhaps even noble, endeavour. However, as evidenced by the internment and prejudice faced by minorities during the Great War, the social and political climate in Canada often violated, rather than protected, the “rights and liberties” of men.

In the Canadian context, imperialism constituted a movement favouring the closer union of Canada and Britain through economic and military co-operation. In his book *The Sense of Power*, Carl Berger writes that imperialists “valued the British connection for reasons of power as well as sentiment.”

Canadian imperialists favoured policies that would allow the dominion to gain influence in the affairs of Empire. They aspired for Canada to be a source of strength for the Empire that was capable of defending itself and aiding in the defence of others. Imperialists “believed that a weak or diminished Empire meant the subversion of Canadian nationalism because the imperial system was the vehicle through which she would attain nationhood.”

The ideology of imperialism became inexorably linked to both nationalism and militarism in Canada. Imperialists such as Sam Hughes and his brother James believed that the military preparedness of the country was necessary in order to counteract fears that the Empire was crumbling. A weak Empire was feared to leave Canada vulnerable to attack, which further fuelled the movement for military drilling and cadet training in the schools as the foundation of a military preparedness.

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23 Ibid., 1.

24 Ibid., 260.

25 Ibid., 232.
volunteer army. Moreover, worries over Canadian defence were often the result of European, and particularly British, concerns in response to the revival of American expansionism, the intensification of the Europeans arms race and the increasing strength of the German navy.  

Canada’s experience with war in the nineteenth century was relatively benign. Out the 7,368 troops that left Canada for the Boer War, the Canadian Military Gazette reported 476 casualties. Of these 252 men were wounded and 224 had died: sixty-three were killed, thirty-one died of wounds, and 127 died as a result of disease. Since most deaths could be attributed to disease, such numbers reassured Canadians that “modern warfare” was becoming increasingly humane and resulting in less deaths and causalities. Other nineteenth-century conflicts were similarly minor and short, leaving English Canadians to shape their conception of war “as a rather exhilarating kind of sport in which few were killed and from which, so it was said, many desirable consequences followed.” As Canada waited for news of the European conflict on the eve of the Great War in August 1914, there was no expectation that this war would be any different.

When the news of war broke, English Canada responded with patriotic vigour as the country draped itself under “a sea of Union Jacks.” Officially Canada had no control over its foreign policy. When Britain declared war it did so on behalf of all the members of its Empire, including self-governing dominions such as Canada. Yet in Toronto, the city became alive with

26 Ibid., 254.

27 Ibid., 234.

28 Ibid., 236.

activity as crowds gathered in front of newspaper offices to hear the latest bulletins and took to the streets for spontaneous parades and patriotic songs. Great numbers of men queued outside the University Avenue Armouries to enlist, so many that it was necessary to deploy armed guards to keep frenzied recruits in line.

Recruitment became a cultural phenomenon. Early enlistment numbers swelled at such a rate that the military had the luxury of turning away men who were considered unfit for military service due to physical stature or age. Militiamen had been practicing war drills for years, even if they had only been in recreational summer camps, and now had the opportunity to try ‘the real thing.’ In light of the harsh economic climate in Ontario, enlistment presented men with an opportunity to earn regular pay. Some employers offered men paid leave to enlist or agreed to ‘hold’ their jobs until soldiers returned. However, the initial excitement faded as the war lengthened, tensions increased, and more men were constantly needed to replenish the troops overseas. Amidst the pageantry of warfare, there was a sense of urgency and commitment towards the Empire and Canada. As the Globe reminded Toronto, “this is war, not vaudeville.”

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33 Cook, *At the Sharp End*, 24-5.
35 Ibid., 28.
36 *The Toronto Globe*, August 5, 1919, 1.
“DON’T LAG BEHIND”: DISCOURSES ON MANLINESS AND RECRUITMENT

During the Great War, recruitment was considered a local responsibility. Until the launch of Government Victory Bonds in 1915, every local regiment was expected to raise funds to equip, pay and recruit men for active military service.\(^{37}\) Although the military was ultimately responsible for training and enlisting soldiers, at the practical level recruitment brought together a host of different civilian and government organizations as well as individual members of the community.\(^{38}\) By 1917, the province of Ontario had spent almost $10 million dollars on war-related expenses; a figure only surpassed by government spending in education.\(^{39}\) Government funds were subsidized by money raised by local militia officers who were largely responsible for organizing recruiting initiatives, soliciting donations to the war effort, and involving both civilians and civilian associations in the recruiting effort.\(^{40}\) As a whole, individual contributions from the Ontario reached $51.5 million and accounted for about half of the monies raised for soldiers and their families by the Canadian Patriotic Fund.\(^{41}\)

The Canadian militia, composed of a small permanent force and larger body of part-time militiamen, played an important role in the recruitment process. These officers were mostly drawn from the professional middle class and the local elite who were involved in various political associations, country clubs and boards of trade. Militiamen usually recruited local men for the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) from the town, city or county where they


\(^{40}\) Maroney, “The Great Adventure,” 71.

\(^{41}\) Crerar, “Ontario and the Great War,” 231.
themselves were born. Although military staff in Toronto, London and Kingston had some control over recruiting in their districts, their role was primarily limited to offering advice and suggestions about specific recruiting techniques. Recruiting efforts themselves were largely organized locally organizers recruited and enlisted local men.

Recruiting initiatives varied over time and by location. Men could sign up at one-man recruiting booths, large public rallies, local militia headquarters and at university campuses across the province. Ultimately, those who enlisted underwent a simple recruitment process. A sergeant or an officer filled out the required forms chronicling a man’s date of birth, trade, marital status, country of origin, history of former service and vaccination record. Recruits then underwent a physical examination and could be discounted on account of their age, level of fitness, eyesight, bad teeth or flat feet. Usually, these ailments could eventually be overcome as men often continued trying to enlist, with their chances for success depending greatly on “the need for men and the energy or patriotic sympathy of the practitioner on duty.” Moreover, as will be discussed below, barriers to recruitment were increasingly removed as the war continued in order to compensate for low recruitment numbers and high casualty rates.

Ideas about the relationship between manhood and duty were central to recruiting tactics and war propaganda during the Great War. To use the terminology of Judith Butler, public displays of military service such as parades and recruitment initiatives were gendered

43 Ibid., 79.
performances. For many men the decision to enlist was a public one. As evidenced by the photo below depicting a recruitment station in Toronto circa 1914, the crowds that gathered along procession routes and crowded in front of recruiting stations provided recruitment activities with an audience made up of men, women and children. In the frenzy of early recruitment appeals, enlistment functioned as a gendered decision that separated men who were willing to accept and follow prescribed notions of manliness and duty, and those who were not. Therefore, the outbreak of the Great War was presented as a mechanism that could separate and distinguish men from “others” who were unable, or unwilling, to serve.

Men who chose not to enlist were labeled as ‘failures.’ In Toronto, the 109th Regiment transformed a streetcar into their travelling headquarters to recruit men and attached a poster to the front reading, “Join with Britain’s Best, Don’t LAG Behind.” The Globe reminded men “Your King and Country Need You… the Empire is on the brink of the greatest war in the history of the world, and it appeals to all unmarried men between the ages of eighteen and thirty to join the army immediately.” Recruiting efforts also addressed crowds at fairs, theatres, churches and athletic events, where they sometimes isolated young men in the audience. It was not uncommon for street recruiters to take on “the trappings of an eighteenth-century press gang” and forcibly escort men off the street and into recruitment offices to enlist. Most militia regiments and CEF battalions in Toronto used street recruiters who swarmed city streets to locate

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47 *The Toronto Globe*, August 5, 1914, 1.

Figure 1. *City of Toronto Archives*, William James Family Fonds 1244, Item 734, “Recruiting Office.”

The above photo depicts a recruiting office circa 1914 in Toronto. The gathering, likely organized by the militiamen of the 74th and 75th Overseas Battalions, attracted a crowd of spectators including women, children and men of all ages. The streetcar bears a banner reading “Join with Britain’s Best, Don’t LAG Behind,” and could have served as a mobile recruiting station for use throughout the city and in processions. This photo, one of a series of similar images, illustrates the widespread appeal of military recruitment initiatives and the popularity of military activities early in the war.

Some battalions even launched “Give Us His Name” campaigns asking the public to submit the names of men eligible for military service.49

In her book *Dismembering the Male: Men’s Bodies, Britain and the Great War*, Joanna Bourke explains that men who did not enlist were identified as “shirkers.”50 In peacetime a

49 Ibid., 76.
50 Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, 78.
shirker was a man who avoided his familial duties and obligations by taking part in evasive activities, such as stopping at the bar on his way to work. In the context of war, the tactics of the male shirker were understood as a refusal to live up to their obligations to the nation, the Empire and other men.\textsuperscript{51} The decision not to enlist for active service was projected as a failure rather than a choice; if enlistment served as a public demonstration of manhood, then those who did not enlist failed at the test. Through a widespread network of recruiting appeals, recruiters in Ontario tried to encourage every eligible recruit in the Province to enlist – and many of them were listening.\textsuperscript{52}

With only thirty-one percent of the total Canadian population, recruits from Ontario accounted for almost half of total enlistments during the Great War.\textsuperscript{53} However, the discourse of duty and war service presented by recruiters was aimed at a specific kind of man, and the appeal to “eligible men” rested upon discourses of masculinity that favoured British heritage and discounted “the others.” Some groups, such as farmers, objected to the belief that enlistment for active service was the highest form of national service. Minority groups, such as Asians and Blacks, were refused entry into the Canadian Expeditionary Forces based on racist notions that questioned their manhood. By upholding imperialistic and racialised understandings of war service, recruitment initiatives across Ontario appealed to certain populations while alienating or ignoring others.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{53} Moss, “Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Men for War,” 1-2.
MEN, SOLDIERS AND “OTHERS”: RACIALISED UNDERSTANDINGS OF WAR SERVICE

‘Race’ was one of the selection criteria used by officers recruiting for the Canadian Expeditionary Force. 54 As discussed earlier, twenty-five percent of Ontario’s population was comprised of various minority groups such as Germans, Blacks, Ukrainians, Austrians, as well as Aboriginals. Some, especially those labeled as “enemy aliens,” were subjected to internment and violence as the war progressed. Others were discouraged, or even prevented, from enlisting based upon their ethnicity. Recruitment was both a gendered and racialised process that favoured and rewarded those of British descent while excluding those with different backgrounds. Acceptable behaviour for men during the war was defined by various factors such as age, class and ethnicity, and was demonstrated by a man’s willingness to enlist and publicly demonstrate his commitment to the war effort. However, men from Aboriginal, Black and Asian communities faced barriers when enlisting for active service that discounted their willingness and commitment.

James Walker argues that Canada’s recruitment of soldiers for the Great War “accepted that certain identifiable groups lacked the valour, discipline, and intelligence to fight a modern war.” 55 This assumption was rooted in Western notions of white supremacy, the acceptance of stereotypes that labeled certain minority groups as militarily incompetent and the general acceptance of “white British masculinity as the assumed norm for Canadian citizenship.” 56 At the


55 Ibid., 1.

beginning of the war Aboriginal enlistment was banned outright as a “protective measure.” 57 The government claimed that German soldiers would not adhere to the rules of “civilized warfare” upon encountering Aboriginals on the battlefield and that Germans would fail to “extend the full rights of war to the ‘savages,’ and [execute] them upon capture.” 58 However, in light of the long and well-known military history of Aboriginal service to the Crown the ban on their enlistment was generally ignored. By December 1915 it was formally withdrawn. 59 At the end of the war, Aboriginal enlistment numbers accounted for over 3,500 enlistments out of a male population of 11,000, comprising an enlistment rate of over thirty percent and almost twice the national average. 60 Yet, the fact that it was instated even for a short time illustrates the racial discourses and practices that surrounded recruitment. Furthermore, the initial ban on Aboriginal enlistment reflects the belief that, based on their heritage, certain men were less suitable for active service than others.

In contrast to the eventual removal of the ban on Aboriginal enlistment, Black volunteers were discouraged from entering into active service throughout the war. Exposing the ignorance and prejudice of the recruitment process, officers believed that Blacks lacked the “requisite intelligence and character to be soldiers.” 61 Not only was Black enlistment discouraged early in the war, it was also openly prohibited. In Nova Scotia, some volunteers traveled from regiment

57 Crerar, 250.

58 Tim Cook, At the Sharp End, 30; Crerar, “Ontario and the Great War,” 250.


to regiment hoping to be allowed to enlist. MP William Pugsley of New Brunswick raised the issue of discrimination against Black enlistment on the floor of the House of Commons at the urging of black representatives from Ontario and New Brunswick. Although the militia insisted that no official regulations prevented “enrollment of coloured men who possess the necessary qualifications,” and the government denied any authorization of discriminatory recruitment policies, no remedies were offered. Moreover, Minister of Militia and Defense Sam Hughes was himself responsible for the rejection of a proposed all-Black unit organized by J.R.B. Whitney, a Toronto journalist. Whitney had already recruited forty men and promised another 150 when Hughes refused to force integration, claiming that no unit would agree to fight beside Black volunteers.

Many members from Canada’s Asian and south Asians communities suffered from the individual discretion of local recruiting officers. East Indians were almost completely kept out of active service, and while the enlistment of Chinese Canadians remains unclear, their enlistment would have been minimal. In the spring of 1916, the Canadian Japanese Association of British Columbia sent numerous telegrams to Ottawa offering, “one full battalion of naturalized Japanese all British subjects.” Since January, the Association had been paying two former imperial soldiers in Vancouver to train and drill 250 Japanese men in preparation for active service. In its telegrams to Sam Hughes, the Association claimed, “we are all British subjects and

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65 Roy Ito, We Went to War: The Story of the Japanese Canadians who Served During the First and Second World Wars (Stittsville, Ont.: Canada’s Wings, Inc., 1984), 25.
ask no conditions except to be treated as citizens.” The Ministry of Defense rejected the offer, along with all other offers to raise racially defined units.

Moreover, some Canadians felt it was “ill-advised” to train non-whites to kill whites. They feared that putting arms in the hands of minority groups and setting them against a European enemy could set a dangerous precedent of dissent. Men who enlisted were required to swear an oath of allegiance by promising to “be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors...[and] observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors and all of the Generals and Officers set over me.” Yet, officials were concerned that minorities who entered into active service could violate the terms of this oath by demanding enfranchisement, a demand that would threaten the established social order of Canada. Therefore, racialised recruitment policies were not only rooted in the perceived ‘suitability’ of minority groups for war, it was also predicated upon fears that visible minorities could demand equality on the basis of their participation in active service. The British values that Reverent J.B. Silcox had proclaimed would protect the rights of all men failed to allow many minority Canadians to participate in the war because it might place obligations on Canada to grant future claims for enfranchisement. The participation of white men in active service did not threaten the social order as did that presented by visible minorities. As a result,

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66 Ibid., 24-5.


69 Morton, When Your Number’s Up, 72.

the Great War was labelled as a “white man’s war,” and “until manpower needs at the front surmounted the obvious objections, killing Germans was the privilege of white troops.”

During the first year of the war, the Canadian Expeditionary Forces (CEF) could afford to be selective as the supply of recruits exceeded the demand for troops. A post-war survey revealed that 18,495 of the 30,617 men who made up First Contingent of the CEF were British born. The remaining troops were comprised of 9,159 Canadian-born recruits, 652 recruits born in other British colonies, 756 Americans, 1,032 recruits from other “foreign countries” and 1,032 men who provided no country of birth. In part, the large number of “British born” recruits can be contributed to the prejudiced recruitment policies that prevented visible minorities from enlisting. However, the preference for recruits of British heritage waned as the war continued. High casualty rates and low enlistment numbers forced the Ministry of Defence and recruitment officers to abandon earlier selective processes that turned men away from recruitment booths. By the end of the war Canadian born recruits would account for over fifty percent of new Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) enlistments.

Although local units in British Columbia refused to enlist Japanese soldiers, recruitment officers in the province of Alberta proved more receptive. In May 1916, the commander of the 191st Battalion based in Alberta received a telegraph from the Ministry of Defense that offered a reluctant approval to accept Japanese recruits. The telegraph sent by Chief of Staff Major-General W.G. Gwatkin stated that:

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71 Ibid., 1-2.

72 Ibid., 3.

73 Cook, At the Sharp End, 28-9.
We want every man we can get far be it for me to object to the individual enlistment of Japanese provided they can speak English and understand it. But it significant that they are not considered good enough for B.C. Battalions; and it is not unlikely that when the war is over and demobilization sets in those who have been in the Canadian Expeditionary Force can make themselves a nuisance.  

By June 1916 Japanese Canadian soldiers were being sent overseas and other minority groups, such as Blacks, were being recruited into military service. However, this did not mean that all enlisted minority groups necessarily participated in active service.

Imperial worries and fears over arming “non-white” minorities against white enemies relegated most Black volunteers to construction units that worked behind the front lines. Although some Black soldiers did see active service, informal policies of segregation and a general unwillingness of white soldiers and officers to accept Black combatants limited their participation on the front lines. In April 1918 General Gwatkin filed a report on the issue of Black volunteers in the CEF, writing that:

The civilized negro is vain and imitative; in Canada he is not being impelled to enlist by a high sense of duty; in the trenches he is not likely to make a good fighter; and the average white man will not associate with him on terms of equality. Not a single commanding officer in Military District No. 2. is willing to accept a coloured platoon as part of his battalion; and it would be humiliating to the coloured men themselves to serve in a battalion where they were not wanted.

Gwatkin's report is blatant in its stereotypical, generalized and racist comments towards Canadian Black volunteers. Not only did his comments reinforce the presence of segregation within the military units, they also granted credence to the ludicrous belief that Black men by virtue of their race were ‘unfit’ for soldiering. The accusation of inferiority not only supported

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74 Ito, We Went to War, 31.

the constructed hierarchy of manliness that favoured British men, it also suggested that Black Canadians would recognize that official discrimination against them was for their own good, as they would not want to serve “where they were not wanted.” Ultimately, Gawtkin recommended that Blacks could be enlisted in any regiment that would accept them, and in a labour battalion that would be formed exclusively for them. Moreover, the service of Blacks during the war did little to change the segregation present in local communities across Canada, which in some areas continued until the 1960s.76

Discriminatory understandings of manhood were reflected in racist policies of recruitment that sought to preserve the ‘status-quo’ of racial relations in early twentieth-century Canada. The obstacles faced by minority recruits during the Great War were an extension of the strand of ‘Britishness’ that favoured those of British descent from all “others.” Therefore, it is important not to view ‘war’ as a period significantly different or separate from that of peace.77 These racist understandings of who was fit for war service illustrated that the Great War would uphold, rather than break down, understandings of white British masculinity as the foundation of Canadian citizenship. Although the policies against Japanese, Black and Aboriginal enlistment varied slightly, some community leaders and members called attention to the difficulties and prejudices of recruitment in Canada. Japanese Canadians appealed to the government that they be “treated as citizens” and allowed to enlist. Blacks in Hamilton, Ontario spoke out against prejudiced local recruitment policies by stating that it was “beneath the dignity of the

77 Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, 20.
Government to make racial or colour distinction in an issue of this kind.”78 The arguments presented from minority groups themselves in favour of their enlistment support Stubb’s claim that Britishness helped to define “a common terrain of interest” between different groups in Canada. However, while some came to identify with British values, this identification conflicted with the concepts of Britishness as being predicated on historical rivalries and prejudices against “others.”79

The social conflict and unrest generated by the Great War aggravated these tendencies by highlighting the divisions, rather than similarities, present in Canadian society. As the war continued, these divisions hardened and the social and political climate in Canada began to disintegrate. Some communities, especially those groups labeled as “enemy aliens,” were subjected to internment and violence as the war progressed. Recruitment waned to a critical point in 1917 as Robert Borden’s Unionist government fought for re-election on the issue of the Military Service Act, or conscription, which sought to force all men to play their part, and do their bit, in the war. Although many Canadians perceived themselves as part of the Empire, not all Canadians shared this sense of allegiance. The Canadian recruiting establishment focused on encouraging, or pressuring, all eligible men to enlist – but not all men heeded their call.

“BEWARE OF THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER”: CONSCRIPTION AND INTERNMENT

During the war, the rights and freedoms of Ontarians with ties to enemy countries were increasingly eroded or, in the case of internment, violated.\textsuperscript{80} Ukrainian Canadians were particularly vulnerable to internment as most were single young men who had only recently arrived from the western Austro-Hungarian provinces.\textsuperscript{81} Of the 8,816 individuals detained in Ontario’s internment camps, Ukrainians accounted for about 6,000.\textsuperscript{82} While official government action against recent immigrants and radicals was aimed at those labeled “enemy aliens,” the animosity and prejudice displayed by the wider British-Canadian populace was less discriminatory, and widespread prejudice was directed against all immigrants. In 1917, 500 veterans and soldiers attacked the homes and businesses of “enemy aliens” in Toronto during what became known as the White City Riots, named after the first minority owned restaurant targeted for attack. One night later, 2,000 rioters took to the streets targeting police who had tried to prevent the ransacking of minority owned restaurants the night before and calling for the conscription of all “non-enemy” minorities.\textsuperscript{83} Economic pressures further increased animosity towards immigrants who were viewed as posing an economic threat by offering lower wages. When interned Ukrainians were released from the internment camps in 1916 to work at tanneries in Bracebridge co-workers burned down their residences and refused to work with them for fear of competition and lower wages.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{80} Crerar, “Ontario and the Great War,” 254.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 257.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 258.

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 259-60.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 259.
White workers in British Columbia showed similar hostility towards Asian immigrants. For decades, the province had been reacting to the perceived “threats” posed by the Asian community: the economic threat of cheap labour and increased competition, and the social threats posed by the presence of Asians in the education system and in the community.\textsuperscript{85} In response to these concerns, the racialised figure of the “Chinaman” was constructed to embody all the perceived derogatory traits of British Columbia’s Asian population. This idea of “Chineseness” categorized Asian men as dangerous and cunning. They were accused of being capable of atrocities such as luring women and children into vice. The \textit{New Westminster News} reminded its readers “none of us can fathom the works of the eastern mind.”\textsuperscript{86} Karen Dubinsky and Adam Givertz theorize that “Chinese men, in some historical epochs, were not ‘normal men’ at all: they were ‘Chinamen’...”\textsuperscript{87} Chinese men were villanized as sexual perverts and cast as scapegoats for the political, social and economic problems of the province.

During the Great War, the ‘German enemy’ was accused of being cowardly, brutal, sexually violent and treacherous. Circulated stories of war atrocities resulted in a drastic shift in public attitude towards ‘all things German’ as Canadians read about the slayings of nurses, crucified soldiers and destroyed hospitals at the hands of the Germans. Closer to home, reports began circulating of German airships over Canadian towns and German plots to bomb Canadian trains.\textsuperscript{88} Like the labeling of Asian men as “Chinamen,” Germans were transformed into what


\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 74.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{88} Crerar, “Ontario and the Great War,” 254.
Dubinsky and Givertz refer to as ‘monster men.’ By heaping negative stereotypes and accusations of atrocities upon Germany and its army, such men were placed “outside the realm of ‘normal’ masculinity and their actions [classified] as deviant.”

Before the war, German Ontarians had enjoyed a favoured status within the province with historical roots stretching well into the nineteenth century. Yet after 1914, Germans were villanized in the press: first they were blamed for starting the war, and then committing atrocities on and off the battlefields. As will be further discussed in Chapter Three, the rhetoric that cast Germany as an unworthy enemy rationalized any prejudice or violence they might suffer as a result. The civil rights violations of “enemy aliens” and associated violent outbursts against minority groups stemmed from their gendered categorization by officials and the media as deviants, or ‘monster men.’ This classification also legitimized violent outbursts, such as the White City Riots in Toronto, that were often fueled by animosity towards the perceived economic threats posed by minority groups and their supposed unwillingness to participate in war work.

The people who were most at risk of public and official harassment during the war were those whose backgrounds were associated with enemy countries. The federal government quietly encouraged Germans, Austrians and Turks who had not yet gained status as British subjects to move to the United States for the duration of the war. Those who remained were obligated to register, report regularly to local authorities and surrender their firearms. Robert Rutherford argues that conflict and boundaries in homefront populations were largely a response to an

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89 Dubinsky and Givertz, “‘It was Only a Matter of Passion,’” 69.

‘imagined war’ constructed by public interpretation of the conflict. ⁹¹ In the “us” and “them” rhetoric generated by war, manliness became linked to a duty to defend the nation against its enemies, both real and perceived.

The ‘nation’ was understood to be an entity bigger than the individual, but to which every individual must play his part. The 1916 “Varsity Magazine” War Supplement describes the idea of the nation as a kind of unified affiliation of peoples:

Nations are not made with hands, nor do they live in houses. Still less are they circumscribed by geographical limitations, or separated by oceans. A nation exists only in the spiritual consciousness of a great people...and of the ideals, aspirations, hopes and fears that they have in common. It exists when its constituent parts feel and think in unison.⁹²

Considerable effort was invested to convince, persuade and sometimes force men to comply with their ‘duty’ to their nation. After all, manliness was associated with action, with a willingness to take charge, and to show courage.⁹³ However, rather than “thinking in unison” the war threatened to aggravate the divisions present in Canadian society and pull the country apart. Even the eventual enlistment of formerly ‘undesirable’ minority groups into military service could not bolster rapidly falling recruitment rates and high causalities. In 1914 Sam Hughes had claimed that Canada “could send enough men to add the finishing touches to Germany without

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⁹² “University Men and the War,” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1916, 31.

As enlistment increasingly failed to meet with replacement demands, the debate over Concription became heated as the proposed Military Service Act would force men into active service. Concription became the major issue in the 1917 federal election and ignited major debated in Ontario, and throughout the country, especially between rural and urban constituents. The wounded veteran soldiers in the picture above stand in front of graffiti that reads, “Slackers beware of the green eye monster conscription.” To some Canadians, especially middle-class Ontarians, conscription was a measure that would enact revenge on men who failed to comply with their duty to the nation and to the men already fighting overseas.

assistance from England or France”; yet by the spring of 1917 recruiting in Canada had slowed to only 4,000 a month, a rate far below replacement needs.  

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Conscription became the major electoral issue in December 1917 as the government grappled with the severity of the situation overseas and dwindling recruitment at home. The decline in recruitment was a combination of the depletion of potential volunteers in English Canada and a general reaction against high casualty rates overseas. Although men who remained in Ontario faced pressure from the recruiting establishment, and were often pinned with the symbolic white feather of a coward by female recruiters, the risks of going to war were more obvious than ever. Newspapers printed long lists of the killed, wounded and missing. Rehabilitation centers and hospitals were given the long and arduous task of healing the bodies and minds of men returning from overseas. Conscription was aimed not only at French Canadians, who had enlisted at the lowest national rate of 1.4 percent, but at unwilling men who had evaded enlistment initiatives to enter into active service.

At the heart of the conscription debate was a movement to force the enlistment of men who refused to comply with their ‘duty’ to the nation and other fighting men. Gender historian Joan W. Scott explains that:

The legitimizing of war – of expending young lives to protect the state – has variously taken the forms of explicit appeals to manhood (to the need to defend otherwise vulnerable women and children), of implicit reliance on belief in the duty of sons so serve their leaders or their (father the) king, and of associations between masculinity and national strength.

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95 Ibid., 67-8.
96 Ibid., 65.
97 Ibid., 65-66.
Recruitment appeals and initiatives presented enlistment as a duty, rather than a choice. Military propaganda and recruiters identified and singled out men who failed to comply with their duty to enlist, men Joanna Bourke refers to as “shirkers.” At recruiting meetings and on the streets, people stopped young men to ask them why they were not in uniform. Although prevalent discourses of masculinity formed the central theme of recruiting tactics and enlistment drives during the Great War, not all men prescribed to or were persuaded by the idea that they were obligated to enlist for active service. The debate over the Military Service Act (MSA) and the looming threat of conscription turned Canadians against each other at the national, regional and individual levels. English Canadians accused French Canadians of being cowards and ignoring their duty to enlist and help those already in battle. Middle-class Ontarians believed that conscription was a long-overdue measure that would force shirkers into active service.

Differences in attitudes towards conscription duty were especially apparent between rural and urban areas. Ontario farmers believed that the forceful removal of male labour would undermine their efforts to increase food production to support the war effort. To farming families, the small allowances offered to soldier’s families did not compensate for “the loss of a male pair of hands.” Farmers and rural areas were also isolated from the parades, rallies and processions that typified public life in cities and towns during the war. By living outside the largely militaristic atmosphere of Canada’s urban environments, farmers were further removed

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101 Ibid., 243.
102 Ibid., 236.
103 Ibid., 237.
from the recruitment tactics that often sought to shame, or pressure, men to recruit. Moreover, as will be discussed in Chapter Two, many rural men were not persuaded by the presentation of active service as the ultimate test of physical fitness and manhood. Most Ontario MP’s initially supported the proposed MSA in 1917, but their support waned as rural constituents voiced displeasure at the removal of male labour essential to their farms.\textsuperscript{104} In order to appease these concerns, the Union Government promised farmers and their son’s exemption from conscription, a concession that was promptly cancelled in April 1918 after heavy German offensives left rural Ontarians just as vulnerable to conscription as their urban counterparts.\textsuperscript{105}

Many men who were conscripted by the MSA failed to comply with their order to enlist. Over nine out of ten men called for service sought exemptions, and many men fled rather than comply with the request to report.\textsuperscript{106} The first 20,000 conscripts began reporting for duty on 3 January 1918. All men between the ages of twenty and forty-three were divided into six classes, starting with single men of twenty to thirty-four and ending with married men aged forty-one to forty-four. The clergy, conscientious objectors, the obviously disabled or those categorized as holding essential jobs could petition for exemption. Those who were denied exemption, or had their exemptions removed, often “took to the hills.”\textsuperscript{107} The conscripts who did make it overseas fought in the last battles of the war, though it is not clear how many actually saw active battle. Tim Cook and J.L. Granatstein claim that conscription recruited necessary additions to the hardened and overworked Canadian battalions. Had the war continued into 1919, as was

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, 238.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 242-3.

\textsuperscript{106} Granatstein, “Conscription in the Great War,” 68.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
generally predicted, tens of thousands of more men would have been needed at the front.\textsuperscript{108} However, at the centre of the conscription debate was the forcible enlistment of men who, for their own varied and valid reasons, did not wish to enlist. Desmond Morton writes that “wars are made by masses of people…and masses are made up of individuals, with their own motives and experiences, joys, terrors and tragedies.”\textsuperscript{109} The volunteer recruitment system did not break down – it dried up. When the pool of willing, and available, volunteers was consumed the government sought to officially sanction the forceful enlistment of Canadians who did not wish to fight.

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

The social and political climate fostered by the war signaled out ‘men’ from their contemporaries, both male and female, on the basis of racialised and prejudiced understandings of manhood and war service. Through prejudiced policies that included internment and discriminatory limits on recruitment, Canada’s experience during the Great War upheld, rather than broke down, the ‘status-quo’ of racial relations in Canada. The subtle shifts in attitudes and perceptions during the war were often extensions of pre-war social trends rather than new developments.\textsuperscript{110} Chapter Two will explore how the public school system focused on producing patriotic citizens who were willing, and able, to act in the best interests of the state.\textsuperscript{111} Reflecting the conviction that war constituted the ultimate test of manhood, debates about militarism and

\textsuperscript{108} Cook, \textit{At the Sharp End}, 369-72; Granatstein, “Conscription in the Great War,” 73-4.

\textsuperscript{109} Desmond Morton, \textit{When Your Number’s Up}, vii.

\textsuperscript{110} Bourke, \textit{Dismembering the Male}, 20.

the merits of military drills for boys decreed that military train would teach boys how the duties and responsibilities necessary to manhood. In the public schools of Ontario, boys were expected to become ‘men.’
CHAPTER TWO

MANHOOD, MILITARISM AND EDUCATION

Canada is even prouder, however, of what her universities have accomplished in higher realms still than those of scientific discovery, original research or intellectual attainment; prouder of the important contributions of our university system and teachings to the formation of splendid Canadian manhood, and to the upbuilding of the Canadian character for devotion to faith and duty, for courage under adversity, and for sane judgment, clean and noble living...based upon a practical belief in the Fatherhood of God, in the Brotherhood of Man, in the ultimate triumph of Right over Might and in the Great and Glorious destiny... in store for every part of our already great Dominion.

- The Varsity War Supplement, 1915

Throughout all levels of their schooling, English Canadian boys were expected to embody the traits associated with good character and citizenship: sound judgment, clean and noble living, and practicality. Education joined, and in some accounts replaced, the traditional role of the Church and the family in the formation of good character in the young. As a result, increasing pressure was placed on schools to cultivate students into “proper citizens.” The school system was believed to be the only institution capable of properly training all citizens, and military training provided a mechanism that could socialize all Canadians to be patriotic and dutiful. At school, and for a minority later at university, boys learned what was expected of them

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1 “A Message from Quebec,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1915, 41.

2 Free education and compulsory schooling for all children between the ages of seven and twelve was initiated through the School Act of 1871. The advent of institutionalized educational system provided the state complete and institutionalized control over what was being taught in schoolrooms across the province. The productivity of the educational system was believed to be related to national industrial prosperity and the overall political and social functioning of Canada. Learning became associated with a system of formalized, codified training that took place throughout the province and sanctioned by the government. Education then became the primary mechanism through which the government sought to socialize, or mould, children into good citizens willing to act in the best interests of their country. See Mark H. Moss, “Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Men for War in the Province of Ontario, 1867-1914” (PhD diss., Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, 1998), 178, 180, 184, 186.

3 Ibid., 7.
from their government, their nation and their peers. This chapter will outline how military training in the schools was adopted as a strategy to improve the health of English Canadian boys, train future members of the Canadian militia, and create an engaged citizenry capable of action in defense of their nation. Through their formal education, which mirrored larger cultural trends towards militarism, students in Ontario schools were pressured to become soldiers who were capable, and willing, of defending their country, moral convictions and, by extension, their manhood.

AN EDUCATION IN MANLINESS: MILITARISM IN ONTARIO’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Since the mid-1860’s, educators and politicians had championed the cause of military drills in the schools for the betterment of a boy’s body and soul.\(^4\) Influential individuals - first Egerton Ryerson and then Sam Hughes - viewed military training as a preferable method for developing the moral character of Canada’s youth. The physical demands and obedience necessary for soldiering were thought to contribute to good character and foster manly virtues such as honour, courage, generosity and virtue.\(^5\) Social reformers and officials also worried about the dirty and crowded conditions present in many urban areas. Life in the city also was viewed as artificial, and middle-class families in particular feared that their boys were “growing up weak.”\(^6\) R. Tait Mackenzie, a doctor who delivered an address at The Canadian Club of Montreal in 1912, claimed that the sedentary lifestyle and removal from “hard outdoor work” characteristic

\(^4\) Garry J. Burke, “Good for the Boy and the Nation: Military Drill and the Cadet Movement in Ontario Public Schools 1865-1911” (PhEd diss., Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, 1996), 1.

\(^5\) Ibid., 57.

\(^6\) Mark Moss, Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2001), 17.
of urban life would ultimately result in “a reduction of the national physique which would react upon the progress of the people.”

Amid concerns over the physical welfare of their children, middle-class men were also becoming concerned with the amount of time they spent away from their homes and their sons. Urban boys were becoming isolated from their older male relatives as fathers left the home for work in companies owned by others and a growing number of sons were generally not needed, or expected, to continue any form of family business. The time boys spent outside of the home, at school or on the streets presented new and immediate concerns about disorderly behaviour, bawdiness, and laziness. In part, these concerns contributed to the popularity of militarism in urban areas by promising a remedy to the perceived problems of city life. In rural areas support for militarism varied as many of the urban concerns over unruly and unhealthy youth simply did not apply. However, whether at school or through extracurricular activity, military training was perceived as a mechanism that would allow urban boys to weather their difficult adolescent years and emerge as patriotic, virtuous, and physically strong men useful to their country and Empire.

Support for militarism was strongest in Ontario’s urban areas as the middle class embraced militarism as a new trend. Ideologically, the movement to incorporate military training in Ontario’s public schools mirrored a renewed interest in the military ideal. In their leisure activities, men and boys were being trained as soldiers. Church and social reformers

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7 Ibid., 16.


9 Burke, “Good for the Boy and the Nation,” 75.

viewed the emergence of boys’ clubs, like the Boy Scouts and the cadet movement, as a way to mould adolescent character. Through the close supervision of their leisure time, urban middle-class youths were encouraged to always present themselves as gentlemen.\footnote{Burke, “Good for the Boy and the Nation,” 123-4.} Earlier in the nineteenth century adult males in Ontario organized themselves into similar associations such as the Sons of England and the St. George’s Society that valorized masculine virtues like duty, practical reason, independence and respectability.\footnote{Todd Russell Stubbs, “Visions of the Common Good: Britishness, Citizenship in the Public Sphere in Nineteenth-Century Toronto” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2007), 219, 246.} Soldiering offered men the opportunity to be instructed in manly behaviour by learning the discipline, good posture, and fortitude associated with military training.\footnote{Burke, “Good for the Boy and the Nation,” 44.}

The middle class and education officials viewed military training as a salve that could sooth the fears concerning poor physical stature, especially in the aftermath of the Boer War, and supposedly loose morals of Canadian youth. The physical aspects of military training appealed to a growing nostalgia for the hard work of the early settlers who developed good character by working the land and leading active, rather than sedentary, lifestyles.\footnote{Ibid., 78.} Due to the constant threat of disease, such as tuberculosis, the rigors of military training were also believed to improve the health of all children who participated.\footnote{Ibid., 217.} At a time when it was believed that urban life was making men and boys “soft,” training for war allowed them to develop the courage, sense of self-
sacrifice and discipline necessary to manhood. In terms of character formation, military training reinforced a respect for authority, self-discipline and obedience in boys who were spending most of their time in schoolyards, on the streets or in factories. At school, students were expected to receive an education in character formation as “the fully educated person has stored his mind with knowledge in such a way that his intellectual faculties give him skill and power…his body has been trained to perform its functions in obedience to the intelligent demands of his moral impulses.” By educating all children across the province, especially poor and working-class children, the state sought to prevent crime and preserve ‘traditional’ values.

To those in charge of Ontario’s public schools, military training developed moral character in children through the cultivation of “prompt obedience” to command. Egerton Ryerson, Superintendent of Education in Ontario, was joined by other American and British education reformers in believing drill to be a worthwhile lesson in patriotic duty and citizenship. As early as 1862, Ryerson urged all male schoolteachers to start practicing drills with boys over ten. Yet calls to make drilling part of the official curriculum waned until the 1890’s and subsequent rise of the cadet movement. In 1896 provincial legislation allowed any high school to conduct classes in military instruction and granted participating schools the incentive of a fifty-

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19 Burke, “Good for the Boy and the Nation,” 73.

The boys in the picture above were part of a cadet troop in Rosedale, a well-established neighbourhood in Toronto, around 1914. The appearance of young boys in uniform soothed middle-class concerns that boys, especially in urban areas, were in poor health as well as lazy and disobedient. Through the repetition of military drills and under the supervision of male commanders, children in uniform were expected to be orderly, disciplined and responsible.

By this time military training was promoted as a panacea to a host of problems. It was believed to counteract the ‘soft’ influences of female teachers; teach students the importance of obedience, precision and punctuality; improve the health of children

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living in urban slums; and provide rudimentary military training for the defense of Canada and the Empire.\(^{22}\)

Nathanael Burwash, Chancellor of the University of Toronto, told Ontario educators in 1905 that “the education of women is woman’s work… boys should be put in the hands of men, and that men of the highest type.\(^{23}\) By virtue of their sex and politically subordinate position in society, women were considered to be unfit and inappropriate figures of authority over young men. Military activities demanded that boys act like “manly men” through the development of moral posture, physical stamina and obedience, all of which could only be achieved under male tutelage.\(^{24}\) Children were believed to be impressionable and could, in a constructed and controlled educational environment, build good moral character and sound physical bodies. The discipline instilled in a boy’s body and mind through his military education were expected to stay with him throughout his life and to guide him to act responsibly in terms of duty and character.

The official curriculum guidelines negotiated by school reformers, politicians and opinion makers focused on preparing children to act as good citizens willing to act in the best interests of Canada and the British Empire.\(^{25}\) The instruction of boys always differed from the

\(^{22}\) Ibid.


instruction of girls, illustrating that imperialism was not only racist but also sexist. In Toronto schools, even though boys and girls worked through their readers at the same pace, only boys examined the *Second Book* lesson discussing cruelty to insects. Girls read the tale of ‘The Theft of the Golden Eagle’ from a different reader, the *Sequel*, which recounted a story about a stolen baby and her brave mother. As students moved into the higher grades, boys were more likely to study bookkeeping and literature while girls would practice their crochet and embroidery skills. Therefore, the introduction of military drills was an extension of existing gendered divisions in education that promoted a “sex-differentiated curricula” based on imperial notions of manhood and womanhood. Schooling was expected to teach girls how to become patriotic young women, just as it was expected to teach boys how to become patriotic and dutiful young men.

The Strathcona Trust (1909), a highly publicized $500,000 pledge by the Right Honourable Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom, provided financial provisions to include cadet training in school curriculums across Canada. In a letter to Prime Minister Borden, Lord Strathcona explained the objective of his trust “is not only to help improve the physical and intellectual capabilities of the children by including habits of alertness, orderliness and prompt obedience, but also to bring up the boys to patriotism and to a realization that the first duty of a free citizen is to be prepared to defend his country.”

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The allotment of Trust money provided further publicity and encouragement for the sixty-seven cadet corps already established in Ontario; fifty of these were in public schools. By 1911 the number of cadet corps in Ontario had risen to ninety, with fifteen new corps formed in public schools.\(^{30}\) The appointment of Sam Hughes as Minister of Militia that year further invigorated the movement towards including military training in school curriculums. Hughes firmly believed that cadet training in the schools was the first step in preparing Canada for any conflict the country may face in the future. In 1912, he announced that in five years time he expected “to have some hundreds and thousands of our youth trained to shoot and march.”\(^{31}\)

In reality, the implementation of military drills in public schools varied across the province. Even after the formal implementation of the Strathcona Trust in 1912 that officially imbedded military initiatives into the Ontario curriculum, rural schools remained outside the national scheme towards military education due to young, inexperienced female teachers who were not expected to be able to deal with the initiatives and general mistrust of militarism.\(^{32}\) There were over 5,000 rural schools in Ontario, and the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph reported that fifty-three percent of children in Ontario were educated in rural schools.\(^{33}\) These schools were usually taught by female teachers who held third-grade teaching certifications, some no older than teenagers, while the best male teachers were recruited to work in towns and

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\(^{30}\) Burke, “Good for the Boy and the Nation,” 34.


\(^{32}\) Burke, “Good for the Boy and the Nation,” 252.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 230.
cities. Moreover, teachers all over the province were often overwhelmed with as many as nine levels within one classroom. As a result, most children most were ‘actually taught’ for only one-third of their school day. The added subject of drilling sometimes fell on deaf ears as teachers struggled to cover the basics of Reading, Writing, Spelling and Arithmetic in over crowded and under funded schoolhouses.  

Another obstacle to universal military training was that most children did not continue their schooling past grade eight. While the public education system decreed that elementary schooling was necessary for all children in the province, this principle of wide accessibility did not extend into high school. Ontario’s high schools were meant to continue the education of “the clever few” who were preparing to enter middle-class professions or higher education. Furthermore, enrollments in high schools were low because for most pupils higher education served little purpose. Those that did enter into high school usually did not continue past their second year, as most certification and matriculation exams did not require education past this level. An anonymous headmaster writing in the Canadian Monthly explained that:

…under the very best system only a very small percentage of the population can ever enter for educational purposes the doors of a High School…the boys educated in the High Schools will, as men, be the natural leaders of the communities in which they reside, and must give a tone to everything in them.

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34 Ibid., 98, 230, 252.
35 Houston and Prentice, Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth-Century Ontario, 253.
37 Ibid., 309.
38 Ibid., 284.
Only eighteen percent of all students in Ontario enrolled in form II, or the second year of secondary study.\textsuperscript{39} Therefore, at the elementary level education was for most an end unto itself rather than as the preparation for further schooling. Furthermore, seventy-seven percent of those who did continue on to high school left secondary education after or before the completion of their first year. Even if students left after the completion of Form I, it was still substantially more education than was received by the majority of children who did not continue past the third class of public school.\textsuperscript{40} The population of high school students was largely middle-class, and the students who left high school for work entered into a variety of different respectable middle-class occupations, such as teaching, office workers or clerks.\textsuperscript{41}

Rather than being a solution to the problems of society, military training in the schools was seen as a threat to farming and working class incomes. Training boys for future active service in the Canadian militia could result in men leaving the farms and a shortage of workers in the event of war, a concern that would later play a central role during the conscription crises of 1917.\textsuperscript{42} Rural trustees also complained that about the increasing amount of regulations, rules and school laws enacted by provincial politicians and education officials.\textsuperscript{43} The introduction of military drills in public schools believed to be “but another nail in the coffin of the traditional farming lifestyle.”\textsuperscript{44} Farming publications, such as the \textit{Farmer’s Sun}, reminded readers that

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 308.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 310.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 312.

\textsuperscript{42} Burke, “Good for the Boy and the Nation,” 228-9.

\textsuperscript{43} Stamp, \textit{The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976}, 122.

\textsuperscript{44} Burke, “Good for the Boy and the Nation,” 252.
Canadian boys were not weaklings as rural children and their families continued to work the land in farming. The moral benefits attributed to military training were also seen as an affront to the ability of parents to instill moral character in their children. Instead of strengthening a boy’s character, military drills and the associated imperial zeal were understood by working class and farming families to pull boys away from their farms, factories and families by entrenching within them a military spirit that would tempt them to become involved in distant conflicts. Although the implementation of military drills varied at the local level, the official curriculum reflected middle-class urban concerns that moral values were deteriorating and the strength of Canada’s youth was being eroded by poor training and bad habits. Military activities provided a formal solution to these problems. Although some disagreed, all Ontarians had to contend with a public school system that officially valued military training for the young.

At the administrative level, the curriculum in Ontario’s schools supported military training as an economical substitute to a standing army that Canada could not afford. A key component of militarism in Ontario was a readiness for action: a man was expected to respond in defense of his values, his family and his country. Manly virtues such as ambition, combativeness and aggression were considered positive attributes in addition to the great value placed on a man’s athletic ability and physical strength. The militia would benefit from cadet training in the

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46 Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976, 94.
schools by being able to “fill up the ranks of the active militia with the young men who have come out of school at the age of 18 or 20…”

Men involved in military associations were willing to enlist, as demonstrated by the large turn out of recruits with previous experience in the militia during the Boer War (1899). Overall, ninety-eight percent of recruits during the Boer War had previous experience in military associations. Carman Miller argues that although men were motivated to enlist by material incentives such as temporary financial security, the decision to enlist was shaped primarily by the collective ideals of the community. Canadian volunteer soldiers who enlisted in the Boer War “belonged to the same recreational, fraternal, voluntary and patriotic associations” and many attended the same churches and schools as their comrades in arms. The majority of enlistments, comprising eighty-four percent of total recruits, were drawn from Canada’s non-permanent Active Militia. These non-permanent militiamen were young, urban men who agreed to a minimum of twelve days of military service per year over a period of three years. Rather than relying on their personal, religious or ethnic beliefs the networks of male friendship fostered by single, young Canadian men in civilian military associations motivated men, mainly from urban areas, to enlist.

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47 Canada, House of Commons Debates (March 9, 1909), as quoted by Garry J. Burke, “Good for the Boy and the Nation: Military Drill and the Cadet Movement in Ontario Public Schools 1865-1911” (PhEd diss., Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, 1996), 217.


49 Ibid., 361, 373.

50 Ibid., 361.

51 Ibid., 373.
In the decades leading up to the Great War, the largely middle-class university student body provided a ripe training ground for the recruitment of officers for service. Canadian officers were generally selected and trained from the civilian population, unlike their British counterparts who often had strong generational ties to the military and were largely drawn from the upper and upper-middle classes. Although some officers had affluent social backgrounds and prior experience with the military, most did not. By virtue of their education and training, the male student body at the University of Toronto was believed to be “rich in embryo officers” waiting to be organized and trained to serve their nation and Empire. As the training ground of future great men, the University played a pivotal role in conditioning men to be patriotic, loyal and active citizens. At the University of Toronto, these students were referred to as “Varsity Men.”

**STUDENTS INTO SOLDIERS: HIGHER EDUCATION IN ONTARIO**

Ontario’s institutions of higher learning became sites where group consciousness and loyalties were constructed. Through their social activities, university students ameliorated themselves to their new surroundings, peers and station in life. Social activities on campus gained cultural importance as students began to rely on their social groups and affiliations to form their sense of self-identity more heavily than their religious conviction or individual moral

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52 W. Stewart Wallace, *A History of the University of Toronto 1827-1927* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1927), 112


54 Ibid., 5.

55 *University of Toronto Monthly*, November 1914, 3-4.
Impressionable students starting their new life at university looked for advice about how to dress, how to act and what to believe. By 1900, students were participating in rigorous social activities throughout the school year as:

The average…student’s life [could] be safely divided into three periods. In the fall the social development has the floor and city manners and every-day culture is absorbed. In the winter sports and social events are less freely indulged in and time becomes more valuable. In the spring cramming, plugging and grinding become the keenest desire of the most lackadaisical.

Student participation in a variety of social interests and associations gave meaning to the university experience. On university campuses it was no longer possible “to portray a distinct student type, whether in moral attributes or in dress.” An older stereotype of the academic who studied endlessly gave way to an active student body that participated in a vibrant non-academic student culture alongside their studies. The assortment of non-academic activities available to students on campus suggests that students, both male and female, were involved in a great number of social activities and displayed a wide breadth of interests.


60 McKillop, “Marching as to War,” 85.
Most students were male, with only the richest families sending daughters to university. However, the arrival of “the skirts” on campus did force the exclusive ‘boy’s club’ environment of the mid-nineteenth century to accommodate an increasingly co-ed atmosphere. Organized sport, such as football, began to enjoy widespread popularity at universities across Ontario as women started to enroll in universities by the 1880’s.\(^1\) On campus, though, sports were a male affair. Manliness was acquired and demonstrated through ‘manly’ behaviour, such as participation in athletics.\(^2\) Male sporting activities on campus also sought to counteract the increasing association of the liberal arts with feminine attributes and restore a sense of exclusively male space on campus.\(^3\) In sport, manliness was defined through ideals of sacrifice and service to a man’s community, team, college and country.\(^4\)

In a social climate that valued military attributes, male athletes were expected to train for the battlefield on their university playing field.\(^5\) Athletics were believed to fortify and develop skills necessary for success as:

To be a college athlete fit for “team” work necessitates fortitude and self-restraint, patience and silence in defeat and adversity, and even occasional submission to personal injustice for the welfare of the college. These qualities are extremely valuable, and they are obtained only at great cost in special post-graduate courses in after-life by those who did not cultivate them in their college student days. The possession of such qualities greatly enhances the chances of such success in outside life.\(^6\)

\(^{61}\) Ibid., 80.


\(^{63}\) McKillop, “Marching as to War,” 80.

\(^{64}\) Levson, “Constructing Elite Identities,” 155.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., 151,154.

\(^{66}\) \textit{University of Toronto Monthly}, April 1913, 259.
University men were expected to become future leaders in government, business and society and sport encouraged male students to develop traits such as courage, self-discipline, and teamwork necessary for leadership positions. Participation in sport was also believed to prepare men for war by teaching strength of character and the importance of winning. Athletics fostered ideas of fair play in competitive battles, facilitated male bonding and prepared men for the ultimate manly game of war.

Like public schools, universities were promoted as “agencies of national service.” Being a student was more than about learning; a student was expected to personify a commitment to the nation, to democracy and to a sense of morality. The university became the last site where men, and youth in general, could be formally molded into patriotic, loyal and active citizens through formal education. Universities sought to further develop the moral fiber of their students and educate them to be patriotic citizens who were supportive, and protective, of the nation and the Empire. To this end, the University of Toronto had served as a recruiting ground for the militia in the past. Students from the University of Toronto had been recruited in the nineteenth century to fight in “K” Company of the Queen’s Own Rifles until it was disbanded in 1890, and participated in the Fenian Raid (1866) and the North West Rebellion

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69 McKillop, “Marching as to War,” 83.

Although most military activity on campus in the nineteenth century ceased at the end of the military conflict, military associations and organizations began reforming on university campuses across Ontario in the decades before the Great War. In the years between 1890 and 1914, the University of Toronto provided recruits for a Company of army engineers under the command of a professor of chemistry W.R. Lang, who was later put in charge of organizing the officer training on campus during the Great War. Moreover, a University Rifle Association was formed on campus to train undergraduates in musketry.

As early as 1908, Canadian universities formally agreed to the creation of the Canadian Officers Training Corps (C.O.T.C.) modeled after the British model of an Officers’ Training Corps (O.T.C.) originally established in 1902. By 1911, delegates at the first Conference of Canadian Universities officially passed a resolution that institutions of higher learning should be involved in the training of military officers. The establishment of officer-training corps at Canadian universities was meant to address the necessity of military preparedness, encourage the further development of British imperial spirit and connect British imperial zeal to the future integrity of Canada. University administrations officially endorsed officer education because it

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71 Wallace, A History of the University of Toronto, 1827-1927, 185; Leatch, “Military Involvement in Higher Education,” 70.


73 Wallace, A History of the University of Toronto, 1827-1927, 186.

74 McKillop, “Marching as to War,” 84-5; Leatch, 29.

75 Leatch, “Military Involvement in Higher Education,” 38-9

76 McKillop, “Marching as to War,” 85.
was viewed as a way for institutions of higher learning to contribute to national defense while at the same time promoting “manly” and “healthy” physical training for students.\textsuperscript{77}

Even for those families who could afford it, a university education was not considered mandatory. Less than one percent of all Canadians between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four attended university. This very low enrollment rate suggests that not all students who could afford to pursue higher education did so.\textsuperscript{78} As discussed earlier, seventy-seven percent of high school students left during or after the completion of their first year of secondary studies, while only five percent of all students continued onto forms III and IV.\textsuperscript{79} However, reflecting the largely middle-class population of Ontario’s high schools, students who did attend university were not exclusively from the upper classes. Enrollment increased as universities became vehicles that prepared students for harsh and competitive careers in the “real world” of business and commerce.\textsuperscript{80} The middle-class increasingly turned to colleges as a way of acquiring formal, and employable, credentials.\textsuperscript{81} More high-school students immediately pursued higher education, lowering the relative age of the student body and creating a new and emerging undergraduate student culture.\textsuperscript{82} Some students from farming families pursued higher education in hopes of securing a more stable and profitable future than the farm.\textsuperscript{83} Middle-class and farming families

\textsuperscript{77} Leatch, “Military Involvement in Higher Education,” 38.

\textsuperscript{78} Gaffield et al., “Student Populations and Graduate Careers,” 11.

\textsuperscript{79} Gidney and Millar, Inventing Secondary Education, 309.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 6, 18; McKillop, “Marching as to War,” 82.

\textsuperscript{81} Walden, “Hazes, Hustles, Scraps and Stunts,” 95.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{83} Gaffield et al., “Student Populations and Graduate Careers,” 11.
Cadet troops, whether associated with public schools or not, were a visual presence in street parades, military processions and reviews in many Ontario towns and cities. In the picture above, three thousand cadets are participating in a military review on the grounds of the University of Toronto on May 24, 1915. In addition to the war work of the university, its grounds were also used by the city at large as a public venue for military drilling, processions and inspections.

were prepared to make sacrifices to send their sons to university as education became a career prerequisite for the newly bureaucratized professions of government and business.⁸⁴

Although there were some military activities carried out on Canadian campuses by individual associations, the Canadian Officer’s Training Corps (C.O.T.C.) marked the first

⁸⁴ Ibid., 21.
centrally organized effort between universities and the Department of Militia. The C.O.T.C. was designed to provide military training for university students with minimal interference in their studies rather than form complete units for use in active combat. The program was meant to generate a large supply of trained junior officers for military service in Canada, Britain and other parts of the Empire. Universities retained their customary powers of discipline and supervision over students in the program while the Department of Militia centrally organized and controlled the C.O.T.C. Officer candidates were regularly monitored and were required to take standardized written and practical examinations. Students learned about army organization, military law and administrative procedures. Based on the British model, students participated in elementary battle tactics, target practice, and military drills. Upon the successful completion of all requirements, students earned their certification and were entitled to receive an officer’s commission in the army. C.O.T.C. participants at Canadian universities earned certificates equivalent to six months of full time instruction and training at the Royal Military College.

In 1912, a C.O.T.C. contingent was formed at McGill University in Montreal and another was shortly established at Laval University in Québec City. Most other universities did not.

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86 Ibid., 39.
87 Ibid., 43.
88 Ibid., 33.
89 Ibid., 32.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid., 39.
establish contingents until the Great War, however by 1916 there were C.O.T.C. contingents at seventeen of the twenty-one established universities in Canada.\textsuperscript{93} Although the University of Toronto had been among the first institutions to advocate for the establishment of the C.O.T.C., a formal contingent was not established until 1914.\textsuperscript{94} Since 1909, the University had been deadlocked in their negotiations with the Department of Militia over who would assume the financial costs of establishing a C.O.T.C program. \textsuperscript{95} In 1912 an editorial in the \textit{University of Toronto Monthly}, a periodical published by the Alumni Association, claimed that:

The question of military training in the University, which has been pending for more than a year, was wisely disposed of at the November meeting of the Senate when the report of a committee adverse to the proposal of the Militia Department to establish a Canadian Officers’ Training Corps was adopted. The committee was influenced by the financial requirements of the proposal which the Board of Governors had declined to assume…. Whatever might be the force of the argument in favour of military training, [the people of Ontario] should, therefore, with more propriety, to be addressed to the Legislature. \textsuperscript{96} The University of Toronto and the Department of Militia disagreed over the responsibility to purchase a piece of land necessary to establish an armory at the University. The University did not believe it should be responsible for the purchase, and the Department of Militia believed that the University should provide the necessary physical space for the training of the contingent.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 40.

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 42.

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 75.

\textsuperscript{96} \textit{University of Toronto Monthly}, December 1912, 50-51.
The pressure to produce more junior officers during the Great War pushed ahead negotiations and the government agreed to pay for the training and outfitting of C.O.T.C. troops using existing University facilities. The University was expected to respond to the war effort with vigor, and the *University of Toronto Monthly* commented that:

> It has been urged that there is a special call to University men in this crisis. Leaders are needed, and to the trained university man, among others, the country is looking. And leaders have come. Many are going with commissions in the Canadian or imperial forces…Again, students and graduates of a provincial University owe a great deal to the community; - they have been given special privileges; part of their education has been provided at the public expense. Service to the country is the return demanded.

As a provincial university, the University of Toronto received endowments and public funds to finance the costs of operation. By virtue of being dependent on public funds, and in part because of its designation as a provincial institution, the University was accountable to public opinion in ways that privately funded universities were not. Activities at the University of Toronto were particularly vulnerable to public opinion due to the University’s close proximity to the provincial legislature in Toronto and its reliance on public funds. Universities were expected to develop the moral fiber of their students and educate them to be patriotic citizens who supported, and protected, their nation and Empire. Administrators at the University of Toronto were particularly aware of their vulnerability to public opinion. The close scrutiny of government officials and the media placed public pressure on ‘Varsity Men’ to demonstrate their commitment to leadership and duty by leading Canada into battle as officers, soldiers and men.

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97 Leatch, “Military Involvement in Higher Education,” 76.

98 *University of Toronto Monthly*, January 1916, 166.
During the first three months of the 1914 fall term, President Falconer repeatedly petitioned both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Militia and Defense to provide resources for the officer training already being conducted on University grounds.\(^9\) Even before the start of the fall academic term, over twenty younger faculty members had set up an interim military organization.\(^1\) In August 1914, the University’s Rifle Association had organized and conducted training classes for future officers “so that there would be sufficient number of men somewhat qualified to assist in recruiting and training when the University opened a few weeks later.”\(^2\) Within days of the beginning of the academic term in September 1914, over 700 men and staff were training and drilling on the grounds with the help of the University’s Rifle Association.\(^3\) Without sufficient supplies, and even without uniforms, unofficial recruits were organizing, attending training classes and learning to use weapons.\(^4\) By the time a University of Toronto contingent was officially designated on November 2, 1914 the campus was already alive with military activity.

**CONCLUSION**

Over the next four years, the presence of war became increasingly obvious on campus. At the University of Toronto classrooms stood empty as many bright, promising minds made their way overseas and into battle. However, being a solider was more than about fighting. Through

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10. Ibid., 77.


13. Ibid., 78.
their schooling and leisure activities, such as organized sport and boyhood military associations, the male student body at the University of Toronto had been conditioned to view war as an adventure and the ultimate test of manliness. As explored above, students who went onto higher education at both the secondary and post-secondary levels were foreseen to be the future leaders of society. As such, they were expected to set a moral and patriotic example by virtue of their experience and education. Chapter Three will describe how the organizations that had once provided social support to incoming students now provided material and financial support to the war effort as university groups and associations produced products needed at the front, formed committees to raise funds and sold Victory Bonds. The student, much like the soldier, was expected to personify a commitment to the nation, to democracy and to a sense of morality. In the heart of Toronto, the University of Toronto transformed itself into a military institution under the scrutinizing glare of the public, the media and government officials.
CHAPTER THREE

FOLLOWING THEIR DUTY: UNIVERSITY MEN AND THE GREAT WAR

University Men join the company now! Help to increase the University’s contribution to the Great War. Take your preliminary training with University Men on the University grounds. Prepare to take your part in what will be the University’s proudest traditions.

- The Varsity Campus Newspaper, 1917

During the Great War, the campus of the University of Toronto became a parade ground, its classrooms became recruiting centres, and its lecture rooms became mess halls. Faculties and colleges organized their own enlistment drives urging students to take an oath of allegiance agreeing to “undergo a systematic training in military work.” Debating clubs argued the validity of German claims to war, while campus newspapers wrote that Germany was barbaric and lacked any “essential culture.” The University co-operated with the military in healthcare, weapons development, and officer training. This chapter will illustrate how, in the first two years of the Great War, the University of Toronto encouraged students to enlist by presenting military training as a social activity and granting academic leniency to those who volunteered for active service. Moreover, the University lent its facilities, as well as its men, to the war effort as laboratories were turned over to produce vaccinations and anti-toxin injections while German culture, literature and language were systematically removed from University classrooms and

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1 The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper, March 7, 1917, 1.

2 Ibid., October 3, 1914, 1.

3 Ibid., December 2, 1914; Ibid., November 18, 1914.

programs. By the end of the first year of the war, 1060 University of Toronto graduates and undergraduates, in addition to sixty-two faculty members, had enlisted for active service.

**LEISURE INTO ACTION: THE SOCIAL ASPECTS OF MILITARY TRAINING**

In early 1914, faculties and colleges at the University of Toronto participated in an informal recruiting competition. Each faculty was eager to encourage students to enlist, and the front page of *The Varsity* chronicled the early recruiting meetings and enthusiastic responses of university students. Students could only be formally enlisted in the University’s Rifle Association. However, students were “given to understand that at a later date [they] would become a member of the Officer’s Training Corps.” The University’s Canadian Officers Training Corps (C.O.T.C.) was officially sanctioned on November 2, 1914, and was organized into twelve companies with a total projected enrollment of 1356 men. The C.O.T.C. functioned as a large Military College alongside traditional university classes. The contingent was arranged into companies that were organized and commanded by members of their own faculties. Student-soldiers on campus participated in military training exercises that were masked as social activities. Just as they were in class together, students were training to fight together.

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7 *The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper*, November 18, 1914, 1.

8 “Canadian Officers’ Training Corps at the University of Toronto,” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1915, 30.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.
Students from the Faculties of Medicine, Dentistry, Education and Applied Science as well as students from University College, Victoria College and St. Michael’s College trained in their own companies. Programs were designed to minimally affect studies on campus, and the academic work of the university closed at 4 p.m. each day to allow students to participate in “Squad Drills” and more generally aid in the war effort. Special lectures were delivered on various military subjects for those seeking commissions, and student-soldiers obtained special certificates in Musketry and Signaling. The Varsity describes C.O.T.C. training efforts as the campus of the University of Toronto became alive with military activity:

Often, owing to the number of squads drilling on the ground, one portion of a squad would mistake a command given to someone else – and then perhaps the front rank continued and the rear rank turned about. But these mistakes were only the result of the immense number that had to be drilled; and as platoon and finally company drill were reached, precision was attained. This is no place for comparison, nor yet the time: it is sufficient to say, no one watched “Varsity’s” companies training and had to make excuses for them.

Training and drilling on University grounds was so prevalent that weekly orders for the C.O.T.C. were published on the front page of The Varsity outlining the time table for company “parades.” At the end of the first year of the war, The Varsity announced that a total of 1868 recruits had enlisted. The Faculty of Applied Science led the recruitment numbers, with a total of 470 enrollments.

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11 Ibid.
12 “Canadian Officers’ Training Corps at the University of Toronto,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1915, 31.
13 Ibid.
14 The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper, Friday October 8, 1915, 1.
15 Ibid.
An inspection of the C.O.T.C. by the Duke of Connaught on January 22, 1914 constituted the first assessment of the contingent at Toronto. Students formed two battalions on the grounds of the Toronto Armouries to hear the Duke speak. Although they had been training on university grounds since the beginning of the fall academic term, most students were training without official supplies or equipment. The presence of potential soldiers in civilian clothes did not escape the notice of the Duke, who communicated his great satisfaction at the turnout of university men at the Armouries. The 1915 *Varsity War Supplement* recorded the words of the Duke:

> You have come here on a very cold night, you are in your ordinary civilian clothing and only two companies are armed. If you had been uniformed you would have presented a still more soldierly appearance. You have come forward at a moment when every man that is able to do anything to help the Empire in a time of stress is needed and you have done so readily in a most efficient manner.

The students and staff who stood in front of the Duke of Connaught without uniforms were soldiers in all but dress. However, there was significance in donning a uniform and taking on – and performing – a particular type of manliness.

The high visibility of the uniform as a symbol of soldiering made it an important part in the performance of masculinity during the Great War. Announcements in *The Varsity Newspaper* selling men’s clothing quickly began to advertise the sale of officer’s uniforms, including “great coats, service dress suits, breeches, British warms, caps, puttees, Sam Browne belts, swords, etc.” Men’s fashion advertisements which were usually accompanied with sketches of men in “Cambridge suits and topcoats,” now included pictures of men in full uniform of “correct

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16 “Canadian Officers’ Training Corps at the University of Toronto,” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1916, 32.
military cut and fit.” The availability of uniforms for sale at men’s shops in Toronto suggests that officer cadets were willing to pay for their own military outfit rather than wait for supplies through the C.O.T.C. Uniforms were important because they symbolically positioned students and staff into the role and responsibilities of a ‘soldier.’ In his book *Men in Black*, John Harvey outlines how clothing acts as a gesture, or a sign, into the associations of the individual wearer. He writes that:

> The ‘meanings’ of clothes are ‘constructions’ placed on them, and are not readable in a dictionary sense, as verbal meanings are. These are meanings based on the perception of specific choices….any meaning in the clothes will, moreover, be either corroborated or qualified by the posture and movement of the body inside the clothes.

Therefore, the meanings of responsibility and duty connected with military service projected onto the uniform were part of the ‘construction’ of masculinity itself. Appearing in uniform publicly demonstrated that a man was willing to participate in war and fulfill the association between duty, manliness and active service. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter Two, men in uniform were believed to embody traits of discipline, obedience, and patriotism. Wearing a uniform was an expression of the gendered qualities of imperial masculinity, just as participation in military processions and parades were gendered processes that publicly separated men from their contemporaries. A soldier’s uniform gave meaning and responsibilities to the man who wore it, responsibilities which would be fulfilled as uniformed recruits left the city and made their way onto battlefields.

During the war, the associations between uniform and meaning extended beyond the army. In her article “‘The Case of the Kissing Nurse’: Femininity, Sexuality and Canadian

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17 *The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper*, March 1, 1915, 2.

Nursing, 1900-1970,” Kathryn McPherson explores how standardized uniforms helped to define and confine nurses according to the “social standards of bourgeois femininity.” McPherson explains that:

Uniforms promised to fulfill several symbolic functions. Standardized dress eradicated differences of class or ethnicity or even personality that distinguished young recruits from one another. Whatever features differentiated the uniforms adopted by individual schools, the commonalities were sufficient to create an occupationally specific code that indicated nurses’ status as ‘on duty.’ And while the uniform represented the work that nurses performed, it simultaneously identified nurses as different from any other female wage-earners.19

McPherson’s observations about the relationship between uniforms and nursing can be easily applied to the case of soldiers during the Great War. The movement from civilian clothes into uniform facilitated a visible transition into being ‘on duty’ in the defense of the nation. Moreover, the appearance of some men in uniform while other remained in ‘common attire’ separated soldiers, and their associated ‘on duty’ status, from other men. As explored in Chapter One, men out of uniform often became the targets of bullying recruitment initiatives and conscription as the war progressed. Although there was a rigid hierarchy in the armed forces that was apparent through differentiated uniforms which indicated status, the willingness of a man to don any uniform alluded to a commonality of understanding concerning the validity of the war effort and the value of military service. At least temporarily, the demonstration of masculinity associated with military service had the potential to negate university hierarchies of age, education and class through the camaraderie and sense of shared values, such as duty and responsibility, which came to characterize military service on campus.

By making special mention of the staff and faculty present at the Armouries, the words of the Duke of Connaught during his inspection of the University’s military recruits reinforced the mentality that every able man had a duty to be of service to his country, especially during times of conflict. The most efficient way of rendering service would be to actively engage in military training, such as the C.O.T.C., with the promise of entering into active service. This call to duty was reflected in the recruitment efforts on campus that sought to reach all men whether they be students, faculty or staff. *The Varsity* recorded that the contingent that stood in front of the Duke at the Armouries was not comprised solely of students, and that the Duke specifically commented on the number of “the older members of the staff training in the ranks.” At drilling practice, students trained under staff and faculty who, in some cases, were learning their paces alongside their students. Some staff and faculty had already served in other conflicts, as in the case of Lieutenant Colonel J.A. Roberts who served in the South African War. However, aside from their participation in the kinds of recreational and social military organizations discussed in Chapter Two, such as the St. George’s Society in Toronto, others had no prior experience in active service. Therefore, the presence of faculty and staff among the ranks of the C.O.T.C. presented a new social climate of camaraderie where students interacted with faculty and staff on more familiar terms.

In military exercises organized on campus, the C.O.T.C. engaged men in training that combined military drills with social and recreational activities that reinforced a sense of belonging, rigor and purpose. Just as students had looked towards social activities to help construct their life at university before the war, these same social organizations now urged men

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20 *The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper*, March 1, 1915, 2.
to best serve their country by making “a magnificent contribution to the fighting forces of the Empire.”21 In his book The University of Toronto: A History, Martin Friedland explains that there was strong pressure on campus for men to join the C.O.T.C. One engineering student wrote home, explaining that “with the President and profs and fellows all urging you to join I could scarcely do otherwise.”22 In his memoirs Lester B. Pearson wrote that, “above all, I was young and adventurous, anxious not to be left out of the response of youth to such a challenge, or to lag behind the others and have a white feather [signifying cowardice] pinned on me.”23 By enlisting, students and staff were proving their commitment to the nation, honouring their duty to one another, and upholding the behaviour advocated by their peers and administration. Just as students learned together in lecture halls, so too did they march alongside each other on campus parade grounds. It was not unheard of for whole classes to enlist together, such as in 1917 when the whole freshman class from the Royal College of Dental Surgeons volunteered for service in the Canadian Army Dental Corps (C.A.D.C.).24

In the fall of 1914, a series of “field days” were conducted on the outskirts of the city where students embarked on campaigns “starting early in the morning, marching five or six miles out, [completing] maneuvers, luncheon, attacks and [marching] home.”25 The sense of adventure and camaraderie fostered by these “field days” continued in May 1915, when officer candidates from the University of Toronto contingent attended a two-week C.O.T.C. summer

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21 The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper, February 4, 1916, 1.


23 Ibid.

24 University of Toronto Monthly, January 1917, 160.

25 “Canadian Officers’ Training Corps at the University of Toronto,” 32.
At the Niagara training camp in May 1915, Officer Cadets from the University of Toronto joined other C.O.T.C. cadets for two weeks of drills, target practice and general military training. Although cadets were expected to participate in military activities, the picture above attests to the overall tone of the camp as recreational and instructional rather than rigorous. The men above, some of them lying down while others drink from their canteens or carry on conversation, are taking a rest from marching on camp grounds.

training camp at Niagara-on-the-Lake. There had been speculation, both at the University and in the local press, as to whether a camp would take place that year at all. Between 1906 and 1914 summer camps were part of the traditional training schedule for militia units. However, these summer camps were officially suspended in 1915 “as a war time necessity.” 26 University

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examinations, which were held a month earlier than usual, were almost over by the time the Government’s decision to hold the camp at Niagara was announced. Accordingly, only 700 of the 1,800 members of the C.O.T.C remained on campus and were able to go to Niagara, which was the only summer camp conducted by any unit of the Canadian militia that year.\footnote{Ibid.}

Those students that did attend the camp spent two weeks drilling, training, and interacting with their fellow officer candidates, including faculty and staff from the University. Before members of the Toronto contingent left for camp, they were outfitted with the equipment required to complete their training at Niagara. Finally, students were able to don the final and most visible sign of soldiering: the uniform. Reinforcing the transformative quality of military uniform, The Varsity described the sight of these newly outfitted soldiers-in-training as “unrecognizable behind their load of greatcoat, uniform, “fatigue” suit, water bottle, haversack, Lee-Enfield rifle, bayonet, sheath and pouch.”\footnote{“The C.O.T.C. Camp at Niagara,” The Varsity Supplement, 1915, 33.} These Varsity Men, many properly equipped for the first time since they began their training, now looked like soldiers in uniform rather than trainees in civilian clothes. Arriving with 701 members, the contingent from Toronto formed the largest group at Niagara where they joined a sizeable force from McGill University and smaller groups from other universities.\footnote{Leatch, “Military Involvement in Higher Education,” 106.}

Reflecting the composition of the contingent itself, the members at the camp were made up of students and staff from the University.\footnote{Ibid., 106.} At the camp, officer cadets became immersed in a male environment conducive to male bonding and camaraderie. Officer Cadets, including both
students and professors, participated in field exercises, military drills and formal inspections. The *Varsity* reported that there was “little trouble about discipline” at the camp, and that spirits at the camp were high. The newspaper recounted that humorous incidents and good times were had in the evening when officer candidates had access to an open-air cinematograph, piano and tent. Of these humorous occurrences, *The Varsity War Supplement* claimed that those connected with the ‘professor-private’ were particularly amusing. One such incident was recalled in detail:

…when the officer of the day called, “Any complaints?” at the mess table where sat Pte. Prof. Lash Miller, Profs. Gillespie and Allan, the first of these seeking an orderly with a jug of milk likely to pass him by, said quickly, “That depends, sir, whether this milk is for us or not.” As though stung by a tarantula the orderly dropped the jug in front of the speaker, and satisfied, the distinguished private bawled, “None sir!”

As illustrated though the pages of *The Varsity*, the social organization of military training allowed participants to develop a new sense of belonging and purpose attached to their military endeavours. On the training field, students often found themselves training alongside their professors, reinforcing the belief that all eligible men had a duty to serve their nation and Empire.

**DISCOVERING ‘THE SOLDIER WITHIN’: ADVENTURE, NATURE AND MILITARY TRAINING**

The C.O.T.C.’s participation in the Niagara Camp and subsequent ‘field days’ that would follow were extensions of existing middle-class trends towards outdoor exploration: the rediscovery of “the wild man within oneself” through tourism. During the late-nineteenth

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century, the ‘wilderness tourism’ industry blossomed across Ontario. Before the Great War, the tourist industry in the province was primarily driven by tension between ideas of civilization and wilderness.” Patricia Jansen’s book, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario*, explores how many urban middle-class Ontarians in the late-nineteenth century fled the heat and dust of the city for the romanticized crisp wilderness of Muskoka. Notions of wilderness served to contrast and reinforce understandings of civilization; yet experiencing wilderness also allowed ‘civilized’ city dwellers to experience the vitality of nature and rigors of physical exercise as they hiked over mountains, embarked on canoe trips, and soaked up panoramic views from the steps of hotel resorts.

Excursions to Muskoka, and the various outdoor activities that followed such as hunting and fishing, were seen as part of a middle-class rejuvenation of manhood. Wilderness tourists were largely middle class due to, among other things, the lack of holidays and sixty-hour work weeks experienced by many in the working-class. As discussed in Chapter Two, middle class families were becoming increasingly concerned over the detrimental affect of city life on the physical and moral health of their children and youth. Trips into Muskoka and the countryside surrounding Ontario’s towns and cities provided a way for urban men and youth to interact with nature in ways that would counteract the supposed negative effects of ‘civilized’ city life such as overwork and stress. Moreover, Karen Dubinsky’s book, *The Second Greatest Disappointment*, explores how natural spectacles such as the Niagara falls inspired feelings of adventure, danger,

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33 Ibid., 28.
34 Ibid., 14.
36 Ibid., 105.
and awe in tourists who visited and interacted with them. An excursion into Muskoka, like the contemplation of the falls at Niagara, provided a kind religious experience where one could commune with nature and witness wilderness scenes that inspired both pleasure and terror.\textsuperscript{37}

Although there were many similarities between the notion of the urban tourist who voyaged into the wilderness on an expedition of self discovery and the male recruit who embarked on the voyage of military training, the expedition of the soldier onto the battlefield was believed to be primarily a journey of self-sacrifice. President Falconer congratulated University men preparing to go overseas at a farewell dinner saying, “While to us they cause sadness as they go, we are yet proud that they are going. They are bound really on a holy crusade for the maintenance of not only their own country and the Empire, but of ideals of democracy and freedom.”\textsuperscript{38} Jonathan Vance explains that Canadian soldiers fighting in the Great War were portrayed in English Canada as crusaders, men who were willing to respond “to the church’s call and quit his home to help vanquish the infidel.”\textsuperscript{39} Soldiers were not only described as soldiers of Christ, but through their suffering and sacrifices on the battlefields soldiers were also characterized as Christ himself: Vance writes that “[Jesus], like the soldiers, had been condemned to suffer for the sins of others. Christ, then, was the quintessential symbol of the man at the front.”\textsuperscript{40} Therefore, war was at once terrible and necessary; although the war resulted in

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\textsuperscript{37} Karen Dubinsky, \textit{The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls} (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1999), 56.

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{University of Toronto Monthly}, April 1915, 305.


\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 43.
scenes of terrifying suffering and carnage, it was also believed to be an awe-inspiring and necessary sacrifice that ensured the freedom of others.

The religious connotations of the conflict as a crusade only heightened the sense of purpose attached to the war effort as the defense of British ideals. However, the carnage of war did much to decimate organized religion in Canada, and Vance reports that almost ten percent of all Methodist chaplains and probationers who had gone overseas resigned their posts upon returning to Canada. Another twenty-five percent simply disappeared and no longer associated with the church.41 In gendered terms, the religious associations of soldiering further heightened the value of active service as the defining moment of manhood. Prevalent understandings of manliness presented soldiering as a path towards saintliness and even immortality. By constructing righteous justifications for war based on religious conviction and self-sacrifice, it was unfathomable that the sacrifices incurred to “save civilization” could fade through the passage of time.

After the war, the construction of memorials in communities across Canada expressed the belief that those who served would be remembered for their service; the alternative, namely that the 60,000 Canadians who had died could simply be forgotten, was unconceivable.42 Moreover, it was believed that men who survived could cling to their participation in the conflict as a demonstration of their self-worth. Chancellor Bowles of Victoria College told students leaving for the front that:

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41 Ibid., 71.

42 Ibid., 44.
We have faith in you; we believe that in the time when you are tested, and you receive your baptism of fire, you will be brave and will quit yourselves like men; and we believe further that, in facing the many insidious temptations of the life of camp, you will be true to the high moral ideals and traditions of this University.43

As soldiers, and as Varsity Men, those who left for University for the front were expected to avoid the moral pitfalls and enticements of life in the trench, including drinking, cursing, prostitution, theft and, worst of all, desertion. University students were expected to serve as leaders at the front, just as they were expected to become the future leaders in their communities upon their return.

In part to further interest in the war against the arguments of skeptics, and also to bolster widespread participation in the war, the administration at the University of Toronto began providing incentives for students, staff and professors to join in the war effort. Rather than relying solely upon more informal systems of peer pressure, the administration actively encouraged and enacted policies to persuade men from the University to enlist. While faculty and staff encouraged men to enlist by speaking at patriotic meetings and convocation ceremonies, the University also formally initiated policies to facilitate a smoother transition from academic life into active service. In February 1915, the senate of the University approved regulations that allowed students to earn academic credit for military activities. The University of Toronto Monthly, published by the Alumni Association, reported that:

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43 *University of Toronto Monthly*, April 1915, 305.
…the Council of the Faculty of Arts recommends that all students of this Faculty, registered for the Session 1914-1915, or in some previous Session, who have been or may be accepted for active service, shall be granted the year in full…[and] all students who have been in attendance up to February 1st, 1915, and whose records are satisfactory to the Faculty Council, shall be granted their Years.44

By granting students their academic year, the University lessened the academic consequences that may have deterred some students from participating in the C.O.T.C and, ultimately, from enlisting for active service. Regulations also allowed students who participated in military training, either with the C.O.T.C. or any other unit, “a bonus based on the military efficiency shown, [and] not exceeding 10 per cent of the full value of each subject.”45 In addition to academic leniency for student soldiers, the University also approved leave of absences for faculty and staff who chose to enlist. The President’s Report for 1917-1918 reported that members of faculty were granted leave of absence that year “for military or national service during the year.”46 By 1918, the report listed a total of 165 present and former staff on active service.47

The University also revisited the question of academic credit for C.O.T.C. participants in December 1916. At this time, the Senate formally initiated regulations allowing students who entered into military training to earn academic credit for their year on a case-by-case basis. The Varsity reported, “every member of the C.O.T.C. who desires credit should call on the Registrar

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44 Ibid., March 1915, 256.
46 University of Toronto, President’s Report for the Year ending 30th June, 1917, 9.
47 Ibid., 7.
of the University at once and have his case determined.”

By enacting policies of academic leniency for students and granting leave of absence for staff, the University formally embedded incentives that encouraged men to enlist. These policies in effect removed obstacles for men considering active service and thus reinforced existing sentiments that all university men had a duty to enter into the service of their country.

As we have seen in Chapter Two, the University was a site for the construction of new kinds of group consciousness. This chapter has shown that during the war, the University administration actively persuaded students to enlist by openly supporting the war effort and enacting policy initiatives that encouraged men to enlist. While the intent to train for war was of paramount importance, military training exercises for student-soldiers combined recreation with the preparation and training for active service. In this way, training and participation in the war effort constructed a sense of belonging, acceptance and purpose on campus that reinforced the duty men were expected to feel in terms of active service. However, the large number of recruits affected the functioning performance of the University as students and staff made their way to training camps and then overseas. By 1915, the staff of the History Department had been reduced so significantly that the department was forced to contemplate hiring new staff. The President’s Report for 1916-1917 stated that 622 fewer students were registered that session than in the previous academic year. In December 1916, The Varsity reported that practically the whole graduating class of Medical students volunteered to serve as “whenever the Meds to anything

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48 The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper, December 6, 1916, 1.

49 Ibid., September 29, 1915, 1.

50 University of Toronto, President’s Report 1917, 7.
they believe in doing it well.”\textsuperscript{51} As will be discussed in Chapter Four, the academic conditions at the University were becoming increasingly dire, and even deteriorated to the point where proposals were made to shut down the University for the remainder of the war.

In 1916, President Falconer observed that the “corridors [did] not echo as they once did with the voices of happy men.”\textsuperscript{52} By 1917, there were approximately 4,300 recruits from the University of Toronto community.\textsuperscript{53} The Great War facilitated great change at the University of Toronto, both in the composition of its student body and in the physical usage of its campus and buildings. Before the war, the proportion of female students at the University had not yet reached twenty-five percent. By 1918, University College reported that the proportion of female students had reached sixty-five percent.\textsuperscript{54} However, the heightened female presence did not diminish war efforts on campus; rather, the increasing ratio of female to male students served as a visible reminder of the sacrifices of the University in the war, and of the responsibilities left to those at home.

Moreover, not all of the students who left campus to engage in war service were male. Many nurses from hospitals affiliated with the University volunteered to go overseas and serve in hospitals serving the front lines; others went as volunteers with the Red Cross or worked in the war offices of Britain.\textsuperscript{55} In addition, there was an exodus of physicians and surgeons from the University staff and leading pathologists, bacteriologists and physiologists who left to join the

\textsuperscript{51} The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper, December 6, 1916, 1.

\textsuperscript{52} University of Toronto Monthly, November 1916, 58.

\textsuperscript{53} “Editor’s Preface,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1917, 8.

\textsuperscript{54} “University College,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1917, 65.

\textsuperscript{55} “War Work of University Women at Home,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1918, 133.
war effort. Members of the university community, including the wives of faculty, equipped hospitals and raised funds while laboratories were turned over to produce vaccines and develop weapons needed at the front. Therefore, all students that remained on campus, both male and female, had to contend with the changing function of University property as buildings once used for lecture halls and dorm rooms were turned over to house and train military troops.

**MEN, MONEY AND MUNITIONS: THE UNIVERSITY GAINS NEW PURPOSE**

During the Great War, activities at the University of Toronto gained new purpose as University buildings, capital and brainpower became focused on preparing men, and the country in general, for war. In March 1915, the University received approval from the War Office and the Department of Militia to raise a University of Toronto Base Hospital. Although medical men from the University had been going overseas since the first contingent left Canada in the fall, the organization of the Base Hospital sought to provide a more complete medical service and create a functioning medical unit to be sent overseas. The hospital was conceived of as a “homogeneous unit” where trained medical officers and nurses from the University community would facilitate “better results [than] may be expected from less homogeneous groups of surgeons and physicians.”

Staffed by thirty-eight officers, including Dr. Harret Cockburn, the sole female doctor, the hospital also employed seventy-three nurses from Toronto hospitals affiliated with the University. Over two hundred soldiers were also employed in the base hospital, most of them drawn from the undergraduate student body at the University of Toronto. Lieutenant Colonel

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56 “University of Toronto No. 4 Base Hospital,” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1915, 24.

J.A. Roberts of the department of surgery, a veteran of the Boer War, was given command of the hospital. Under his leadership, the hospital recruited many of the University’s leading pathologists, bacteriologists, and physiologists in addition to physicians and surgeons. The University bid farewell to the members of the Base Hospital on May 5, 1915 at Convocation Hall and by the end of the month it had arrived in England. ⁵⁸ At the request of the Serbian government, the hospital was first stationed in Northern Greece at Salonika where it serviced the Serbian-German front for two years before moving to Basingstoke, England.⁵⁹

Although the Base Hospital had arrived overseas, the work on campus was just beginning. Two committees were formed on campus to ensure that the hospital could meet this mission. The first was made up of members from the University’s staff, Board of Governors and Senate, and was concerned with raising funds to purchase the best surgical, medical and laboratory equipment. The second committee was made up of “ladies connected with the University” who were largely responsible for supplying the materials necessary to equip 1,040 beds, producing surgical dressings for the operating rooms, and preparing all linens necessary for patient care. It was hoped that the hospital would be able to “relieve suffering, restore sick and wounded to health, and minister comfort to thousands who will have undergone untold hardships for Canada and the Empire.”⁶⁰

In effect, student activities on campus were completely transformed by the outbreak of war. The Hospital Supply Association was only one of the many groups on campus that sought

⁵⁸ “University of Toronto No. 4 Base Hospital,” 25.


⁶⁰ “University of Toronto No. 4 Base Hospital,” 25.
to raise and commission funds to be put towards the war effort. In 1915, the President of the University himself pledged $3,000 to a special collection by the British Red Cross, leaving it up to the Students Administrative Council to organize the campaign alongside “the executive officers of the various women undergraduate associations.”61 The women at Victoria College operated a Patriotic Tea Room on campus and contributed all proceeds to war funds.62 The principal profits of The Varsity War Supplements were donated to the Canadian Red Cross through the Hospital Supply Association, and accounted for a sum of $8,000 by the time the last supplement was issued in 1918.63 The Varsity reported that students helped sell government bonds, commonly known as Victory Loans, to fund the war effort; they sold them across Toronto with such enthusiasm “in their work that they went without their meals.”64 University classes ended a month early so that all students, both male and female, would be available to work in munitions factories or on farms.65 The vibrant student culture that had thrived in the decades before the Great War found new purpose in training men for active service, as well as recruiting those left behind to donate their time and their funds to war work.

The University of Toronto was eager to “extend to military authorities any assistance which might facilitate the training of troops.”66 As a result, the campus became home to a myriad of military personnel including the Royal Flying Corps, the School of Infantry, and a Training

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61 The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper, Friday, October 8, 1915, 1.

62 “War Work of University Women at Home,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1918, 133.

63 “The University Hospital Supply Association,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1918, 80.

64 The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper, Monday, December 3, 1917, 1.

65 Friedland, The University of Toronto: A History, 255.

Depôt for non-commissioned officers. A kitchen was constructed at the back of the University’s large Examination Hall to transform the space into a mess hall. Lecture rooms in the Medical Building large enough to accommodate the whole company were made available to the Training Depot. The University of Toronto Overseas Training Company, whose chief function was the training of candidates for the British Army, quartered in student residences at Victoria College and used the lawn as a parade ground and location to pitch tents. The Royal Flying Corps occupied half of the Engineering Building where lectures were given on the theory of flight, and Trinity College became the site of a general reception hospital so that the Old General Hospital could be used for soldiers. Hart House became almost completely occupied by military authorities and was an important rehabilitation center for men who returned from the war. The adjustments and concessions granted to military personnel on campus further reinforced the commitment of the University to the war effort. *The Varsity* war supplement in 1917 reported, “these new adjustments have been caused by the fact that Canada knew little of what war means…[or] the sudden demands which the creation of a large war-machine entailed.” The affects of the war on campus life were palpable. While some men left campus for active service, others arrived to use University facilities as training grounds. Female undergraduates used libraries and reading-rooms to produce goods on behalf of the Red Cross.

67 Ibid., 58.
68 “University of Toronto Overseas Training Company,” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1916, 27.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
The production of medical supplies and scientific knowledge on campus demonstrated quite clearly that the University became a space fundamentally geared towards supporting the war effort. By early 1915, much of the scientific work still occurring on campus was geared towards meeting the various multifaceted demands of an army at war. The Bacteriological Department was particularly instrumental in battling an outbreak of meningitis that swept through the troops of the Second Division stationed at Exhibition Camp in Toronto. The bacteriological laboratories at the University were transformed into “a veritable beehive of activity” as faculty and students battled to swab, examine and process each man who may be infected.72 With the cooperation of the Toronto General Hospital, an entire floor in the Emergency Department was set aside for those who were either infected by the disease or identified as carriers and therefore placed under quarantine. The laboratories at the University were responsible for preparing the necessary materials used in testing each man for the infection, which included collecting endless samples, refilling thousands of test tubes and recleaning and sterilizing equipment for continuous use. A total of sixteen cases were verified at the Exhibition Camp, and of these eight men died. The Varsity reported that “when all is said and done, the outstanding feature of this whole matter will be the fact that this has been only one of the many ways in which the University of Toronto has responded to the call of the Empire to help in the might struggle in which it is now engaged.”73

Laboratories, notably the Antitoxin Laboratory and the Connaught Laboratory, processed and produced vital anti-toxins and chemicals needed by the army. The dangers of infection on

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73 Ibid., 48.
overseas battlefields were real, and the consequences were deadly. In 1916 a special report printed in *The Varsity* war supplement written by Mary Roberts Rhineheart, a nurse in the Red Cross, declared that soldiers were exposed to conditions where “typhoid-carrying waters…seep into the trenches [and] tetanus and gangrene infect even the simplest of wounds.”

University laboratories produced large quantities of vital medical injections such as the diphtheria antitoxin, tetanus antitoxin (lock-jaw serum), anti-meningitis serum, smallpox vaccine and serum for the prevention of gas-gangrene infection. In return for the production and sale of anti-toxins and vaccines at near cost prices, university laboratories were given grants by the Federal Government to fund production and build new facilities. By 1918, university laboratories had produced over two hundred and fifty thousand packages of tetanus antitoxin. According to reports coming out of France, University of Toronto laboratories were reported to be one of only three facilities capable of producing satisfactory vaccines for use overseas.

The militaristic climate on campus at the University of Toronto was only one division of the war work occurring at universities across Canada, the United Kingdom and, after 1917, the United States. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the development of the Canadian Officer’s Training Corps was modeled on the British system, the Officer’s Training Corps (O.T.C.), established in 1902. Sonja Levsen argues that the development of military training programs at

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75 “The War Work of the Connaught and Antitoxin Laboratories, University of Toronto,” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1918, 94.

76 “University Antitoxin Laboratory,” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1915, 48.

77 Ibid.; “Anti-toxin Laboratory and Connaught Laboratories at the University Farm,” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1917, 54.
elitist universities in the United Kingdom, such as Cambridge, was related to definitions of manliness that valued the principle of community service. She writes that:

In Britain…it had become advantageous for a community with a claim to national leadership to demonstrate military leadership qualities. College and fraternity students thus based their elite consciousness on specific concepts of manliness, which were heavily influenced by military ideals and closely linked to an ideology of community and sacrifice.

Moreover, the importance of militarism in Canadian education reflected larger British trends that valued the university as a site where the worth of a man could be evaluated. In his book, *Oxbridge Men*, Paul Deslandes explores how university life was organized around a series of trials, including the importance of examinations, which provided opportunities for men “to prove their masculinity vis-à-vis other men.” The sacrifice and service necessary to succeed in these trials, and to thrive at university both socially and academically, were believed to develop distinctly masculine traits such as sportsmanship and determination. These ideals of manly sacrifice and service to the community were apparent during the Great War as universities across Great Britain placed their buildings and resources at the disposal of the War Department.

The final issue of *The Varsity War Supplement* in 1918 devoted a series of articles to the war service rendered by allied universities during the war. Dr. Alex Hill, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, outlined the important contributions to the war effort made by British universities:

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79 Ibid., 157.

The statement that without the aid of her Universities Britain could not have faced the
War with any prospect of success is no figure of speech…the first requisite was men,
especially men fitted by education and training to command the miners and mill-hands
who rushed into the fighting ranks…less important then men, yet also indispensable, has
been the contribution of the Universities in knowledge and skill needed to meet
conditions unprecedented in the experience of the country…they have concerned
themselves with the making of guns, range-finders, aeroplanes, and other instruments of
war…81

The contributions of the Canadian university, then, were not unique in their scope or their belief
that the university provided an ideal training ground for the development of officers for war.
Moreover, similar to the reports of the administration at the University of Toronto, the presence
of dissenters or contentious objectors is largely ignored or omitted as Dr. Hill makes explicit
mention that the majority of eligible men enlisted for service, while the women entered into
service as nurses and volunteers. Yet Levsen writes that the presence of pacifist sentiments at
Cambridge instigated violence as the majority of students viewed pacifism “as a foreign,
treacherous ideology.” As the armistice was signed in November 1918, students vandalized the
offices of a campus paper, the Cambridge Magazine, which had published pacifist articles during
the war.82 As will be discussed in Chapter Four, the oppression of pacifist sentiments in Canada
demonstrated the prevalence of militarism as a relationship and demonstration of power.
Although there were real tensions and conflict on campus surrounding the legitimacy of the war
effort and the role of the university in the conflict, Dr. Hill effectively silenced the presence of
dissent on campus in favour of a monolith portrayal of the British university as a willing agent
and service of the state.

81 “Universities of the United Kingdom and the War,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1918, 78-9.

By 1917, the campus of the University of Toronto housed a variety of military associations. In this picture, a group of men in uniform stand in front of a military camp erected on a field behind University College while a training aircraft for the Royal Air Force flies above. The presence of so many military activities on campus transformed University grounds into a bustling military camp as students were forced to navigate around base camps and training grounds to attend classes and lectures.

American universities focused on putting “the scholar...in the thick of the World War” upon the entry of the United States into the conflict.\footnote{83} At Princeton University, “the British flag was flying from Nassau Hall, the original college building...for the first time since the war of the

\footnote{83}{"The Scholar in War,"} \textit{The Varsity War Supplement}, 1918, 124.
Dr. John Grier Hibben, President of Princeton University, articulated sentiments similar to those expressed by leaders of British and Canadian universities when he wrote to The Varsity that the American university has “always felt that our highest privilege is to train men for the service of the State – for the promotion of civilization in times of peace, for the preservation and protection of our nation in times of war.” American universities also established the Students Army Training Corps, which was similar to the C.O.T.C. in that it allowed students to participate in military service and earn training certificates alongside their academic classes. Students were required to complete the following four courses in order to complete their training: Military Law and Practice; Hygiene and Sanitation; Surveying, Map Making, Map Reading and general Topography; and the Issues of War, where students discussed the “remote and immediate causes of the war.” American universities appealed to Canadian institutions, and the University of Toronto in particular, to aid in the development and organization of the Student’s Army. In response, the University of Toronto volunteered the services of “officers of the Canadian service with experience in France who had returned and were physically unfit for anything but home employment.” Consequently returned officers at the University of Toronto were granted commissions at universities such as Columbia, Yale, and Northwestern to instruct and organize military activities on campus. The efforts of Canadian universities during the war were not only lauded by their American counterparts: they were seen as a template for the organization of America’s own Student’s Army Training Corps.

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85 Ibid.

86 Ibid., 127.
Moreover, *The Varsity* offered detailed accounts verifying the commitment of universities across Canada to the war that reinforced the belief that the most valued war resource at the university was the student body itself. *The Varsity War Supplement* reported that 12,000 members of the Canadian universities, including graduates, members of the staffs, former students and undergraduates, had been on active service by August 1917.\(^{87}\) Enlistments often had a devastating effect on enrollment, such as in “one of the Eastern universities” where attendance in the Faculty of Applied Science dropped seventy-five percent during the war.\(^{88}\) However, although the “occasional voice was raised in favour of closing the universities…it was irresponsible and found very little or no echo.”\(^{89}\) Whether it was participating in campaigns to raise funds, preparing supplies to aid wounded men overseas or committing to national service during the summer months, Canadian universities and their students were expected to uphold their duty to best serve the war effort.

The pressure to participate in war work was reflected in the changes occurring in the functions and organization of the University as it demonstrably committed itself to war work. It was impossible to forget that the country was at war when soldiers were stationed in former student residences and training on campus fields. Similarly, students were reminded of the sacrifices of their peers as classrooms began to empty and, later, returned bearing the physical and emotional markings of war. Through their actions and policies, the administration of the University of Toronto was actively engaged in encouraging all students, both male and female, to

\(^{87}\) “The Canadian Universities and the War,” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1918, 90.

\(^{88}\) Ibid., 90.

\(^{89}\) Ibid., 91.
do their part in support of the war effort. Additionally, the commitment of the University to support the war effort fundamentally altered the social and academic climate on campus in ways that extended beyond recruiting men for active service. However, just as the administration of the University was finding new purpose in participating and facilitating war work, it was also grappling with the larger issue of what, and who, did not fit into the institution’s new directive.

**UNWELCOME INFLUENCES: GERMAN AT THE UNIVERSITY DURING THE GREAT WAR**

In view of Germany’s new status as an enemy country, the University sought to separate itself academically from the study of “German culture.” In his opening address to the class of 1914, President Falconer expressed that:

> We know what we owe to German intellect, to German music, to German technology. We remember also the kindness that we have received in Germany, the simplicity of the earlier manners, the frankness and comradeship. All this we cherish both as a happy memory and a present enrichment.

But alas! to-day that pleasant prospect is deluged with a catastrophe that threatens to mar it for our generation at least. The Germany that we knew and admired has been trampled down by the rude soldier; universities are closed, music is silent, and our former German friends are hissing forth anathemas on the perfidious Briton.  

By 1915, German works were completely removed from philosophy courses and the study of the German language had become optional for all programs except chemistry. Public lectures were given on campus explaining the diplomatic crisis that lead to the war, the history of Germany and the organization of the British Army. At one lecture in 1914, entitled *The Germany of*

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90 University of Toronto Monthly, November 1914, 19.

91 Friedland, The University of Toronto: A History, 260.
Bismarck, “the interest shown by the public was such that the Physics Building proved quite inadequate, and even the doors of Convocation Hall had to be closed before the hour advertised.” Resistance against German scholarship was so great that it did not find its way back into the curriculum and general influence for the next fifty years.

The language used by University officials and publications presented German culture as a principally negative enterprise. University publications directly blamed Germany for starting the war. It was because of Germany’s violation of the neutrality of Belgium that Great Britain, and consequently Canada, entered the war. The advance into Belgium pitted the civilized world against the uncivilized Germans, as the attack on France was viewed as “as step towards a further end, and this end was, of course, the supremacy of Germany over the world…” The anti-German rhetoric present in University publications, Toronto’s daily newspapers and opinion papers devoted particular attention to the issue of German professors at the University. The Toronto Globe claimed, “the great body of the [German] people have been impregnated with the idea that Germany’s manifest destiny is to be world-master, and that Britain has interfered…”

Consequently, enemy aliens were classified as deviant and separate from understandings of ‘normal’ masculinity. As discussed in Chapter One, the ‘German enemy’ was characterized as being cowardly, brutal, sexually violent and treacherous. This view of Germans as different

92 University of Toronto Monthly, November 1914, 55.

93 Friedland, The University of Toronto: A History, 260.

94 “Canada’s Part in the War,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1915, 37.

95 The Toronto Globe, September 29, 1914, 4.

96 Karen Dubinsky and Adam Givertz, “‘It was Only a Matter of Passion’: Masculinity and Sexual Danger,” in Gendered Pasts: Historical Essays in Femininity and Masculinity in Canada, ed. Kathryn McPherson, Cecilia Morgan, and Nancy M. Forestell (Don Mills, Ont.; Oxford University Press, 1999), 69.
and dangerous is reflected in an article entitled, “What is Back of the German Mind?” that appeared in the 1915 *Varsity War Supplement*. In this article, Professor A.B. Macallum explores the racial motivations behind the war effort by discussing the predisposition of German culture towards warfare:

> What is back of the blackman’s mind, or of the mind of the Japanese or the Chinaman? This is a question an anthropologist or ethnologist would ask when he would put himself to explaining the conduct of the Negros, the Japanese of the Chinese as a race…[but] this racial psychology plays its part in interracial or international affairs amongst the white races also…the brutalities show that the German is barbarous, brutal, uncivilized; not to be classed with the other nations of the white race, and at least a thousand years behind in the culture that is the pride of the highest representatives of the human race of today.  

Due to their perceived separation from the community at large, and association with other racialised minorities such as Blacks and Asians, those classified by the government as enemy aliens were subjected to different principles of justice and denied the right to freedom usually held by Canadian residents. By 1916 around 80,000 Canadians of German descent had registered themselves with local authorities while an additional 6,061 were interned in camps, many of which were in British Columbia. Those that were interned were primarily categorized as “Austrians.” However, the majority were Ukrainian peasants from the eastern edges of the Austro-Hungarian Empire who had originally been invited to Canada and settle the western provinces. Yet due to their association with negative stereotypes and rumored atrocities

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97 “What is Back of the German Mind?” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1915, 92.


99 Ibid., 36.
committed on the battlefields of France, those identified as being of German and Austrian
descent were transformed into ‘monster men’ capable of deceit and vice.  

The internment of enemy aliens during the war was also motivated by their economic
vulnerability, high rate of unemployment and social unrest that was especially prevalent in
Western Canada. The economic recession that began in 1913 had worsened by 1914 and the
government projected unemployment rates of unprecedented proportion. As the most vulnerable
sector of the work force, un-naturalized ethnic laborers began to travel around the larger cities in
the West looking for work and even participating in protest. The reports of social unrest
emanating from Western Canada and British Columbia worried the federal government in
Ottawa, and interment could ensure the removal of this potentially volatile segment of the
population and relieve the associated economic and social tensions.  

Bohdan S. Kordan explains that:

Once the un-naturalized alien had been designated a domestic enemy and once
extraordinary powers had been delegated to local authorities, it was inevitable that the
foreigner as enemy alien would become the target of authorities who acted out their worst
fears and prejudices, all the while believing in the just nature of their cause.

Similar to the demonization of Chinese Canadians in response to fears about their social and
economic position in society, the interment of economically vulnerable enemy aliens was in part
a response to their precarious, and potentially unstable, presence in the general public. Moreover,
the wide-spread discrimination of enemy aliens, or those labeled as being of German descent,
was often initiated in response to theoretical understandings of Germans as “others” separated

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100 Karen Dubinsky and Adam Givertz, “It was Only a Matter of Passion,” 69.
102 Ibid., 21.
from mainstream understandings of manliness. This “otherness” also extended to white-collar ‘German’ workers in the cities of English Canada, even those who had been in Canada for generations, as they suddenly had to contend with accusations and suspicions of untrustworthy, deceitful and dangerous by virtue of their German descent.

The University of Toronto retained three professors with Germanic roots: Paul Mueller and Bonno Tapper who taught German, and Immanuel Benzinger, a professor of Oriental languages. ¹⁰³ All three were born in Germany and had not yet obtained Canadian citizenship. Mueller was a graduate of the University of Toronto, and had been in Canada so long that he was ineligible for conscription in Germany because he had allowed his citizenship to lapse. Tapper had received his schooling at the University of Chicago and intended to return to the United States and seek citizenship if his position at the University of Toronto did not become permanent. Benzinger had just arrived at the University after years of studying in Palestine. He returned to Germany in the summer of 1914 to bring his family to Canada. The war prevented his family’s travel, and although Bengzinger was allowed to return to Canada his wife was forced to remain in Germany where their son was drafted into the army. ¹⁰⁴

While mainstream newspapers vilified German Canadians in general, they made explicit demands that all three professors be fired. ¹⁰⁵ In October 1914 the Toronto Globe claimed that German culture was “distinctly anti-Christian” and that:

¹⁰³ Friedland, 260.

¹⁰⁴ Friedland, The University of Toronto: A History, 260.

If German professors in foreign universities are now unjustly suspected of being engaged in high-class espionage they have their Emperor and his “war lords” to thank for the imputation; and if this injurious suspicion proves a hindrance to really honourable Germans in search of employment abroad they must recognize that under the circumstances the prejudice against them is not unreasonable.106

As a publicly funded institution, the University of Toronto relied more heavily on annual grants from the provincial legislature than other more privately funded institutions such as McMaster and Queen’s Universities.107 The reliance on public funds made the University of Toronto more vulnerable to attack in the press and public opinion, since the latter could sway the policies of the legislature.108 Public pressure forced the issue of dismissing university professors with German roots, yet on this point the University and the newspaper editorials disagreed.

The Board of Governors at the University of Toronto was split on the issue of the German professors. Although President Falconer found it necessary to discuss the culpability of the “Prussian System” and German nation in instigating the war, he also reminded University alumnae that “we have on our staff men of German birth who have served this University well, with whom we have formed strong friendships, and whom we will continue to treat, I hope, with no less courtesy and kindness that we have hitherto shown.”109 The three men in question had been allowed to return to the University and begin their work at the beginning of the term with no large protest. However, in the early weeks of the 1914 term public opinion grew increasingly

106 *The Toronto Globe*, Saturday, October 17, 1914, 4.
108 Ibid.
109 *University of Toronto Monthly*, November 1914, 19.
hostile and the Board of Governors became split between two camps: those who believed that as German subjects these men must immediately be removed from the pay of the Senate, and those who believed that without any evidence against them, the men in question should be allowed to stay at the University and not be removed, even with six months pay.\textsuperscript{110} Through the Board of Governors, the University was being asked to sacrifice principle ideas regarding the security of tenure for its Staff.\textsuperscript{111} The Board expressed two main considerations: whether the German professors had been personally exercising harmful influence over their students, and whether the institution was in danger of attracting negative public attention.\textsuperscript{112} 

President Falconer, along with other prominent University officials, objected to the vilification of the three men and believed that Mueller, Tapper and Benzinger should be allowed to stay on at the University.\textsuperscript{113} These men had been carefully chosen for their positions, and their departments would suffer without them.\textsuperscript{114} Despite the opinions of the University President, after two days of deliberation in December 1914 the Board of Governors granted all three professors a paid leave of absence with full pay until the end of the academic year.\textsuperscript{115} The professors at the center of the controversy were being judged on the basis of their ethnic origin rather than individual merit. The Toronto \textit{Globe} conceded that:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{110} Ibid., December 1914, 123.
  \item \textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Friedland, \textit{The University of Toronto: A History}, 260.
  \item \textsuperscript{114} \textit{University of Toronto Monthly}, December 1914, 123.
  \item \textsuperscript{115} Friedland, \textit{The University of Toronto: A History}, 261.
\end{itemize}
It is the reflection really of the antagonistic feeling of the public against anything emanating from Germany rather than the direct penalty for any wrong-doing on the part of any one of the three professors who have been affected. In other words, it is one of the injustices of war.\footnote{The Toronto Globe, Saturday December 5, 1914, 6.}

Without the consent of the President, the Board of Governors did not have the authority to dismiss any member of Faculty, and President Falconer took no responsibility for the decision made by the Governors.\footnote{Ibid.} The leave of absence awarded was labeled by the \textit{Globe} as a compromise between discharging the German professors altogether and keeping them fully on staff.\footnote{Ibid.} After receiving Canadian citizenship in 1915, Mueller requested to return to the University but the Board of Governors would not have him and made him return his key to University College.\footnote{Friedland, \textit{The University of Toronto: A History}, 261.} Tapper returned to the University of Chicago where he continued his post-graduate work while Benzinger secured employment at a small college in the United States. Mueller was able to remain in Toronto and secure employment at McMaster University, an institution that was less dependent on public funds and therefore able to withstand the public pressure the University of Toronto could not.\footnote{Ibid.; Crerar, “Ontario and the Great War,” 260.}
CONCLUSION

As the case of the German professors demonstrates, the commitment of the University of Toronto to the war effort was marked as much by what was discouraged as it was by what was promoted. Although the administration of the University may have expressed differing opinions concerning the appropriate fate of the professors in question, in the end the final decision to dismiss all three reflected the general domestic climate of divisiveness and conflict generated by the war. As the next chapter will discuss, the surge of militarism in the first years of the war overwhelmed voices of dissent as the frictions and divides present on the homefront threatened to tear communities apart as much as it brought them together. Canadians bickered at the national and local levels over defining the nature of the country’s commitment to the war effort, a conflict that culminated in the Conscription Crises of 1917 and subsequent enactment of the Military Service Act (MSA). As the war progressed, the question of eligibility raised serious questions and concerns about the remaining male student body at the University of Toronto. The escalation of the conflict obliterated moderate stances concerning the war effort as militarism became increasingly radical. In the “us” and “them” rhetoric generated by the war, the nation existed as an entity larger than any one individual, but one in which every individual was obligated to play his part.
CHAPTER FOUR

“AS THE HORROR GROWS”: COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING AT THE UNIVERSITY

“God rest you, happy Gentlemen,
Who laid your good lives down,
Who took the khaki and the gun,
Instead of cap and gown.”

- The Varsity War Supplement, 1916

The participation of students and alumnae in the war effort transformed them from ordinary men into men worth honouring “by risking a soldier’s death, [and] by fighting for their country in its battle for liberty.” The University of Toronto Monthly wrote that student-soldiers who made the decision to go to war chose to “be part and parcel of the heroic days of Canada” and fight in “the liberation of the world.” Yet early recruitment appeals glorifying camaraderie, bravery and adventure were replaced by sentiments of desperation and acute references to loss as the human costs of the war mounted. In addition to heralding the sacrifices of the soldier, measures were exerted on the remaining male student population by the University administration. This chapter will discuss how the stories of soldiers who were lost, and the experiences of those who returned home, introduced new pressures on eligible men to enlist. New students were encouraged to act in faith with those who had already fought and lost their lives, and fulfill their duty to enlist on the grounds of glory and self-sacrifice. In the midst of national debates over Conscription and the Military Service Act, recruitment appeals on campus


2 Ibid.

3 University of Toronto Monthly, April 1915, 271.
changed from encouraging to forceful, as all male students at the University of Toronto were required to comply with mandatory physical examinations, register with the University and participate in compulsory drill practice.

**FULFILLING THEIR DUTY: THE DEPLETION OF THE MALE STUDENT BODY**

When President Falconer stood in front of the entering class of 1916, he reminded them of the great service rendered by university men and women in the war. That fall, there were 600 less students on campus and by January 1917, still another 600 had left. In spite of the growing horrors of war, President Falconer reinforced enlistment for active service as the defining moment of manhood. *The University of Toronto Monthly* published the President’s address to incoming students in Convocation Hall:

> Two years ago when I gave the opening address this hall was filled with men and women. I spoke to them of the meaning of the war and its direct causes. At that time far more men were listening to me than to-day. Most of those who came up then were lighthearted youths who did not realise what an awful decision lay before them. They did not know what hidden powers of sacrifice, what latent nobility of character were theirs. How different is the environment to-day. These halls are lonely even though you come as a new issue out of boyhood into youth to take the places of those who have gone…

However, the growing horrors of war did not change the University’s administration support of the war effort. The “hidden powers of sacrifice” were given heightened value in English Canada as the war continued, casualty rates continued to rise and more men were constantly needed at the front. As discussed in Chapter Three, the administration of the University of Toronto believed that its most important contribution to the war effort was the service of its students and

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4 University of Toronto. *University of Toronto Roll of Service, 1914-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1921), xvii.

5 *University of Toronto Monthly*, November 1916, 48.
soldiers. In June 1917, The President’s Report reported that 4,052 university men were currently engaged or enlisted to engage in active service.6

The Varsity reported the fates of these students and graduates, both on the front page of the student newspaper and in the annual war supplements. In the war supplements, pages with the title of “Honour Roll” chronicled the names and biographies of students and graduates who died from shell wounds, machine-gun fire and spinal meningitis.7 The soldiers featured in the newspapers “Biographies” were not listed as faceless casualties. Instead, the campus newspaper appealed to its readers for the biographies and pictures of every man from the University community who had perished during his war service. The Varsity published the stories of men such as Ronald Mackenzie Richards who enlisted in 1914 while on vacation in England and never returned, and of Fred Charles Andrews, an “Old St. Andrew’s boy” who spent his last Christmas in the trench.

The descriptions in The Varsity reflected the reality that men died of a variety of wounds and ailments. In the commemoration of sacrifice, there was no distinction between the men who were killed in action and the men who died of illness such as spinal meningitis. Some men listed in the “Honour Rolls” had not yet even seen a battlefield. The 1915 Varsity War Supplement recorded the service of David Elliot Haig, a twenty-four year old graduate that had just earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree and who was recorded as having “died from meningitis at Toronto.”8

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6 University of Toronto, President’s Report for the Year ending 30th June, 1917, 9.

7 “Biographies,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1915, 4-7.

8 Ibid., 4-5.
mentioned briefly in Chapter Three, resulted in the deaths of eight men, including Haig.\textsuperscript{9} Similarly, Georges Leycester, a twenty-nine year old priest who served as Chaplain of the Queen’s Own Rifles, was recorded as having died at Salisbury Plain, the army training grounds in England, on January 1, 1915. In \textit{The Varsity War Supplement}, Leycester’s death is lamented as “in him the country loses a worthy citizen and a manly soldier; and the Church loses a devoted priest.”

As evidenced by the inclusion of men who died of illness alongside those who died in action, it was the willingness of a man to serve rather than the nature of his death that made his sacrifice worthy of glorification. In her study of masculinity and the Great War in Britain, Joanna Bourke suggests that there is no distinctive separation between the study of masculinity and the study of men’s bodies. She argues that the body constituted a socially constructed ‘frame’ in which men lived, and that manliness was judged and evaluated on the basis of how a man chose to use his body. Bourke writes that “although men might possess useful bodies capable of performing their allotted civic and military functions efficiently, they might chose instead to malinger by refusing to acknowledge their duties in the workplace and in the armed forces.”\textsuperscript{10} Therefore, the willingness of a man to accept his perceived duty to enlist was of paramount importance, regardless of the nature of his death.

\textsuperscript{9} “The University and the Meningitis Outbreak,” \textit{The Varsity War Supplement}, 1915, 8.

Those who died, whether due to wounds on the battlefield or to illness in the military camps, were still considered to be ‘on duty’ and in the service of their nation. The loss of Hubert Gordon Allan, who had died in France from spinal meningitis, was described as being meaningful and worthwhile, as the sorrow inspired by this death was mingled with “the joy and satisfaction of knowing that his life had been well spent, and in a sense was complete, for he had lived with purpose and result.” By enlisting, these students had demonstrated their perceived responsibilities as men to defend their beliefs and their nation. This commitment was given further meaning by their death, and they were honoured both as soldiers and as men. Moreover, the large number of deaths due to illness in the Boer War set a precedent for recognizing the sacrifice of soldiers who did not return, either due to illness encountered at camp or on the front lines. Out of a total of 252 casualties during the Boer War, 127 had died as a result of disease. The men listed on The Varsity’s “Honour Rolls” were not commemorated by the manner of their death; like the veterans who did return, fallen soldiers were judged based on their willingness to endure the ‘ultimate sacrifice’ of their lives and for their commitment to manly duty, responsibility, and value of active service as a demonstration of manliness.

By virtue of their participation in war, the men who returned from war were expected to embody new standards of morality that reflected their commitment to service and sacrifice. The Varsity reported that, “from the men who have looked death in the face we hear of new views of


religion and morals and politics and social relations. What are we going to offer them when they return from the war? It will have to be something better...”

Using the same rhetoric assigned to the men who died overseas, convalescing men were praised for their heroism and sacrifice on behalf of their nation. If a willingness to enter into active service was the defining moment of manhood, then the wounds suffered by a man during his endeavors were the markings of a hero. 

The Varsity War Supplement in 1916 explained that:

[The soldier’s] desperate defence of Ypres in the Spring of 1915 and their dashing captures of more recent date have touched the imagination and inspired the people of the Dominion. Many of these men are now returning wounded and disabled. They fought in Flanders against the Germans hordes: they return to engage in another struggle in which they need all the assistance the country, for which they fought so valiantly, is able to give them.

English Canadians believed they owed returning men only the highest of praise and the best of care as repayment for their service and sacrifice. Moreover, recruitment initiatives across Canada capitalized on the returned soldier as motivation for enlistment in the war. After allowing so many of its soldiers sacrifice their health - or their lives - to the war effort, Canadians believed they could settle for little less than total victory over “the German hordes.”

Convalescing and wounded men not only represented the high costs of war; they were also physical reminders of the dangerous work that remained unfinished overseas. Professor G. M. Wrong, whose son fought in the Great War, wrote an article entitled “When the Men Come Back” in the 1917 Varsity War Supplement. Wrong’s son, Lieutenant Humphrey Hume Wrong, fought with the British Expeditionary Force and returned to Canada after being wounded in

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14 “Vacation Conversations,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1916, 32.

1916.\textsuperscript{16} In his article, Wrong states, “at this moment the last man who wants the war to end prematurely is the soldier.” \textsuperscript{17} He writes that soldiers know that they are fighting for liberty, and only once that liberty is secured will they consent to return home. According to Professor Wrong, the soldiers fighting on the battlefields were not calling to be returned home; instead, they were calling for other to join them, to reinforce their lines and take the place of those who had already fallen.

About five percent of the soldiers who returned to Canada were declared unfit to return to their pre-war employment. The men who did come home but were declared unfit to return into active service were helped to “take up the broken threads of life” through “functional re-education.”\textsuperscript{18} All men who were considered mentally and physically able participated in vocational training that was meant to provide them with new skills for their return into civilian life.\textsuperscript{19} These returned men engaged in a struggle to “win back their health and strength.” However, the placement of rehabilitation at the University of Toronto provided remaining students with a public display of the very real consequences of warfare.\textsuperscript{20} The Varsity published detailed reports of the rehabilitation activities occurring on campus and the work done at the University in helping to restore convalescing men. One article printed on the front page of The Varsity Newspaper in early 1918 claims that “when one considers … the various apparatus and the fair masseurs at the convenience of the wounded soldier, one cannot understand the need for

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\textsuperscript{16} University of Toronto. University of Toronto Roll of Service, 1914-1918, 524.
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\textsuperscript{17} Martin L. Friedland, The University of Toronto: A History (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2002), 255.
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\textsuperscript{18} “Editor’s Preface,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1917, 8.
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\textsuperscript{19} “Universities and the Returned Soldier,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1917, 134.
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\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
the enforcing of the Military Service Act.” Although the tone of some pieces written about convalescing soldiers were light hearted, they thinly veiled the devastating wounds suffered by men who returned.

Nowhere were the costs of war more obvious than in the re-education centers where amputees were fit with “special appliances for billiards, tennis, croquet and bowls… [to] develop the control and strength of stumps.” Machines, apparatuses and weights were developed and used to help wounded soldiers recoup use of their extremities and attempt to regain their independence. In addition to acting as a training site, Hart House was the center for the development of therapeutic methods across Canada. During the first eight months of operation, facilities at Hart House rehabilitated two hundred and fifty men, and treated seventy-five patients from local hospitals daily. The “functional re-education” occurring at the University was anything but lighthearted as men struggled to re-learn how to walk, how to write, and how to adapt to their new physical and mental state.

Moreover, the rehabilitation of disabled and wounded men coincided with the continued training of military forces on campus. At some locations, training of men for active service and the functional rehabilitation of men occurred at the same place. In theory, the sacrifices of the wounded soldier may have been celebrated by the University administration and its publications. However, the juxtaposition of soldiers training for war against those who had returned, and were struggling to overcome the consequences of participating in the conflict, provided a powerful example of the increasing tensions on campus as the war continued. Casualty rates were growing.

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21 The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper, February 13, 1918, 1.

22 Ibid.

greater each day, and the number of names listed on the *Varsity* “Honour Rolls” of those killed increased from 120 to 346 in the year between 1916 and 1917. The theoretical justification of the war, namely that it was a glorious and noble adventure, was being continually challenged by the very real physical, social and fiscal consequences of the war effort.

**‘READING BETWEEN THE LINES’: THE PRESENCE OF DISSENTION ON CAMPUS**

The absence of students and staff had greatly affected the general productivity and basic functions of the University as a whole. During the war, full-time studies at the University of Toronto were on the verge of total collapse. Most programs, other than courses in English, History and the modern languages, suffered a decline of about fifty percent.24 The Faculty of Medicine struggled to conduct regular courses due to the large number of faculty on active service. A shortage of coal forced the main buildings of the University to close between February 14 and March 5, and classes were conducted elsewhere in the city.25 The only department that experienced an increase in enrollments was the Department of Chemical Engineering, and this only occurred on account of the great demand for chemists generated by war work.26 As the University denied rumors that it would close for the duration of the war, even President Falconer conceded, “the academic work of the year has not been in most cases of the same quality as

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25 *President’s Report 1917*, 7.

26 Ibid., 8.
before the war. The spirit of the students was not as keen as in normal times: they were living in
the midst of more or less distraction and the instructors felt the increasing strain of war.”27

The tangible depletion of the male student body diminished the functions and numbers of
the C.O.T.C. as “the academic year of 1916-1917 found the Corps in a greatly depleted
condition.”28 While total enrollment at the University of Toronto had sharply declined during the
first two years of the conflict, it had stabilized by 1916.29 As a result, recruitment initiatives on
campus were becoming less effective as the men who left campus between 1914 and 1916 were
not being replaced by new enrollments, and thus the body of willing and eligible men was
rapidly depleted. By 1917, the Faculty of Applied Sciences reported that only eighty-six of their
students remained in the contingent, having fallen from 470 in 1915. In September 1917, the
Militia Headquarters cancelled annual grants for C.O.T.C. training in an effort to concentrate all
available funds on directly aiding the fight overseas.30 Therefore, students no longer received
official military credit for participation in the C.O.T.C. and efforts were concentrated on
“barrack square drill, for the purpose of inculcating discipline and smartness, and physical and
bayonet training which [was] of great value.”31 While the C.O.T.C. retained a presence on
campus, the reduction of its numbers meant that fewer recruits were being presented for
commissions in the Canadian or Imperial forces.

27 Ibid., 7.

28 “Canadian Officer’s Training Corps 1917,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1917, 63.

29 McKillop, Matters of Mind, 271.

30 “Canadian Officer’s Training Corps 1917,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1917, 63.

31 Ibid.
In the spring of 1917 volunteer recruiting in Canada was failing to meet replacement needs, and only 4,000 new recruits were enlisting each month. In his article “Conscription in the Great War,” J.L. Granatstein attributes this decline to the exhaustion of potential volunteers in English Canada and a general reaction against the high casualty rates overseas.\textsuperscript{32} The depleted condition of the C.O.T.C. can be attributed to similar circumstances. As mentioned above, by 1917 there were 4,052 university men on active service.\textsuperscript{33} Although males were fewer in number on campus, not every eligible student on campus chose to enlist. The dwindling numbers of recruits for the C.O.T.C. suggests that the reserves of eligible men willing to enlist had already been exhausted on campus. Moreover, the physical costs of war were becoming more obvious as wounded men returning to campus were transformed by the war, albeit not necessarily in the expected ways.

The men who fought overseas were believed to have learned and acquired new values, and “would do their duty because it is their duty…they have looked the reality of death in the face and they will want reality still.”\textsuperscript{34} President Falconer stated that “While to us [the soldiers] cause sadness as they go, we are yet proud they are going.”\textsuperscript{35} Chancellor Bowles of Victoria College told students that “we have faith in you; we believe that in the time when you are tested, and you receive your baptism of fire, you will be brave…quit yourselves like men…true to the


\textsuperscript{33} President’s Report 1917, 9.

\textsuperscript{34} “When the Men Come Back,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1917, 123.

\textsuperscript{35} University of Toronto Monthly, April 1915, 305.
high moral ideals and traditions of this University.” Yet if the men who chose to enlist were heralded as dutiful heroes, what does this imply about those men who chose not to enlist?

Joan W. Scott writes, “gender is one of the recurrent references by which political power has been conceived, legitimized and criticized.” Therefore, manliness was not a static identification; it was incessantly being contested and constructed. It meant “different things at different times to different people.” At the outbreak of the war, enlistment for active service was dominantly portrayed throughout English Canada as the defining moment of manhood. As discussed in Chapter One, war and the associated glorification of martial imagery profoundly influenced the consciousness of late-Victorian English Canada. To enlist for active service was to participate in the historic military traditions of Britain and defend British ideals such as a respect for democracy and the rule of law. Therefore, a refusal to enter into active service was largely perceived as a failure to uphold the fundamental values of “Britishness” which were promoted as the defining characteristics of English Canada.

Moreover, war was believed to foster such manly virtues as duty, endurance, strength and respectability. Yet if the Great War offered an opportunity to demonstrate one’s manliness, or

36 Ibid.
presented “an invitation to manliness” as described by George Mosse, then those who did not enlist refused the invitation. Dissenters were believed to demonstrate their inferior status both in terms of failing to meet their duty and in demonstrating their manhood.42 The presence of men who failed to comply with social, administrative and peer pressures to enlist was not overtly discussed in University publications. However, official policies and speeches glorifying the sacrifices of the University and its students in the war effort, especially those urging students to continue to enlist, suggest that the University administration was addressing an audience that was never directly identified: male students at the University of Toronto who chose not to enlist.

In February 1915, the President of University College delivered a farewell speech in front of 136 student-soldiers who were preparing to join the 2nd Canadian Division overseas. He expressed to them that students were “preparing to fulfill the first, and for most the highest duty of man: [they were] going to the front…”43 Yet by 1916 the realities of war had eroded the notion that death was a duty to be borne by men and a necessary step towards true manhood.44 The rhetoric that urged men to enlist on the basis of a commitment to duty and manliness was proving to be a poor justification for the carnage that lay ahead for so many. However, it is difficult to ascertain the identities of dissenting students on campus. Their presence is virtually invisible in most university publications intended for public consumption, including *The Varsity War Supplement* and *Torontonesis*, the yearbook of the University of Toronto. As mentioned in


44 Garry J. Burke, “Good for the Boy and the Nation: Military Drill and the Cadet Movement in Ontario Public Schools 1865-1911” (PhEd diss., Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, 1996), 178.
Chapter Two, the University was subjected to the critical eye of the media and public officials as a publicly funded university, and as such had a vested interest in presenting the contributions of the institution to the war in the most positive light possible. The University itself could be accused of ‘shirking’ its duties and responsibilities as public institution if it allowed men to ‘avoid’ active service by remaining enrolled in academic studies.

In his book *Matters of Mind*, A.B. McKillop outlines changes in student enrollment at universities across Ontario during the Great War. Total registrations across the province dropped by almost half throughout the first two years of the war. In 1914-15, McKillop reports that 8,431 students were enrolled at institutions of higher learning in Ontario. By 1916-17, only 5,884 would remain. The effects of decreased registrations were most prevalent at the University of Toronto, which educated almost half of all students in higher education and was the largest institution in the province. Student enrollment numbers at the University of Toronto decreased from 4,428 students in the first year of the war to 3,246 by 1916-17. 45 McKillop attributes the decrease in enrollments to the large number of early recruits from Toronto during the first two years of the war. Between 1914 and 1916 the male student body at the University of Toronto was almost halved. Out of 3,000 male students in 1914, only around 1,750 remained by 1916. However, the latter number still constitutes a significant male presence on campus, albeit not as significant in prior years.

The University sought to clearly define its position in support of the war and separate itself from the disloyal and cowardly reputation of men who refused to enlist. These “shirkers,” as discussed by Joanna Bourke, were accused of failing to uphold their obligations to the Empire,

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The societal importance placed on enlistment demonstrates that the assertion of manhood through war service was a primary way of signifying relationships of power. If enlistment was believed to represent a public demonstration of manhood, then those who did not enlist failed at the test. Furthermore, manhood was something that was continually judged and qualified through the way a male behaved or presented himself in society. Men were expected to prescribe to specific values and uphold certain traditions through their actions. Therefore, not all males were necessarily labeled by society as “men.” During the Great War, dominant discourses of masculinity based upon imperial understandings of Britishness and imperial duty placed great valued on active service as manly behaviour. Men who failed to comply with their perceived duty to enlist were classified as “others.” They were “non-British,” “enemy-aliens,” “pacifists” or physically unfit for active service. The possibility that male students at the University of Toronto could be “contentious objectors” who did not agree with the war effort, or did not wish to serve, implied the dangerous assumption that Varsity Men were cowards who avoided their responsibilities a students, and as men.

The numbers of men lost, and the horrors survived by those who were beginning to return, affected remaining students as they dealt with the constant pressures of studying at a university that had transformed its grounds into a military camp. While the enrollment of female students remained constant, increasing pressures to enlist meant that fewer males were present throughout the ranks of students, staff and faculty at the University. However, the depletion of the male student body does not necessarily suggest that every man who left the University chose

46 Bourke, Dismembering the Male, 78.

47 Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 1067.

48 Ibid., 1074.
to enlist. In his book *Witness Against War*, Thomas Socknat explores pacifism in Canada between 1900 and 1945. He explains that during the war, pacifists were largely categorized into two classifications: the ‘established’ communities of Quakers and other sectarian pacifists who leaned upon a long history of maintaining their religious beliefs and way of life against outside intrusion, and the ‘new’ and increasingly radical social dissenters that emerged throughout the war. These latter ‘new’ pacifists were seen as dissenters in a more political sense. ⁴⁹

At the outbreak of war, some pacifists had a difficultly reconciling the concept of war and their Christian beliefs even though some accepted the idea that the war represented “a just struggle between democracy and militarism.”⁵⁰ Lewis F. Horning, president of the Canadian Peace and Arbitration Society, warned that although the peace movement had failed to prevent the outbreak of the war, it could work to “preserve clarity of thought” and prepare for a the post-war re-construction of society as more in keeping with liberal ideals. As mentioned earlier, imperialism had become inexorably linked to both nationalism and militarism in English Canada. Yet although Horning acknowledged prevalent understandings of the war as just and legitimate, he sought to combat the militaristic sentiments and activities that had become pervasive in everyday life. Horning wrote a letter to Dr. T. Albert Moore, who held the position of secretary for the Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada, explaining that:

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⁵⁰ Ibid., 46
…the old Patriotism is altogether too often associated with the soldiers life. The language of our everyday life and of our past literature smacks very much of the martial, that is, it is a language based upon old ideals and old habits. ‘Patriotic Fund’…why not Soldiers Fund?…The New Patriotism calls for life and opportunity for life, not death and destruction and vandalism and horrors.  

However, although there were established pacifist sentiments in Canada before the outbreak of the Great War, Socknat explains that most pacifists in Canada grew silent. 52 He argues, “while some moderates were converted to one extreme or the other, most were simply silenced by the rising tide of Christian patriotism.” 53 As the war progressed, moderate pacifists sentiments in Canada largely disappeared as the ‘new’ pacifist movement radicalized. Increasingly radical pacifist groups launched criticisms against the social and economic system as a whole, which lead “militant patriots” to regard pacifists as subversive and suspicious. 54 Even Horning relented in his attempts to organize pacifist sentiments into action as the presence and views of moderate pacifists were increasingly suppressed by the militarization of English Canadian society. 55

In Witness Against War, Socknat claims that the liberal peace movement collapsed during the Great War. Many moderate pacifists embraced the Great War as a ‘holy war’ that presented an opportunity to win long-standing peace. This concept of the conflict presented the Great War as the ‘war to end all wars’. 56 However the silencing, or repression, of moderate pacifist

51 Canada, House of Commons (1868), An Act Respecting the Commencement of Certain Acts of this Session Therein Mentioned, 31 Victoria, c. 40, s. 17, as quoted in Thomas Socknat, Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada, 1900-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 47.

52 Socknat, Witness Against War, 48.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., 60.

55 Ibid., 48.

56 Ibid., 58.
sentiments in the increasingly martial atmosphere of English Canada presented a safer course of action than the rejection, or opposition, of militarism. By 1917 social and racial tensions across Canada were becoming increasingly volatile. These tensions, which Chapter One discusses in further detail, eroded the rights and freedoms of Ontarians with ties to enemy countries as these co-called “enemy aliens” were harassed and interned in camps across the country.

Joan W. Scott includes the act of ‘repression’ as a fundamental aspect of the construction of gender. She writes that discourses of gender “still contain within them alternative, denied, or suppressed definitions.” 57 Considering conformity of moderate pacifists during the war, and the potential consequences for those who did not, it is possible that dissenting students at the University of Toronto would not have labeled themselves as outright ‘contentious objectors.’ The social costs would have been great to bear; even the religious press supported the war as a “righteous cause.” 58 Moreover, the campus of the University of Toronto would have presented an increasingly hostile environment for any man who voluntarily remained out of uniform. It is possible that many students whom The Varsity would have classified as ‘conscientious objectors’ were no longer present at the University; at some point during the four years of escalating militarism on campus, they may have simply stopped attending.

The evidence concerning dissenting students is murky at best. As mentioned earlier, as a publicly funded institution the University had a vested interest in presenting its war work in the most favourable light possible. This meant the omission, or denial, of ‘contentious objectors’ on campus in most official University publications. However, I believe that University claims presenting the remaining male student body being unfit, or unsuitable, for active service was

57 Scott, “Gender as a Category of Analysis,” 1074.

58 Socknat, Witness Against War, 49.
meant to deflect public criticism and scrutiny over the potentially explosive presence of dissenters on campus. Editorials and articles published in the campus newspaper hint at the criticisms launched at University policies, especially mandatory military drilling, and suggest that all male students did not comply with the belief that it was their ‘manly’ duty to enlist. Publicly, Varsity Men were heralded for their participation in the war and sacrifices on the battlefield and, in order to avoid the increasingly violent repercussions of harbouring dissenters on campus, the university sought to keep it that way.

**FROM ENCOURAGING TO FORCEFUL: MANDATORY MILITARY SERVICE ON CAMPUS**

The development of mandatory military training was not wholly unexpected, as in January of 1917 the University initiated a registration of all students, both men and women, to evaluate their physical condition and willingness to participate in national work during the summer. The *President’s Report* announced in June 1017 that, “after careful discussion the Senate transmitted to the Board of Governors a recommendation that, beginning [this] autumn… a system of compulsory military instruction and physical training should be established in the University for all men undergraduates proceeding to a degree.”59 As the war continued, the University explained the significant amount of male students left on campus by claiming that they were unfit for military training. *The Varsity War Supplement* in 1917 published an address written by Principal Hutton at University College that described the students left at Toronto:

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59 *President’s Report 1917*, 8.
…a class in Greek which before the war used to number some dozen men contains to-day one Canadian (twice-rejected for military service), one Chinaman, one Japanese and one woman; if it were not for these alien nationalities (not enemy alien; we have none), some classes would be much smaller; there are many Jews, e.g. in the College, and there are others much nearer to the British and Canadian type than some of the Jews and yet not quite sufficiently Canadian yet or British to enlist in a body. By this means, the number of male students in some University classes still remains considerable.60

The University of Toronto Roll of Service, 1914-1918, published three years after the signing of the armistice in 1918, claimed that “very few men were found to be fit for active service, so that when some months later the Military Service Act came into force, even on a lowered standard it had no appreciable effect in the University.61 Yet the debate over compulsory military training, which will be discussed further below, suggests that there were dissenters, and that transition to compulsory drilling was targeted at those who continued to resist pressures to enlist.

As discussed in Chapter One, ‘race’ was part of the selection criteria utilized by recruiting officers for the Canadian Expeditionary Force.62 By claiming that the remaining male student body at the University was either unfit for military service due to their physical condition, or due to their status as “non-British,” the University could, at least publicly, absolve any fears that it was allowing eligible men to ‘shirk’ their duty to enlist and remain enrolled in academic classes. However, there is little evidence to suggest that the over 1,500 male students remaining on campus were comprised solely of those classified as ‘unfit’ or ‘unsuitable’ for active service. Although the University’s Roll of Service would later claim that few university men were found fit for active service, only eighty-six of the 886 students who underwent

60 “University College,” The Varsity War Supplement, 1917, 65.

61 University of Toronto Roll of Service, xvii.

physical examination in 1917 were declared unfit for any kind of military service. Therefore, the majority of students examined were classified as being eligible for military training, and 272 men were immediately declared fit for overseas service. A further 209 were declared fit for non-combatant service overseas, and 260 were classified as being fit for service only in Canada. Fifty-nine men did not report to the gymnasium for inspection. However, even though the above statistics explicitly recorded the number zero beside the category of “fit, but conscious objector,” some commentaries and letters to the editor published by the newspaper did mention criticisms launched against the University administration and its policies. Moreover, the fact that fifty-nine men did not report for inspection could suggest that they disagreed, or were willing to disregard, University initiatives that were presented as compulsory.

The pages of The Varsity and its annual war supplements officially supported the initiation of mandatory physical inspections. The newspaper stated publicly that it welcomed “the introduction of compulsory drill and [felt] sure that the majority of students will see that it is, after all, more fair.” By forcing all students to participate in military instruction, mandatory training was believed to level the disparities present between those who willingly volunteered for service and those who failed to live up to their responsibilities by refusing to enlist. Even those declared unfit for military service were required to participate in “corrective physical exercise” in a bid to strengthen their fitness and allow them to enter into military training. However, increased strength through physical exercise was only one of the benefits associated with mandatory military service. The arguments in favour of universal military training were essentially the same as those presented in favour of military training in the elementary schools as

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63 The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper, October 15, 1917, 1.

64 Ibid., September 28, 1917, 2.
discussed in Chapter Two. Participation in training exercises was expected to foster new connections between students, develop a sense of discipline, foster the qualities of leadership and allow men to be of service to their country “in times of national peril.”65 Male students were warned that their military training would require just as much effort as any other university course, and they were advised to “buckle down and work.”66

In 1915, the University of Toronto had initiated policies that allowed students to earn academic credit for military activities. As outlined in Chapter Three, regulations granted students who participated in military training on campus to earn, “a bonus based on the military efficiency shown, not exceeding 10 percent of the full value of each subject...”67 Additionally, students who enlisted for active service were granted their academic year in full, and were not penalized for failing to complete their traditional course load. However, these policies stipulating academic leniency for those participating in military service were not extended to students drafted into mandatory military drilling. Unlike previous years, when men were granted academic leniency and a reduced course load, students were not relieved of one academic class to compensate for their time spent completing compulsory military exercises. Therefore, men were forced to comply with mandatory military training on top of an already full academic schedule.

Academic leniency for students participating in military exercises was meant to remove considerations that may have hindered students from entering into military training and, eventually, active service. Essentially, the academic credits granted to student-soldiers were rewarded in recognition of their motivation to enter into the service of their nation. By

65 Ibid.
66 Ibid., October 12, 1917, 1.
67 University of Toronto Monthly, March 1915, 256-7.
participating in war service, men were transformed into heroes worth honouring. However, the reality that academic incentives were not granted to students subjected to compulsory military training suggests that, because they were forced to enter into military training, remaining male students were unworthy of the rewards associated with volunteering. Just as those who volunteered were rewarded with academic consideration for their effort, those students who did not were punished by being forced to comply with military training in addition to their academic studies. For remaining students, the burden of military service would not be lightened by the University administration. To use the terms of Joanna Bourke, ‘shirkers’ who avoided their duties and responsibilities could not be granted the same rewards and recognition of those who voluntarily complied with social and cultural pressures to enlist.

By 1916, the male student population was roughly equal to the number of female students at the University of Toronto. It is unclear, though, how this change in the composition of the student body affected relations between male and female students at the University of Toronto. As discussed in Chapter Two, the social climate at the University before the war was largely separated according to gender. Female students were expected to participate activities suitable to their station and position. During the war, these activities were extended to include fundraising efforts for the Red Cross, the sale of Victory Bonds and the preparation of hospital supplies to be sent overseas. It is possible that female students on campus contributed to the pressures exerted on the remaining male population; however, there is little evidence that outlines whether or not female students directly participated in recruitment initiatives on campus. Yet gender conflicts did arise over the introduction of compulsory military for male students as they complained that female students had an unfair academic advantage over their male counterparts.

Despite being announced well before the start of the fall term, the initiation of mandatory military training caught some students by surprise. Men were required to report for physical examination in early October 1917, after which they were to be divided on the basis of physical fitness and handed over to the C.O.T.C. for organization and instruction. Not all students at the University of Toronto readily welcomed the prospect of forced military service. Upon learning of the conscription of all male students into compulsory drilling, one freshman at the Dental College remarked, “he was not aware that [the college] had been turned into a recruiting office.”\footnote{The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper, October 3, 1917, 1.} Moreover, published articles claiming that “every male student will have to do his part” were printed alongside criticisms of compulsory drilling. The front page of The Varsity published an article that claimed women had an unfair academic advantage as “who wouldn’t want to be a co-ed when the university imposes one less subject on them than on the men?”\footnote{Ibid., October 12, 1917, 1.}

In addition to complaining that the addition of military studies as an extra course in their schedule was unfair, one letter written to The Varsity by a student writing anonymously under the guise of “Arts 18” claimed that the expectation of drilling for two afternoons a week was unreasonable, especially for those who were working their way through university. “Arts 18” challenged the University to “be honest and publish in their literature no poor need apply.”\footnote{Ibid., October 15, 1917, 4.} He accused the University of punishing students unable to pay for their education by forcing them to comply with one extra subject, and complained that students would have to make the journey to campus an extra two times a week and for no academic merit. Furthermore, “Arts 18” demanded to know the consequences of refusing to comply with compulsory drilling. He asked:

\footnote{The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper, October 3, 1917, 1.}
\footnote{Ibid., October 12, 1917, 1.}
\footnote{Ibid., October 15, 1917, 4.}
If I absolutely refuse to take the drill outlined by the Senate or authorities gone insane over militarism, and wishing to foist on us the German system, making men mere sheep and goats, the very system we are fighting against, what will the authorities do? I do not believe that their Charter would allow them, if I should get my six subjects prescribed, to keep back my degree from me?

Why not be fair to those boys earning a living, either give them exemption from this drill or consideration on one other subject. Be fair, be decent, be British.

Here, “Arts 18” makes critical use of imperial terminology to reinforce his disapproval of university academic policies. The appeal to university officials on the basis of Britishness, principally his appeal for them to “be British” and grant exemptions or academic leniency, constituted a veiled rejection of the widely accepted rhetoric that it was the patriotic duty of every eligible man to enlist. By urging the University to grant leniencies and exclusions, “Arts 18” presents reasons, rather than excuses, why otherwise ‘eligible’ men could be exempted from active service. Furthermore, he presented his own valid reasons for not participating in military service: he was busy working to support himself in addition to financing and completing his education.

Moreover, by invoking the rhetoric of Britishness against the University administration, “Arts 18” effectively ‘turned the tables’ on the imperial rhetoric of duty and responsibility usually employed by the recruiting establishment. He claimed it was the University and its policies, rather than the students themselves, which failed to comply with British ideals of duty and responsibility. This claim contradicted the idea that compulsory drilling was a fair policy that forced all students to equally contribute to the war effort. Essentially, compulsory drilling violated British values by treating men like “mere sheep and goats” and undervaluing the ability of each student to make his own decisions. “Arts 18” argued that by virtue of its own charter, the

\[72\text{ Ibid.}\]
University did not possess the authority to force students to comply with mandatory military training. The publication of criticism under the anonymous alias of “Arts 18” further illustrates the subversive presence of dissention on campus at the University of Toronto. The camaraderie and recreational atmosphere of early C.O.T.C. training endeavours had vanished as the war continued and the militarization of campus created an increasingly hostile environment where those who objected to the war effort, or refused to comply with socially accepted participation in the war effort, were regarded with hostility and suspicion.

**A REJECTION OF MANHOOD: THE VARYING NARRATIVES OF THE WAR**

*The Varsity* presented two competing narratives concerning the level of support for the war effort on campus. The official narrative suggested that the majority of male students supported or at least complied with University policies of compulsory training. Pieces written by newspaper staff reflected the sentiments presented by University officials in urging all students to accept compulsory drilling as part of their duty and understand that, “necessity knows no law.”\(^{73}\) *The Varsity* urgently stated that soldiers were not fighting in the war because they wanted to; rather, they were fighting because they must. Men would “prefer to be engaged in the quite constructive tasks of normal life rather than to spend their energies on destruction. While it is necessary, however, they are more than willing to carry on as soldiers.”\(^{74}\) Yet *The Varsity* also ran articles demonstrating that not all men prescribed to the belief that they were obliged to enter into active service. These articles, often submitted to the newspaper anonymously, countered the widely publicized image of the University as unanimously supportive of the war effort. Men

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\(^{73}\) Ibid., 1.

\(^{74}\) “When the Men Come Back,” *The Varsity War Supplement*, 1917, 123.
argued against compulsory drilling, and accused the university administration of being unfair and violating its own Charter.

At the heart of these two narratives is the concept of manliness. The official narrative sought to encourage, and later force, men to comply with their perceived duty to enlist. Each man was expected to wholly devote themselves to the war effort; in the case of eligible men, this meant enlistment for active service. The counter narrative disputed the insinuation that all men were obligated to enter into military service. Resistance on campus, even if it was covert, testifies that not all men prescribed to the belief that they were required to risk their lives on a quest for manhood. *The Varsity War Supplements* chronicled a version of events that highlighted activities that corresponded to the administration’s great support for the war while omitting or failing to fully address aspects, which were considered less favourable. It is difficult to ascertain the extent of disillusionment or resistance against compulsory drilling, or the war effort in general, as it is only hinted at or vaguely mentioned. Often, criticism was mentioned only to present the appropriate rebuttals. However, it is possible to determine that there was resistance from men who believed the university’s policy of compulsory drilling was not only unreasonable but also unlawful.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the failure of the volunteer recruiting system can be contributed, in part, to a reaction against the high casualties and disabilities generated by the war. Members from the University of Toronto community did make great sacrifices and commitments for the war effort. The 1918 *Varsity War Supplement* recorded that fifty-seven percent of students and twenty-five percent of faculty from the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering
fought overseas. Of these, fourteen percent died, and a further sixteen percent were disabled.\footnote{“Training Disabled Soldiers at the University in the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering,” \textit{The Varsity War Supplement}, 1918, 139.} In light of these casualties, there was a rejection of the idea that war could lead to glory and that men must be “physically fit to fight, and spiritually fit to die.”\footnote{\textit{University of Toronto Monthly}, April 1915, 307.} Increasingly, the justification that men were risking their lives in the war for the betterment of their nation, their empire and themselves was difficult to comprehend.

At the individual level, students remaining on campus would have lost a friend in the war, or known someone who did. The war disrupted both the academic and personal lives of University students as they were faced with the prospect of leaving for war themselves, or sending off their family and friends as they made their way overseas. While the research for this thesis was unable to incorporate personal diaries and letters, other sources allow us to speculate about the worry and fear that must have became part of daily life during the war. Philip Child’s book \textit{God’s Sparrow}, published in 1937, was one of the last Canadian novels about the Great War to appear before the outbreak of the Second World War. The novel follows the journey of Dan Thatcher, the protagonist, as he struggles with his own reservations about the war and the overwhelmingly militarized climate of Ontario. While the novel is a work of fiction it mirrors the journey of Child himself, who enlisted as a student from the University of Toronto in 1917 and served as an artillery subaltern.\footnote{Jonathan F. Vance, \textit{Death so Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War} (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 3.}

Writing about the war retrospectively in the 1930’s, Child incorporated reoccurring references to the shame felt by men out of uniform, and to the tensions surrounding discourses of
manly responsibility and active service. While the character of Dan Thatcher struggled with the
decision to enlist, the figure of his father, Pen Thatcher, remained stoutly opposed to the war. In
the following passage, Dan confronts his father about the justification of war:

When [Pen] could speak, he said bitterly: “One needs an old head to resist this sort of
thing.”

“We didn’t start it, Father. If a man hits you, you have to fight.”

“This isn’t a fight. All the marching and music, Dan, the bands swinging down the street
mean just one thing – killing people you’ve never seen before and whom you don’t even
see die, killing them at three miles distance.”

“But, Father, a man has to be loyal to his country. You can’t sit back and let your
friends fight for you.”

Pen was silent for a moment, then he said in a tone of absolute conviction: “You have
other loyalties, Dan. Don’t you know that?”

For Dan, these loyalties extended beyond his family history of opposition to the war, personified
by his Grandfather who “had been a pacifist years ago before the word was invented…” The
health of both his parents were failing, and Dan feared that they would no longer be able to care
for his ailing sister, Joanna. If Dan left for war the care of his sister would be left in the hands of
total strangers, a scenario which Child described as “unthinkable.” However, recruitment
appeals during the Great War made few concessions for family considerations that may have
hindered men from enlisting. The absence of males from the household could have left those
who fell ill without care, and rendered households financially destitute with the enlistment of the
main wage earner. For many men, the discourses of masculinity that presented active service as
an obligation would have contradicted with their more immediate responsibilities to provide and
care for their family. Able-bodied men either enlisted for active service or were labeled as

79 Ibid., 88.
80 Ibid.
‘shirkers’ who cowardly avoided their responsibilities. The reality that men had other responsibilities, or more pressing matters at home that needed their attention, was largely ignored in the ‘us’ and ‘them’ rhetoric generated by the war effort.\(^\text{81}\)

However, war was becoming increasingly viewed as an abnormal and dangerous state rather than a noble and glorious adventure. Letters from university men overseas complained, “many of us are tired of war. For it simply means position after position, and it is perhaps quite natural that we should wish to be done with it all and be back to a more normal way of living.”\(^\text{82}\) Moreover, there were contradictions between the life of a student, which was governed by intellect, rational inquiry and the preparation for social and political ‘leadership,’ and the life of a soldier, which required a submission to hierarchy, following orders, and compliance with the collective rather than individual will. One letter published in *The Varsity* by Malcom W. Wallace, a student stationed overseas, claimed that:

> The scholars and would-be heroes of U of T and Knox College have become quite reconciled to cleaning harness and grooming horses. The men who can “roll to bed with a Latin phrase and rise with a verse of Greek” do not always make the most efficient gunners or N.C.O.’s, and clearly the man from the Peace River country who has been ranching for years has in him the making of a better horseman than the average student.

In the absence of personal letters and diaries, it is difficult to know how students acclimated themselves to the life of a soldier. Yet, whether student served as officers or artillermen, the carnage of war resulted in the loss or disfigurement of even the brightest and most promising Canadian students.

On a national scale, tensions surrounding the war effort were threatening to tear the country apart. The bitterness inspired by the length of the war, and its political and social

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\(^\text{82}\) *The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper*, November 30, 1917, 3.
consequences, inspired divisiveness and intolerance. English Canada accused “the traitors [in] Quebec” of failing to pull their weight. Farmers argued convincingly for exemptions in order to continue working the land, exemptions which were promptly recalled after the enactment of the Military Service Act in 1918. The debate over conscription exacerbated linguistic, cultural and regional tensions across the country. On a local scale, the old arguments in favour of war were no longer successful in encouraging men to enlist. Moreover, it was becoming impossible for young men to legally conduct their lives without being arrested or forced into military service. In such a climate, it was increasingly difficult to believe that war, and possibly death, was the necessary cost of achieving manhood. Although *The Varsity War Supplement* would claim in 1917 that the majority of male students left on campus were comprised of a majority of “non-British” students, the large number of men declared fit for military service suggest that there was a sizeable community of eligible male students remaining on campus. As a result, the University of Toronto enacted policies that forced men to partake in military activities that others participated in willingly.

However as the situation at the University and in the city at large grew increasingly dire it became dangerous, if not impossible, for men to avoid compulsory military service. Moreover, Toronto was no safe haven for men who sought to avoid compulsory military training as the city became an epicenter for the organization of drafted men. In January 1918 the first men drafted under the Military Service Act began reporting for service at Toronto’s Exhibition camp. Police began canvassing the city for young men not in uniform. By February 1918, all men declared fit for active service were required to carry their papers with them at all times. If any man should

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fail to present the appropriate paperwork, he risked immediate conscription.\(^84\) Citizens were asked to help police in their efforts to round up defaulters and were promised a reward of 10 dollars for every “shirker” turned in to authorities. About one in five men who were drafted failed to comply with their orders to report for service, and military officials received between fifty and sixty letters a day detailing the whereabouts of such men.

Therefore, the dissension present on campus was not over, as the social and potentially violent consequences would have been great. There were uniform pressures to support the war effort and the union government’s platform in December 1917 that included the Military Service Act. Full-page advertisements appeared in The Varsity stating that the University of Toronto “has sent from its members so many brave boys to the trenches of France and Flanders, that those at home are determined that the reinforcements to urgently needed overseas shall be sent, and sent at once.”\(^85\) The great success of early recruitment initiatives, including the social and recreational tone of early drilling exercises, might have generated some discomfort on the part of those unwilling or uninterested in participating. The location of the university in Toronto, which was described in Chapter One as being a hotbed of militaristic fervour and activity, could have further complicated the situation of those not in uniform. The transformation of campus into a military and training camp for various military forces may have heightened the pressure and scrutiny felt by those not serving in the military. Therefore, there may have been little overt criticism or outright rejection of university policies because the staunch objectors were simply not there. By the time the formal policies of compulsory drilling were enacted in 1917, the campus of the University of Toronto had already evolved into a hostile climate for those who

\(^84\) Miller, *Our Glory and Our Grief*, 162-3.

\(^85\) *The Varsity Undergraduate Newspaper*, February 13, 1918, 1.
objected to the war. At any one of these stages, contentious objectors to the war may have stopped attending classes in order to avoid undo criticisms and, later, to avoid being conscripted into mandatory military drilling and eventual active service.

Even in the face of some resistance, the official rhetoric was monolithic both in proportion and in influence. The belief that all able men were obligated to enter into active service was publicly sanctioned by those who held the reins of influence on campus, such as the President, and all over the country, such as government officials. The political and social culture of English Canada that had developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries glorified warfare and defined manhood based on physical and moral notions of courage, discipline and valour. The administrative power supporting this ‘official’ narrative of masculine duty does not suggest that resistance was futile. However, it did place men under pressure to conform to the dominant standard of male behaviour which, during the Great War, included active service.

CONCLUSION

At 2:30 a.m. on the morning of November 11, the message “the armistice is signed” flashed across newspaper telegraphs in Toronto. Within half an hour newsboys had taken to the streets with the headline: “Germany throws up her hands.” Soon after church bells began to toll across the city, the “sirens let loose” and the air became filled with shrill whistles, screaming sirens and bellowing horns. The Toronto Globe declared on November 12 that, “if Canadians were ever ‘war mad’ during the thrilling periods of the last four years, it is certain they were peace-mad yesterday.” The population of Toronto took to the streets at the news, much as they

86 The Toronto Globe, November 11, 1918, 1; The Toronto Globe, November 12, 1918, 1.

87 Ibid., November 12, 1918, 1.
had four years previously when Britain declared war on Germany. Except this time, Torontonians were celebrating the conclusion of a conflict rather than the commencement of a war. This chapter has discussed how, in the last two years of the war, high casualty rates introduced new pressures on men to enlist. These pressures ultimately culminated in the Conscription Crisis of 1917, as outlined in Chapter One, and in the movement towards compulsory drilling at the University of Toronto, as outlined above. Using *The Varsity* newspaper and magazine supplements, the dominant narrative of the University in support of the war was discussed alongside the more subtle currents of resistance.

While the official rhetoric of government and University officials reinforced the notion that all men were obligated to enlist, the resistance and criticism present on campus illustrate that not all men prescribed to this notion. Therefore, news of the armistice must have inspired a great sense of relief: the drafted men were needed no longer. Moreover, by the time the armistice was declared, the city deserved a reason to celebrate. The year 1918 had been marked by coal shortages, arriving casualties from the front and the outbreak of Spanish Influenza. Much had been lost in the war, but now there was also much to look forward to. The cataclysmic tensions throughout Canada both locally and nationally became more relaxed, and the relief felt for those returning to Canada and for those who would never have to fight tempered the grief of the nation.
CONCLUSION

THE LEGACY OF WAR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

These years were the most glorious if the most terrible that this University has ever known. It was moved to its heart. Probably nowhere else than in such an institution could the variety of the call made by war be so intensely felt. Such a period and such lives must have a permanent record in the University, so placed that in all time to come the generations of the youth who will come up to this place may not be allowed to forget that noble deeds were done in former days on these grounds.

- Robert Falconer, President of the University of Toronto, 1918

Over 6,000 graduates, undergraduates and staff from the University of Toronto entered active service during the Great War. Ten percent, or about six hundred, of those who left never returned. In the immediate aftermath of the conflict, the Alumni Association at Toronto grappled with the responsibility associated with erecting a commemorative memorial for university men who died in the war. One year after the signing of the armistice, a crowd gathered at the west corner of Hart House in November 1919 to witness the ceremonial foundation of what would become the war memorial at the University of Toronto: Soldier’s Tower. However, as Jonathan Vance writes, “important as it was, erecting a war memorial was only part of society’s obligation to the memory of war…[as] there remained the possibility that some townsfolk might pass by it without pausing to ponder its significance.” During the planning of the monument the Alumni Memorial Committee recommended the establishment of an ‘Annual Memorial Day’ when the University would gather at the tower to “commemorate the war service of its son and daughters and the ideal for which they fought and died, to the end that their...
courage, faith, and constancy be an abiding inspiration.” On Remembrance Day each year a crowd still gathers at the base of the 143 foot tall structure to honour the sacrifices of Varsity Men by laying wreathes, reciting poems and listening to a lone trumpet play the ‘Last Post.’

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The names of university men who lost their lives in the chaos of the Western Front, in crowded hospitals or cramped military bases were etched into a stone Memorial Screen that sits at the base of Soldier’s Tower. These names stand as a stationary reminder of the service and sacrifices of the University community during the war. Yet the commitment of the University to the war effort was anything but static. For the duration of the Great War classrooms on campus were turned into training halls, student residences became military barracks and men trained and drilled with the C.O.T.C., a program designed to provide military training to students alongside their academic studies. Campus newspapers, public speeches and official publications encouraged all eligible men to comply with their perceived duty to enlist. I argue that a “landscape of militarism” was created on campus between 1914 and 1918, and part of this commitment to militarism included reinforcing the gendered associations between manliness and duty. War was believed to foster the development of manly virtues such as endurance, strength, respectability and a commitment to duty. Through its formal and informal policies, the University administration encouraged every student to “do their bit” and give the best part of themselves to the war effort.

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4 *University of Toronto Monthly*, March 1919, 3.

The country’s participation in military conflicts during the nineteenth century, as discussed in Chapter Two, solidified a belief in English Canada that war was a necessary and even noble endeavor. The ‘German enemy’ was characterized barbaric and uncivilized, and the war was justified as being fought in defense of British ideals. By participating in war, students were expected to embark on a “new kind of education” that would force them to think “about the deep things that constitute citizenship and human worth.” Moreover, the public school system in Ontario placed high value on military training as a mechanism to socialize students into patriotic and dutiful citizens. Due to their education and training, the University of Toronto anticipated that its male students would become future leaders in government and business. As such, students at the University of Toronto were expected to perform as leaders in the classroom, in society and in the war by prescribing to the highest standards of morality and duty. Enlisting, then, signified more than a willingness to leave home and take up arms; it signified that a man was committed to the defense of democracy, to the protection of British values and to securing the freedom of generations to come.

My research approached the University of Toronto as a case study to examine the relationship between manhood and recruitment between 1914 and 1918. I concluded that gendered understandings of war and recruitment on campus at the University of Toronto presented active service as the defining moment of manhood. Moreover, notions of the relationship between duty and active service were rooted in prevalent ideas of manliness and duty. As historian Joan W. Scott writes, “gender constitutes a primary way of signifying

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relationships of power.”

Therefore, when politicians, officials and recruiters encouraged some men to enlist and refused to accept others, they upheld imperial and racialised understandings of Canadian manhood that accepted “white British masculinity as the assumed norm for Canadian citizenship.”

This dissertation explored how the administration of the University of Toronto used its position of authority over students to first encourage, and later force, men to comply with their socially constructed obligation to enter into active service. As the war progressed it became increasingly difficult, and dangerous for ‘eligible’ men to remain out of uniform. As a result, those whom The Varsity would have labeled as ‘conscientious objectors’ may simple have left campus in order to avoid undue criticism and, later, conscription into compulsory military training or active service. Thomas Socknat claims that many objectors resigned to remain silent in order to avoid the certain social consequences of voicing opposition in wartime Ontario.

The authoritative powers that supported the ‘official’ narrative of masculine duty did not negate the existence of criticism and objections to Canada’s role in the war. However, they did place men under pressure to conform to the dominant standard of male behaviour that, during the Great War, included active service. The demands placed on men by ‘official’ sources such as government officials and acts of policy sought to encourage men to comply with the characteristics of manliness valued by structures of power. Thus the idea of ‘the soldier’

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symbolized manly behaviour and placed great social value on his prescribed characteristics such as endurance, strength, and a willingness to risk his life in defense of the nation.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

In choosing to focus primarily on the events and circumstances that lead so many students, alumnae and faculty to enlist, my examination ended once university men enlisted for active service overseas. Further research is needed to explore how university men adjusted to soldiering and reacted to the experiences of war upon arriving in France. Masculinity does not exist as one single entity; it is an inherently subjective process. The individual subject, and his or her relationship to social organizations, constitutes an essential part of how gender works. Yet manhood is judged and qualified by the way a male presents himself in society.\(^{11}\) Therefore, the construction of gender encompasses a series of complex relationships between the individual subject, and the processes and organizations that govern social interaction. Personal writings, such as letters and diaries, could allow insight into how students interacted with and experienced militarism on campus, and into how ‘non-conforming’ men on campus dealt with the pressures placed upon them by their peers and the University administration. They could allow future researchers to examine how militarism was perceived and experienced by students, both male and female, that remained on campus.

A study into the effects of the changing study body, particularly the decline of male students that resulting in a larger proportion of female students on campus, could further examine how “gender constitutes a primary way of signifying relationships of power.”\(^{12}\)

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\(^{11}\) Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 179.

\(^{12}\) Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 1067.
did the students who remained on campus, both male and female, deal with the absence and loss of their peers overseas? Furthermore, the meaningful war work and service conducted by university women, both and home and overseas, could be further studied and analyzed. After the war, many former soldiers enrolled at the University of Toronto to commence or continue their post-secondary education. Approximately half of students who wrote engineering entry examinations at the University in 1919 were returning soldiers. A study of post-war masculinity at the University of Toronto could provide insight into if, and how, notions of masculinity and war were altered by the experiences and high casualty rates generated by the war. It is unclear how these former soldiers adjusted to university life, and how returning students adapted to campus life after the experiences of war. The University of Toronto Monthly complained that:

What am I going to do after the war? — that is the topmost question, today, in the minds of the majority of the 5,000 Toronto Alumni who are returning from the war. To judge by those who have already been discharged the returned University men will be in a worse economic position after the war than almost any other class. Government agencies are equipped to aid the “workingman” in re-establishing himself in civil life but they are not equipped to assist the professional man…beyond shadow of a doubt the professional man who returns from the war will find the task of gathering up the strings of civil life very, very difficult.

Moreover, the militarization of campus did not abruptly end after the signing of the Armistice in 1918. In the years immediately following the end of the war, the University struggled to reclaim many of the buildings and spaces used by the military for academic study. The University administration also decided to continue compulsory military drill during the 1918-1919 school year as “the results of last year’s training were so satisfactory that the Senate…decided to make

Friedland, University of Toronto: A History, 271.

University of Toronto Monthly, December 1918, 2.
physical training a permanent requirement.” Further inquiry is needed to explore the eventual
de-militarization of campus, and the possible tensions that arose as the University transitioned
back to focusing primarily on academic rather than military initiatives.

“TO THE GLORIOUS DEAD”: THE LASTING LEGACY OF THE GREAT WAR

Harry Patch, the last British Veteran of the Great War, died at the age of 111 in July 2009. Patch served as a machine-gunner in the trenches of the Western Front and lost his three best friends, in addition to being seriously wounded himself, at the battle of Passchendaele. Speaking about the death of Britain’s last living connection to the Great War, Prime Minister Gordon Brown said, “the noblest of all the generations has left us, but they will never be forgotten. We say today with still greater force, We Will Remember Them.” In Australia, Claude Choules is honoured as the last remaining veteran of the Great War at the age of 108. Canada’s last surviving veteran of the Great War, John Babcock, celebrated his 109th birthday modestly by having lunch at his favourite restaurant. Babcock was born on a farm near Kingston, Ontario in 1900 and enlisted at fifteen after lying about his age. The truth about his age was discovered upon his arrival in England, and the war was over before he was old enough to fight. Yet although these men may be heralded as the last living veterans of Flanders, they do not represent “the last living connection to the Great War.”

15 Ibid., 19.


17 Ibid.

Ninety years after the Armistice was signed, the memory of the Great War continues to be the subject of major motion films, museum exhibitions and remembrance ceremonies. In the week leading up to Remembrance Day in 2008, the names of 68,000 Canadians who died during the war were projected onto public monuments in cities across Canada as part of the Vigil 1914-1918. The Toronto Star reported that the Vigil incited meaningful reactions on the part of observers who gathered into the early hours of the morning to light candles, stand together and watch the names go by. Martin Conboy, a lighting designer and artist who participated in creating the Vigil, described the impact of the light display as “quite phenomenal.” Conboy continued saying, “this year we wanted to [honor] all the men who died in the First World War as there’s only one man alive now – that’s John Babcock. We decided we were coming to the end. How do we remember it?”

However, Jonathan Vance explains that the passing of the Great War from lived experience into memory began immediately after the signing of the Armistice. In the decades after the war, Canadians grappled with the difficult task of coping with the consequences of war and constructed a social memory of the war that was “hopeful, emotional and occasionally inconsistent…” After four years of carnage, Canadians were sick of hearing about tragedy, carnage and death. Instead, they focused on celebrating and honouring the sacrifices of war through the establishment of local and national war memorials as well as Armistice Day, later renamed as Remembrance Day. The war became the subject of popular shows, advertisements

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20 Vance, Death so Noble, 5.

21 Ibid., 74, 89.
and novels as the Canadian public strove to ease painful memories. Yet the construction of nostalgic representations of war could never “fill the vacant chairs at the kitchen table or hide the fact that almost every big city street corner was home to a disabled veteran.”22 For many men, and for many families, the horrors of war never ended as they continued to grapple with the physical, emotional and mental consequences of war.

As Harry Patch told a reporter in 2007, “I met someone from the German side and we both shared the same opinion: we fought, we finished and now we were friends…It wasn’t worth it.”23 These sentiments are mirrored in a poem written by Philip Child, the author of God’s Sparrow as discussed in Chapter Four. Child published a poem in 1951 entitled “Afterwards” that recounted his experiences meeting “a man from Hungary.” The second verse of this poem reads:

“We served on opposite sides of that war,” I said,
“And either one of us might now be dead,
Killed by the other.”
I held my hand out to him. He took it and smiled.
“We might be shaking hands with a man we had killed
Those years ago, as if he were a brother.
“Isn’t it strange?” we said.24

Perhaps it is the ‘strangeness’ of the Great War that fascinates us. Although the war served as a catalyst for social and political unrest, the war effort aggravated existing tensions rather than creating new ones. Therefore, the war personified both the continuation of pre-war social trends and the construction of a terrifying and violent climate of destruction. Maybe the Great War

22 Ibid., 89.


captivates us because of the importance placed on battles such as Vimy Ridge and the notion of Canada’s ‘baptism of fire’ as it journeyed towards nationhood. It was believed that if Canadians could focus on the positive aspects of the war, rather than dwell upon the racial, social, political and economic tensions that threatened to tear the country apart, the memory of war could be an important part of the a burgeoning sense of Canadian nationalism. However tempting it is to view the war as a unifying force, the overwhelmingly high casualty rates, intense political unrest and violent outbursts between 1914 and 1918 illustrate that the war often brought out the worst, rather than the best, in many Canadians.

A crowd of spectators still gathers annually at the base of Soldier’s Tower on Remembrance Day to honour the service of the University during the Second World War and the Korean conflict in addition to the Great War. This year, no explicit mention was made of the Canadians who have served and died in Canadian missions over the last fifty years or in Afghanistan. The ceremony honoured war service as a meaningful part of the University’s history; yet war work was commemorated as part of the institutions past, not part of its present. Yet, it is important to recognize that militarization of the University of Toronto during the Great War was an act of conformity, rather than a radical statement, as English Canada buried itself under an imposing tide of imperial patriotism. In the martial climate of wartime Ontario, the University administration itself found itself placed under social, financial and political pressures to influence its students to enlist. The militaristic environment of English Canada does not justify the University’s policy of encouraging enlistment into active service; however, it does provide a backdrop to explore how discourses of manhood and duty influenced recruitment initiatives during the Great War. As a poem published in the University of Toronto Monthly explains:

25 Vance, Death so Noble, 9, 11.
But when the signal rockets flare
  He strains his eyes the void to scan;
When the sounds of battle fill the air
  In the face of death he plays the man.26

26 W. Hodgson Ellis, “As a Watch in the Night,” University of Toronto Monthly, June 1913, 361.
Appendix A

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