SCARLET AND KHAKI, FIRE AND STEEL:
REPRESENTATIONS OF WARFARE IN BRITISH MASS CULTURE, 1870-1914

by

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Abstract

In the late-nineteenth century, Britain saw the development of a mass culture consumed by a new public. It was a culture of diverse forms each seeking commercial success. Part of that success came through a celebration of empire that, after 1870, was rapidly expanding. Embedded in this dynamic cultural context was a similarly new regard for the British army as the Continent destabilized and empire seemed increasingly part of the definition of power. Formerly maligned and distrusted, the army enjoyed a prominent place in the commercial culture as it fought incessant imperial wars against diverse and unusual opponents whose demise served to entertain while the empire grew.

Considering these varied stimuli affecting the British public, this dissertation examines how the discourse on warfare was formulated by the adult and juvenile mass culture defined by the illustrated press, paintings, juvenile novels and toy soldiers between 1870 and 1914. It argues that there was a representational convergence on a set of forms drawn from British military history, the contemporary manifestation of soldiers participating in parades and the volunteer movement, and from the colonial wars regularly fought and reported in the press. These sources of discourse promised accuracy and often provided it in the superficial form of equipment details and broad battle narratives. However, in revealing the experience of warfare the discourse was false. The culture confirmed a normative and anachronistic vision of war based predominantly on the peculiarities of colonial wars and the displays and war games of weekend volunteers. It was a vision that suited the conservative army officer elite and those who were rendering it for sale, but it was a time when the character of warfare was rapidly changing. Expanding in scale and technological sophistication, modern war was
becoming ever more distinct from the controlled and familiar image of it. Even the experience of the Anglo-Boer War failed to fundamentally narrow the gap between reality and representation.

By occupying an analytical middle ground, this study is distinct from most cultural and military histories. It considers the origins and characteristics of the representation warfare, but does so without allowing the campaign narratives and technical details, common to military history, to obscure their abstract meaning. It does, however, guard against drifting too deeply into the well-tilled ground of cultural history that reveals how that manifestation of warfare came to shape other social values. In this work, how the vision of warfare was formulated and why it was significant in the context of British culture prior to the Great War remain the central concerns.

A note on spelling

The spelling of foreign names (places, peoples and artifacts like weapons) is inconsistent in the mass cultural media used in this work. In fact, some of these vagaries of spelling persist. However, never is the spelling so unusual as to obscure its intended meaning. For example, the Battle of Isandlwana is spelled “Isandula,” and “Isandhlwana”; Sudan is typically spelled “Soudan”; Ghurkha is spelled “Goorka” and “Gurkha.” So, instead of repeatedly using “sic” I have generally left the spelling unchanged in its original context without additional notation.

Keywords: Victorian Britain; British Army; popular culture; imperialism; militarism; The Illustrated London News; The Graphic; The Boy’s Own Paper, G. A. Henty

Dedicated to the memory Dr. Ian Dyck
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Completing this dissertation relied on the help and inspiration from many people. I must first recognize the Simon Fraser University History Department faculty who formed my committee. Dr. Ian Dyck had long supported my academic and professional pursuits, and his enthusiasm for my return to studies at the doctoral level provided the confidence I needed after a lengthy absence. Ian recognized my interest in military history but encouraged me to take a cultural approach to the subject. This spoke to Ian’s confidence in me and also revealed his sensitivity to my particular family and professional responsibilities that would have made lengthy overseas research impossible. Sadly, Ian passed away before seeing the completion of this work.

Taking over as my senior supervisor, Dr. John Stubbs revealed an exemplary commitment to his colleague and friend, Ian, and a generosity to me by seeing my work through the final and most difficult stages. His penetrating questions and repeated close readings of my text improved it both for its intellectual rigor and clarity. Dr. Roxanne Panchasi’s creative commentary similarly pushed me to consider unexplored themes that added dimension to this dissertation and the avenues to expand its assertions in future research. The other members of my examining committee, Dr. Mark Leier (Chair), Dr. John Craig, Dr. Ilya Vinkovetsky, and Dr. Patrick Dunae, I thank for their engagement with my work and for making the examination process enriching and collegial.

Various libraries and institutions made available the primary and secondary sources used in this work, but the staffs made the mining of these sources more efficient and pleasurable. The British Library, the National Army Museum, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Victoria provided the majority of the textual and
graphic sources. Those not directly available were procured by the inter-library loan services of the University of the Fraser Valley and Simon Fraser University. The Vancouver Museum houses an impressive collection of toy soldiers viewed early in my research and this inspired further investigation into this aspect of British culture. Images of toy soldiers were generously provided by Leigh Gotch, Toy Soldier Department, Bonhams Auctioneers, UK.

Finally, I must thank certain individuals. Dr. Alisa Webb, a former student and now colleague at UFV, generously provided advice, inspiration, and friendship. Exploring the world of toy soldiers resulted in an unexpected but delightful relationship with James Opie. His passion for these models led him to complete an invaluable cataloging of the Britains figures and the accumulation of a vast collection that was a privilege to see. Iain O’Shea, an honours student at SFU, kindly gave me access to his collection of *The Navy and Army Illustrated*. Michelle Patterson and Stephen Fleming provided constructive criticism and editing advice. Brent Woodley and Marlene Murray (History Departmental Assistant, UFV) endured my interminable computing questions and always provided the answers. Ruth Anderson, the SFU Graduate Secretary, made the last hectic days prior to final submission bearable. The illustrations, so central to this dissertation, were rescued from my poor photography by the technical magic of James Cordeiro whose work in our own television culture was suspended to work on the product of Britain’s culture of the long nineteenth century. Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, I must acknowledge the inspiration and support I have received from family. My mother and father, Dorothea and Barry Leach, instilled a fascination for history that found expression in travels, books, and the college teaching career that my father
modeled so well. My wife, Michelle Patterson, shares this passion for history, and, in spite of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, has found the strength to complete her doctorate. Although sometimes difficult and frustrating, our studies have enriched our lives and hopefully that of our daughter, Miranda, who has always given us so much in return.
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Introduction

By the late summer of 1915 over two million Britons had volunteered to fight in the Great War. They knew of the losses suffered since August 1914 and rallied to replace them, but the vast majority had never served in the military and certainly never experienced combat. Despite the lack of experience, this generation of Britons had been exposed to warfare through the new commercial culture their entire lives. It was a military education rich in social, national, and gendered discourses, but first and foremost it defined the character of warfare. Hence, when the young men volunteered in 1914 or 1915, they did so equipped not just with a stoic resolve inspired by patriotism or the need to fulfil the expectations of their male identity or class. They joined having previously seen the warfare conducted by Britain in the past and present (and even the future) represented in the mass culture. According to these representations, there was little to fear and much to recommend in the experience of battle.

Print, image and performance regularly provided representations of warfare as conducted by Britain’s small professional army in diverse parts of the empire. It was a representation informed by history, military tradition and ceremony, and domestic volunteerism, but war was most explicitly seen through the lens of imperialism. It was a product avidly consumed, especially after 1870 when the industry of culture provided ever more products and imperial wars proliferated. War was popular. And yet, this generation was unique in being exposed to it in such a systematic, if abstract, fashion. Earlier, war was experienced by relatively few and the consumer culture was similarly limited. In the twentieth century, total war shockingly democratized the experience of war. In the late-nineteenth century, experience and exposure to warfare were inversely
Although we cannot be certain what the majority thought warfare entailed prior to experiencing it, we can define how the underlying discourse on warfare was shaped by the mass culture. By examining a diverse selection of popular and accessible media such as the illustrated press, juvenile novels, paintings and toy soldiers I will consider why this representation of warfare converged on a set of identifiable forms shaped by ideals often sustained by the peculiarities of colonial campaigns.1 Sometimes dismissed as romantic glorification, the high diction of valour, bravery, and self-sacrifice, that had long sustained the worth of war for the elites, belies the fact that the physical manifestation of warfare in the commercial culture was not inherently inaccurate.2 Indeed, the culture was deliberate in presenting the uniforms, weapons, tactics, and the intimate realities of combat, and, by revealing the contrasting character of the enemy, emphasized the correctness of the foregoing characteristics of British warfare.

This was war worth fighting by an institution that had long been mistrusted but could now be celebrated. It was controlled warfare defined by scarlet and khaki uniforms, shallow lines and bristling squares, deadly rifle fire capped by decisive bayonet charges, and intimate fighting by soldiers often carried into battle on horseback. Much

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1 John Lynn asserts the importance of culture on the way armies conduct warfare in his remarkably wide-ranging study. Although his emphasis is on the experience of battle, his theoretical model juxtaposes and links the discourse of war (its ideal) with the reality of war as actually experienced. My work places the emphasis on the discourse of warfare as defined by a selection of mass cultural media forms, but this still recognizes that the army, particularly junior officers, were both consumers of and contributors to the culture that defined much of the discourse. John Lynn, *Battle; A History of Combat and Culture from Ancient Greece to Modern America* (Cambridge, MA: Westview, 2003).

was anachronistic and all powerfully enduring. Revealing these attributes of warfare, the army was certainly complicit. Military dress and displays of drill and pageantry served discipline and the regimental community, but it also permeated the broader culture. So did the contemporary war experience of officers whose diction of war, expressed through newspaper interviews and freelance writing, reflected both the behavioural expectations of their class or rank, and informed the new, popularly accessible culture to which they too belonged.3 In this respect, the army’s role in shaping the discourse on warfare was not conspiratorial; while deliberate and self-serving, the army and its officers were usually presenting a vision of war to which they too largely adhered even if it now seems misplaced and even fanciful. Of course, complicit too were the ‘embedded’ reporters whose loyalty to the institution that offered them adventure, and occasionally fame, generally meant favourably coloured text and images of each campaign they witnessed.

This dissertation provides insight into the militarized mass culture of Britain that flourished after 1870 and survived the reverses of the Anglo-Boer War to carry Britons unflinchingly to the Great War. Through its exploration of varied commercial media, rich in military content, this work argues that British culture provided a typically uncritical image of warfare that promised accuracy, was normative, knowable, and even enriching, but dangerously false. The empirically revealed character and origins of that representation are, here, of central concern. This representation of warfare as performed by a historically successful army prominently engaged in colonial campaigns was a misleading vision not because of gross inaccuracies or undue celebration. It was false

History 58, no. 3 (September 1986).
due to its narrow narrative scope that emphasized the familiar and historically enduring constructs of the discourse that, as a socially defined object, confirmed the broader value of war and the conservative institution that fought it. The volunteers of 1914 did not have their motives for joining, whether abstract or mundane, complicated by a challenging vision of the nature of battle.

However, this representation of warfare was at odds with the changing nature of modern, industrialized warfare. Some of this misrepresentation is inherent in the way war is textually and graphically presented – the textual or visual diction of war is inevitably inadequate and its veracity rarely revealed by lived experience. Few had actual experience of warfare or even interacted with the small army that was predominately stationed overseas. Like any historical or journalistic narrative, selecting the idiosyncratic details of warfare was more interesting and marketable. Relegating the unglamorous and often brutal character of campaigning to the margins – or leaving them off the page entirely – militaria and war’s exciting episodes of violence were disproportionally emphasized.

Much of this could be said of any period and culture, but in Britain the contrast between the reality and the idealized discourse of warfare was particularly marked in the

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4 Edward Spiers examines the experience of war as communicated by Victorian soldiers through their correspondence. These rich sources sometimes voice criticism of commanders, the hardships of campaigning, and the selectivity of the press reports, but they generally adhere to the commonly accepted views of British superiority over the various peoples they encountered in empire. Spiers considers the literacy of the British soldier and concludes that it was higher than often supposed but still very low; in the 1890s fewer than forty percent achieved the barest level of literacy. Nevertheless, many individuals did write and the letters provided a link between the army and the home front. Spiers notes that much of the writing was done by reservists, mustered or volunteered for a particular campaign and who expected to return home soon. These letters were less critical and might have been written to enhance the reputation of the individual about to return, but in so doing “they could boost the reputation of the army generally.” Soldiers stationed in the empire for longer periods of time might have been less enthusiastic about their experiences, but they also had less reason to write and might not have had family awaiting their return. Edward Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier in Africa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 7-15.
context of the late-nineteenth century and the eve of total war in the twentieth. Industrialization and the systematic application of science to weapons development precipitated an interest in military technology. By the late-nineteenth century, industrialization was less a question of satanic mills and more a measure of national superiority – the naval race with Germany at the turn of the century revealed this technological and industrial vitality. Sophisticated weapons used by the army expressed this even more pointedly when juxtaposed to the swords and spears of Native opponents fought in real war. But European war, perhaps like politics and the commercialized culture, was becoming impersonal and massive in potential scale. Continental conscription, general staff professionalism, and complex mobilization preparations revealed a military desperation to control the chaos that all wars impose. The old military systems, still defined by the Napoleonic ideal of epic battles won by great leadership and soldierly élan, were extended beyond their capabilities, particularly at the tactical level where the improved technologies of killing stifled movement and decisive results.

In contrast, colonial warfare, conducted by a small professional army and selectively represented in the new commercial culture, could be anachronistic and supported the persistence of traditional military methods, individual achievement, and systems that ran against, or strangely parallel, the stream of modern industrial war flowing toward 1914. Even when news of real wars fought in the empire became rare after 1902, juvenile fiction and militaria in the form of uniform illustrations and toy soldiers presented the durable old vision, ‘commodified’ and reassuring.

What immediately follows is an effort to place this work on the representations of
warfare in British mass culture into the methodological approaches common to the
cultural history of Victorian and Edwardian Britain as it pertains to military themes.
Thereafter, Chapter 1 will define the place of the army and militarism in British society
and culture. Subsequent chapters will explore the representation of warfare by dividing it
into the following themes: Chapter 2 examines the representation of uniforms,
accoutrements and weapons; Chapter 3, tactics; Chapter 4, the consequences of fighting;
and Chapter 5, the representations of the enemy and how they served to refine the
definition of British warfare.

Understanding Warfare

What the public understood about warfare cannot be reliably answered, although
it is precisely the question to which social and cultural historians are drawn. In his
Depictions and Images of War in Edwardian Newspapers, 1899-1914, Glen Wilkinson
cannot resist defining what Britons believed was the shape of warfare in his detailed and
narrowly focused analysis. He concedes, “the way that actual warfare was perceived is
unclear” but asserts that the consumer’s “imagined” vision of war can be ascertained
from the newspaper representations in text and graphic. This popularly perceived
reality, according to Wilkinson, is therefore the most important ‘reality’ to define. He

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6 Wilkinson, 6. In his biography of Kipling, Charles Carrington boldly asserts that from 1890 forward “all
that generation of young men who volunteered to fight in the Spanish-American and Anglo-Boer wars
derived their notion of colonial warfare and of the soldier’s life largely from Kipling.” Charles Carrington,
Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Work (London: Pelican, 1970), 393. While this is an untenable assertion, it
does offer the idea that mass cultural sources do provide compelling representations of the army and war.
7 Wilkinson challenges the notion that “the goal of the historian is to uncover reality, instead of
understanding what people at the time believed to be reality.” Glenn Wilkinson, “Purple Prose and the
Yellow Press: Imagined Spaces and the Military Expedition to Tirah, 1897,” in Negotiating India in the
254. Of course, perceptions are a discrete type of reality and one as illusive as the physical reality
Wilkinson dismisses. I contend that the most reliably defined “reality” is the one explicitly communicated
then echoes the zeitgeist argument of historians like Michael Howard who suggest that this positive vision of warfare encouraged support for war in 1914 that then came as a shock when finally experienced in the trenches of France and Flanders.\(^8\) Certainty, even about the “imagined” shape of war, cannot be asserted on a broad scale; Wilkinson’s imagined vision of war was that of the newspaper writers, illustrators and editors. Selected anecdotal evidence from letters, diaries and memoirs seem to validate his general postulation that these purveyors of the news influenced the public. But the diction of war had many mutually supporting sources. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence of what a few thought about war based on reading newspapers is not enough if it is meant to explain the volunteerism of millions in the first year of the Great War. Nor is the surprise of the real experience of war novel; it might well be a truism of all war.

War is usually a shocking and unusual experience and to be surprised or unsettled by its realities is wholly predictable. The character of that realization can itself be surprising; Joanna Bourke asserts that the pleasure of killing can be an un-stated soldier’s epiphany\(^9\) while others find it difficult to use their weapons at all, and certainly not with deadly intent.\(^10\) Both of these realities were in sharp contrast with the popular

\(\begin{align*}
\text{through the physical evidence of illustration and text in the mass culture. A limited source base that can be readily accessed and enumerated, the various edifices of culture can be analyzed to determine what interpretive options were made available to that illusive public. If the options were limited, we, as latter day readers, will be able to define the parameters of the discourse even if we can’t know for sure where ‘most’ people positioned themselves in it.}
\end{align*}\)

\(\begin{align*}
8\text{ Michael Howard, “Men Against Fire: Expectations of War in 1914,” International Security 9, no.1 (summer, 1984); Michael Howard, War in European History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 112-113. The cultural interpretation of the origins of the Great War is challenged by more recent historiography. Richard Hamilton and Holger Herwig appropriately question the methodology of this approach noting the lack of reliable evidence. The attitudes of people are hard to measure, especially in the period prior to systematic polling. Even the backgrounds and motives of the members of militarist leagues and clubs that professed certain agendas are not clearly defined by the available data. Richard Hamilton and Holger Herwig. Decisions for War, 1914-1917 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 11-17.}
\end{align*}\)

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presentation of warfare and the expected behaviour of British soldiers. But even the
more stoic, perhaps workman-like response to battle experience marks a contrast with the
common representation of glory and vigour.

What is more important than asserting that war’s character was, or is, a surprise,
is to consider how the discourse of war is formed prior to the inevitably varied
experience of it. What interpretive options the culture provided the public and from what
sources these visions were derived can be more accurately assessed. Indeed, while
recognizing that the cultural media were themselves engaged in a reciprocal relationship
defining meaning with their consuming market, we need not make assertions about what
the amorphous public thought when the tangible edifices of culture can be more reliably
mined for the shared discourse of imagined warfare.11 This is a subtle, but ultimately
important, methodological distinction that also demands a broader consideration of
varied cultural sources. If newspapers presented their public with a marketable
“perception of war that readers already held” it raises the question of what composed the
diction of that perception of war and where it originated. So, while I question the
certainty with which Wilkinson’s asserts that a positive impression of war encouraged
men and women to participate in it, the culture provided few interpretive alternatives to
that image and certainly did little to encourage men and women to question war based on
its inherent qualities when the politicians and diplomats chose that path in 1914.

11 Wilkinson makes the appropriate observation that the press (and, I would contend, other types of cultural
media) engaged in a two-way exchange to define the discourse on war that was familiar, immediate and,
therefore, relevant; the audience was not a “blank slate.” While this allows historians like Wilkinson to
make assumptions about public attitudes about war, I prefer to limit my arguments to the communicated
interpretations of warfare that the mass culture provided. Glen Wilkinson, “‘To the Front’: British
Newspaper Advertising and the Boer War,” in The Boer War; Direction, Experience and Image, ed., John
Cultural History and Military History

In its focus on military content and its physical and technical representation across multiple media forms, this dissertation escapes the more common approaches to Victorian culture even when those approaches discuss, or even emphasize, military themes. Andrew Dowling, in his work on Victorian masculinity, appropriately asserts that “cultural history explores the relationship between literature and knowledge…” and that it “…argues that literary texts construct what people know about a particular issue.”12 This is a useful definition, although the definition of culture used here goes beyond literature to include many media forms that offered knowledge of warfare. Tonio Holscher recognizes the broader value of artistic and monumental culture in his work on ancient representations of warfare. While identifying the ideological and political implications of war themed art, he states that “the images of war in all cultures are no mere visual fictions: they refer to hard, profound, and complex experiences in real life, to a world of killing and dying.”13 This contrasts with much of the historiography of Victorian culture related to war that has not escaped the themes typically associated with cultural history. Social relationships, class, race, the definition of gender roles (particularly masculinity), nationalism, imperialism and the media forms themselves are emphasized. While these are all valuable investigations, it is worth noting that they sometimes risk imposing an anachronistic consciousness on the Victorian past;

Dowling’s aforementioned work on masculinity is prefaced with the admission that the definition of masculinity itself was not debated in the cultural consciousness of the

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13 Tonio Holscher, “Images of War in Greece and Rome: Between Military Practice, Public Memory, and
The shape of warfare and the character of the institutions that fought it were, however, explicitly considered in British mass culture. Nevertheless, familiar lines of inquiry into culture predominate. For example, in his chapter on popular art, John Springhall notes that “the prestige of the British Army was probably higher than at any time before or since and military values became mandatory for all young Englishmen,” but he uses the romantic imagery of the army and warfare only as a conduit of imperialism. Said notes that the “cult of the military personality was prominent” in Britain. While he uses militarism to explore the racial and cultural interaction of Orientalism, he offers no consideration of the doctrinal divide in warfare that served to expose much of that discourse; Native opponents fought differently from the British and this revealed something of the character of warfare itself. James Belich also emphasizes race in his work on the wars fought against the Maori of New Zealand. Although he does go into considerable detail about the campaigns and methods used by both sides, his thesis on the cultural representation of this war emphasizes the racial discourse as opposed to the varied influences shaping the discourse on war. Heather Streets also

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14 Kelly Boyd confirms this perspective by noting that Victorians “envisaged masculinity as a biological given that they were helping to mould to the needs of society.” Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys’ Story Paper in Britain: A Cultural History, 1855-1940* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 175.


17 James Belich argues that the British racial discourse skewed their understanding of the New Zealand Wars fought against Maoris who developed innovative methods of warfare. According to Belich these methods integrated indigenous fortified warfare (e.g., the use of the entrenched pa) with modern firepower. This, he contends, was overcome by British superiority in numbers as opposed to technological or organizational superiority. Britons were loath to admit this and didn’t. While his argument is compelling, if overstated (Belich virtually credits the Maoris with modern trench warfare), quantitative dominance of the British speaks to the larger system of warfare that only modern military systems could produce and sustain; the Maoris might have fought successful actions, but were overwhelmed by the British capacity to wage
examines racial discourse in her excellent recent work on the “martial races” employed by the British.\textsuperscript{18} Her work is wide ranging in its source base, but returns to the theme of race and racial discourse in lieu of a strictly military analysis. Most recently, Michele Martin has offered a comparative analysis of illustrated periodicals and their coverage of the Franco-Prussian War. This work is revealing of the political and hegemonic discourse of mass culture, but again, the military dimension of the war representation is left under-analysed.\textsuperscript{19}

Also typical of the interpretive trajectory of cultural studies is the work by Joseph Kestner. British colonial campaigns are understood by Kestner as events which “demonstrates the degree to which warfare dominated Victorian consciousness and contributed to the formation of ideologies of masculinity, constructing paradigms of activity, aggression, dominance, endurance, heroism, comradeship, patriotism and power.”\textsuperscript{20} The deconstructed evidence does, indeed, lead to conclusions about such social and psychological identities, but too often the shape of warfare itself is ignored in favour of other intellectual constructs.\textsuperscript{21} Consciously or sub-consciously, Britons were long-term war. Race may have shaped the skewed discourse defining this war in British culture, but the systemic military dimension cannot be marginalized. The British won and Maori methods ultimately overcome. James Belich, \textit{The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict} (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986), 291-298.

\textsuperscript{18} Heather Streets, \textit{Martial Races: The Military, Race, and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

\textsuperscript{19} Michele Martin, \textit{Images at War; Illustrated Periodicals and Constructed Nations} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

\textsuperscript{20} Joseph A. Kestner, \textit{Masculinities In Victorian Painting} (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), 189. Like Kestner, Troy Boone’s analysis of nineteenth century British youth culture is focused on class and, in the chapter on empire, comments on G.A. Henty’s novels as instruments of social conservatism and class delineation. The military narrative that even Boone admits “is at the heart of the novel” is used for the purposes of class analysis and ignores its military educational value. Troy Boone, \textit{Youth of Darkest England} (New York: Routledge, 2005), 140-141.

\textsuperscript{21} Military history has struggled to justify itself with articles that explicitly address its topical focus and methodology. While old ‘captains and campaigns’ narratives have long given way to approaches that incorporate themes that link war and the various permutations of ‘society’ (the now rather old ‘new military history’), military historians seem to agree with Martin van Creveld that military history must ultimately
not simply shaping “paradigms of activity” that defined manliness or class identity or jingoistic patriotism. While reading news or fiction, observing battle paintings, participating in the Volunteer Force or even playing with toy soldiers, they were confronted with paradigms of warfare that were both partly accurate, but also dangerously limited, if not entirely fanciful. This study will consider these explicit manifestations of warfare. It does so without exhaustively restating the multifaceted layers of meaning that cultural historians usually seek, but it will occasionally use them. Instead, it will reveal the cumulative repertoire of war representation as it might have been seen by the still rather poorly educated, but literate, British public that Hobson described as having “low curiosity and indiscriminate receptivity.”

Cultural studies are most commonly about the audience and the media producers, and certainly not about the accuracy of the content. Accuracy is appropriately de-emphasized as largely irrelevant since it is with the reaction to the text or image, not its veracity, that cultural historians are concerned. Glenn Wilkinson’s aforementioned emphasis on imagined realities reveals this point. This dissertation, however, in part emphasizes the issue of accuracy across a diverse selection of sources. For one, the writers and illustrators of the period valued the accuracy of their portrayals that were commonly offered with an explicit educational motive. Prior to the advent of electronic media and with photography only slowly replacing the lithograph, the varied forms of the illustrated mass-market press were the principal purveyors of news and information.

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23 Photographs are not extensively used in this work. Although their presence in the illustrated press...
Whether in newspaper, journal, novel, history book, lithograph, painting or even toy, representing the British soldier overseas was done with an attention to detail, or at least its promise. In all the aforementioned types of writing and illustration, there was a remarkable similarity of content that permeated the general media that had not clearly demarcated distinctions between genres; the novel writer would borrow from history texts, the historian would present narratives of grand events in a style more akin to fiction, and even the lived experience of soldiers might be rendered in memoirs in the style of both novelist and historian.24 Painters of military themes too, while asserting their artistry, were more often defined as ‘illustrators’ praised for their accuracy at the expense of their work’s artistic value – a direct result of the close medium linkages between illustrated papers and battle paintings.25 This derived largely from the mass availability of illustrated papers that featured the work of artists who took the opportunity to hone their skills as ‘war specials’; battle paintings had been shunned as accurate ‘illustrations,’ but in the later nineteenth century this became the measure of their worth.

In seeking to produce true representations the edifices of the consumer culture were simply satisfying a public expectation for accuracy as it defined its military
discourse. In his work on spectacular theatre, Michael Booth observed the following trait in nineteenth century British culture:

if there is any age in which visual taste has been less abstract it is the Victorian. The general public and the theatre audience included in that public craved concrete images of historical and contemporary reality in the book and magazine illustrations, prints, magic lantern slides, panoramas, and paintings they saw. Legend and history had to be actualized and visually familiar and accessible.26

Writing about the thought processes of Victorian intellectuals like Thomas Carlyle, the poet and social critic Matthew Arnold, and the great essayist John Ruskin, Gerald Bruns observes this commitment to historical and empirical evidence as opposed to a reliance on abstract theories.27 If this has broader application to the mass culture, it would confirm the weight of both history and war journalism on the conceptualization of warfare; as Bruns asserts for ideas, perhaps the discourse on warfare was “inseparable from its history.”28 Kipling, much to the initial displeasure of critics, recognized this public desire for the genuine with his colloquial style in his *Barrack Room Ballads*.29

Of course, the assertion of accuracy and its expectation by the public was fundamentally flawed. The notion of accuracy is dependent on what the consumer already knows. Consequently, much of the accuracy discussed herein relates to the physical trappings of war, such as uniforms and weapons. Their faithful rendering was crucial since accuracy here allowed the consumer to suspend disbelief and to anchor the familiarly uniformed soldier to an alien place and a combat experience that would likely not be tested with lived experience. The complex experiential qualities of warfare could

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28 Bruns, 905.
not be accurately portrayed anyway, but it was promised and appeared rendered with the physical details helping to confirm the discourse. Hence, the image of the British soldier was faithfully reproduced and placed into a variety of warring contexts. However, it was an image that generally verified an ideal reinforced by the limited presence of real soldiers at home and in the expectations of warfare based on long established traditions, and the myths and narratives of past campaigns embedded in the ceremonies and uniforms of volunteers and units on home service.

The moments of battle and actual fighting described or illustrated in paintings and in print were often of real events or represented the kind of fighting that doctrines and weapons implied would occur. But these rare episodes of fighting at close quarters or facing the drama of a desperate situation were selected to represent a type of combat that bolstered an expectation of what fighting and killing (or dying) should always be like; the ‘typical’ reality of campaigning and battle was lost in this selectivity of the exceptional that was confirmed by what could be measured as accurate, like soldiers’ uniforms. Of course, even for the ‘war special’ artist, moments of fighting were fleeting and often not directly observed. Like the consuming public, they, too, had to sometimes imagine these moments and drew upon their own expectations of warfare.30

Parts of the reality of colonial warfare, and particularly the way it was represented in the media with its emphasis on great battles, intimate close combat, and steady firing

29 Carrington, 402.
30 The difficulty of telegraphing news and sending sketches sometimes meant that these representations of war had to be invented by the papers even though this was condemned by the profession. Roger Stearn, “War Correspondents and Colonial War, c. 1870-1900,” in Popular Imperialism and the Military, ed., John MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 145. Lucy Brown also notes that the ‘light’ press, including the illustrated papers that had their ‘war specials,’ had to use the reportage of the better-staffed papers to offer detailed narratives of the events. Lucy Brown, Victorian News and Newspapers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 216-217.
lines, actually resembled the anachronistic war games of the volunteer movement, the
drill practice of cadets or students at school, and the full-dress parades and ceremonies in
which regular soldiers participated at home. These, in turn, were manifest legacies built
on the methods used by British commanders and soldiers in the celebrated wars of the
past, particularly the Napoleonic Wars. The Duke of Wellington’s exploits and those of
the legendary British infantryman in the Peninsula campaign will be frequently noted.
This narrative was not just influential on the popular representation of warfare, but the
fascination with Napoleonic doctrine, and even of the romantic character of Napoleon,
had a significant influence on the military. The desire to achieve victory in decisive
battles using traditional doctrines was too much for soldiers to ignore even when faced
with technologies that made battles more deadly and less decisive, and victory in wars of
nations more illusive.31 So, if the army was convinced of the persistence of old methods
of war because it suited their own ethos, it is of little wonder that the same tradition
would bolster the public desire for equally glorious and decisive results conducted in the
style that was represented in the culture. In this way the military education of the British
public was not far removed from the actual doctrines and expectations of war espoused
by the British army as it considered the changes in warfare revealed in places like South
Africa.

What added further to these expectations was the superficial understanding of
colonial wars that, to the uncritical consumer of the commercial culture, seemed to have
all the hallmarks of offensive warfare culminating in decisive battles against Native

opponents that helped define the civilized warfare of the British. While there have been
periods of intense and frequent battles, military history is generally marked by their
rarity. Colonial campaigns were also defined by few great battles. Instead, they were
characterized by indecisive skirmishes, lengthy marches, and pacification strategies
designed to erode resistance and force the illusive deciding battle that Native opponents
often sought to avoid and proved less tests of arms than massacres. These realities of
colonial war and army life feature much less in the commercially driven culture that had
largely expected imperial expansion and equally expected that expansion to be won at the
tip of a bayonet. Worn boot leather, disease, and burning villages hardly inspired claims
of national or racial superiority. Soldiers themselves commented on these omissions
from the news sent home by the correspondents who they believed neglected the
“mundane” aspects of campaigning.32

In addition to the aforementioned studies by Glenn Wilkinson, an excellent start
for examining the historiography of cultural representations of the army and warfare is
The contributors offer a wide range of interpretations of varied cultural forms including
music, music hall, juvenile literature, paintings, and spectacular theatre. While a
remarkably useful collection, the contributors predominantly represent the cultural and
social dimensions of this topic that neglects the explicit military education that the
culture provided. Roger T. Stearn does provide some useful content regarding the
manner in which war correspondents such as Archibald Forbes and Bennet Burleigh, and

the war special artists Melton Prior and Frederick Villiers did their work. They were
intent on accuracy but understood “British war as, usually, justified and as challenge,
adventure, heroism and glory.”

MacKenzie’s introduction to the book best considers, albeit briefly, the shape of warfare itself as represented in the culture. He condenses what colonial wars provided to the culture as “colourful engagements involving cavalry and simple weaponry, heroic deeds of individual action, concentration rather than dispersal, exotic backdrops and strange enemies, with captives and booty that fed interests in anthropological display.”

This is a useful summary and one that inspired this investigation to define these visions of war more precisely and consider from where they originated in the culture. Unfortunately, the contributor chapters in this edited work offered only partial answers. In fairness, some of the cultural forms explored in MacKenzie’s book were unsuitable for the representation of warfare given their physical limitations. Dave Russell’s chapter, for example, appropriately notes that combat scenes were difficult to stage and costly for the music halls. This apparently justifies the small part of his chapter being dedicated to the description of fighting and the rather lengthier consideration of moral, masculine and national values, a trait common to all the chapters in MacKenzie’s compilation, and, to a large extent, all the works on culture and imperialism published to date under MacKenzie’s editorial guidance by Manchester University Press.

One of the many useful titles in this series is W. J. Reader’s *At Duty’s Call; A

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Study in Obsolete Patriotism. Reader presents an effective overview of how British attitudes toward the army and military service were constructed in an effort to understand why millions of Briton’s voluntarily enlisted to fight in 1914 through 1915. Reader is most concerned with the upper-middle class public school male and while his use of mass cultural sources is diverse, his commentary about the origins of British militarism implies the existence of a prescriptive, albeit not a consciously organized, propaganda about the value in war and military service. The characterization of warfare itself, however, remains largely undefined in spite of the assertion that it was “innocent.” Even when Reader turns his attention to the perceived “nature of war” in his chapter titled “On War” his commentary is largely driven by the theories of contemporary military, social, and religious commentators and institutions. While their rationalizations about the duration and worth of war is useful to Reader’s work, and might have informed the attitudes of the elites prior to the war, the character of warfare as an experience is not explored in any detail.

Michael Paris provides a wonderfully detailed account of the cultural use of war and soldiers in his Warrior Nation; Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000. Paris uses a wide range of sources to support his thesis that British culture, far from shunning militarism, embraced military themes that were found in religious, gendered, moral, social Darwinist and strategic discourses. Strikingly, the discourse about the explicit nature of warfare is not considered substantively even though the way in which that theme was constructed informed the glorified ideal he claims permeated

37 W. J. Reader, At Duty’s Call; A Study in Obsolete Patriotism (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).
38 Reader, 128.
British culture. Repeatedly, Paris identifies the cultural use of war to communicate militarised values, but does not investigate the vision of warfare itself as a discrete topic. The shape of warfare in this context is apparently so well understood that Paris and others neglect to explicitly define its character. I challenge this assumption.

The same analytical limitations are found in I. F. Clarke’s works that promisingly consider the manner in which war was cast in the future. Here, too, the broad pre-Great War interest in military subjects is left with only passing commentary about how the explicit character of warfare was communicated; the interest in war within its political and social context is emphasized as Britain and Europe looked to future conflict. As opposed to seeing how warfare defines values and expectations, I am interested in how warfare itself was defined in the mass culture that was rapidly expanding after 1870.

The year 1870 marks the beginning of reforms that would shape both the mass-market culture and the celebration of a reinvigorated army that the culture would embrace in a manner that it had never done before. In 1870, the Forster Education Reform bill was passed that provided the foundation – albeit imperfectly -- for compulsory elementary education. With an urbanizing population that had comparatively high rates of literacy, it was clear that universal education would create an even larger literate market to which papers, journals and books of all sorts could be sold. The print

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41 Raymond Williams argues that 1870 is not an appropriate date to begin a cultural analysis of Britain. Many of the trends in print production and consumption were well established before this date, and the educational policies and production technologies noted for this particular period had less immediate impact than is often emphasized. For this study however, as will be duly explained, 1870 is appropriate for its confluence of cultural, military, political and imperial events. Raymond Williams, *Culture & Society: 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, revised edition, 1983), 306.

42 Kelly Boyd notes the importance of the Education Act of 1870, but stresses that literacy was already high
industry was already well developed to take advantage of these developments due to technological and entrepreneurial innovations on which the later part of the century would build.\textsuperscript{43} With further developments in printing such as the rotary press and the availability of vast rolls of cheap pulp paper, the potential for business was huge, especially since the advertisement, stamp, and paper duties were previously eliminated in 1853, 1855, and 1861, respectively.\textsuperscript{44} Politically unfettered, the ideals of journalism as a type of public consciousness – the Fourth Estate – were challenged by the possibility of commercialism.\textsuperscript{45} By the end of the century, the Harmsworth Amalgamated Press revealed the victory of the latter. There was a massive increase in the number of daily and weekly papers and journals in the period approaching 1870, many of which were illustrated. In 1800 there were eighty-eight established newspapers, but this number increased to almost five hundred by 1861.\textsuperscript{46} Illustrated papers were well represented in this early development. Charles Knight’s ground breaking \emph{Penny Magazine} demonstrated the value of illustration to the print industry.\textsuperscript{47} This 1832 publication was quickly emulated both in Britain and internationally;\textsuperscript{48} between 1832 and 1860 British

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{43} Patricia Anderson notes that “the introduction into England of mechanized paper-making (1803), the steam-powered press (1814), and multiple-cylinder stereotype printing (1827) permitted the low-cost, high-speed dissemination of the printed word.” Patricia Anderson, \textit{The Printed Image and the Transformation of the Popular Culture, 1790-1860} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 2.


\textsuperscript{46} Jones, 23.

\textsuperscript{47} Anderson, 50.

\textsuperscript{48} Michele Martin reveals the very direct influence of Knight’s first illustrated paper, parts of which were exported for reprinting in papers throughout Europe and South America. Reprinted in its entirety in the}

\vspace{0.125cm}
weekly illustrated papers sold between 80,000 and 400,000 copies per issue. The proliferation of adult newspapers was followed by a newly found interest in catering to the juvenile market. In 1855 there was one juvenile periodical, but by 1900 106 new titles had been developed, eighty percent of these after 1870.

The competition that this created across the industry meant that many publications were overwhelmed by the mass-market papers that included illustrations and tantalizing news, produced on a massive scale by technologies too costly for the smaller concerns. To survive the costs of the new standards, papers and periodicals adopted successful formats and popular content resulting in greater homogeneity of papers at the expense of diverse opinion. This commonality of content was also exacerbated by the use of limited sources and overseas wire services; for most imperial wars there were few reporters or war special artists who witnessed the events and they relied on even fewer wire services to communicate their stories to the home market. Usually left anonymous, the fame of a select few, such as the artists Frederick Villiers and especially Melton Prior, speaks to their rare qualities (and their shameless self-promotion). In fact, many of

United States, the paper inspired new illustrated publications in places like France and Germany already by 1833. Not a newspaper, its contents were educational or entertaining. It was the *Illustrated London News* (1842) that shifted the emphasis of the illustrated press to news. Martin, 12-13.

49 Anderson, 2.


52 Williams appropriately notes that the cost of news-gathering and its dissemination requires a mass audience that only large corporate bodies can service. Williams, 310. While his comments are as much about contemporary media as that of the nineteenth century, there should be no surprise that so many popular journals and papers were Cassells or Harmsworth publications. However, debating the effects of this concentration of the press on British liberty was a contemporary topic. William Cobbett and James Mill early in the century and the radical journalist and publisher G. W. M. Reynolds in the 1870s suggested that the press could be a dangerous organ of repression and subjection. But these voices of skepticism stood in contrast to the more general view that “the connection between the freedom of the press and civil liberty…had by the turn of the nineteenth century become a firmly rooted tradition in English political
the campaign illustrations and stories written in the press came not from professional journalists or artists but from officers who doubled as amateur writers and illustrators. Even Garnet Wolseley, later field marshal (1894) and commander-in-chief (1895-1900), supplemented his income with war reporting. Converging representations of news, and especially news concerning war, even bridged various types of media both in terms of content and format. Campaign reports in the newspapers would inspire illustrated coverage in the lavish weekly journals, in the writing of serialized fiction and novels, and the proliferation of products and even toys that celebrated the contemporary campaigns being fought. For example, the Britains Ltd. toy company, with its efficient manufacturing process, produced hollow-cast alloy models of British regiments fighting overseas concurrent with the campaigns themselves. Selecting a diverse source base is therefore crucial for this study and reveals a cultural context that mutually confirmed the validity of the discourse on war.

The Sources

The challenge facing any student of the late Victorian era is selecting an appropriate body of primary sources from the massive array of materials available. Lytton Strachey noted in his biographical survey, Eminent Victorians, the impossibility of adequately surveying the residues of the Victorian past:

our fathers and our grandfathers have poured forth and accumulated so vast a quantity of information that the industry of Ranke would be submerged by it, and the perspicacity of a Gibbon would quail before it. It is not by the direct method

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of a scrupulous narration that the explorer of the past can hope to depict that singular epoch…. He will row out over the great ocean of material, and lower down into it, here and there, a little bucket, which will bring up to the light of day some characteristic specimen, from those far depths, to be examined with a careful curiosity.\(^{55}\)

It was an anticipated problem of this research that its source base would be disparate in form but explore only commercially or popularly successful examples of any one particular medium. Most analyses examine a particular type of cultural form. Edward Said, in his influential and wide-ranging work *Culture and Imperialism*, draws much of his evidence from novels, some of which were accessible, like Kipling’s *Kim*, and others less ‘popular’ like Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. Said defines the novel as “the aesthetic object” dismissing the popular works by authors like Henty and leaving unexplored other media forms.\(^{56}\) My argument regarding the representational convergence of warfare relies on a wider variety of mass media and institutions that collectively formed a mutually supporting vision of warfare. Consequently, my “little bucket” captured some of the highest profile elements of British mass culture that were accessible, often critically unsophisticated, and meant to both entertain and edify. Given the market driven impulse to mimic medium specific success (with the resultant homogeneity of form in media like the illustrated papers and juvenile journals) diversity of sources is crucial.

The sources used in this dissertation are therefore diverse but ‘popular’ in that they were available to a large part of the British public over most of the period between 1870 and 1914. All the sources had a significant contemporary longevity whether in terms of publication survival, enduring national (as opposed to regional) popularity, or


corporate existence, and were selected for their over-lap with the period in question (1870-1914).\textsuperscript{57} Furthermore, none of the sources were exclusive to any one class and collectively they represent a cross-section of the mass-produced culture as distinct from “popular culture” which can be defined as that invented or consumed principally by the labouring classes. This is not to imply that a particular medium was not intended for a particular class, but it is clear that the middle class print of the \textit{Illustrated London News}, \textit{The Boy’s Own Paper}, or the novels of G. A. Henty were more widely disseminated than simply through purchase or subscription.\textsuperscript{58} These publications found a bigger readership through libraries and informal distribution.\textsuperscript{59} For example, the popularity of Henty novels was so great that libraries had to limit the number borrowed by a single patron. The juvenile paper \textit{Pluck} regularly encouraged its readers to pass along their copies of the journal to non-readers. Similarly, the working class origins of the music hall should not obscure the increasingly broad audience that these establishments attracted by the 1890s through to the Great War.\textsuperscript{60} Consequently, I use the terms “mass culture” or “commercial culture” as opposed to “popular culture” to escape class based assumptions, and to emphasize the commercial character of the products while not attaching to them

\textsuperscript{57} The \textit{Illustrated London News}, \textit{The Graphic}, \textit{The Boy’s Own Paper}, \textit{Chums}, \textit{Pluck}, Britains toy soldiers, Henty novels, Royal Academy paintings, the popularity of music halls, and the high rates of participation in the volunteer movement (and then Territorial Forces) all represent stable parts of the mass culture.

\textsuperscript{58} Postal records of stamp purchases, even after the repeal of the stamp acts, are a reasonably reliable way that newspaper and journal circulations can be estimated. However, indirect purchase and informal distribution are much more difficult to assess especially where these become more prominent in distribution later in the nineteenth century. Alvar Ellegard, \textit{The Readership of the Periodical Press in Mid-Victorian Britain} (Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, 1957), 5-8.

\textsuperscript{59} Lucy Brown offers several examples of informal distribution of newspapers throughout the century including between family or social circles, community, or by deliberate free distribution to retain market share. Lucy Brown, \textit{Victorian News and Newspapers} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 27-29. Deliberate redistribution of papers circulated to hotels and restaurants is also noted. Brown, 50. Also see Jonathan Rose, \textit{The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

judgements about their inherent qualities. What follows, then, is a brief overview of the primary sources used for this dissertation and the secondary analyses that helped to navigate them.

After 1870 there was a proliferation of newspapers and journals. The illustrated papers particularly benefited from the technological advancements in illustration lithography starting in the 1880s, replacing the more laborious woodcut printing method. Photography emerged in the later part of the century, although the limits of this medium meant that line illustrations rendered more powerful images through to the Great War. With their combination of brief text and beautiful illustrations, the *Illustrated London News* and select issues of *The Graphic* provide this thesis with some of its most important sources for representations of the army and warfare. The *Illustrated London News (ILN)* was the first illustrated newspaper, and with a circulation that reached about 300,000, set the standard for all other illustrated papers. Started in 1842 by Herbert Ingram, the ILN

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61 Patricia Anderson provides a concise challenge to the class-based notions of culture. She asserts that ‘popular culture’ “has continuing usefulness as a common-sense description of any generally accessible, widely shared interest or activity, or of the taste of a majority of ordinary people, or of the commercial success of particular artifacts…” Anderson, 11. However, to define popular culture as a working class phenomenon is to set out boundaries of access and exposure to the culture of other classes that did not exist and were being broken down with the deliberate dissemination of cheap copies of high art in the new ‘mass’ press. Anderson makes a strong argument for the appropriate use of the term ‘mass culture’ defined by its novel technological means of production, its wide distribution, and the consumer’s desire for the products it generated. The transition from a culture more defined as ‘popular’ to one better described as ‘mass’ occurred in the early 1830s, as far as Anderson is concerned, largely due to the success of the new illustrated papers. Anderson, 9-12. It should be noted that the theoretical construct of mass culture is old and one that has been challenged for its explicit comparison with high or elite culture. Dismissed as “standardized, formulaic, repetitive and superficial, [and] one which celebrates trivial sentimental, immediate and false pleasure,” mass cultural constructs can ignore the agency of the consumer and presupposes the superiority of elite culture. Dominic Strinati, *An Introduction to the Theories of Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 12 and 33-38. The term mass culture is useful, however, to communicate the fact that it is “produced by the industrial techniques of mass production, and marketed for profit to a mass public of consumers.” Strianti, 10

62 Circulation increased with special events like the Great Exhibition, but war was always good for sales. As stated earlier, it is reasonable to assume that there was an informal distribution of this lavishly illustrated newspaper. Printed on good quality paper and costing 6d, the ILN would not have been discarded lightly and would also have endured repeated perusals. For these reasons, it might be regarded “as the best recorded history of the Victorian era.” Mike Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers; British Popular Fiction*
survived in various formats but was always lavishly illustrated. Its original sixteen printed pages included thirty-two woodcut images. Laborious and costly to produce, the ILN provided copious illustrated coverage of domestic and foreign news and sent correspondents and ‘war special’ artists like Melton Prior (1845-1910) to document the many wars fought by Britain and others. Prior became a well-paid celebrity bolstering his own reputation by sometimes placing himself in the action of his sketches but more importantly by travelling to at least eighteen wars around the globe. Pat Hodgson asserts that Prior, first commissioned by the ILN in 1873 to sketch the Ashanti War, was “the most important figure of the great age of war illustrators.”

Dozens of other illustrated papers challenged the ILN but few lasted long. One notable exception was The Graphic started in 1869 by one of the former engravers of the ILN, William Luson Thomas. The format of the paper was very similar to the ILN and the quality of illustration certainly equalled it. The Graphic too, like the ILN, had highly regarded war illustrators – notably Frederick Villiers (1851-1922) – who provided some of the most enduring images of Victoria’s little wars; all illustrated histories of Britain’s colonial wars continue to include at least some of the ILN’s or The Graphic’s illustrations. The quality of the nineteenth century illustrations and, as will be shown, their accuracy, makes their use in exposing an aspect of the contemporary culture imperative for this study. For a population that was increasingly literate but still

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Magazines (London: The British Library, 2006), 246. Between 1870 and 1914 the ILN was edited by John Lash Latey (1859-1890); Clement Shorter (1891-1900); Bruce Ingram (1900-1963). Ashley, 256.


66 Between 1870 and 1914 The Graphic was edited by Arthur Locker (1870-1891); Thomas Heath Joyce
predominantly poorly educated, the illustrated press simplified complex issues for a wider audience to consume through its abridged text and entertaining images.67

In addition to the illustrated adult press, the late-nineteenth century produced a wide range of illustrated juvenile journals. Like their adult counter-parts, these journals covered a wide array of topics including stories and articles with imperial and military themes.68 Certainly one of the best known and enduring illustrated boys’ journal was that started in 1879 by the Religious Tract Society, *The Boy’s Own Paper* (*BOP*).69 Partly as a reaction to the many ‘penny-dreadfuls’ that were realizing the market potential of the increasingly literate youth, *BOP* lashed back with tales designed to educate and entertain; it was a successful combination that resulted in a large readership.70 Its underlying moral agenda did not mean that *BOP* failed to describe the army and warfare, although the character of the descriptions and the military themes selected differed from the content of other popular illustrated boys’ papers. The Cassell published *Chums* (1892-1941) and Alfred Harmsworth’s *Pluck* (1894-1916, 1922-1924) were high-profile competitors to

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67 Lucy Brown asserts that the illustrated papers were not deliberately trying to simplify the news or complex narratives with images, but they reflected a long established tradition of informational and editorial illustration. Brown, 29-30.

68 Troy Boone argues that the imperial theme was pointedly directed at the working-class youth market as a way to weld this group to the nation. This was particularly important in the later nineteenth century when imperial competition threatened war that this youth would be called upon to fight. Boone, 4.

69 Between 1879 and 1914, *BOP* was edited by James Macauley (1879-97); George Andrew Hutchison (1897-1912); and Arthur L. Haydon (1912-1924). Ashley, 246.

70 By the 1890s, *BOP* claimed a weekly circulation of 665,000. Accounting for borrowed copies and other forms of informal distribution, it is estimated that *BOP* readership amounted to about 1.4 million. Patrick A. Dunae, “New Grub Street for Boys,” in *Imperialism And Juvenile Literature*, ed. Jeffrey Richards (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 23. Kelly Boyd suggests that *BOP* inflated its sales figures, but inflated or not, they compared favourably with other contemporary popular juvenile papers. One of the most successful juvenile journal publishers, Edwin Brett, enjoyed a weekly circulation of 250,000 for his penny *Boys of England* in the 1870s which was similar to *BOP* in the same period. Of course, Alfred Harmsworth (Amalgamated Press) publications came to dominate the market with titles like *Marvel, Union Jack, Boys’ Friend* and *Pluck* that were cheaper but of similar length and quality to their competitors. Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys’ Story Paper in Britain: A Cultural History, 1855-1940* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 34-36.
BOP in an ocean of cheap papers.\textsuperscript{71} While \textit{Chums} produced high-quality illustrations adjoining their stories of adventure (often set in empire and at war), \textit{Pluck} was a cheaper, less sophisticated paper but still asserted its greater moral and content qualities over the penny-dreadfuls against which it was directly competing.\textsuperscript{72} Again, the combination of text and illustration enhanced the intellectual access to the information they provided in their gripping tales and edifying articles.

Having written and edited a juvenile paper, George Alfred Henty (1832-1902) enjoyed roaring success in the boys’ adventure novel market. Henty was well acquainted with war. As a journalist he joined that small fraternity of war correspondents and reported on numerous conflicts, including the Crimean War (1854-56), the Austro-Italian War (1866), the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), the Ashanti campaign (1873), and the Turkish wars against Serbia and Russia in the 1870s.\textsuperscript{73} It was not, therefore, surprising that the imperial and military themes featured prominently in Henty’s novels for the juvenile audience. Illustrated with maps and reproduced paintings, Henty expanded on the weekly yarns presented in the papers.

Of the eighty juvenile novels that Henty wrote in the 1880s and 1890s most were historical, military, or colonial, and frequently combined two or all three of those

\textsuperscript{71} In 1920, \textit{Chums} was published by the Harmsworth Amalgamated Press. Between 1870 and 1914 \textit{Chums} was edited by Max Pemberton (1892-1894); Ernest Foster (1894-1907); and Ernest H. Robinson (1907-1915). Ashley, 249-250.

\textsuperscript{72} The success of these and countless other juvenile papers kept the American pulp-fiction monthlies out of the market. Ashley, 9.

\textsuperscript{73} See Joseph Mathews, “Heralds of the Imperialistic Wars,” \textit{Military Affairs} (Autumn, 1955) for a useful overview on the nature of colonial war reporting. The war correspondent was a British phenomenon until the 1890s and tended to be uncritical. Indeed, journalists were part of the campaigns that they covered, took pride in that participation and their relationship with the soldiers: “Their glory was his glory, and the correspondent felt it was his duty to see that the people back home understood and appreciated it. He sought not only to describe the activities and feelings of Tommy Atkins but also to serve as a spiritual link between the soldier and the homefolk.” (150)
characteristics.\textsuperscript{74} They typically involve a teenaged boy who becomes isolated or estranged from his family, has to demonstrate his inherent virtue through privation and adventure, usually joins the British army - formally or informally - on a campaign to defeat a savage Native foe, inevitably interacts with Britons of lower social and moral stature and in the process, not only shows his gentlemanly character, but usually reestablishes himself in the elite culture from which he sprang. The discourse on class, gender and the elevating qualities of warfare are unmistakable.\textsuperscript{75} But so too is the deliberate moral and historical content that was embedded in the novel’s romanticized high diction that exposed the broader educational function that Henty methodically injected into his work and took very seriously; he became the “Boy’s Own historian” and more often than not that history was military.\textsuperscript{76}

Military historical narrative provides the underpinning of many serialized adventure stories in the juvenile papers and many of Henty’s novels exemplified this with titles such as \textit{The Dash For Khartoum}, \textit{With Kitchener in the Soudan}, \textit{With the Allies to Pekin}, \textit{With Clive in India}, and \textit{With Moore at Corunna}. The fictional narrative and even the principal characters are often totally subsumed by these apparent digressions into military history that feature in all the novels examined for this dissertation. In the preface of \textit{With Clive in India} Henty states “The historical details are, throughout the story, strictly accurate...” and he follows this assertion with a short list of sources.\textsuperscript{77} Henty then continues, “In this book I have devoted a somewhat smaller space to the personal

\textsuperscript{74} About twenty of Henty’s novels were set in imperial wars, although some were historical as opposed to contemporary. Michael Paris notes that Henty “saw British history as a series of inevitable wars which had created the empire, and believed that future generations must stand ready to wage war to maintain that heritage.” Paris, 60.

\textsuperscript{75} Boone, 140.

\textsuperscript{76} Henty was a contributing writer to the \textit{Boy’s Own Paper}. Dunae, 21.
adventures of my hero than in my other historical tales, but the events themselves were of such a thrilling and exciting nature that no fiction could surpass them.”78 This assurance of historical accuracy, combined with a willingness to substitute his own narrative with that of history, lent Henty a reputation of reliability; the historian A.J.P. Taylor famously reminisced about the influence Henty had on his interest in war and history and that even his early teaching at Manchester University was informed by these novels from his youth.79 And this popularity was felt far and wide. His main publisher, Blackie & Son, was an innovative company that understood the diversity of the growing market and the advantages of mass production.80 Costing five or six shillings, Henty’s novels sold well with Napoleonic and colonial titles being most popular. Accounting for British sales until 1917, one of his earliest novels, With Clive in India (1883), sold a high of 38,238 copies, The Dash for Khartoum (1891), 23,432, and Under Wellington’s Command (1899), 26,537.81 With Buller in Natal (1900) sold 25,808 but his Afghan adventure, To Herat and Cabul, published well into the Anglo-Boer War in 1901, sold only 9,152. Henty’s books sent around the empire, were reprinted in the United States and his young readership in Canada was unequalled.82 Furthermore, cheaper reprints made his works, already popular through libraries, available to those of lesser means. Illustrated with prints and maps, Henty’s novels were easily read and explicit in their moral and educational content.

77 G. A. Henty, With Clive in India; or, The Beginnings of an Empire (London: Blackie & Son, 1884), 5.  
78 Henty, With Clive in India, 5.  
81 Newbolt, 661-663.
Print provided a compelling description of warfare, especially when set in the tales of Henty, but both the illustrated press and novels benefited from the works of art dedicated to battle and reproduced in their pages and on public display in places like the Royal Academy. It cannot be said that military themes were terribly popular in nineteenth century Britain until the last quarter of the century and particularly from the 1890s forward when both contemporary and historical battle paintings proliferated. These images derived a much wider audience than solely from gallery visits due to the reproductions and the thinly veiled copies they inspired in the popular press. The Napoleonic theme was the most popular, but renditions of colonial battles, especially by war special artists such as Godfrey Douglas Giles, Charles Fripp, and Richard Caton Woodville, and others like Elizabeth Thompson (later Lady Butler), offered carefully considered representations of the warfare being reported in the press. Like the line illustrations in the papers, the paintings of this period provide the enduring image of British imperial campaigns. Perhaps idealized and certainly misleading in their topical selectivity, few paintings more powerfully shape the image of colonial warfare than Fripp’s Last Stand at Isandhlwana, Butler’s Rorke’s Drift, or Woodville’s Charge of the 21st Lancers at Omdurman. In addition to published reproductions, many of the paintings referred to in this work were examined in the galleries of the National Army Museum and revealed the detail integrated into these usually large canvases.

One less enduring form of painting that should also be mentioned is the panorama. Panoramas offered a wider audience a view of the painted world unrolled or displayed in circular galleries sometimes with life-sized replicas and props blending the

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82 Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism; Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Oxford: Oxford
painting into a modelled foreground. Invented and patented by an Irishman, Robert Baker, in 1787, the form became popular in the early to mid-nineteenth century, until the last British panoramas were painted in the 1880s. Although their subjects were sometimes drawn from history, the panorama displays exposed the interest in the immediate and changing world of emerging cities, newly conquered exotic territories, war and patriotic heroism. Their attention to topical themes means that there are virtually no surviving examples; paintings were displayed for a year or two and then over-painted. The importance of topical immediacy had the corollary of accuracy. In reference to the popularity of military subjects, Bernard Comment notes that “painters of panoramas endeavoured to be as faithful as possible to events, and sometimes it was two or three months before a canvas depicting heroic deeds appeared [with] the greatest visual accuracy.” Although British panorama painting fell out of favour, they continued to be displayed at least until 1905 when a German painter exhibited a large panorama of the Battle of Trafalgar in London, an example of the endurance of this illustrated form and of the enduring historical Napoleonic theme that shaped so much of the understanding of warfare throughout the nineteenth century. The panorama had greater longevity on the Continent where, for example, the Frenchman Louis Dumoulin painted yet another rendition of the Battle of Waterloo, “one of the most widely exploited themes,” displayed in 1912 in a circular cyclorama built on the battlefield. Noted for its attention to geographic and uniform details, this rare surviving example can still be viewed.

University Press, 2001), 72-73.
86 Comment, 241.
Discussion of late-nineteenth century British culture must also address the impact of the music hall. Emerging from popular working-class culture and then invaded, or appropriated, by the middle-classes, music hall performances included military content in its wide repertoire of entertainments. Although J. A. Hobson famously objected to its crude nationalism and imperialist tone, the military themes, while sometimes overt and occasionally spectacular, were more subtle in character. According to Colin Macinnes, the common soldier was always held in high regard, while officers, especially after the Anglo-Boer War, were often satirized: “popular pride in naval and military heroes is increasingly transferred from the splendid personages in the ward room or the officers’ mess to the recalcitrant warriors of the barrack-room or below decks.”

Nevertheless, in terms of representing the character of the army in war, music hall and entertainments like spectacular theatre reinforced familiar notions “of war as essentially noble and glamorous.” Music hall song lyrics provide some clues to the representation of the soldier and warfare, but to determine the important tone and character of the performance requires more specialized analysis provided by historians like Colin Macinnes, Penny Summerfield, and Peter Bailey.

If paintings provided sweeping representations of battles, children – and many adults – could enjoy miniature representations of the army with their toy soldiers.

Although not a new type of toy in Britain, cast alloy soldiers had typically been imported

87 Colin Macinnes, Sweet Saturday Night (London: MacGibbon & Kee Ltd., 1967), 75.
from Germany and were quite costly. Already a popular amusement, toy soldier collecting became an obsession when in 1893 William Britain started producing an inexpensive, hollow-cast range of soldiers that were accurately painted and widely distributed throughout Britain and the empire. Britains Ltd. quickly dominated the domestic market and millions of soldiers flooded into gentlemen’s parlours and the bedrooms of children who collected the various regiments of the British Army, sometimes concurrently with the units actually seeing service in the empire.

Collecting toy soldiers was not limited to a passive regard of the purchased soldiers displayed on a shelf. These little men marched to war. Previously, miniature sea battles had been presented to large audiences as a form of commercial spectacular theatre since the 1890s and the *Jane Naval War Game*, first published in 1898, allowed similar re-enactments to be played out at home.90 Inspired by the Prussian officer training game, the *Kriegsspiel*, similar rules for playing land war games were subsequently published, most famously by H. G. Wells in 1913. Titled *Little Wars*, Wells’ guidebook popularized the representation of warfare – albeit for wishfully altruistic reasons – using toy soldiers and a miniature battlefield.91 Fortunately, private and museum collections offer ample opportunity to see and handle these toys, and enthusiasts are supported with guide-books that catalogue the entire inventory of models. James Opie’s work in this field is noted for its completeness in cataloguing the product of Britains.92

Finally, specific mention must be made of the volunteer movement. Britons

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90 Jan Rüger, *The Great Naval Game; Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 57-61.
volunteered in large numbers to join the Militia, the Yeomanry, and, re-established in 1859, the Volunteer Force. Considered in greater detail in Chapter 1, the volunteers occupy a unique intermediary position in British society and culture, and serve this project in two ways. First, the Volunteers, along with the Militia and Yeomanry, were “soldiers” and with ever increasing government funding and regulation in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries, became ever more so. In this way the Force provides this study with one type of army against which to compare the Regular Army and its warfare as represented in the mass culture.

Concurrently, however, the various volunteers were themselves part of the mass culture. Not only were they represented in the media, they contributed to the way that the Regular Army and its campaigns were understood. Meant to defend Britain, until the Anglo-Boer War volunteers were never engaged in real war and their duties were relegated to weekend drill, shooting competitions, Easter reviews and the occasional manoeuvre, all observed by thousands of spectators and by thousands more in the illustrated press. Due to their immediate presence in British society and culture, the ornately uniformed volunteers, conducting soldierly activities, contributed to the discourse on war. Seeing close order drill and firing lines blaze away at Aldershot war games sometimes performed with the Regular Army reinforced the image of colonial warfare as represented in print and image.

Conclusion

This dissertation is about how warfare was represented in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods and, by extension, in all representational media, including historical writing. Although it is a post-modernist truism that the limits of language and illustration
put to doubt our ability to accurately describe anything, the representation of war in print or image carries with it the responsibility of shaping or reinforcing the perceptions of those who will experience it and those who sent them. How a culture represents the experience of war influences how a society finds worth in it. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, popularly consumed British culture shared a manner of representing the army and warfare that promised accuracy and generally confirmed the soundness of the army and the value of war.

While class shaped perceptions about the officers and men in the army, support for the British fighting man never diminished whether it was in a juvenile paper or one of the illustrated weeklies. Celebrating those fighting men, Britons defined their understanding of masculinity, patriotism, religious righteousness, racial superiority and industrial might, but they were also informed about the warfare that provided definition to all the foregoing traits; it was, however, the one abstractly represented experience most would never be able to test, at least until the mass volunteerism for active service in 1914. And yet, the new conduits of commercial culture presented representations of warfare to the consuming public like never before. It seemed that war, as defined by the historical record and imperial campaigns reported in the press, was won by offensive minded officers of daring and ‘pluck,’ that great battles could decisively end the typically short operations, that British industrial arms and modern organization was indomitable, but that traditional tactics and even uniforms still had a place in war that made it both familiar and glorious. Soldiers still stood side-by-side in lines and squares to issue fire and repel a Native assault whose irregularity confirmed British superiority. And if firepower was not enough, total victory would come at the tip of the bayonet, secured by
cavalry charging with swords drawn and lance pennons fluttering in the wind.

If this vision of war seems simplistic it is only partly so. Colonial wars of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were partly anachronistic, but also included much of the technology and innovation that the industrial era had to offer. Representing such warfare with a dose of jingoism and a large portion of glory-bound tradition derived particularly from the Napoleonic wars, there was a representational convergence on military matters that was superficially accurate but tragically false. Wars included everything that the papers, novels, paintings, and toys said they did. There was heroism, desperate melees, near run things, and marvellously orchestrated pageantry splendidly adorned with uniforms and the sound of stirring martial music. If this has little impact today – which, in fact, for some it still does – it certainly did in the period before 1914. The tragedy is that the war representation was so limited in scope to these exciting moments, often accurately portrayed, that a broader military education was omitted or obscured by the well-understood values associated with jingoism and masculinity. War is commonly glorified, but the representational problem of visioning warfare prior to 1914 was its normative rendering that diminished the importance of changes in technology and tactics, and, more importantly, the submersion of the individual in its new scale. In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, popular representations of war made it a controllable test of personal will, regimental loyalty, and British power.

That mass industrialization, widening political participation, consumer marketing, jingoism, and militarism should coincide is not surprising; each of these forces relied on one or more of the other characteristics of the age to exist. That this occurred prior to the Great War did not make war inevitable. However, if the discourse on warfare has a place
in social and political spheres, the mass culture representation of warfare since 1870 provided the public with few interpretive options with which to inform their reaction to the decisions for war in 1914 and the subsequent experience of war itself.
“We don’t want to fight, but by jingo if we do
We’ve got the ships, we’ve got the guns, we’ve got the money too...”
G. W. Hunt, 1878.

Chapter 1: Imperialism and the Army in British Culture

The lyrics noted above, sung by the music hall icon the Great McDermott, communicate a popular perspective on Britain’s military culture in the late-nineteenth century.1 Britons were loath to fight, it seems, but were prepared to do so with confidence. McDermott’s rendition aroused acclaim from both working-class and middle-class audiences and certainly represented a broad cultural assertion of Britain’s stature as an imperial and military power. But, in the context of global imperial expansion – the “new imperialism” – McDermott only offered a half-truth by asserting that the British were unwilling combatants. Britain fought incessantly in the nineteenth century, and deeply embedded in the late-Victorian and Edwardian mass culture, and often at its forefront, was a celebration of the British army in the wars it conducted around the globe. If, as John MacKenzie suggests, empire was the most effective force of social discipline, the model of behaviour in empire was quite likely to be the soldier on campaign.2

This brief chapter will consider the place of imperialism and the army in British society. The army was an institution readily used to project Britain’s imperial power and popularly celebrated for its exploits, but it struggled to draw recruits and its leadership remained an exclusive club even after the reforms of the 1870s purportedly dismantled

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1 Christopher Pulling asserts that the song had “an immense influence on public opinion.” He provides no evidence of this influence, but he does show examples of how the song was disseminated in a variety of other media forms such as papers and cartoons, and inspired emulation by other song-writers. Christopher Pulling, They Were Singing: and What They sang About (London: George G. Harap, 1952), 77-78.
aristocratic and moneyed privilege. However, as long as it kept winning and doing so far away, it also kept British militarism defined by a cultural abstraction that could eschew the threat of Continental style military preparations and conscription. Revealing this ambivalent relationship with the army and its role in empire provides a context for the analysis of the primary materials used in the subsequent chapters.

The imperial context of Briton’s military education was significant both in terms of how it propelled warfare into the spotlight and how this alien context influenced its form. Indeed, while the tangible benefits of empire were vague, the military prowess of the nation expressed through repeatedly successful colonial campaigns was unambiguous. After 1870 this was especially so in the more substantial campaigns in Africa against the Ashanti, Zulus, Dervishes, and Boers, and on the North-West Frontier and in Afghanistan; these campaigns are here emphasized for their substantial media coverage. Popular British fascination with empire came late in the nineteenth century but achieved prominence with its own name inspired by the commercial culture that benefited from it: jingoism. Edward Said asserts that this outward looking obsession was the way Britons defined themselves: “culture comes to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state; this differentiates ‘us’ from ‘them,’ almost always with some degree of xenophobia. Culture in this sense is a source of identity.”

This imperial identity was interwoven in a context of increased urbanization and mass-market literacy that consumed the popular press. Indeed, literacy and the mirage of the unified

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4 Whether imperialism benefited or substantively affected the general population of Britain is debatable, but the broad awareness of empire and the idea of its importance is generally accepted for the period between 1870 and the Great War. See John MacKenzie, ed., *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986); E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987). There are more recent opposing interpretations, such as by Bernard Porter who argues that imperialism, even in the post-1870 period, remained largely unimportant to the majority of
“imagined community” of the imperial nation might even momentarily trump other forms of identity through, according to Benedict Anderson, a shared language and the means to consume it in culture. Empire provided much to consume. Hence, stories of an expanding empire won by war and driven by great power competition excited the imagination and was self-perpetuating as the substantive meaning of empire was lost in the abstract desire for prestige.

Jingoism

Popular enthusiasm for imperialism – jingoism – was perceived by some as vulgar and illusory. The journalist John A. Hobson attacked the justification for empire in his cogent 1902 analysis Imperialism and had criticized popular support for empire – particularly in the music halls – in his 1901 essay, The Psychology of Jingoism. Holborn observed that music hall jingoism represented “a coarse patriotism, fed by the wildest rumours and the most violent appeals to hate and the animal lust of blood.” Even proponents of empire shared Hobson’s concerns, if not his left-liberal conclusions, about the vulgar nature of jingoism. Rudyard Kipling, whose poems were frequently recited in music halls and ultimately represented the voice of empire, became increasingly upset

Britons. While this might be true – the heart-felt commitment Porter seeks would have been rare – the presence of empire in the culture was widespread, if often simplistic in its representation. Bernard Porter, The Absent Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain (New York: Oxford University press, 2004).

Anderson puts great emphasis on literacy, language and culture in formulating his thesis that nations exist as imagined communities, abstract conceptualizations that, since the eighteenth century, created a powerful identity for which people would die in the millions in modern wars. Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities; Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism (London: Verso, 1991).


Don Randall, Kipling’s Imperial Boy: Adolescence and Cultural Hybridity (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 12-13. In his close analysis of Kim, Said asserts that Kipling saw empire as an enduring and natural
by the overconfident mood of the British public and its lack of military preparedness and discipline. His poems “Tommy” and “Soldier, Soldier” in the *Barrack Room Ballads* made a mockery of public fickleness regarding the soldier and the empire that he believed was a natural phenomenon and national responsibility.  

John Buchan, a writer and statesman who later became governor-general of Canada, wrote in his 1906 novel, *A Lodge in the Wilderness*, a virulent attack on jingoism and the contemporary belief that people “regard our empire as a mere possession…a matter to boast of, and not an added duty.” He continued his criticism by asserting that most people had a “frivolous understanding of what empire involves” and that “jingoism, then is not a crude imperialism; it is imperialism’s stark opposite.”

The rapid conquest of territory, especially in Africa, added to this notion of empire as a possession but did little to clarify why this new imperialism demanded expansion. Improved logistical, medical and military technology facilitated further conquest. Economic motives seem not to have inspired the annexations that brought increased cost with little more possibility for economic exploitation than had previously been satisfied with limited military and administrative presence. Indeed, overseas trade and commerce decreasingly relied on the empire itself; by the middle of the century “trade no longer followed the flag, it went ahead, or it went where the flag would never go.” Hobson makes a strong contemporary argument against the economic interpretation of the new imperialism, especially in Africa, stating that the notion of responsibility: “On one side of the colonial divide was a white Christian Europe whose various countries…controlled most of the earth’s surface…On the other side of the divide, there were an immense variety of territories and races, all of them considered lesser, inferior, dependent, subject. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 134.


10 Eldridge, 102.

protected markets was dated and ran contrary to the modern character of international trade. He also offered evidence of the cost associated with the military occupation that offset any monetary gain while dangerously militarizing the state and culture: “It is our mistaken annexation of tropical and sub-tropical territories, and the attempt to govern ‘lower races,’ that is driving us down the steep road to militarism.”

Even if there had been economic advantage in expanding the empire, H. G. Wells wrote “for the mass of the English people, India and Egypt and all that side of our system mean less than nothing, our trade is something they do not understand, our imperial wealth something they do not share.” In his reminiscences of life in a working class neighbourhood in Manchester prior to the Great War, Robert Roberts asserts that the only tangible benefit of empire was the availability of bananas at the local grocers. The general ignorance of other benefits (or costs) failed to compromise the fact that “they knew the Empire was theirs and they were going to support it.”

Hence, the value of British ‘pink’ on a map was largely misunderstood and likely unrealized in tangible terms for most of the British public at home except as an expression of national power that coincided with, and largely defined, British militarism. Edward Said similarly concludes that the one thing remaining to justify

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13 Hobson, *Imperialism*, 128-129
16 Roberts, 144.
17 ‘Militarism’ is a widely used term that is qualitatively vague. For the purpose of this work I used Michael Howard’s definition: “an acceptance of the values of the military subculture as the dominant
imperialism was “the subordination of the non-white” and that doing so propelled the military into prominence because they managed to “bash a few dark heads.” This tapped into a long held belief in western dominance. Edward Creasy, whose perennially reprinted *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, included no non-western battles and confirmed his selection of the battle of Marathon as having demonstrated the “superiority of European free states over Oriental despotism.” Similar to the obtuse benefits of inheriting the glories of the classical past, the new imperialism might have provided little else but a general sense of western “superiority” and, more specifically, a way for Britons to express a new found affection for their army. It was militarism inspired by warfare conducted safely far away from home against strange and cruel peoples.

**The Army and British Society**

A study of popular representations of British warring would naturally lead one to Briton’s affection for their navy; little boys dressed in blue sailor suits, usually not scarlet serge. Jan Rüger has presented a marvellous comparative study of the cultural war values of society: a stress on hierarchy and subordination in organization, on physical courage and self-sacrifice in personal behaviour, on the need for heroic leadership in situations of extreme stress; all based on an acceptance of the inevitability of armed conflict within the state-system and the consequent need to develop qualities necessary to conduct it.” While the British might have objected to notion of military values being “dominant” and that “hierarchy and subordination” run contrary to liberal values, in practice Howard’s definition can be seen in British culture. Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 109-110.

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18 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 150.
20 Alan Penn. *Targeting Schools; Drill, Militarism And Imperialism* (London: Woburn Press, 1999), 80. Military inspired tailoring mimicking army uniforms, and especially cavalry uniforms, was common to the fashions of the elites in the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries influencing both male and female, and adult and child dress. This influence was most noted actually during conflicts such as the Napoleonic wars and the Crimean War and abated in their aftermath. See Scott Hughes Myerly. *British Military Spectacle From The Napoleonic Wars Through The Crimean*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 147-150. Perhaps exceptional, *The Graphic* featured a photograph of a five-year old Leslie Shotter who participated in the siege of Ladysmith in the Boer War. Praised for organizing a ‘squad’ of children and for his drill, Shotter is shown wearing the full dress uniform of the 42nd Royal Highlanders. “‘Captain’ Leslie Frederick Barriff Shotter,” *The Graphic* LXII, no. 1611 (October 13, 1900): 543.
waged as a popular manifestation of the Anglo-German naval race. The deliberate effort to popularize the navy with the theatre of spectacular (and costly) naval reviews, ship launches, and the concomitant press coverage and cinema is woven together in Rüger’s recent work. It reveals the importance of mass culture in shaping patriotism and an affection for the military as an expression of national power and industrial vitality. Given its history and obvious technical sophistication, the navy was not a hard sell. But the navy did not fight in this period. In defining warfare, the navy remained an abstract performance without contemporary experience to confirm the spectacle; the army paraded, but it fought too – incessantly.

Initially distinct from her subjects, Queen Victoria had affection for her army and relished its ceremonies and reviews. These too became instruments of public “discipline” and imperial propaganda punctuated by lavish events like the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897 that featured over 50,000 soldiers drawn from around the empire. She was also a great patron of military art, commissioning works from Royal Academy exhibitors Richard Caton Woodville and Elizabeth Thompson. But for most people, the army had long been unworthy of celebration, and, with the exception of elite culture, remained the pariah of the broader British culture until the later-nineteenth century. Kipling’s Barrack Room Ballads certainly observes that lingering ambivalence, especially in “Soldiers, Soldiers” where the soldier is shunned by his public but celebrated for his wars. Historically it requires little imagination to understand why. Composed of men often forced into service through want or circumstance, exiled to serve overseas where there

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21 Jan Rüger, The Great Naval Game; Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
was risk of absorbing irregular, foreign and exotic habits, largely unnecessary for home
defence and traditionally perceived as politically dangerous and repressive, the army was
long seen as morally suspect and an instrument of aristocratic despotism. The post-
Napoleonic use of the army and volunteer Yeomanry for policing was famously
experienced in 1819 at the “Peterloo massacre” in Manchester and continued to be
prevalent until borough and county policing became more formally established in 1839
and 1855, respectively.  

While empire was still largely abstract, stable, and defined by the navy, merchant
marine, and plantation, there was little reason to hail the achievements of the army. This,
of course, ignored the fact that since the Seven Years War imperial defence had relied
increasingly on the conquest, garrisoning, and policing of the empire by the army.  In
spite of this emerging imperial role and a successful military record in major continental
wars, the army did not feature in British culture except during the conflicts themselves
and usually at particular times of crisis or victory. After such peaks of interest, Britons
objected to the cost of wars and the army that fought them, an attitude echoed by the
highest levels of government.  

Even elite culture, which largely monopolized military themes until the later
Victorian period, tended to emphasize the values, class and background of the officer as

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24 Barnett, 279.
25 Peter Burroughs, “Imperial Defence and the Victorian Army,” in The British Army 1815-1914, ed.
26 After a critical assessment of British policy in West Africa, an Illustrated London News columnist
complained that “it is scarcely reasonable, therefore, to anticipate a satisfactory conclusion of the strife
without incurring enormous expenditure of money and a considerable loss of life, and, in regard to the
former, the British taxpayers will be called upon, of course, to pay the bill.” “The Illustrated London
News,” LXIII, no. 1777 (September 20, 1873): 258. Prime Minister Gladstone was loath to support high
military expenditure and was enthusiastic about army reform in the 1860s and 1870s largely to raise
opposed to his military personality; it was the Duke of Wellington that won Waterloo, not a general per se.\textsuperscript{27} G. M. Trevelyan, in his \textit{English Social History}, perhaps begrudgingly notes that “the ‘gentlemen of England’ beat Napoleon, the professional, and they deservedly won praise and prestige.”\textsuperscript{28} But this admiration of Wellington also spoke to the nineteenth century embrace of substance combined with gentlemanly character: “Wellington was recast in such a way that he became both the epitome of hierarchy and an example of the new meritocracy, a mingling of two conceptions of personal value that had been effectively opposed for at least a century.”\textsuperscript{29}

It was a peculiar combination that tended still to favour class over merit, the gentleman over the army institution. Gwyn Harries-Jenkins notes this emphasis on the officers as landed gentlemen and how their class values and education defined what it was to be an officer -- it was not the military itself that established the professional norms.\textsuperscript{30} Harries-Jenkins argues that this remained the case throughout the Victorian period and even survived the professionalizing reforms of the 1870s by Secretary for War Edward Cardwell and later those of Richard Burdon Haldane in 1906-7 following the Anglo-Boer War.\textsuperscript{31} Statistical analysis of the social origins of those who became

\textsuperscript{27} The defining character of Wellington as the epitome of Englishness, solidified after his death in 1852, is convincingly argued in Peter W. Siennema, \textit{The Wake of Wellington: Englishness in 1852} (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006).

\textsuperscript{28} G. M. Trevelyan, \textit{English Social History; A Survey of Six Centuries, Chaucer to Queen Victoria} (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1942), 467.


\textsuperscript{31} The Anglo-Boer War made army reform imperative but tradition and the influence of senior commanders trumped the reforms with regards to officer selection, promotion and dismissal. With their colonial campaigning successes overshadowing failures, Lords Wolseley and Roberts had their officer ‘rings’ to whom they showed favour and promotion. That legacy persisted and revealed “a simple desire to perpetuate the privileges and attractions of the late Victorian and Edwardian army, with its pleasant life, social networks and traditional ideals.” Travers, \textit{The Killing Ground; The British Army, the Western Front}
commissioned officers shows that only men of means rose to those ranks even after 1871 when the commission purchase system had ended; the cost of becoming an officer remained high due to the personal wealth needed to supplement the meagre salaries.\textsuperscript{32} Gentlemanly conduct, defined by class and regimental tradition, was, therefore, expected of all officers, including those from middle-class origins seeking entry into the officer elite.

In spite of the alien qualities of the army and its officer culture, by the 1870s, the British were increasingly interested in the military, saw its conditions improve, participated in volunteer units, romanticized its past victories and celebrated its successes in colonial wars; wars that were perfect in scale and character for British officers and soldiers to find glory and conduct themselves in the manner that continental and industrial war would never allow.\textsuperscript{33} Some of this interest derived from a period of reform that increasingly democratized British society and endeavoured to reform state institutions like the army to be more in alignment with the values of civil society.

In the wake of the Tory 1867 Reform Act, Whig Prime Minister William Gladstone recruited Secretary for War Edward Cardwell (1868 to 1872) to initiate a series of reforms that in theory, if not in practice, addressed many of the shortcomings of the British army that had made it unpopular and inefficient. The intent was to decrease the number of British soldiers deployed overseas, improve the quality of the army’s

\textsuperscript{32} Edward Spiers offers a close quantitative analysis of the social origins of the officers and notes the remarkably stable presence of landed gentry in the senior ranks all the way to 1914. Part of the analysis notes that the simple cost of maintaining the officer’s lifestyle in the mess and the accoutrements of parade required substantial private means that middle-class aspirants and those promoted from the ranks found hard or impossible to satisfy. Spiers, \textit{The Army and Society}, 1-34. Anthony Clayton estimates that the annual cost of being a line regiment officer was at least 200 pounds, 750 for the cavalry and likely over 1000 for an officer in the Guards regiments. Anthony Clayton, \textit{The British Officer} (Harlow, England: Pearson, 2006), 109.

\textsuperscript{33} Harries-Jenkins, 105.
officers, assure a more substantial home defence by creating an army reserve, improve service conditions, and do so with greater economy.\(^{34}\) Regiments were reorganized on a regional basis, ideally locally recruited with a county depot battalion linked to a battalion available for active service. The Militia provided a third and sometimes fourth battalion.\(^{35}\) Initially resisted, the linked battalion organizational reform was more systematically adopted in 1881 under Cardwell’s successor, Hugh Childers. Ultimately, this created a strong regional regimental identity that folded into its structure the Militia and Volunteer units. Regimental parades helped raise the profile of the local unit and the military in general.\(^{36}\) A short six-year enlistment (as opposed to signing-on for twenty-one years) was followed by another six-year commitment to serve in the reserves theoretically providing for the establishment of a large army in times of war. The less onerous service times and improved pay were meant to encourage enlistment that struggled to compete with other occupations in the ever more industrialized cities.

Cardwell’s reforms were a notable part of a long process that had started in the 1830s and continued through to 1914, but they were not immediately effective. The promise of keeping one of the two regimental battalions at home usually proved impossible as the army fought its incessant wars of empire. In 1872 there had been a

\(^{34}\) Albert Tucker provides excellent, albeit dated, overview of the key features of the Cardwell reforms. His argument, that the reforms were not so dramatic and that continuity trumped change, is structured around the key proposals in the reforms. Albert V. Tucker, “Army and Society in England 1870-1900: A Reassessment of the Cardwell Reforms,” The Journal of British Studies 2, no. 2 (May, 1963): 110-141. Initially there was a significant cost associated with the ending the officer purchase system. The government paid seven million pounds in compensation to officers who had lost the investment in their rank which could now not be sold. Clayton, 101.

\(^{35}\) The Militia Act of 1852 established this semi-regular body was composed of men who were fully trained and but served domestically only. Militiamen could volunteer for service overseas as replacements for Regular Army units. Prior to the establishment of a formal system of reserves, the Militia fulfilled the reserve role. The Haldane reforms of 1906 re-designated the Militia, Volunteers and the Yeomanry as the Territorial Force. David French, Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People, c. 1870-2000 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 10-12. Also see Spiers, The Army and Society, 162-163; 276-277.

\(^{36}\) Clayton, 102.
balance between the battalions at home and those on active service, but, for example, by 1879 there were fifty-nine battalions at home supporting eighty-two deployed overseas.\textsuperscript{37}

Recruitment practices were meant to draw a better quality of soldiery, but after an initial increase in volunteers, recruitment stagnated until the 1880s and never fully satisfied the requirements of relying on volunteer recruits as opposed to on conscription.\textsuperscript{38} The quality of the short service time recruits was also questioned. The Zulu war reverses put to doubt the abilities of the “boy soldiers” to face the realities of hard campaigning, as did the defeats and difficulties encountered in Afghanistan in 1879-1880.\textsuperscript{39} Army life itself came as a shock to the new recruits who might have been more willing to join due to the short service period; desertion doubled between 1870 and 1878.\textsuperscript{40} The systematic reform of military law, rates of pay and conditions of service, particularly in the 1880s under Childers, slowly addressed the aspects of military life that were archaic and out of step with the broader society.\textsuperscript{41}

Nevertheless, the most notable reform, challenging the purchase system, met with opposition and failure in practice. Faced with an intransigent House of Lords, Cardwell won Victoria’s support in 1871 for a Royal Warrant to end the practice of buying and selling commissions for promotion and profit. Advancement in the regimental officer ranks was now driven by performance-based merit.\textsuperscript{42} Meant to halt the illegal free market in commissions that favoured the rich and upset the middle class values of

\textsuperscript{37} French, 19.
\textsuperscript{39} W. S. Hamer, \textit{The British Army; civil military relations 1885-1905} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 78-79.
\textsuperscript{40} French, 16.
\textsuperscript{41} French, 21-25.
Cardwell, in practice the landed elites continued to dominate the leadership of the army and shaped its culture.\textsuperscript{43} The regimentally based traditions of “hard-living, drinking, riding to hounds, and whoring…continued to be accepted principles of army life long after general society had concealed them behind official canons of respectability and reform.”\textsuperscript{44} Stationed in the empire, the officer’s life style was especially one of leisure and sport. For example, a pictorial in \textit{The Graphic} titled “Military Life at Sierra Leone” illustrates officers hunting, purchasing goods from a local hunter, and dancing at a ball.\textsuperscript{45} Only the uniforms reveal the illustrations as depicting soldiers.

More able to sustain the social expenses, that were not alleviated with better pay, this elite officer club also found advantage in belonging to one of the ‘rings’ around two of the most decorated and prominent generals in the army: the General Garnet Wolseley ring of officers having served with him in Africa and General Frederick Robert’s India ring where fighting in Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier won notoriety. Tellingly, promotion from the non-commissioned to the commissioned ranks actually decreased between 1885 and 1910.\textsuperscript{46} In the infantry and Army Service Corps, the annual average number of promotions from the ranks was fifteen. Between 1903 and 1910 the average was below ten. In the cavalry, long the preserve of independently wealthy elites, the average between those same years was a mere two per year and between 1903 and 1910 no promotions from the ranks occurred at all. Although its values had evolved to a

\textsuperscript{43}The growing interest in the army and particularly in its campaigns should not suggest that the values of liberal British society penetrated deeply into the military culture. It remained guardedly tradition bound and elitist, retaining a willingness to discipline the lower ranks brutally. In the Great War the British executed more of its soldiers than the Germans. Alexander Watson argues that this was a legacy of colonial campaigning that enhanced the separation between the army and the broader culture. Alexander Watson, “Culture and Combat in the Western World, 1900-1945,” \textit{The Historical Journal}, 51, no. 2 (June, 2008): 537.

\textsuperscript{44}Hamer, 82.

\textsuperscript{45}“Military Life at Sierra Leone,” \textit{The Graphic} XXXIV, no. 887 (November 27, 1886): 564.

\textsuperscript{46}Ramsay, 66.
higher degree of professional behaviour, Edward Spiers concludes that

Officers were still attracted from roughly the same groups in society. Aspirants from the middle class and from other unwelcome sources were discouraged from seeking a commission. The criteria of a public school education and the possession of private means acted, like the purchase system, to ensure a largely restrictive pattern of recruitment. The customs, traditions and social life within the mess were preserved partly by recruitment, and partly by pressures upon those who entered the mess to conform to its mores and conventions.47

M. A. Ramsay concurs, stating that, “…the traditional leadership in the army was willing to sacrifice the concept of a professionally oriented officer corps in order to preserve some form of social exclusivity.”48 After the Anglo-Boer War, there was some pressure to reduce this hold over commissions by elites, but in senior regiments such as the 1st Life Guards, Royal Horse Guards, and the Grenadier Guards the percentage of officers with inherited titles either remained stable or actually increased between 1870 and 1912. It is notable that the technical services of the artillery and engineers had virtually no titled officers throughout the entire period.49

Bound by traditions and class privileges, the army still had to work hard to improve its public reputation even late into the century. Positive descriptions of army life in the 1890s are provided in the journal The Navy and Army Illustrated, but articles are frequently prefaced with a challenge to what the author believes is a negative public perception: “‘Tommy Atkins’ of to-day is better clothed, fed, and in every respect better treated than was his predecessor of twenty or thirty years ago [with] the effect of inducing a better class of men to join the profession of arms.”50 Such implicit

49 Ramsay, 132.
defensiveness perhaps confirmed the negative assumptions about army life that reforms were only slowly addressing. It remained an army few joined but one celebrated for the bravery of its soldiers. Indeed, the rank and file had already raised its profile during the Indian Mutiny (1857) and then repeatedly through highly documented campaigns such as the Zulu War (1879), the wars in Egypt and the Sudan during the 1880s and 1890s, and the on-going fighting on the North-West frontier and Afghanistan all the way to 1914 and beyond.  

Military reforms and media coverage of colonial campaigns were not the only reasons why the army generated a newfound public interest. War scares inspired growing concern over military matters. The first major war scare of the post-Crimean war period was that of feared French aggression in 1859 following Napoleon III’s successful campaign in Italy against the Austrians. But this was followed by an array of war scares, exaggerated and ever popular in the juvenile press, which saw Britain threatened by Russia, France, and Germany. Juvenile fiction even had war unleashed upon Britain from China and Japan (the latter as rather unlikely allies of the Russians). Of course, war was a reality on the Continent. Britons could not ignore the rise of Prussia and the wars of German, and even Italian, unification that changed the balance of power in Europe. They also observed the numerous wars fought in the Balkans and the Russo-

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51 Heather Streets notes that the Mutiny was particularly important in raising a more positive profile of the common soldier and starts her cultural study of the military and imperialism in 1857. Heather Streets, *Martial races; The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 21.


53 There was particular interest in the excellent performance of the Prussian conscripts and also recognition of the vital role played by the Prussian General Staff. However, for some like Prime Minister Gladstone, the defeat of France actually served to improve Britain’s European position and reduced the need for a large conscript army. Allies, empire, and the navy had long served the British and would continue to do so. Thomas F. Gallagher, “British Military Thinking and the Coming of the Franco-Prussian War,” *Military Affairs* 39, no.1 (February 1975): 20.
Japanese War of 1904-5. All of these conflicts were covered extensively in the adult press. Indeed, the rise of Germany and the cautionary war scare story it inspired by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir George Chesney, *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), can be seen as key ingredients in raising public interest in the army.\(^{54}\) So, the consuming public had every reason to be interested in war and the mass culture of the time provided plenty of impetus to accept the military, and particularly the army, into their public and private lives.

In light of its traditionally ambivalent relationship with the army, it might seem strange to suggest that Britain was militaristic. British writers both then and more recently emphasized their disdain for Continental militarism while dismissing its presence at home.\(^{55}\) The *Illustrated London News (ILN)* presented an anonymously written article about the reorganization of the British army in the wake of the Cardwell reforms. Commenting on conscription, the author suggested that Prussia had adapted well to compulsory military service for its male population, but Britain did not need to pursue this seemingly practical approach to military preparedness. The inutility of conscription for Britain is emphasized, but the cultural opposition is also embedded in the script:

> The insular position of this country renders the plan unnecessary. She does not require for her security an armed and disciplined nation. Her interests are mainly industrial. Her power depends, not upon the extent of her territory, but, in a great

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\(^{55}\) A 1928 book by John Fortescue, *The Empire And The Army*, is well situated in time to illustrate the persistence of the view in question. He asserts that “[T]he British are by nature better at actual fighting than at maintaining armies, and ‘matters military’ have never been given very much attention in times of peace.” He continues his commentary on the British enthusiasm for war: “It is a well known fact to the impartial historian that very few, if any, of our British wars have been in any sense wars of aggression; deliberate planning and preparation in time of peace with the object of making war is, in fact, entirely absent from our history.” John Fortescue, *The Empire and the Army* (London: Cassell and Company, 1928) xxx-xxxi.
degree, upon the development of her special resources, upon her manufacturing and commercial energies. She cannot pretend to compete with the great military monarchies of the Continent in the size of her armies. She has no need to do so. She would utterly derange her entire social mechanism did she attempt it. In all probability, moreover, any attempt of this kind would have proved, not merely futile, but dangerous. It was only to be expected, therefore, that the reconstruction of her Majesty’s land forces would proceed upon those bases which experience has shown to suffice for a nation situated as we are. In most respects, voluntary enlistment suits our purpose better than compulsory service, and a comparatively small army answers all the legitimate ends a Government should have in view more easily and more completely than multiplied legions.56

It seemed that the French, and especially Prussian, military traditions were based on submerging the individual in a nationalistic sacrifice to military discipline and duty. This seemed anathema to the type of militarism and nationalism Britons accepted that emphasized, rather than obscured, the role of the individual. Defending the individual in warfare was particularly important in British culture as war was moving irresistibly toward mass armies coordinated in great mobilizations and grand strategies. For example, G. A. Henty’s juvenile novels put their young protagonists into military and warring situations to find their individual valour while serving Britain, not to sacrifice their selves for the state alone; few of his characters stay in the army.

Broadly speaking, this self-asserted generalization about British militarism that shuns mass military participation has some validity. Exceptionally, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars (1792-1815) saw the British armed forces raise over 700,000 men, deployed around the empire.57 The army numbered approximately 230,000 until 1815

56 “Reconstruction of the Army,” *The Illustrated London News* 59, no. 1677 (November 4, 1871): 422. This dismissal of conscription was not universally embraced. In 1901 the National Service League was formed to campaign for peacetime conscription. Concerned by the Anglo-Boer War experience, by 1914 it boasted 200,000 members. Anne Summers, “Militarism in Britain before the Great War,” *History Workshop* 2 (1976): 106.
57 Impressive as this was, it was a modest total compared to the continental armies. France mustered over 2.5 million of its citizens largely used in its army operating just within Europe. Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare in the Age Napoleon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 134. Britain’s larger imperial and naval commitments had to sustain massive losses from disease in foreign climes.
but this was followed by a dramatic reduction after 1818 (the end of the occupation of France) to just over 110,000. Britain rarely needed a large army and resisted conscription having had the advantage of a powerful navy and a channel bulwark against invasion. By its very nature, the navy remained an idealized institution in the broader culture but one at arm’s length unless the culture chose to invite it in. Nelson and his Trafalgar Square (1830) was a very public, but official, invitation. A commercial celebration was to be found in Gilbert and Sullivan’s *HMS Pinafore* (1878) that reflects a persistent cultural interest in the navy that was also ever present in *Rule Britannia*, written in the 18th century. By the late-nineteenth century the navy drew massive audiences to its reviews. Images and text celebrating naval technology featured frequently in the illustrated press. But in the period covered in this study, it was the army that was regularly engaged in warfare and, hence, the selected focus here.

While the character of British nationalism and militarism might have been subtly different from continental examples, the fact of British militarism remains self-evident. Without the conscription that militarized continental societies, Britain’s militarism might seem even more socially embedded as it relied on the culture – both elite and popular – and was reinforced by public military displays and significant participation in the volunteer movement.

Taking the West Indies from the French, between 1793 and 1796, the British lost 80,000 casualties almost exclusively from illness. Barnett, 234.

58 Spiers, *The Army and Society*, 35-36. By 1845 only 44,731 officers and men of the British army were stationed at home and these were widely dispersed across the country, partly for reasons of home security and partly to reduce the social and political tensions that the army inspired. In addition, the army budget was similarly slashed to a quarter of its war time state, from 43,256,260 pounds in 1815 to 10,699,865 in 1820. Spiers, *The British Army*, 73-74.


60 J.A. Mangan provides a useful summary of the broadly embedded militarism in British culture and notes that even the art critic and social commentator John Ruskin gave Social Darwinistic tinged lectures on war
Long a part of British military tradition, the Napoleonic Wars inspired the more systematic creation of a large reserve of Volunteers, Militia and the mounted Yeomanry. Most of these formations had been reduced or disbanded along with much of the Regular Army after Napoleon was defeated, but in 1859 a new Bonapartist threat inspired the re-establishment of the Volunteer Force, an unpaid and rudimentarily trained formation drawn from all classes. It was a good club to join; in 1868, ninety Members of Parliament were volunteers. Dressed in fine uniforms, these part-time soldiers offered a broad part of British society a safe glimpse into the world of the military that was both real, in that the volunteers became an increasingly important part of Britain’s military planning, but false, in that volunteer life bore little resemblance to that of serving soldiers fighting colonial campaigns. Whereas the Regular colonial-engaged Army was traditionally seen as rough, immoral, open to foreign mores and dangerous, until the Anglo-Boer War the volunteer force was akin to a scouting movement for adults where the men could derive the benefits of soldiering without the physical and moral risks; serving their country, they could still be home for tea.

Women found this worth supporting as did those who might otherwise have suspected the agenda of the army. Anne Summers asserts that in the mid-Victorian

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61 Use of small case denotes volunteers of all types. The Volunteer Force specifically will be capitalized.
64 The Scouting movement is not specifically analyzed here. While it had strong military overtones with uniforms, drill, and outdoor activities that resembled those of an army on campaign, it was not formally a military or cadet organization. This differentiates it from the volunteer forces that were always meant to be martial and realized that intent in the Anglo-Boer War and after.
65 Cunningham, 72. Patricia Morton suggests that the moral agenda of the volunteer movement was quite
period volunteering was a way to explore citizenship but defined as an antithesis to the potentially repressive national army.66 An illustration in the *ILN* reveals the family solidarity and serene domesticity that was left unaffected by participation in the Volunteer Force that also spoke to British democracy: “The gallant citizen soldier who is seen putting on his warlike equipment in the peaceful privacy of his own home, and in the presence of his admiring family, has the appearance of being just the right sort of man to stand in the battle-field….”67

The broad influence of the volunteer movement on the mass culture should not be underestimated. Ian Beckett stresses that a significant proportion of British men participated as Volunteers since the Force’s re-establishment in 1859 and estimates that by 1903 eight percent of the male population had been a Volunteer.68 Beckett also notes that, in contrast to regular soldiers stationed in empire, these large numbers of volunteers performed manoeuvres to vast audiences and went home to wives and families, thereby multiplying the exposure and effect of this military system to a much broader part of the society.69 What Beckett does not consider while exploring the militarizing and social dynamics of the volunteer movement is the education in army life and even warfare (through the weapons training and drill) that the volunteers and their families derived explicitly directed at women who would be more accepting of their husbands and sons participating in the Force. It seemed to work as women performed many supportive functions like fund raising. Patricia Morton, “A Military Irony: The Victorian Volunteer Movement,” *Royal United Services Institute* 131 (September 3, 1986), 67.


68 Beckett estimates that 22.42 percent of the male population between the ages of 17 and 40 had had or were experiencing military service either as professional Regulars or volunteers in 1898. Ian Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition: 1558-1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 200.

69 According to Beckett, “in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century at least, they contributed to the recognized growth of militarism…and were projecting those values in a way that the regular army could not, for auxiliaries were far more representative of society as a whole.” Beckett, 287.
from their participation in the force. The contrived experience of soldiering in the volunteers and the concurrent coverage of real warfare in the mass media was not so at odds; both were shaped by tradition and selective ideals. Britons saw volunteers in manoeuvres and weekend camps, either live or through press coverage, but they also saw real soldiers and warfare filtered through the media and might have interpreted those images through the experience of playing at war.

Hence, the volunteer movement is both a measure of cultural representations of the military and also a significant contributor to how that representation was shaped. Seen through the filter of the volunteers, the park pavilion military band, and guardsmen on parade, the campaigning soldier in Africa or India looked less threatening and more knowable. Hugh Cunningham unambiguously asserts that “it was the Volunteers whom the Regulars had to thank for the improved image of the army in later nineteenth-century Britain.”

The volunteer movement fed British militarism, but like the abstract images of warfare in the press or the vitriol of imperial rhetoric in the music halls, the volunteers played at war that remained a construct and not a reality. Hobson astutely notes that Britons did not seek “personal participation in the fray,” but fed their “neurotic imagination” with a jingoism that fulfilled “the passion of the spectator…not of the fighter.” Steve Attridge challenges the notion of the army as a discrete entertainment, a “performer” distinct from the public “observer,” but emphasizes instead its role as

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70 Summers is likely correct in asserting that the public “drew its image of the military life as much from through the ‘Saturday Soldiers’ as from those of the Regular Army.” She does not, however, speculate about how the volunteer manoeuvres, combined with other representations of combat, influenced the popular conception of warfare. Summers, “Edwardian Militarism,” 238.
71 Cunningham, 68.
72 Hobson, … Jingoism, 8-9.
“intrinsic to Victorian society.” Perhaps the volunteer movement bridged that gap between participation and passivity.

Volunteer manoeuvres, war scare stories that coincided with calls for military reform and vigilance, interest in science and technology as applied to weapons, and the mass press interest in empire and its wars all “encouraged Victorian readers to think of warfare as a normal condition of human life.” For Britons, war was indeed the norm even if they rarely participated in it personally. So, in spite of assertions to the contrary, Hobson was right to challenge the notion of a pacific empire: “The *Pax Britannica*, always an impudent falsehood, has become a grotesque monster of hypocrisy; along our Indian frontiers, in West Africa, in the Soudan, in Uganda, in Rhodesia fighting has been well-nigh incessant…. Peace as a national policy is antagonized not merely by war, but by militarism.” W. S. Hamer correctly asserts that enthusiasm for imperial war “was pure escapism, a romantic longing for a life of activity, heroism, and adventure that few Englishmen would ever have the opportunity to experience.” Hence, the jingoistic and militarized mass culture and the volunteer movement were vicarious ways to experience the imperial adventure and war. These emerged into full flower during the second half of the nineteenth century and bolstered Britain’s self-confidence through years of imperial expansion and battlefield victories until the Great War. The form of this representation of warfare had largely been invented in the media explosion of the late-nineteenth

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73 Steve Attridge, *Nationalism, Imperialism, and Identity in Late Victorian Culture: Civil and Military Worlds* (Gordonsville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 45. Attridge emphasizes the negative impact of the Anglo-Boer War on how British society perceived its army. While this might be true, the representation of warfare was little changed by the experience in South Africa and the inertia of the established diction persisted to 1914 and beyond.


76 Hamer, 217.
century, even if much of its character tapped into previously established traditions. This discourse survived even the Anglo-Boer War and was perhaps bolstered by the enhanced interest in the army following that war.

Although the Anglo-Boer War was significant regarding the way the army functioned and how it might be reformed, it has been asserted that the literary response to the war was largely muted because it could not, and did not want to cope with war’s new reality. The Boy’s Own Paper presented virtually no content on the fighting in the Anglo-Boer War and suspended most of its military content (paying the price with reduced circulation). Kipling remained largely silent on the Anglo-Boer War, at least in communicating the qualities of the experience or creating a sense of place like he had done with India. After the initial flurry of press coverage in 1900, the journalistic commitment to the war faded; a long war without decisive battles received ongoing but reduced coverage. If the Anglo-Boer War failed to challenge fundamentally conventional representations of war, the closely scrutinized Japanese victory over the Russians in Manchuria in 1904-5 gave impetus to return to familiar forms.

The Anglo-Boer War’s lack of enduring cultural impact on the vision of war might not be surprising. The short-term concerns regarding the conduct of the war

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77 Robert MacDonald, “Signs from the Imperial Quarter: Illustrations in Chums, 1892-1914,” Children’s Literature 16 (1988): 37. Early in the war, BOP presented a map of South Africa and simple portraits of the key leaders in the conflict. There was no commentary, nor an adjoining article. “The War in South Africa,” The Boy’s Own Paper 22, no. 1090 (December 2, 1899): 137. Other references to the war were similarly obtuse preferring to address this war, like others, with items on war medals. “The South African War Medal,” The Boy’s Own Paper 24, no. 1194 (November 30, 1901): 142.

78 John Peck. War, the Army and Victorian Literature (London: Macmillan, 1998). Kipling wrote two essays for The Times and four articles for the Daily Mail. In addition he wrote some verse, much of it for the soldier’s own paper, the Bloemfontein Friend in South Africa. In contrast to his work on India, Paula Krebbs argues Kipling failed to engage with the substance of the war in Africa and wrote only to rally support for it at home or to appeal to the soldiers themselves. Paula Krebbs, Gender, Race and the Writing of Empire: Public Discourse and the Boer War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 158-169.

79 The enduring discourse on the shape warfare should not obscure the shifting interest in national military preparedness after the Anglo-Boer War. Anne Summers suggests that, while pre-war reforms sought to
revolved largely around logistics and strategy. Such things made for dull print and illustration. The British mobilization and transportation of armed forces to South Africa went quite well and offered little controversy to report on. Later war strategy, partially reliant on hemming in the Boers with barbed wire and blockhouses as opposed to assaulting them in battles that they were loath to fight, was also difficult and uninspiring to represent; the intimate drama of battle was lacking. Only the increased use of mounted units (not cavalry, but mounted infantry) offered the mass culture a familiar image of war, albeit one that was not clearly differentiated from its actual function in the field during the guerrilla phase of the war. Ultimately the Anglo-Boer War did not create a definitive break from established traditions of war representation that proved remarkably enduring.

Indeed, the commonly asserted concern over the physical and moral health of British men actually served to enhance the importance of tradition-bound visions of war. Tim Travers reveals the debate that raged after the Anglo-Boer War about the changing nature of tactics and combat. The Boers had demonstrated that the fire-swept

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80 Leopold Scholtz considers the impact of the war on military thinking. He appropriately notes that smokeless gunpowder, trenches and wire were not particularly new or unknown. Their use by the Boer’s had some unique characteristics and effects but the real area of military change was in logistics and the strategy of defeating the Boers by the ‘indirect approach.’ In this strategy, numerical superiority and mobility would be used to dislodge the Boers from their entrenched positions won in the early phases of the war. It was a long-war strategy that ran contrary to the direct assaults that proved so costly to the British early in the war. But with the arrival of Field Marshal Roberts as Commander in Chief in January 1900, the war would take a turn against the Boer’s who lacked the ability to fight a long imperial war. Unfortunately, this strategy had little impact on the culture and the military that drew few enduring lessons from the war. Leopold Scholtz, *Why the Boers Lost the War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 152-155.

81 In his consideration of newspaper advertising and the use of military imagery during the Anglo-Boer War, Wilkinson emphasizes the importance of setting the war into the broader context of the 1890s. The imagery was not unique and borrowed from previously established forms and broader cultural concerns such as over health and fitness. Wilkinson, ‘‘To the Front’,’’ 206-207.

battlefield had made offensive action against fortified and concealed positions costly. Although some officers recognized this new reality, the British army reaffirmed the importance of offensive will over defensive technology, the man over the weapon. This fed into the established images of war heroism and the development of institutions like Baden-Powell’s scouting movement that served to bolster the qualities of British men, always “prepared” to defend the empire.\(^{83}\) However, a more fundamental motive embedded in this response by both the army and the culture was that the character of war had not been lost to technological and material determinism. War was a controllable phenomenon and won, as Henty put it, “by sheer pluck.”

**Conclusion**

The reforms by Secretary for War Haldane derived from the South African experience were militarily significant. The establishment of the Imperial General Staff and a restructuring of the army into divisions and corps with a deliberate integration of the volunteer formations into the Territorial Force were crucial and long delayed steps toward modernizing an army that had been bound by tradition and still resisted Continental military forms. These changes did not, however, upset the cultural discourse on warfare. Colonial “little wars” were far less frequent after 1902 as the British initiated fewer imperial adventures. After the war in South Africa, Continental and global diplomacy became more pressing. Britain preferred to police their existing empire and negotiate with their imperial competitors over the few remaining territories under dispute. Expeditions into Tibet (1903-4) and punitive missions on the North-West Frontier superficially maintained the representational continuity with past experiences. If this proved insufficient content for the adult press, juvenile culture continued to reveal British

\[^{83}\text{Travers, “Technology…,” 280.}\]
military prowess in uniform plates, fictional war stories, and toy soldier war games. The shape of war was preserved.

Doubts raised by the Anglo-Boer War about the importance of will over technology, the offensive over defence, were further marginalized by Japan’s decisive victory over Russia’s more passive stance in Manchuria. Jay Winter suggests that even the Great War failed to entirely erode the familiar and positive pre-war discourse on war. Instead, the media relied on existing methods of representation that had been defined by the publishing boom, particularly after 1870. My conclusion will consider the representation of warfare in the opening months of the Great War, but by then the largely exclusive reliance on the commercial culture to define the discourse on war for those who might fight was sadly being challenged by lived experience.

The new imperialism and the army’s role in it were therefore prominent in the mass culture. In the following chapters the means by which Britain’s warfare was communicated to the consumer of text, image and even toys will be revealed starting with the iconic representation of the uniforms and weapons of Tommy Atkins.

84 Jay Winter, Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Richard Price argues that the Anglo-Boer War had a sobering effect on British working-class patriotism that had been seen as boisterous and crude. Often opposed to the war, working-class participation in pro-war demonstrations and ultimately in volunteering for service were expressions of class solidarity and economic desperation. Richard Price, An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working Class Attitudes and reactions to the Boer War, 1899-1902 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972). In spite of Price’s search for working-class agency, their seemed to be little evidence of their influence in politics – Unionists won handily the 1900 election – nor in having a significant impact on the culture. If the working-class opposed the Anglo-Boer War and grew less tolerant of the discourse on war generally, the cultural forms examined in this work show little evidence of it.
“Our gallant lads in red”¹
British soldiers marching into Abyssinia (1868).

Chapter 2: Representing Uniforms and Weapons

The most distinguishing features of a soldier are his uniform, accoutrements, and weapons. While these definitive attributes are meant to support practical functions in the field, they also serve a psychological and social function within both the military and in the broader host society. Most obviously, uniforms can help to define masculine attributes, sexually charged, desirable but dangerous; soldiers kill, but the uniforms help to make that act legal in the context of war.² As such, the anonymous soldier, identifiable only by his uniform, is rendered distinct from the rest of the population, and yet the same uniform also identifies him as a symbol of that society’s military might and tradition. The importance and inertia of the latter actually compromised a uniform’s utility on campaign and even outdated styles often persisted in full-dress parade uniforms long after they were withdrawn from use on active service. This discourse of the uniform indicates the paradox of the soldier, and particularly the nineteenth century British soldier: at once a rough and violent pariah to the broader, pacified society, he could also be the very definition of imperial power, masculinity and individual valor. The uniform and weapons of the British soldier as represented in the culture spoke also to the ways of British warfare in a clear and unambiguous manner. Well dressed and orderly, and

² The sexualized meaning of uniforms expressed itself in a mid-century ‘scarlet fever’ and then a ‘khaki fever’ at the start of the Great War. Recast, or perhaps simply anonymous, by virtue of their uniforms, young women (and boys) became enraptured with the overt masculinity communicated by uniforms and the promise of war that they brought. Angela Woollacott, “‘Khaki Fever’ and Its Control: Gender, Class, Age, and Sexual Morality on the British Homefront in the First World War,” Journal of Contemporary History 29, no. 2 (April, 1994): 325-347.
bearing superior weapons, war became equally ordered as long as scarlet or khaki clad Britons marched to the sound of the guns like so many Grenadier Guards or toy soldiers on parade.

This chapter will examine the way in which the uniforms and equipment of the British army were represented in the commercial culture and how that representation provided a nominally accurate yet selected and idealized part of the discourse of Britons at war. The importance of accuracy is most explicitly revealed here. Uniform and equipment details, at least in a broad sense, were knowable and quite visible to the population at home due to the presence of soldiers and weekend volunteers. Faithfully representing key elements of these accoutrements anchored in a reality the more abstract experiential qualities of warfare. Particular emphasis will be placed on sources that made a distinct effort to present uniform and weapon details as a topic of special interest. The juvenile press certainly presented such an emphasis, but the adult media also provided the consumer with an explicit education in British uniforms and weapons.

Few nations have had such an enduring tradition in military dress as the British with their scarlet serge.3 Although exaggerated in terms of its actual application, the popular perception is that scarlet became the chosen colour of British uniforms -- and particularly infantry uniforms -- since the seventeenth century development of the Parliamentarian New Model army during the English Civil War. Subsequently associated with the victories of Marlborough and the celebrated campaigns of Wellington

3 National uniform colours emerged with professionalization the seventeenth century, but the commonly held association between scarlet and the British soldier is arguably stronger than, for example, the use of blue in the French army (started in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars) or even dark Prussian blue. The French long made use of white uniforms, and Prussian and German uniforms were sometimes black or pale blue (Bavaria). Only Habsburg white and the use of green in the Russian army might equal the British uniform colour tradition among the powers of Europe.
in the Peninsula and then at Waterloo in Belgium, the scarlet uniform became further
sanctified by its representation in the Crimean War as the “thin red line.”

These three words are rich in meaning since they establish a link between British
bravery (“thin” implying few British soldiers), tactics (the legendary British “line”
formation), and the red uniform that binds these two other attributes. Hence, the uniform
is indelibly associated with the way British soldiers conducted themselves in battle.
Kipling exposed this simplistic and persistent reverence for the familiar uniform in his
poem “Tommy” in which the soldier colloquially states “We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor
we aren't no blackguards too, But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you.”

Kipling’s admonishment of public hypocrisy toward his Tommy could not eliminate the
currency of the symbol. So the scarlet uniform, and subsequently the almost equally
ubiquitous khaki, was represented with considerable accuracy in the mass-market culture
of Britain. Even if illustrated in a simplified manner, or with some omissions or errors in
particular regimental distinctions, the basic hallmarks of the British soldier’s dress and
equipment were instantly recognizable to friend and foe.

As noted in the dissertation introduction, the accurate portrayal of the British
soldier, polished and idealized, was seriously undertaken by those representing soldiers

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4 The “thin red line” is attributed to The Times correspondent William Russell describing the Argyll and
Sutherland Highlanders driving off Russian cavalry at the Battle of Balaclava. Although it was initially the
“thin red streak” he later changed this to the more familiar construct in 1877 in his history of the Crimean
stories/red-line.html In an 1897 Pluck story set in the context of the Crimean War the author returned to
Russell’s original phrase. “The siege of Sebastopol; A True Story of the Crimean War,” Pluck VI, no. 145
(1897): 5.


6 Cetewayo, the Zulu chief during the 1879 war, characterized his British opponents as the “red” soldiers in
reference to the uniforms they wore. Frank Emery, The Red Soldier, The Zulu War 1879 (London, Hodder
and Stoughton, 1977), 27. The Boers were also impressed by the idealized image presented in the British
illustrated press; so much so that they were surprised by the rather less imposing physicality of the soldiers
they encountered in 1899. Denis Judd and Keith Surridge, The Boer War (London: John Murray, 2002),
in the mass culture, and this concern was also applied to the illustration of uniform and accoutrement details. This is not surprising in the realm of news media, and particularly the weekly illustrated papers like *The Illustrated London News (ILN)* and *The Graphic*. Accuracy was an expected part of their mandate and the ‘war special’ illustrators such as Melton Prior for the *ILN* and Frederic Villiers for *The Graphic* were hailed for their detailed illustrations and specifically accredited for their work when many of their print colleagues might be left in anonymity. Battle painting similarly embraced a realist approach and represented quite accurately the uniforms and equipment of British soldiers in action, if often in a ‘regulation’ idealized fashion. What is more surprising is that the producers of fiction, juvenile literature, and toys were also often explicit in their desire to represent soldiers in accurate dress in dedicated uniform plates and paintings. Here again, the educational agenda is noted and adds to the assertion that medium distinctions were not clearly demarcated, particularly with fiction borrowing from history and journalism. But what makes this concern over accuracy less mysterious (and much more methodologically relevant) is that examples of uniforms and weapons were immediately present for the consumers of papers, novels, paintings and toys to see in the form of passive observation of soldiers at state events, or more active interaction with soldiers in the popular volunteer movement.\(^7\) The realities of physically manifested British militarism in the late-nineteenth century demanded that a broadly defined accuracy of British uniforms and weapons was presented in the abstract media. Doing so added

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\(^{60}\) Militarized and uniformed non-military organizations flourished in this period and added to the general familiarity with uniforms and military values. The Salvation Army and the boys’ and girls’ Scouting movements are obvious examples of militarized organizations. Drill and rifle shooting in schools were also promoted, although the specifically military nature of this training was controversial and frequently challenged by educators and parents. Alan Penn, *Targeting Schools; Drill, Militarism And Imperialism*
credibility to the products of the nascent consumer culture and satisfied the broader image of Britons fighting in colonial campaigns wearing uniforms that were celebrated and familiar.

The period between 1870 and 1914 saw the British army field service uniform go through its most significant transition. From the long established scarlet for infantry and most heavy cavalry regiments, and blue for the artillery, the battledress of all regular army services gradually became khaki drab reflecting both the practical needs of campaigning in varied climates and the tactical requirements of less burdensome equipment and less visible uniforms. However, this was a relatively slow transition in the field, and home service uniforms retained their more colourful origins until about a decade before the Great War. Rarely worn, review order, or full-dress, uniforms remained scarlet until the war, and Guardsmen still retain the scarlet dress today, a fact that speaks to the enduring expectations of a public celebrating a military tradition, although likely ignorant of its origins. This overlapping of uniform appearance throughout much of the period is significant since it meant a persistent link with the scarlet tradition that Britons associated with the glory of war whether defined by the gentleman heroes like Marlborough and Wellington or by the more ‘democratic’ vision of the common infantryman or cavalryman.

In addition to the distinctions between home service dress and that used in the field, there was the distinction between regulation field dress and the actual appearance of soldiers on campaign. Campaign dress might radically alter regulation norms as a
result of practical adjustments to local climate, local fashion influences, or due to a problem of receiving replacements for worn out kit. Since many colonial campaigns were short, the latter problem was not always encountered, but soldiers on the march rarely looked exactly as they were intended to appear. For example, it was not uncommon for soldiers to wear their light weight ‘undress’ uniforms for active service as was the case in the Indian Mutiny when some regiments wore their white undress jackets as opposed to their heavier scarlet frocks. Examples of campaign alterations and improvisations are as numerous as Britain’s wars and the many regiments that fought in them. However, as will be noted in due course, improvised campaign dress was not commonly represented in the illustrations of British soldiers in the field; the icon of the scarlet or khaki clad Briton was usually left uncomplicated by the distractions of real war.

**Uniforms and Accoutrements**

The uniform and accoutrements of the British soldier of the late-nineteenth century are readily familiar. Starting in 1878, most soldiers received the cork and canvas white sun helmet for non-European foreign-service and a black helmet for home duty. This headgear was retained until the uniform reforms of 1902 that replaced the field service helmet with the peaked cap, although tropical duty still called for the sun helmet and review order uniforms also retained the black helmet. In 1881, the facings (usually the collar and cuffs) of the long used scarlet infantry uniform tunic were altered to remove regimental distinctions in favour of standardized ‘national’ colours: English and Welsh regiments all had white collars and cuffs, the Irish green, and the Scottish

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in the Empire. In addition, soldiers were issued undress uniforms for barrack life.
regiments yellow. The removal of these distinctions drew ongoing criticism; in *The Navy and Army Illustrated* an anonymous commentary observes that “modern reform and an apparent disregard for the value of esprit de corps have deprived our line regiments of almost all distinctions in dress….” Although the regimental distinctions were removed from the facings, collar badges, belt buckles, helmet fittings, regimental flags, and, of course, Scottish regimental tartans all gave individual units unique identities that proved also important for the propagation of regimental achievements in the mass culture.

Although experiments with alternative uniform cuts and colours were attempted, the end of the scarlet tradition started in India with the increasingly common use of the more practical khaki uniform. Concurrently used with scarlet clad British units in the field since 1846, khaki coloured uniforms were officially adopted for both British units in India and those of the Indian Army starting in 1885. By 1896, the example of the Indian Army was applied to the entire British Army with the adoption of the foreign service khaki uniform, although home service and review order uniforms of scarlet – or blue for many cavalry and all artillery units – were retained until 1902 when for European service British soldiers were to wear the more practical, but less glamorous, khaki drab. It was the army’s sombre nod to the experience of fighting in South Africa, but it did not seem to dampen popular interest in uniforms. During and after the Anglo-

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10 During the 1882 Egyptian campaign and the 1884 Sudan Campaign, several regiments including the Guards used a grey field-service uniform. It was a short-lived experiment but one that exposed the need for a ‘tropical’ uniform that was comfortable and less conspicuous than the scarlet uniform.
11 Khaki is derived from the Urdu word meaning ‘dust’ and varies in shade from yellow-brown to tan-beige. Khaki was occasionally used for review order uniforms but some regiments, notably cavalry regiments, actually returned to the more traditional blue uniforms as late as 1903. Michael Barthorp, *Indian Infantry Regiments 1860-1914* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1979), 34. For a useful overview of the uniforms of the Indian Army see Borris Mollo, *The Indian Army* (Dorset: Blanford Press, 1981).
Boer War, khaki did enjoy support from the fashion industry that used the dusty coloured fabric in clothing and accessories, especially for men’s active wear.\(^{13}\) Whether the purchaser was expressing his patriotism or seeking to enhance his masculinity cannot be reliably ascertained, but the awareness of khaki as a military (and masculine) colour is evident in the way it was so broadly used. Predictably, the battle painter R. Caton Woodville was dismayed at the retirement of the red uniform that had featured so prominently in his famous works.\(^{14}\)

Although its use in harsh climates was long challenged by local alternatives and official changes, the scarlet uniform jacket held a meaning of military might and valour that Britons believed in and occasionally resurrected to intimidate an enemy. In 1879, the Zulus were purportedly impressed by the fighting zeal of the “red soldiers”, an enduring fact reported long after in the popular media such as in the juvenile paper *Chums* that featured copious military content.\(^{15}\) Confidence in the reputation of the ubiquitous scarlet jacket found a place in battle tactics. In the Sudan campaign to relieve General Gordon’s besieged Khartoum in 1884-5 British regiments wore their red uniforms for the last time. Gordon even requested that this be done explicitly to intimidate the Dervishes.\(^{16}\) At the Battle of Kirkeban (February 10, 1885), the Black Watch and South Staffords were ordered to change from their grey campaign dress into their scarlet full dress uniforms to demoralize the defending followers of the Mahdi. At the last major battle of the campaign, the Battle of Ginnis (December 30, 1885), four regiments were ordered to change from their recently issued grey-brown khaki uniforms

\(^{15}\) “Daring Deeds for the Flag; Brave Men who have Faced Death”, *Chums* (1897): 125.
into scarlet serge – the last time the red uniform was worn during a major action.

Whether these incidents had the desired effect of terrifying the enemy with the implied promise of defeat at the hands of the “red soldiers” cannot be known. However, it seems that the British commanders believed in the emotional potency of the uniform even if its practicality had eclipsed.

Illustrating the British soldier’s uniform and equipment in the adult media was only occasionally a separate focus, and yet the detail of the uniforms was often scrupulously reproduced in the context of illustrated news reporting and art. The illustrated press provided readers with lavish line illustrations of news from around the world but with an understandable emphasis on the British Empire. In addition to reinforcing their ubiquitous role in state occasions and royal pageants, or adding dimension to the lark of volunteer soldiering, illustrated war reporting provided Britons their only glimpse of how their soldiers were living, fighting, killing and sometimes dying in remote parts of the globe.

The responsibility of the news illustrator and journalist to provide accurate or engaging portrayals of the events as they unfolded was a heavy one, but one in which they took pride. It was complicated by the logistics of communications, the physical challenges of campaigning, and balancing the desire to report news while remaining a loyal voice of British imperial policies. Indeed, because news either travelled slowly due to the remoteness of the campaign, or because the bare facts of the news were communicated quickly due to the efficiency of the ever developing telegraph system, the

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17 In a popular military history it was reported that after the Battle of Kirkeban Dervish prisoners confessed to having seen the approach of the British attack, but mistook it for a herd of red cattle. James Grant, British Battles on Land and Sea (London: Cassell and Company, 1899), 595.
illustrator and correspondent were often very scrupulous about the literary or artistic content of their submissions; their reporting was not necessarily “news” but reinforced existing knowledge and expectations which therefore had to ring true.\(^{18}\) These submissions could be very personal and provided a sense of place far beyond that normally associated with plain news and even in lieu of accuracy if that was hindered by personality clashes with commanders or due to the increasingly common impediment of military censorship.

General Wolseley resented the correspondent’s parasitic presence but came to understand their role and manipulated it by providing favourable (and sometimes false) information.\(^{19}\) Until the Anglo-Boer War the correspondents were at considerable liberty to perform their tasks without much censorship except that which had to be imposed by the officers on campaign.\(^{20}\) However, the reporters had not to antagonize the commanders to whose staffs they were attached – while generals like Roberts nurtured their relationship with the press and obliged them with favourable stories, Kitchener distrusted the war reporters.\(^{21}\) He revealed his disdain through the tactics applied to the correspondents attached to his staff during the Sudan campaign of 1898. According to Philip Knightley, his policies were to make them “run exactly the same risks as his

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soldiers, to limit their telegraphic facilities to 200 words a day, and to give them no help, no briefings, no guidance, and little courtesy.”22 During the Anglo-Boer War, legislation was passed that controlled the press that flooded into South Africa in 1899.23 Concerned with maintaining public support at home and over local security potentially compromised by the literate Boers reading British papers, the military was empowered to limit the movement of correspondents whose reports were censored or, after the defeats of December 1899, were written to bolster British resolve.24

Despite the growing limitations on press freedoms, the correspondents and war artists put themselves at grave risk while on campaign. The dedication to war reporting by the leading papers is exemplified by the description in the ILN of a remarkable burial procession for the Standard war correspondent J. A. Cameron who was killed “while he sat in the ‘zereba’ [a defensive barrier made of thorny bushes] eating his breakfast” accompanying the British forces during the 1885 Sudan campaign.25 Also present with the force was Melton Prior of the ILN, Bennet Burleigh of the Daily Telegraph, Frederick Villiers of The Graphic, and H. S. Pearse of the Daily News. Cameron’s body was buried next to that of Leger Herbert of the Morning Post, who had died earlier. Burleigh, Villiers and Pearse all received slight wounds at the Battle of Abu Klea, and Prior, shot in the thumb and the “softer part of my body” claimed that he too had had his “share of the

21 Stearn, 155.
23 Colonial campaigns in our period were usually accompanied by a small group of journalists attached to the military staff. By 1896 and the three year re-conquest of the Sudan, a significant 30 reporters followed the campaign. This number rose to 70 that arrived in South Africa (along with supporting staffs) to report on the early phase of the Anglo-Boer War. Badsey, 190-191. This does not include the practice, increasingly frowned upon by the military and banned in the Anglo-Boer War, of officers writing reports or simple ‘letters’ to newspapers for publication to supplement their meager pay. Badsey, 193.
24 Knightley, 77.
entertainment.”

In addition to the war reporting, illustrated papers such as the ILN and The Graphic dedicated considerable space to the various home defence volunteer forces, presenting beautifully illustrated reports of manoeuvres and reviews complete with a careful consideration of uniforms and equipment. Indeed, while wars in Africa and Asia got enormous coverage while being fought, the coverage of domestic volunteer activities is quite consistent; the ILN, for example, had a regular column in their limited text headed “The Volunteers” reporting on events like shooting competitions and Volunteer Force reviews such as the annual Easter review.

Occasionally uniforms and equipment were presented as separate topics of interest related to an approaching war or due to a Volunteer Force event. For example, in anticipation of the Gold Coast ‘expedition’ of 1873, the ILN provided a cover line illustration of the 23rd Fusiliers in their “ordinary” full-dress uniform of scarlet jacket and bearskin hat, and also in their overseas field service dress wearing their cork and canvas helmets. The illustration is not particularly detailed, but it is a useful study of the basic elements of the two ubiquitous British soldier types: the full-dress guardsman type and the ‘pith’ or ‘Indian’ sun helmet wearing imperial campaigner. In the black and white illustration only the headdress clearly distinguishes these two types, but residing in the same frame makes the paradigmatic qualities of both uniforms immediately apparent.

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26 Melton Prior, Campaigns of a War Correspondent, (London: Edward Arnold, 1912), 218-219. Also see Hodgson, 122.
27 C. R., “Officers and men of the 23rd Fusiliers in their ordinary uniform and as equipped for the Gold Coast,” The Illustrated London News LXIII, no. 1788 (December 6, 1873): cover.
28 In 1902 the ILN presented a rare uniform plate unrelated to an impending campaign but to celebrate the appointment of the Prince of Wales to the ceremonial colonelcy of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. This plate shows the regimental uniform evolving from 1752 through 1802 and 1852, to the present in 1902. The contemporary uniforms are shown both in the khaki field service dress and in the scarlet review order. This
An explanatory article notes that in addition to the uniform changes for the campaign, soldiers were issued with mosquito netting. The anonymously written column observes the importance of the net in combating the risk of malaria, but is particularly excited to note that the soldier will not be “deprived of his beloved pipe” while using it.29 A similar illustration to that of the fusiliers shows the Guards as equipped for the 1882 war in Egypt. Here, the illustrator, W. H. Overend, presents the various officers and privates of the Grenadier Guards and the 1st Life Guards in the Egyptian context, denoted with palm trees in the background.30 Marvellously engraved with their uniforms and equipment in pristine condition, Overend has troubled to add the regulation issue blue spectacles and veils, which the anonymous writer of an adjoining article notes

29 “Troops for the Gold Coast,” The Illustrated London News LXIII, no. 1788 (December 6, 1873): 527.
“preserves their eyes.”

The well being of the British soldier was assured with these new regulation innovations. The issuing of new equipment had already inspired an earlier study of the “Oliver Magazine Accoutrements.” The engraving illustrates the arrangement and use of the new pack, webbing and ammunition pouch as worn by three soldiers in home service dress, complete with bearskin and spiked black helmet headdresses (Illustration 2.2). The adjoining article praises the new, simpler design of the Oliver equipment,

Illustration 2.2 “The Oliver Magazine Accoutrements for Infantry Soldiers” from the ILN (May 11, 1878)

which, in fact, was not ultimately adopted for widespread use by the British Army. However, the fact that the ILN bothered to offer such a detailed illustration implies a belief in the reader’s interest in such matters, and reassured Britons that their soldiers’

needs were met.

The variety of Volunteer Force uniform, and those of the mounted volunteer Yeomanry, also attracted the attention of the newspaper illustrator. While regulation dress for the regular army was quite splendid, it was a reasonably standard appearance for all infantry and cavalry, with exceptions for units like the Rifles, or Highland regiments. The volunteer units were much more varied in their uniform designs until their absorption into the broader army structure starting with the Anglo-Boer War and finally their conversion into the fully financed and regulated Territorial Army in 1908. Prior to that time, old styles of headdress and uniform persisted guided by the desires of the officers that commanded. Consequently, fur busbies, shakos, kepis, feather bonnets and more conventional helmets and bearskin hats coexisted in the Volunteer Force (Illustration 2.3). Early volunteer uniforms were deliberately made distinct from those of the regular army, purportedly to differentiate the citizen volunteers from the unpopular army. This was short lived. Denoting increased government supervision and perhaps

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33 A wonderful study of Scottish Volunteer uniforms is presented throughout the August 27, 1881 edition of the *ILN* which was largely dedicated to covering the Queen’s visit to Edinburgh and her presence at the Volunteer Review. Portraits of officers and groupings of soldiers in camp scenes expose the great variety of uniforms used by the Volunteers. The serene and colourful presentation contrasts with the rather more stark coverage of the fighting in South Africa and particularly the defeat at Majuba Hill in May of that year. *The Illustrated London News* LXXIX, no. 2206 (August 27, 1881). In 1905, a study of Scottish Volunteers illustrates an amazing array of uniform types including all branches of the army. Highland bonnet, shako and bearskin co-exist with the more modern cork helmet and bush hat. The contrast between this glamorous display of uniforms and the horrid coverage of the Russo-Japanese War of the same period is marked. R. Caton Woodville, “The Great Review at Edinburgh: Types of Scottish Volunteers,” *The Illustrated London News* 37, no. 961 (October 7, 1904): 504.
Illustration 2.3 “The Great Review at Edinburgh: Types of Scottish Volunteers” from the *ILN* (October 7, 1904)

the growing, popular acceptance of that Regular Army, traditional scarlet, blue and green uniforms became the most common and were tailored in a manner that reflected the predominant home service uniforms of the regular army. 35 This reinforced the common

35 Hugh Cunningham, *The Volunteer Force: A Social And Political History 1859-1908* (London: Croom Helm, 1975), 95. Prior to their formal creation in 1859, there were government and media suggestions that
vision of the British soldier, whether volunteer, regular, guardsman, or park bandsman, as dressed in beautiful uniforms that contrasted with the progressively more drab uniforms used on campaign that were illustrated but rarely physically seen.

In addition to illustrating the uniforms and equipment of soldiers at home, the more common campaign illustrations presented in the *ILN* and *The Graphic* are often rich in detail. Uniform particulars are generally quite accurately portrayed although they usually reflect regulation dress as opposed to campaigning realities. This is not surprising since the papers used the sketches provided by war special artists like Prior and Villiers only as the basis of fully rendered and polished engravings such as the detailed, but contrived, works by artists like R. Caton Woodville. Consequently, familiar uniform regulations were applied to the rendering process that was somewhat divorced from the actual circumstances being represented. This certainly made for wonderful art, but the immediacy of the sketches, and some of the details of war as applied to uniforms, were polished away from the field sketches. Nevertheless, the papers promoted the accuracy of the special artists based on their intimacy with the events being illustrated. For example, the *ILN* reader was assured that “our Special Artists, Mr. Melton Prior, at the head-quarters of the British Army between Ismailia and Tel-el-Kebir, and Mr. J. Schonberg, at Port Said, continue to furnish this Journal with numerous Sketches of the most interesting scenes and incidents within their range of

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the Volunteer uniforms should be simple in design and of grey or undyed fabric. This was largely ignored by the Volunteer units who eagerly chose impressive uniforms paid for by the officers, the men themselves or shared between them. Geoffrey Cousins, *The Defenders; A History Of The British Volunteer* (London: Frederick Muller, 1968), 108.

36 Woodville sometimes painted soldiers in an idealized fashion, and sometimes inaccurately, but his passion for detail was revealed by the vast collection of arms, uniforms and accoutrements that populated his studio. They included artifacts from the 17th century forward and from around the world. Roger T. Stearn, “Richard Caton Woodville, 1856-1927,” *Soldiers of the Queen* 97 (1999): 20.
Occasionally, and rather unusually, the *ILN* printed facsimiles of the actual field sketches, an option made more possible in the 1880s by applying the technology of photography to the engraving process. For example, Melton Prior provided a two-part sketch narrative of the interrogation and subsequent execution of an Egyptian spy. In the blank spaces on the sketches Prior notes uniform details such as different headdress types and fabric colours, and what differentiated the uniforms of the regular soldiers from that of the officer. Similarly, above a sketch of the Battle of El Teb in the Sudan campaign of 1884, Prior made uniform and equipment studies of the officers, men, and saddle of the 10th Hussars (Illustration 2.4). Both front and back of each figure is detailed exposing an interest in accuracy, albeit in sketch form. Later in 1884, Prior and other correspondents issued a series of sketch portraits of political figures, officers, and soldiers associated with the Nile campaign. These reproduced sketches include uniform studies of an Irish Rifles soldier in undress uniform wearing a fatigue cap, a mounted Guardsman of the Camel Corps, officers of the Mounted infantry, and a front and side profile study of 42nd Highlanders specifically illustrated in “marching order.”

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Illustration 2.4 “The Cavalry Charge at the Battle of El Teb, Feb. 29” from the ILN (March 22, 1884)  

While the war artist provided his audience with images of Britons at war, the battle painter also provided vivid representations of soldiers on campaign. Although poorly regarded at the beginning of the century, the battle painting as a genre gained in popularity from about the 1870s due to the same impulses that made all things imperial and military more acceptable. Although paintings were, by their very nature, more exclusively accessible to the elite and the growing middle-class, papers like the ILN and The Graphic, and even juvenile publications like Boy’s Own Paper and Chums reproduced these paintings for a broader audience across generations and classes.

Uniform or weapon studies were not the principal concern of painters like R. Caton Woodville, G. D. Giles, or Lady Elizabeth Butler, but they clearly made decisions about the uniforms in which they intended to dress their subjects – and getting it right
was of importance, especially in the later part of the period under examination. Although the popularity of battle painting increased, the art community never fully recognized the artistic merit of these works seeing them as more akin to the journalistic efforts of the war special illustrators and print engravers. It didn’t help the case of the artist that in fact many of the battle painters were, or had been, war specials or had done engraving for papers like the *ILN* or *The Graphic*. Woodville and, more notably, Giles are both examples of this interdisciplinary trend. However much questioned as ‘art’, battle painting received praise for its accuracy and educational qualities. What was being ‘accurately’ presented was, of course, not always scrupulously considered; again, the representation of uniform and accoutrement types was as much a problem in painting as in other media.

Part of the problem was the willingness of the army to provide soldiers as models for the painters. Butler used this to advantage in her paintings that are wonderfully conceived but reflect more a uniform ideal as opposed to its campaign reality. An historical example of this preference for the pristine is Butler’s painting of the charge of the Scots Greys at Waterloo, “Scotland Forever”. Napoleonic subjects became all the rage in the late-nineteenth century and Butler found a perfect subject in this charge of British heavy cavalry at Waterloo. The uniform details are quite accurate, but do not represent the regiment on campaign. The regiment used oil-skin covers for their bearskin caps and sources indicate that, due to the poor weather prior to the battle, the Scots Greys were covered in mud and their white cross-belts were dyed red from their scarlet tunics bleeding onto the leather.\(^{42}\) Butler’s painting is also in error due to her inclusion of the

regimental flag – British cavalry did not carry standards into battle after 1812.\textsuperscript{43}

However, this little detail in an otherwise dramatic rendering touches on the issue of accuracy and how soldiers are portrayed; superficially correct in its representation of British uniforms and equipment, the flag, so important to regimental identity and public display, should not have been included. But without the flag the painting would perhaps have appeared incomplete and compromised the viewer’s sense of realism in the rendering.

Helping the viewer interpret the events being represented sometimes led artists and publishers to explicitly make changes to uniform details in the name of other representational accuracies. An example of this is a representation of the Battle of Omdurman illustrated by A. Sutherland in 1898.\textsuperscript{44} Providing a panoramic view from above and behind the British battle line, the colour print shows Kitchener’s army – or at least the British part of it -- at the moment of the Dervish assault with its entire front line firing at point-blank range into the attacking enemy. Immediately under the title of the work, the artist or publisher made clear the decision to represent the British units in the painting with the scarlet and blue uniforms: “In order that the positions of the different regiments may be readily distinguished, the home uniforms have been retained.”

Supplemented with numbered labelling on the picture and a corresponding list of the regiments represented, it was of importance to ensure that the viewer could accurately identify each regiment which generic khaki uniforms would have obscured.

Unfortunately, illustrating the infantry uniforms in scarlet and artillery and medical


\textsuperscript{44} “The Battle of Omdurman at 6:30 am, 2\textsuperscript{nd} September, 1898,” colour lithograph. 17\textsuperscript{th}/21\textsuperscript{st} Lancers Regimental Museum, Belvoir castle, Grantham. This print is commonly reproduced to supplement narratives of the battle. Philip Ziegler, \textit{Omdurman} (London: Collins, 1973), 130-131; Stephen W. Sears,
personnel in blue fails to serve the said purpose since each regiment is still identically illustrated; all the infantry are painted in scarlet with white facings and sun helmets making it impossible to distinguish by uniform the separate British regiments. Clearly, then, the explicit decision to represent the British units in scarlet has rather less to do with unit recognition than it does with an artistic decision to use the more familiar and ornate home service dress. In this battle won by the Anglo-Egyptian army, the Egyptian portion of the army is notably absent from the illustration and the scarlet clad British are unambiguously credited with the victory.

While the adult media tended to represent uniforms as an incidental detail, the juvenile audience was presented with educational illustrations and toys that specifically detailed the uniforms, badges, equipment, and flags of British regiments. There was a belief, well founded it would seem, that boys were inherently interested in such military minutia. In the introduction to a *Boy’s Own Paper* article titled “Our Soldiers and Their Equipment”, the author asserts that “it is certainly exceptional to meet with boys, grown up or otherwise, who do not take at least a passing interest in things military.”45 The *Boy’s Own Paper (BOP)* and other juvenile papers and media certainly catered to this perceived interest, particularly in the last part of the nineteenth century and, perhaps surprisingly, in the decade after the Anglo-Boer War. Although the content of *BOP* did not emphasize military topics and, in fact, whole annuals might have no significant military stories or articles, such content was common and was either decidedly educational or embedded in fictional serialized stories.46

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46 Even a cursory examination of the *BOP* annual indexes reveals the diverse subject matter that this journal
Uniform and accoutrement studies represent a significant proportion of the military content and frequently included the one colour illustration that accompanied a number of the BOP issues. The first military themed colour pull-out illustration issued by BOP was “The Rank Marks of the British Army.” Uniforms, medals, and rank distinctions quite frequently featured as the subject of the colour illustrations, again, particularly in the latter part of the period in question. A pull-out illustration “Our British Cavalry: 1890” by Richard Simkin (1840-1926), perhaps the most famous uniform illustrator of the period in Britain, displayed an accurate, although simplified, portrayal of cavalry regiments in full dress. In the wake of the Anglo-Boer War an illustration was printed of “British War Medal Ribbons and Decorations” but no article was provided to explain this arcane informational colour plate.

In 1904, an article and colour illustration titled “Uniforms of Regiments of the British Army Past and Present” is presented in the 8 October issue (Illustration 2.5).

Presented and punctuates the fact that military content was not emphasized. Pottery painting and gardening might get as much attention as military matters in BOP that ultimately emphasized male juvenile interests like sports, technology, and scientific themes. However, although military articles and illustrations do not appear in every paper, letters from boys to BOP consistently addressed military topics judging from the replies printed in BOP under column headings “Our Notebook” or “Correspondence”. Military history, army life, and organizational minutia are all addressed. In his consideration of illustration in Chums, Robert MacDonald observes the comparatively restrained military content in BOP that had a distinctly educational content than the stories of adventure and individual heroism in Chums. MacDonald goes on to note that BOP actually lost circulation during the Anglo-Boer War due to its limited military content during the war. Robert H. MacDonald, “Signs from the Imperial Quarter: Illustrations in Chums, 1892-1914,” Children’s Literature 16 (1988), 37-39.

47 “The Rank Marks of the British Army,” The Boy’s Own Paper Annual VI, no. 267, (February 23, 1884): 337.
48 Simkin was a well known illustrator of military uniform studies and his work was used to guide the toy soldier painters for Britain’s Ltd. R. Simkin, “Our British Cavalry regiments: 1890,” The Boy’s Own Paper Annual XIII, no. 624 (December 27, 1890): attached to the end of this issue.
50 “Uniforms and regiments of the British Army Past and Present,” The Boy’s Own Paper Annual XXVII, no. 1343 (October 8, 1904): 30-31.
The anonymous author and illustrator start their overview from 1660 and the beginning of the scarlet uniform tradition. Indeed, of the thirty-two uniforms illustrated, one is in khaki and all the rest are in home service uniforms of scarlet except for the rifleman and artilleryman whose uniforms were green and blue respectively. An unambiguous message of continuity is presented emphasizing the relationship between British regiments and a military tradition with the scarlet uniform. That this uniform study, and other special illustrations, should follow the Anglo-Boer War – a war scarcely mentioned in *BOP* – perhaps implies an effort to celebrate the strength of that military tradition in the aftermath of a difficult war where tradition was tested and found wanting. Indeed, the bland nature of the lone illustrated khaki uniform – that of a Foot Guard – is noted by the author; almost sadly he suggests of the soldier that “…no one would recognise [him] as a Guardsman if it were not for the patch on the helmet”.

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51 “Uniforms and regiments of the British Army Past and Present,” *The Boy’s Own Paper Annual* XXVII,
The importance of full dress is again revealed by another colour plate illustrating the “Types of the Territorials”; seventeen of the twenty-one figures were illustrated in review order, the other four in service dress.\textsuperscript{52} The variety of Territorial full dress uniforms is quite remarkable and speaks to the importance of uniforms in creating unit identity and reflective of the legacy of the Volunteer origins of the Territorial units. Similarly, an article “Types of Our Empire’s Defenders” has an adjoining colour plate of the same title that, with considerable detail, displays twenty-eight soldiers from around the Empire (Illustration 2.6).

Notably, there are seventeen white soldiers illustrated compared to eleven Native troops, but the author does note the “Indian Army being conspicuous by their handsome uniforms.”\textsuperscript{53}

Another colour illustration focuses on “Cap Badges of the Territorial Force.”\textsuperscript{54} Here

\textsuperscript{52} “Types of the Territorials,” The Boy’s Own Paper Annual XXXI, no. 1658 (October 22, 1910): attached to the end of the issue.

\textsuperscript{53} “Types of Our Empire’s Defenders,” The Boy’s Own Paper Annual XXXV, no. 4 (October 26, 1912): 63.

\textsuperscript{54} V. Wheeler-Holoham, “Cap Badges of the Territorial Force,” The Boy’s Own Paper Annual XXXV, no.
again, the adjoining article offers little embellishing narrative and simply describes the
badges and the unit to which they belong. Loath to present gratuitous violence, but with
an educational agenda, BOP presented the reader with these studies of uniform details
and carried the cost of colour presumably to bolster sales with images of soldiers and
their accoutrements. Chums pursued a similar strategy.

The juvenile weekly paper Chums presents military content more consistently, but
in contrast to BOP includes no separate uniform studies. Instead, uniforms are carefully
portrayed in both line drawings supporting articles on a variety of military themes and in
supplementary full-page reproductions of paintings. In its first volume (1892-1893),
Chums presented a series of articles and illustrations titled “Our Famous Regiments”
featuring the Life Guards, the Foot Guards, the 10th Prince of Wales’ Own Royal
Hussars, the Royal Scots Greys, the Rifle Brigade, and the 1st Royal Dragoons. Each
article describes the history and battle honours of each regiment selected for study, and
provides the reader with small, but carefully detailed line illustrations of the unit being
described. For example, the second article in the series examines the Foot Guards and
details both in text and illustrations the evolution of the brigade’s uniforms through the
historical narrative emphasizing the Napoleonic period uniform and that used in the
Crimean War.55 The final illustration shows a private, drummer, and sergeant from the
Guards Brigade in 1893; their splendid uniforms are familiar to all, and even in 1893 the
anonymous writer “hopes that the Guards will remain always as we know them now.”56

Another series of articles in the third volume (1894-1895) of Chums, “Yarns of

13 (December 28, 1912): 199-200.
55 “Our Famous Regiments – II. The Foot Guards,” Chums 1, no. 22 (February 8, 1893): 340-341.
56 “Our Famous Regiments – II. The Foot Guards,” Chums 1, no. 22, (February 8, 1893): 341.
the Army,” recounts “True Stories of Military Valour”. In this series, the author highlights examples of military feats by regiments from around Europe and throughout modern history with accompanying line illustrations of contemporary soldiers. The author, D. H. Parry, notes that the “illustrations show the fighting dress of six nations, each having glorious traditions of individual and collective heroism…” and then specifically describes the British soldiers illustrated as “…coming on at the ‘double’ in scarlet jumpers and white helmets, Lee-Metford magazine rifle in hand.”57 In general terms, the uniform as illustrated could have been worn in continental campaigns but certainly did not represent the “fighting dress” of British soldiers deployed in actual wars overseas in 1895, nor did the illustration reflect anything of campaign improvisation. Once again, the scarlet tradition is revisited in its ideal just prior to the transition to khaki home service dress.

In addition to the line drawings accompanying articles, BOP and Chums also reproduced military themed paintings, frequently in colour. Although not uniform studies, the subject matter and choice of uniform worn by the figures is telling. In Volume IX, readers were presented with two supplemental colour reproductions of Harry Payne paintings titled “Returning to Quarters after a field day” of the 12th Prince of Wales’ Royal Lancers and “Breaking out into skirmishing order” depicting the Coldstream Guards.58 Although they are meant to be on manoeuvres, the principal subjects are mounted on beautiful horses, and are also dressed in splendid full-dress

58 Harry Payne “Returning to Quarters after a Field Day” painting reproduced as a supplemental colour plate in Chums IX, no. 437 (January 23, 1901), inserted before page 353; Harry Payne, “Breaking Out Into Skirmishing Order,” painting reproduced as a supplemental colour plate in Chums IX, no. 450 (April 24, 1901): inserted before page 561.
uniforms complete with the Coldstream Guards officer wearing his bearskin and the lancers with plumed *czapska* hats and their red and white lance pennons unfurled. The 1901 date makes these detailed full-dress representations anachronistic. In addition, there are representational contradictions. The bearskin-wearing Guardsmen are presented supposedly adopting a skirmish line which was a tactical disposition that had long been practiced and was required in the fighting during the Anglo-Boer War. Of course, the full-dress uniforms – and a mounted officer -- are at odds with this tactic of dispersal and concealment. Similarly, one of the lancers carries a carbine denoting the increasingly common tactic of dismounting cavalry for issuing fire. But the suggestion of modern cavalry tactics is undermined by the uniform and accoutrement details presented. Of course, these uniforms would be familiar, and, as noted by the anonymous *Chums* writer wishing for the Guards to never change, in these illustrations the uniforms rarely do change.\textsuperscript{59}

Regimental colours receive dedicated attention in *BOP* and *Chums*. Anachronistic on the battlefield and last used by the British during the First Anglo-Boer War at the Battle of Majuba in 1881, these symbols of nation and regiment continued to hold a fascination that was explored in illustration and article for the juvenile audience. “The Colours of the British Army”, an article and adjoining detailed colour illustration in

\textsuperscript{59} Another supplemental painting reproduction in 1907 entitled “Soldiers All” shows a boy accompanying soldiers on the march who are wearing contemporary khaki drab uniforms and the modern regulation peaked cap. While this illustration does not rely on uniform tradition to promote military life, the soldiers illustrated are the oft romanticized lancers. Showing cavalry is somewhat anachronistic already, but to illustrate lancers in 1907 is a curious decision since in 1903 the lance was withdrawn from service until 1909 when all regiments were again equipped with the weapon. In 1907, then, it was an act of nostalgia to include these mounted lancers in the illustration, even with their modern uniforms. “Soldiers All”, *Chums* XV, no. 774 (July 10, 1907): supplemental painting reproduction inserted before page 942.
BOP provides a beautiful overview of regimental flags. Like other articles in BOP concerning medals and badges, this article on colours is really an excuse to recount the battle honours and combat anecdotes of the various regiments whose flags are illustrated. Similarly promoting military values through the symbol of the regimental flag, an article by Her Majesty’s Forces Reverend E. J. Hardy describes the issuing of new colours to three regiments in 1897. He is unambiguous about the importance of the colours “as a symbol which connects the soldier with the past, and reminds him of his duties in the present. It tells of the blood lavishly spilt on the battlefield, and of the soldier’s patient endurance.” He continues with a Zulu War anecdote punctuating the importance of duty and explaining why a silver wreath adorned the Queen’s colour of the 2nd Battalion of the Warwickshire Regiment: “to commemorate the devotion of Lieutenants Melville and Coghill in their heroic effort to save that colour in the fatal surprise of Isandula, January 22, 1879.”

Saving the colours was also the subject of a supplemental colour plate in BOP illustrating a British dragoon, “the last of his regiment,” rescuing the regimental colours from French cuirassiers at Waterloo. While the subject is archetypal and the context of the Napoleonic Wars common in British culture, it must be restated that British cavalry regiments did not carry their colours in battle during the later Napoleonic wars. Like Butler’s painting of the Scots Greys also at Waterloo, this inaccuracy in an otherwise well rendered illustration is secondary to communicating the vital relationship of duty

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62 The Napoleonic Wars were always a popular military theme in the nineteenth century, but in the 1890s and after the Anglo-Boer War Napoleonic subjects proliferated and colonial wars became less common.
and valour between soldier and the fabric symbol of his regiment. That this illustration is embedded in an article entitled “Our Soldiers and their Equipment” in which the writer laments that colours that were “once rallying points in many a bloody struggle, are now deposited for safe keeping in the parish church...,” exposes the frequent contradiction between military reality and the romantic ideal found in the public discourse. The Waterloo illustration exposes the writer’s preference for the lamented lost ideal and obscures the post-Boer War context of its rendering.

The continued importance of regimental colours after the Anglo-Boer War is further noted by a huge four-page fold-out colour illustration of “Colours of the New Territorial Home Defenders” by Alfred Lambert and the attached article, “The Colours of our Territorial Army” (Illustration 2.7). The writer of the article asserts the importance of colours noting that “a regiment entitled to have colours would, however, be hardly considered complete without them....” Indeed, the flags have the ability to bridge class divisions within the regiments as the colour presentation ceremony brought together “a representative gathering of every class from every part of Britain....” Perhaps fleetingly

63 A series of articles in Chums examines the equally important act of capturing enemy colours as trophies. W. J. Frost, “Famous Flags and Their Stories; Trophies Captured in War,” Chums IV, no. 158 (September 18, 1895): 59; no. 160 (October 2, 1895): 91; no. 162 (October 16, 1895): 126.

The loss of colours was a regimental catastrophe, but their capture provided units and individuals with tremendous status. The Chums articles, “Famous Flags and Their Stories” recounts examples from British military history of enemy flags being captured through acts of bravery that equal those associated with ‘saving the colours.’ Most of the anecdotes are of flags taken from French units, particularly from the Napoleonic Wars. The third and final article recounts examples from India, America, and Afghanistan. In conclusion, the author admits that British units too had lost their colours, but emphasizes that this was only in the most desperate and heroic of circumstances such as at the 1881 Battle of Maiwand. Here the 66th Regiment of Foot is described as making a “last determined and desperate stand” during which the colour bearer, fell dead across his flag: his part played, his duty nobly done.” W. J. Frost, “Famous Flags and Their Stories; Trophies Captured in War,” Chums IV, no. 162 (October 16, 1895): 126.


this moment of class harmony existed. But the significance of this ceremony, and the article which describes it, is that British culture retained its fascination with a military tradition that was largely anachronistic.

Illustration 2.7 “Colours of the New Territorial Home Defenders” detail from BOP (October 30, 1909). Courtesy of Rare Books and Special Collections, UBC.

Describing the accoutrements of military pageantry and the consistent representation of soldiers in full-dress, or review order, is marked and indicates a manner of understanding the nature of military service both at home and abroad as controlled and tidy. Only occasionally is the reader provided with a glimpse of campaign dress improvisation, and this is usually embedded in articles, not illustrations, written by soldiers. For example, a Captain R. T. Halliday provided BOP readers with a series of articles in 1906 based on his experiences on the Indian North-West Frontier. In the second instalment, Halliday prepared to embark on a long march and added to his uniform a headdress to protect him from the sun. Inspired by local attire, Halliday fashioned a turban with an additional towel draped over his neck. For eye protection he
wore blue goggles, which was not unusual kit, except that he added a visor made of green cardboard. This apparition was hardly ‘regulation’ and he notes that his “turnout created much interest and mirth.” This example of campaign dress improvisation represents a common reaction to the requirements of field service practicality. Unfortunately, it appears to be an exceptional example and one that adds more to that notion of the British officer eccentric than it does to the common practice of improvisation. Highlighting the exceptional nature of Halliday’s garb, the attached line illustration titled “Types of Native Troops” shows Indian Army soldiers in regulation dress noted by the author for its splendour. Also, the humour embedded in the anecdote detracts from the very real problem of contending with difficult climatic conditions with inappropriate regulation issue equipment.

Inappropriate equipment could have rather deadly repercussions and there is one somewhat obtuse reference to this in a brief excerpt in BOP. In “The Humour of Our Soldiers” the writer is bemused by the anecdotes of soldiers in the field and their sardonic reaction to the circumstances of campaigning in South Africa. One such anecdote has a soldier dying his buff equipment, and even his skin, khaki. When asked why, “Tommy replied cheerfully: ‘It is better to be alive and dirty than clean and dead’ claiming that the dirt made him less visible to the “Boer sharpshooters.” Suggesting only that the “Tommy

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67 A commentary on a series of sketches provided to the ILN by a field Special Artist, Mr. Simpson, warns the reader that “those familiar with the 10th Hussars at home might fail to recognize them if they could see the regiment on service in Afghanistan; most of the regular uniform has been left behind, and quite a new outfit, adapted for the work has been assumed by both officers and men.” The article goes on to describe the khaki uniform and campaign dress adopted by the regiment. The commentary emphasizes the fact that a gulf existed between the familiarity of what dress was worn by soldiers at home and what they wore in the field, but also exposes the contrast between most of the popular illustrations and the realities of field dress. “Afghan War Illustrations,” The Illustrated London News LXXIV, no. 2068 (February 1, 1879): 111.
68 Rev. E. J. Hardy, M.A. Chaplain to the Forces, “The Humour of Our Soldiers,” The Boy’s Own Paper
can be very sarcastic” the writer ignores the grim and explicit meaning of the soldier’s statement: light-coloured cross-belts and equipment were visible and deadly. This was long understood by the soldier in the field, and the practice of dulling white or buff equipment with tea or other dying agents was a common practice long before the Anglo-Boer War.

Other media types did little to rectify the purportedly accurate, but essentially false, popular image of the British soldier in the familiar uniforms of the present or past. The toy soldier producer William Britain contributed to the representational convergence of the British soldier noted in most media. And like so many sources of military content, Britains toys promised accuracy. Hailed as an exceptional example of British entrepreneurial success in the late-nineteenth century, Britain successfully defeated the foreign monopoly of toy soldier sales largely by producing cheap models that reflected market demands for accurate representations of British soldiers. In 1910, an article in BOP noted that the previously dominant “…German made soldiers betrayed their origin to the purchaser who knew anything at all about military matters by the flagrant inaccuracies in the dress and equipment of the British Tommy Atkins…” In contrast, the Britains toy soldiers were “absolutely correct in the smallest detail of uniform and equipment…the infantry of the line in correct helmets, scarlet tunics, and facings…”

Grubb lauded the comprehensiveness of the Britains range covering all arms and services

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69 Soldiers have always altered their uniforms or equipment to suit campaigning realities. As noted earlier, the use of khaki fabric had its origins in the Indian army. But starting in the 1840s, long before khaki’s official adoption, British units dyed and deliberately dirtied their undress white uniforms or even their shirts in emulation of an Indian unit, the Corps of Guides, well known for their fighting on the North-West Frontier in khaki uniforms. Hythorthwaite, 34.

of the British Army, even including Red Cross nurses. What is noteworthy, however, is the attention to scarlet dress and helmets, both of which by 1910 were relegated to review order and had been long replaced for home and foreign-service by khaki drab. And yet, while interviewing managing director Alfred Britain as part of a visit to the factory, Grubb reasserts that Britains had “taken infinite pains to gratify the modern child’s taste for realism; and every detail in these tiny soldiers equipment is correct”; Britain confirmed the assertion. How that “taste for realism” emerged derives from the convergence of representation in the mass culture around a repertoire of traditional and contemporary forms, but the fact that this realism assumed a vision of the British soldier in a uniform that was a rarely used anachronism speaks to the assertion that the popular understanding of the British soldier was real and familiar only in its most idealized and ceremonial form.

Britains’ concern over uniform accuracy was well known and helped to bolster sales. Regimental distinctions were painted onto the metal figures, and collectors, young and often old, eagerly added yet another distinct unit to their growing collections. By 1914, Britains had toys representing all the elite foot and cavalry regiments, the artillery, most of the line cavalry regiments and a significant proportion of the regular infantry regiments. Certainly favouring review order dress for their miniature regiments was a market expectation, and Britains, in spite of its reputation for accuracy, deliberately kept their lead soldiers in scarlet when khaki was officially being adopted for soldiers of flesh

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72 Grubb, 750.
73 Brown, “Models…,” 532.
and blood. Nevertheless, Britains also knew that the market was keenly interested in British colonial wars and was quick to produce campaign specific sets of soldiers. Three years after their first release of models, Britains produced toy soldiers depicting the African Mounted Infantry of the ill-fated 1896 Jameson Raid. A much more popular depiction of khaki active service uniform clad toys was of the 21st Lancers for the 1898 Sudan campaign and their charge at the Battle of Omdurman. Notably, these lance-armed figures accurately have the lance pennons furled for combat, a detail not represented in any of the more typical full dress figures. This set was soon followed in 1899 with Set 96, the “York and Lancaster Regiment” regiment also at Omdurman; more regiments in colonial active service dress followed especially in the wake of the Anglo-Boer War, but the scarlet of home service dress or review order remained dominant and even the initially khaki clad Yorks and Lancs were reissued in 1903 with scarlet uniforms. Occasionally representing colonial soldiers in khaki was likely a collector’s expectation and did nothing to compromise the ideal of the scarlet uniform. Khaki in the colonies and scarlet at home could comfortably co-exist.

Plainly sculpted soldiers could be easily converted and painted to accurately represent specific units. Weapons accuracy was more problematic since the casting details were relatively crude and painting such details went beyond the mandate of accuracy applied to the uniforms. However, heavier weapons like cannon or machine guns were faithfully cast, although it was in print that these were more effectively

74 Brown, “Models…,” 533.
75 In 1895 Britains released a Mountain Artillery set (Set 28) depicted in foreign service dress. The Jameson Raid set was however the first release to respond to a contemporary news event. James Opie notes that, in spite of the high profile of the raid in the media, this set was short-lived. James Opie, The Great Book of Britains; 100 Years of Britains Toy Soldiers, 1893-1993 (London, New Cavendish Books, 1993), 30.
presented in all their deadly detail.

Representing uniforms usually meant presenting a familiar and tradition bound ideal. It was a vision of the British soldier that looked to the past while marginalizing the drab uniforms of the present or future, and, by implication, marginalizing the modern tactics for which these modern uniforms were designed. Looking to colonial wars made this process of marginalization easier since archaic tactics persisted and even scarlet uniforms might be donned for one last charge. Representing weapons faced the opposite problem. While celebrating the modernity of British technical and industrial capacity, the implications of these new weapons on the idealized warfare of scarlet clad Britons, or even their modestly equipped Native opponents, had to be minimized. Discussing weapons technology looked to the future but had to sometimes deny its actual effect on war in the present.

**Weapons**

H. G. Wells’ apocalyptic *War of the Worlds* (1898) revealed the horror of irresistible and impersonal technological warfare. Of course, what seemed frightening and immoral when perpetrated by Martians was largely indistinguishable from the massacres sometimes inflicted on Native armies by the British. While this did not lend itself to romantic adventure, a topic explored in Chapter 4, writers and illustrators could not resist occasionally celebrating the superiority of British military technology and training, especially when the Natives possessed similar assets and were using them to shoot back.

Henty was certainly ready to express his discomfort with lopsided victories won

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76 Opie, 61.
by technological asymmetry, but in contexts of approaching technological parity, he celebrates British mastery over modern weapons and the failure of Native opponents to achieve the same. In *With The Allies to Pekin* the Chinese use of rifles and artillery is notably desultory,\(^\text{77}\) and Henty makes specific mention of the effectiveness of the British breech loading rifles. This is a sentiment repeated in *The Dash For Khartoum* where a soldier comments that “the idea that savages, however brave, could cope with British troops with breech-loaders had then seemed absurd.”\(^\text{78}\)

Kipling has a similar disregard for the Native will to face British fire. In his short story, *The Man Who Would Be King* the two lead characters, Peachy Carnehan and Daniel Dravot, set out to win an empire amongst the tribes beyond the North-West Frontier with twenty Martini-Henry rifles.\(^\text{79}\) More explicitly, Kipling praises the fire of the “Screw-guns,” referring to the light artillery piece that could be dismantled and carried on animals to engage enemies occupying difficult terrain inaccessible to wheeled artillery carriages. The refrain celebrates the technology and the soldier’s affection for it:

> For you all love the screw-guns –  
> the screw-guns they all love you!  
> So when we take tea with a few guns,  
> o' course you will know what to do -- hoo! hoo!  
> Jest send in your Chief an' surrender –  
> it's worse if you fights or you runs:  
> You may hide in the caves, they'll be only your graves,  
> but you can't get away from the guns!\(^\text{80}\)

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Kipling’s affection for the “guns,” toward which Henty was ambivalent, exposed a general interest in technology that contributed to the European capacity to make war. British commercial culture could not resist touting the achievements of that military technology.

Of course, knowledge of the theoretical attributes of weapons speaks little to the reality of their use regardless of how accurate the specifications are presented. Placing these weapons into the anachronistic context of colonial wars, that shared attributes with familiar narratives of historical conflicts, potentially complicated the representation of warfare. One solution was to keep these two visions of warfare separated. Horribly effective weapons could be discretely celebrated while the flesh and blood triumph of British soldiers over Native warriors was done in wars that superficially resembled those pre-dating the industrial age of killing. The technical language describing weapons was kept from interfering with the traditional high diction of war narrative.

As with uniform plates, weapons technology studies were the subject of separate consideration. However, in contrast to uniform minutia, both adult and juvenile papers dedicated space to weapons in a manner similar to examining other technology like trains, ships, aircraft, and industrial equipment. Generally the special coverage came in the form of an illustration, usually supported by a descriptive article. Collectively, these brief excerpts trace the development of British military technology. For example, the ILN presented a technical article on the Martini Henry rifle and subsequently an article offering an overview of the small arms issued to the British army featuring the recently

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adopted Lee-Metford (Illustration 2.8). The *ILN* also featured articles on machine guns including the early French weapon, the mitrailleuse, followed by articles on the rotary barreled Gatling, and the gravity fed multi-barreled Nordenfeldt. The history of the machine gun was completed with a *Chums* article about the water-cooled Maxim machine gun that was the model for most heavy machine guns used in the Great War.

Illustration 2.8 “The New Magazine Rifle Supplied to the British Army” from the *ILN* (February 28, 1891)

What is noteworthy about these articles and illustrations is that they are dispassionately technical. They either emphasize the innovative merits of a weapon in a manner that completely divorces it from killing, or they emphasize the defensive qualities of the weapon that benefit the British fighting man, again without considering the effects.

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84 At this stage the Gatling was referred to as a mitrailleuse, not a ‘machine-gun’. “The Gatling Gun,” *The Illustrated London News* LXI, no. 1720 (August 24, 1872): 173-174.
85 “The Nordenfeldt Guns at Aldershot,” *The Illustrated London News* LXXXIII, no. 2315 (September 1,
it might have on typically poorly equipped opponents. For example, in a wide ranging 1903 article in *BOP* titled “Our Soldiers and Their Equipment,” the author gives a quite detailed assessment of the new Lee-Enfield rifle noting that this “wonderful gun” had a ten round magazine that could be discharged in fifteen seconds.\(^{86}\) Its deadly potential is left unstated and unrevealed with examples, but the risk of overheating the barrel or wasting ammunition is specifically noted. Similarly, the *ILN* article on the Nordenfeldt machine gun marvels at the rate of fire generated by this relatively small weapon. Never does the article explicitly mention its killing power.

Britons wanted to be proud of the achievements of their country’s intellect and industry without emphasizing the sanguine effect it actually produced. However, this celebration of technical innovations for killing, with its jingoistic and social Darwinistic implications, contrasts with the representations of colonial warfare, where British steel and ‘pluck’ count for more than murderously superior technology. What is ironic is that both the celebration of sophisticated technology *and* the asserted importance of British valor are over wrought. Machine guns were often found to be unreliable, awkward to transport and difficult to supply with adequate stores of ammunition on campaign.\(^{87}\) Most of the firepower that won British colonial campaigns came from the rifle carried by the disciplined infantryman who cared little for valor and rarely used his bayonet. Nevertheless, accurately representing the technical merits of sophisticated weapons within a narrow narrative context presented an aspect of war that could be safely enjoyed with little consideration of its deadly reality.

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Conclusion

The deceptive quality of representational accuracy as it relates to uniforms, accoutrements, and weapons is explicitly exposed in the following final example. The *ILN* included an illustration in 1902 featuring three mounted figures of the 2nd Dragoons (the Royal Scots Greys).\textsuperscript{88} Apparently a vedette (soldiers performing picket duty), these cavalrymen are drawn – accurately -- in their extremely visible home service uniforms, almost indistinguishable from their ancestors who charged the French at Waterloo and who were immortalized by the most famous of Elizabeth Butler paintings. What makes this thoroughly misleading is that the title at the top of the full page illustration is “The Mishap to the Scots Greys at Klippan on February 18” referring to an incident in the Anglo-Boer War when a squadron of the 2nd Dragoons was surprised and overwhelmed by a Boer raid with significant loss to the cavalry. In this context, the Greys would have been wearing their khaki field service dress. Unusually, they are illustrated in home service scarlet, albeit accurately represented. The sub-title indicates that they are on vedette duty which, at Klippan, they clearly failed to perform effectively. The mixed messages are rife, but the comfort of seeing the familiar uniform might have been intended to minimize concern over this failure in the field.

As long as Britons could link their army to the glorious traditions of the past through their familiarity with a uniform, war’s reality was of little consequence. Even the occasional colour painting of the khaki field-service dress complemented, through its implications of exotic colonial warfare, the overwhelming ideal of the British soldier as

depicted at domestic ceremonies, historical paintings, uniform studies, park bands, and toys. If war was represented through the lens of its familiar trappings, the complexities of representing the experience of war were reduced. By the late-nineteenth century the “thin red line” was an anachronism, but it had cultural currency. Still in the 1880s scarlet clad Britons were fighting distant, but persistent wars. Representations of these soldiers, and their khaki inheritors, did not challenge, but complimented the historical or domestic representations of soldiers and their weapons. The convergence of these often accurate, but idealized visions of uniforms and technology in the various media forms offered few interpretive options to explore the realities of active campaigning. Britain’s soldiers remained the “gallant lads in red.”
“This advance in hollow square was a most imposing sight…The colours – the first time for many days – were all flying, and the bands were playing…The stirring music vibrated through every heart and made all impatient for battle.”

The British attack on the Zulu Royal kraal at Ulundi.

Chapter 3: Representing Tactics – The Ubiquitous Line and Square

The accurate representation of battlefield tactics has always been an enormous challenge for those armed with pen or brush. The on-going relevance of John Keegan’s 1976 work, *The Face of Battle*, speaks to both that challenge and interest in this representational problem. Keegan bemoaned the romanticized descriptions of battle that he named “battle pieces.” This was a type of narrative particularly common in the emerging military historiography of the nineteenth century that reduced tactics and the battle experience to set forms and an uncomplicated homogeneity of effects on both the cheering victors and the recoiling losers. Units either collectively adhered to their doctrinally defined formations or, usually with defeat, collapsed into confusion. The difficulties associated with controlling massed formations in the chaos of a smoke filled and noisy battlefield, notwithstanding the effects of weapons on the body, seemed unimportant to military history. Although much of Keegan’s concern was the singular physical and emotional reality of fighting and its skewed depiction – a topic that is addressed in the next chapter – he was also intrigued by the way that battles unfolded tactically and organizationally. In effect, Keegan sought to present the contrast between the ideal or expected character of warfare, and the actual way in which men in battle

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move and fight.

This chapter considers the way Victorians and Edwardians were shown how the British army conducted its battles tactically. It will demonstrate that colonial wars and the popular image of those wars presented an anachronistic idea of how battles were fought. Furthermore, this anachronism marched in step with the immediate domestic manifestation of uniforms and pageantry by Volunteer Force units, Regular Army military displays, and the tradition of the British army based on long past glory. It was not, however, a representation of tactics that risked eliminating the individual from the narrative; the idea of subsuming the individual into a military culture was anathema to a Britain that was militaristic and nationalistic but not apparently at the expense of liberal individuality. Within the context of familiar tactical forms, the soldier still needed the agency to reveal his valour and thereby demonstrated the worth of warfare.

This chapter will also show that the attempted accuracy and educational agenda of even fictional accounts of warfare nevertheless offered a largely false sense of how warfare outside the colonial realm was evolving. This is in addition to the truncated impression it revealed of the varied strategic and operational character of colonial campaigns that rarely offered the battles so favoured in the narratives of mass culture. Finally, it must be emphasized that many works have considered the manner in which the British army’s organization and military doctrine were affected by some of the anachronistic qualities of colonial warfare; offensive strategies, aggressive close-order tactics, and decisive battles were beguiling and the military itself was deeply engaged in

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an intellectual debate, particularly after the experience of the Anglo-Boer War. While these technical considerations of warfare need mention here, the emphasis of this chapter remains predominantly the popular access to military tactics as represented in the mass media.

How soldiers perform their tactical evolutions in battle has long been analyzed by historians and tends to be a mystery to civilians. The effectiveness of the English longbowmen and the tactical dynamic of the Napoleonic infantry column versus the firing line are all perennially debated. Depictions of twentieth century warfare, both fictional and documentary, generally add to the mystery of tactics. In contrast to the spatially concentrated and lockstep formations of old, the seemingly chaotic modern ‘empty battlefield’ with its soldiers dispersed and concealed is difficult to conceptualize and represent. Weapons technology is prominent, the enemy is often unseen, and there seem to be only few ‘friendly’ soldiers in the frame or narrative. The organizational and dynamic structures imposed on fighting – tactics – seem to fade in favour of individual initiative and improvisation. This is in contrast to the long history of the collective

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4 The most important post-war analyses regarding the conduct of the war were the Elgin and Esher Committee Reports of 1903. The former was a systemic analysis considering the organization, intelligence, and functions of the Army. The latter considered the command and control of the army with particular emphasis on the development of a modern general staff. Some of the recommendations found their way into the modernizing reforms introduced by the Secretary of War, Viscount Haldane in 1906-12. Jay Stone and Erwin A. Schmidl, *The Boer War and Military Reforms* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1988), 144-150. In his military analysis of the war, Leopold Scholtz asserts that the post-war commissions failed to assess the fundamental changes to warfare that had occurred. Instead, the initial troubles faced by the British were seen as failings of their army’s organization and methods. Thus, the military’s conceptualization of war itself had not changed. Leopold Scholtz, *Why the Boers Lost the War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 154-155. Analyses of tactical developments during the Great War necessarily address the pre-war period, often in some detail. Tim Travers’, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare 1900-1918* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987) considers the tactical impact of the Anglo-Boer War on British doctrine as a means to understand the disasters of the early war prior to examining the wider developments. Paddy Griffith’s *Battle Tactics on the Western Front; The British Army’s Art of Attack 1916-18* (New Haven: Yale, 1994) emphasizes the more dynamic character of tactics revealed in the last two years of the war, but he too offers a brief commentary of the period between 1900 and 1914.
experience of war that even survived the deadly innovations of the nineteenth century
and largely defined the experience of the trenches of the Great War.⁵ Of course, armies
are still as concerned about controlling the shape of battle as they have always been, and
bodies of soldiers operate in defined formations set out by training manuals and dictated
by military doctrines.

Perhaps because of the dispersed nature of contemporary warfare and the cultural
emphasis on individual narratives in battle, modern group tactics are less familiar, if no
better understood, than those used in the past. The image of shoulder-to-shoulder brightly
uniformed soldiers fighting at close range on the Plains of Abraham or in countless, and
popularly re-enacted, American Civil War battles is not a difficult one to conger, and if
imagination fails, popular media has repeatedly provided the necessary images in film
and print. Similarly, the redoubtable British square and “the thin red line” still have
some currency in our own popular culture and certainly did in late-nineteenth century
Britain. Why this is so has much to do with the military education that the media
provided Britons through their representations of battle and the tactics used to win the
campaigns of empire.

The tactical mechanics of fighting were certainly presented in the varied forms of
the juvenile and adult culture. Considered an issue of historical and cultural significance,
it seems that to report how battles were won was almost as important as winning them in
the first place, and writers and illustrators went to some trouble to get the “how” right, at
least within narrowly defined parameters. But in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth

⁵ George Mosse explores the contrasting character of war experience comparing the persistent collective
experience of the Great War’s trenches and the camaraderie that it engendered, to the individualized shape
of warfare in the Second World War. George L. Mosse, “Two World Wars and the Myth of the War
Experience,” Journal Of Contemporary History 21, no.4 (1986).
centuries, tactical developments struggled to balance the security of the close order, disciplined, and familiar tradition of the Napoleonic legacy with the individualistic, dispersed and seemingly chaotic tactics of the empty fire-swept modern battlefield. Complicated by the vagaries of the diverse colonial experience, both the army and the mass culture somehow had to define the British way of war. The competing notions of battle tactics will be explored in turn as a way into the cultural interpretation of battle.

The Napoleonic Legacy and the Development of Tactics in the Nineteenth Century

Military principles and tactical developments in the nineteenth century were profoundly influenced by the legacy of the Napoleonic Wars that persisted too long in the military and even longer in the mass culture. Whereas the eighteenth century emphasized professionalism and rigid linear tactics, Napoleon’s army, born of the Revolution, was more flexible in its application of novel theoretical developments in tactical doctrine. Firing lines were supplemented by clouds of harassing skirmishers and fast moving, narrow frontage columns; the erosion of enemy morale was achieved as much by the threat of close assault as it was by the pulverizing effects of firepower. Artillery, slow to emerge from its pre-eighteenth century technological and doctrinal limitations, also played a vital role in demoralizing the enemy in anticipation of the decisive assault by bayonet and sword. In this context, cavalry too was reborn as a key element of shock and could turn an enemy’s retreat into a rout. Napoleon’s successes,

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6 M. A. Ramsay supports the commonly held view that the Napoleonic Wars largely shaped modern war as it was emerging in the nineteenth century. M. A. Ramsay, Command and Cohesion; The Citizen soldier and Minor Tactics in the British Army, 1870-1914 (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002), 15-16. He notes the specific persistence of Wellington’s tactical influence for at least fifty years. Ramsay, 23. Napoleon and his military genius were frequently applauded in the popular press. Even in The Boy’s Own Paper, and as late as 1911, an article written by a British artillery officer describes the military superiority of Napoleon over his Continental opponents as demonstrated at the Battle of Austerlitz. Lieutenant-Colonel John Adye, RA, “Austerlitz. Napoleon’s Greatest Battle and Victory,” The Boy’s Own Paper Annual 34, no. 2(October
won by a combination of strategic vision, organizational sophistication, and tactical flexibility were compelling. Napoleon’s Grande Armée was therefore the model of military achievement and celebrated for its characteristics of dynamism, a remarkable record of victory, and the apparently decisive nature of those victories.\(^7\) It seemed the apogee of the art of war.Incrementally, and sometimes long after the conclusion of the wars, every major Continental power emulated elements of the French military system that had previously defeated them: mass conscription, staff reorganization and professionalism, and tactical methods that saw a move toward columnar maneuver and assaults.\(^8\) However, Britain alone resisted fully integrating the new way of war relying on its own traditions and methods while negotiating the broader principles derived from the Napoleonic experience, ultimately in the context of colonial warfare.

The impact of Napoleon was hard to ignore for both the military that admired some aspects of his way of war and a public that fell victim to his mythologized romantic qualities. Of course, the British had their own legacy to celebrate from those wars. In

\(^7\) The military methods of Napoleon have been the subject of a massive historiography. This includes the unapologetically enthusiastic works of David Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (New York: MacMillan, 1966) to the more critical assessments like those of Owen Connelly, *Blundering to Glory* (Delaware: SR Books, 1999) and Robert Epstein, “Patterns of Change and Continuity in Nineteenth Century Warfare,” *The Journal of Military History* 56, no. 3 (July 1992): 375-388, who put much more weight on the instrument Napoleon inherited from the revolution and the failings of his opponents. While the first position might appear like historical sycophancy, the latter interpretations are too ready to define military success as the default of an enemy’s failure; Napoleon, of course, had to seize the opportunities his opponents provided and his methods and character were well suited to achieve that end. And more importantly here, Napoleon deliberately constructed a glorified image of those same achievements that was successfully exported over time and space.

\(^8\) The political implications of the military reforms made their adoption complicated for the autocratic regimes. After 1806, the Prussians reformed their staff and expanded their system of recruitment while retaining aristocratic military privilege, all under the guise of the war of ‘national liberation.’ The Habsburgs were more conservative, but modest tactical and organizational reforms were instituted by 1809. Creating a large militia was approved in 1808, but, in spite of a good performance in the 1809 campaign, was withdrawn from front line service. For the Habsburgs the risks associated with universal conscription were too great in their multi-ethnic empire. Gunther E. Rothenberg, “The Habsburg Army in the Napoleonic Wars,” *Military Affairs* 37, no. 1 (February, 1973: 1-5.
contrast to the Napoleonic equation of victory through a professionalized imperial staff controlling the actions of a mass conscript army, the British army found victory in a volunteer army led by an amateur aristocratic staff, enacting a strategy that was often at odds with their political masters, and using eighteenth century linear tactics. In a maelstrom of romanticized and certainly revolutionized warfare that was ultimately impressive to all, including the British, they seemed attached to the more methodical methods of Frederick the Great, ignoring that Napoleon had rendered these obsolete in 1806. Fortunately, the British had found excellent leadership in dedicated military men like the Duke of Wellington and the context of British campaigning in the Napoleonic Wars suited their doctrines and capacity.

Fighting in Spain and Portugal, the French military system proved far less effective than it had against the Austrians, Prussians and Russians. Iberia was a peripheral campaign for Napoleon and failed to fully occupy his attention – he only briefly went to Spain late in 1808. His marshals were not usually up to the task of campaigning in a hostile terrain and climate, against an Anglo-Portuguese Army that was adequately supplied and supported by a guerilla war that made French strategic maneuver slow. Most Spaniards were not duped by the promise of liberty and equality, and found fraternity in opposing French oppression. All this militated against the Napoleonic principles of war that found its greatest advantages in rapid maneuver and superior concentration of force to achieve decisive battle. None of these principles was easily achieved in Spain or Portugal where the French often fought battles in which they were compelled to attack with little or no advantage in strength against a Wellington who understood defensive tactics perfectly with an instrument of war that developed its own
Napoleonic myth: the scarlet clad British infantryman and his Brown Bess musket.

This soldier and weapon of the Napoleonic Wars were the more prominent historical origins of the ‘thin red line’ made popular by the Crimean war painting of that name by Robert Gibb in 1881. The line formation continued to be the most common battalion disposition of the Napoleonic period since its shallow files of two to four soldiers arrayed in wide ranks allowed for the maximum use of firepower. This attribute came with a cost to mobility; a line formation required strict discipline to maneuver a unit that might be two to five hundred men wide. Conscript armies found this increasingly difficult to perform but the British professionals usually retained the line as their principal battlefield formation. While academic and popular histories more recently battle over the true nature of the British line versus French column tactics, the common notion of Wellington and his infantry lines defeating Napoleon’s columns was awash in the print and illustrations of the later nineteenth century. Edward Creasy’s popular military history names Waterloo as the last decisive battle, and explains the vulnerability of the French column when met by “heavy volleys of musketry from an extended line, followed up by a resolute bayonet charge.” This high profile of the British line was particularly evident in the later nineteenth century when Napoleonic subjects in print and paint were extremely popular; in the 1890s, Napoleonic battles were the subject of

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10 James Arnold recently summarized the historiography of this tactical debate that started most explicitly with a lecture by the Napoleonic military historian Sir Charles Oman, in 1910. Oman presented an interpretation of this confrontation (which the British line usually won) that emphasized the superiority of British firepower as a function of formation; a line brought muskets to bear. Arnold challenges this by considering a much wider array of interpretations that included training and doctrine. James Arnold, “A Reappraisal of Column versus Line in the Peninsular War,” The Journal of Military History 68, no. 3 (April, 2004), 535-552.

paintings twice as often as contemporary battle scenes. The juvenile novelist, G. A. Henty, also made direct reference to this ubiquitous tactical confrontation in one of his pulp works:

It was thus through the wars of the period that the English and the French always fought: the French in massive column, the English in long line. Once again, as at Albuera and in many a stricken field, the line proved the conqueror. Overlapping the columns opposed to it, pouring scathing volleys upon each flank, and then charging on the shaken mass with the bayonet, the British regiments drove the enemy back beyond the hedgerows, and were with difficulty restrained from following them up the face of the opposite hill.

The Peninsular campaign established that reputation, but the battles of the Waterloo campaign were most frequently celebrated. Episodic battle narratives like Henty’s fixed the notion of British tactics for the mass culture regardless of medium. Victory was defined by superior firepower issued from line or square, discipline and the bayonet charge *coup de grâce*. All of these elements would be found in the popular descriptions of British tactics and warfare, regardless of the technological leaps made between 1815 and 1914. Breech-loaders and bolt-action might make the first element

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13 G. A. Henty, *One Of The 28th, A Tale Of Waterloo* (London: Blakie and Sons, 1890), 304-305. Keegan’s commentary on the ‘battle piece’ quotes an excerpt from General Sir William Napier’s *History of the War in the Peninsula* about the Battle of Albuera that reads similarly to Henty’s ubiquitous description of Napoleonic tactics. Keegan, 35-36. As late as 1915 a juvenile novel by a Captain F. S. Brereton details a narrative of the battle that again sets this tactical dynamic of French column and British line in high relief. The dramatic moment when the French Old Guard attacked the British centre defended by the British Guards battalions is described with relish:

> How eagerly Napoleon must have watched them! How sternly Wellington looked on at the contest! For he was not to find his belief in his troops shaken on this eventful day. The Guards were to do as well as had their comrades at Hougoumont. They suddenly rose to their feet when the dense column of the French Guards was close to them. Then a terrible volley was poured into the enemy; while, a moment later, as Wellington himself called to them to charge, the men dashed forward with wild shouts, and, launching themselves against the shattered head of the column, flung the flower of Napoleon’s army literally to the winds.


14 A detailed consideration of Napoleonic tactics is provided by Brent Nosworthy, *Battle Tactics Of Napoleon And His Enemies* (London: Constable, 1995). This work considers many of the typical tactical confrontations experienced on the Napoleonic battlefield and explodes myths such as those regarding
even more deadly, but the will to finish the enemy with the bayonet seems a perennial feature of popular representations of British tactics in the field. Even the military accepted this belief in the bayonet assault that found renewed purpose in colonial wars.

Post-Napoleonic reaction meant that most nations demobilized their conscript forces and returned to smaller, volunteer armies, useful for controlling the populations of Europe purportedly imbued with revolutionary ideas. But as much as the French army’s success and ultimate failure rested on total war and mass conscription, the desire for decisive victory through aggressive offensive strategies and tactics was not lost on the now more professional military staffs of Europe.\textsuperscript{15} The analysis of Napoleon’s methods of war by Antoine Jomini, \textit{Précis de l’art de la guerre} (1838), confirmed the Emperor’s mastery over warfare as a discrete military challenge that combined the scientific application of principles with the effective use of fighting will. It was deemed the very culmination of the trajectory of warfare since the Middle Ages and implied that war could be controlled and won through dynamic tactics and stratagems. Having had a diverse military career in French and Russian service, Jomini was long-lived (1779-1869) and his ideas remained equally enduring throughout the nineteenth century.

Uncomplicated by the confusion of actual combat, his theoretical musings on the art of war suited the military who wanted to retain control over warfare in the manner that he

\textsuperscript{15} Strategy, a key component of Napoleon’s politicized vision of war, was largely misunderstood after 1815. Like so many other powers, the British adopted the interpretation the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars by Antoine Jomini in his \textit{Précis de l’art de la guerre}. Seeing Napoleon’s control over war as the culmination of developments initiated in the eighteenth century, Jomini left war as a tactical and operational problem divorced from broader strategy and politics. In some ways this suited the British and their colonial wars that were often about discrete campaigns, methodically undertaken, using a simple strategy to generate a decisive battle that favoured concentration of force and firepower over maneuver. Colonial Wars were largely operational and tactical problems; strategy was simply a means to reduce war to those levels. Hew Strachan, \textit{From Waterloo to Balaclava: Tactics, Technology, and the British Army, 1815-1854} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 2-6.
asserted was possible.\textsuperscript{16} Even technological developments that improved firepower and made movement in the open increasingly deadly, failed to diminish the allure of aggressive tactics.

Whereas the Napoleonic soldier was equipped with a musket that had little changed for one hundred years, the mid-nineteenth century brought on a flurry of technological developments in arms that would have serious tactical implications as they were fully integrated into the armies of the industrial states.\textsuperscript{17} The reliable percussion cap of the 1820s, the accurate Minie bullet of the 1830s, coupled with the mass production of the rifle in the 1840s and then the breech-loading rifle in the 1850s (the Prussian Dreyse ‘needle-gun’), and the application of the same technologies to artillery, all forced the militaries of Europe to consider how offensive tactics could overcome the defensive superiority of firepower. Military tradition, the preservation of class and officer’s privileges, economic considerations, inter-arm jealousies, and the uncertainties of applying the science of technology to the art of war were some of the principal issues that shaped the evolution of European army doctrines and tactics in the nineteenth century. However, the developments were not a linear progression. Two notable but unexceptional Continental examples illustrate the point and provide context to the British developments. Prior to 1859 the Austrians had recognized the deadliness of firepower and adopted linear tactics. Their defeat by the assault formations of the French


\textsuperscript{17} The strategic impact of technology was perhaps even more striking with train transport, telegraph communications and metallurgical and chemical developments changing the production and effectiveness of the new weapons. Of course, the great fleets of steel and massive guns revolutionized naval warfare even more dramatically although these developments were largely left untested in the late part of the century. The Anglo-German naval race was driven by the requirements of the innovations and became a source of popular fascination. See Jan Rüger, \textit{The Great Naval Game; Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
in 1859 in northern Italy forced them to revise their tactical doctrine to suit their “army of pigs.” In an unintuitive reversal of doctrine that seemed to ignore technological developments in firepower, the Austro-Hungarian army adopted multi-rank assault columns designed to bring their soldiers into close combat as quickly as possible. As far as the predominantly ethnic-German officer corps was concerned, this simpler, albeit more bloody, approach to tactics was culturally suited to the Slavic soldiers they held in such low regard. It was also more economical; shooting practice was expensive and in the wake of this new tactical doctrine Austro-Hungarian soldiers were issued with paltry amounts of ammunition for annual training.

The cultural, political, and economic dimensions of military developments in the Habsburg Empire were similarly evident in the French Third Republic later in the century. Douglas Porch offers an excellent analysis of the evolution of French military thinking infused with political battles between republicans challenging the conservatives over issues like conscription service time, arms acquisitions and the nature of army doctrine suitable for their nation in arms. Here, the conclusion was that defensive firepower could be overcome with offensive fire, vigorous movement and the bayonet that suited the mentalité of the French citizen soldier.

Ultimately, in Britain too, political and social considerations within the British officer caste kept the devolution of tactical command to non-commissioned officers from

19 Douglas Porch, The March to the Marne: The French Army 1871-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Robert Ripperger, in “The Development French Artillery for the Offensive,” The Journal of Military History 59, no.4, (October 1995): 599-618, also notes the political and cultural predisposition favouring offensive tactical doctrines and how these influenced the artillery acquisition decisions that neglected positional heavy artillery and preferred the mobility of flat trajectory, open sighted field artillery like the light 75mm field gun.
fully developing at a time when firepower was demanding more dispersed and, therefore, lower level control over tactics. Commissioned officers sought to retain this control and largely succeeded; not only did British battalions have more officers per number of privates compared to their European counterparts, few of those officers had been commissioned from the ranks as late as 1910.\textsuperscript{20} As revealed in Chapter 1, the British officer elite disproportionately remained the preserve of the aristocracy and gentry even after the Cardwell reforms of the 1870s eliminated the purchase of commissions in favour of promotion based on merit.\textsuperscript{21} And while tactical control was still retained by company and battalion level officers, their jobs became ever more complex as war shifted irresistibly from that dominated by concerns over morale and offensive action to the maneuver stifling technologies of firepower. It was a difficult transition for the tradition-bound officer corps to handle.\textsuperscript{22} For example, the machine gun was readily accepted as a new weapon, but its role remained ambiguous until well into 1914.\textsuperscript{23} In spite of the experience of the Anglo-Boer War, or even the hideous effects that firepower inflicted on their earlier opponents such as the Zulus or Mahdists, the machine gun was perceived as a defensive weapon that hindered the offensive spirit. It was an evaluation that made it unsuitable to the cavalry struggling to keep alive its role as an instrument of shock.

\textbf{Colonial Wars and Tactics}

Summaries of such complex issues as tactical doctrines can only lead to broad

\textsuperscript{20} As late as 1914 a British battalion had a high ratio of 1 officer for every 34.3 privates compared to 1 for 54.5 in France and 1 for 45.2 in Germany. M. A. Ramsay, \textit{Command and Cohesion; The Citizen Soldier and Minor Tactics in the British army, 1870-1918} (Westport: Praeger, 2002), 43.


\textsuperscript{22} Tim Travers, \textit{The Killing Ground; The British Army, the Western Front & the Emergence of Modern War 1900-1918} (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword Books, 2003), 62.

\textsuperscript{23} Tim Travers, “The Offensive and the Problem of Innovation in British Military Thought 1870-1915,” \textit{The
assertions that too often make the agents of these developments seem foolhardy. This is not the intention here. Doctrinal principles developed in the late-nineteenth century produced infantry tactics and drill manuals that wrestled with how to balance institutional needs with the dramatic technological developments. In the British army the tactical doctrine dispersed the strength of a battalion (the basic tactical unit of command) into a deep formation of successive company or multi-company strength lines designed to be flexible, mobile, mutually supporting, and minimized exposure to enemy fire. What needs to be noted, however, is that tactical doctrines are influenced by factors much more diverse than technology and training. Social, historical, economic and political forces clearly influenced the shape of military doctrine and meant that even the dispersed ‘modern’ tactics that were emerging in the nineteenth century were still geared toward offensive action. And for the British army the colonial experience was another important influence on the development of its overall fighting methods.

This influence was hardly surprising led, as it was, by elites seeking further social and political advancement in an empire that offered the experience of real war, although war of a type that was often at odds with the military developments in Europe. In spite of the tensions that typically existed between ‘colonial officers’ and their metropolitan counter-parts, the influence of the lived experience of colonial warfare on the preparations for hypothetical war in Europe was substantial prior to 1914. Indeed, colonial wars fulfilled many of the established expectations of warfare in general, particularly regarding tactics. The scale of colonial campaigns was usually small enough

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24 In spite of its dispersal and complexity, the 1896 drill book still emphasized the bayonet assault and did not explicitly define instructions for maneuver in extended order. Stone and Schmidl, 14.
to allow the news media to personalize their coverage by not only emphasizing the commanders like Wolseley, Butler, Roberts or Kitchener, but even junior officers like those who defied the Zulu assaults at Rorke’s Drift or won Victoria crosses in far flung campaigns around the globe; the individual ‘hero’ could still be celebrated while the amorphous masses of the enemy provided the scale that made the concomitant dangers to the lone Briton even more poignant. In addition, though, the expectation of offensive and decisive warfare that the Napoleonic tradition had purportedly established was also clear, and in the case of Britain, the influence of colonial wars was that much more important given the overt disinterest in Continental commitments. If this was so for the military institution itself, for the public, who read about imperial adventures and martial successes against varied hosts of Natives, the notion that war was defined by the imperial experience of it was hard to disavow and certainly was not by the mass culture.

A definitive statement about the tactical character of colonial warfare was found in the book written by Colonel C. E. Callwell (1859-1928) in 1896 appropriately titled *Small Wars; Their Principles and Practice*. A standard text for the British army until the Second World War, Callwell’s analysis of colonial warfare draws upon a wide range of historical and contemporary evidence, including examples from non-British imperial campaigns. His own wide ranging experience included participation in campaigns in Afghanistan, the First and Second Anglo-Boer Wars, and diverse staff and intelligence

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25 Stories of Victoria Cross recipients were common features of the popular press, and particularly the juvenile press. See Chapter 1, representations of Uniforms and Equipment.

26 Even in 1907 the British Government was more interested in sending the Expeditionary Force to protect India than the Continent, coming to the conclusion that “the British Army need not be tied down to the protection of the British Isles.” Michael Howard, *The Continental Commitment* (London: Temple Smith, 1972), 20.

responsibilities in the War Office throughout his career, including during the Great War. Revised in 1899 and then in 1906 to include his Anglo-Boer War experience, Callwell’s *Small Wars* is remarkable in its breadth and detail on how to conduct a colonial campaign, particularly at the operational and tactical level. For Callwell, higher strategic or political considerations were of little importance. He saw the principal concern of a commander in the field was bringing the Native enemy to heel quickly: “in a small war the only possible attitude to assume, speaking strategically, is the offensive.” With strategic élan, it seemed the enemy could either be ‘overawed’ or, more infrequently, be drawn into a decisive battle that would inevitably end the war. It was a recipe that the military could embrace and made for exciting press coverage.

It was clear to Callwell that a sedate strategy favoured the Native opponent familiar with the local terrain and deriving support from the home territory which would be little taxed by the limited technical or logistical requirements of these simply organized and equipped forces. In contrast, European armies required much more logistical support to ensure that their military systems and technology could be deployed in campaigns that invariably plunged them into hostile territory in the hope of precipitating battles that tactically favoured them. However, while modern arms and methods bore tactical advantages, Callwell identifies European discipline and vigor as the

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29 Douglas Porch observes in Callwell’s analysis the absence of the broad strategic and political dimension of colonial war as emphasized by the great nineteenth century theorist von Clausewitz and applied in the field by, for example, Wellington in India. Callwell’s deliberate separation of politics from the character of colonial wars exposes a feature of popular commentary and representations of these wars where their origins and justifications are usually separated from the manner of their conduct. This allowed the positively shaped character of war to be upheld while the specific political context of particular campaigns could be more critically discussed. Douglas Porch, “Introduction to the Bison Books Edition” in Callwell, XV.
30 Callwell, 75.
key trump cards in the quest for decisive victory.

It was an assessment that fed into a broad national preconception about British character and soldierly superiority. As asserted by General Sir William Gatacre in an 1899 interview for the juvenile paper *Chums*, “there is no army in the world that can render a better account of itself than the British,” but he also suggested that fighting against “barbarians” did not compare with the complexities of fighting against Europeans. As one of Kitchener’s generals in the lop-sided Omdurman campaign, Gatacre had the experience and authority to make such an assertion, although, shortly after this interview, Gatacre would experience defeat at the hands of a less ‘barbaric’ opponent in South Africa.

Callwell repeatedly emphasizes the importance of psychological factors over purely physical or technological capabilities. Whereas Native forces (according to Callwell, only sometimes constituting an ‘army’ with all of its organizational and systemic connotations) were often fickle in their will to fight, European discipline and aggression could rob the enemy of initiative and impose upon them the shape of battle. So important was this psychological fortitude that Callwell provides unusually numerous examples of where heavily outnumbered European forces defeated large bodies of Native enemies by an audacious display of will and bluff that spoke to the superior character of Europeans. Russian and French exploits are included, but of the six examples four are British including two from the Indian Mutiny, one from the 1882 Egyptian Campaign and

31 Callwell 24.
33 Described as “one of the finest and most daring officers in the British Army” by *Chums*, Gatacre lost the Battle of Stromberg (December 11, 1899) largely due to overzealousness, and was dismissed. Thomas Packenham, *The Boer War* (New York; Random House, 1979), 223 and 249.
34 Callwell, 29-33.
another from the North-West Frontier where Callwell could draw from his own experience.\footnote{Callwell, 81-83.} Such examples fed the popular media, a fact he recognized: “[D]ash and audacity displayed at the right moment have given rise to episodes flavouring the tedious operations which are characteristic of, and inevitable in, warfare of this nature, with a spice of romance.”\footnote{Callwell, 81.} Callwell’s observation is both telling of the typical character of colonial wars as being marked by ‘tedium’ but also that particular episodes could and did define the character of warfare for the public. And, although it was clear that what constituted appropriate aggressive tactics was entirely contextual, it often meant the use of old-style close-order formations that were familiar and added to the popular representation of warfare. If audacity and vigor were to win battles, better they were done in a collective display of resolute discipline: Britain bringing order to the chaos of battle and to the un-Christian wilderness of empire with its equally wild inhabitants.\footnote{John MacKenzie develops the notion presented by the nineteenth century writer John Ruskin regarding the importance of taming the wilderness of empire much like a Christian crusade of pacification. John MacKenzie, ed., \textit{Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850-1950} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).}

Displays of offensive pluck were only sometimes recommended and ultimately Callwell emphasized the importance of prudently using tactics that recognized the character of the opponent’s style of fighting. Hence, when faced by opponents that favoured skirmishing from afar with firearms while occupying rough terrain such as forest, jungle, or mountains, the British officer was encouraged to use tactics that minimized the vulnerability of his own troops and made best use of the weapons to hand.

In the later nineteenth-century this meant breech-loading rifles and artillery and the possibility of using dispersed and mobile tactics, particularly by mounted infantry – a
troop type that brought the mobility of cavalry but the steady dismounted firepower of infantry. Fighting in central Africa, against the various peoples of the North-West Frontier, and especially against the Boers in South Africa demanded such tactics even though they were inconsistently employed. Indeed, recognizing the post-Anglo-Boer War acceptance of these types of tactics was resisted in the popular press. After stating that “war has lost a good deal of its old romance and glamour,” a 1903 article in BOP begrudgingly recognizes the need for dispersed tactics:

both attacked and attacker endeavour to make themselves as far as possible, invisible to each other. But no doubt, it needs as much courage to face a distant, unseen foe, who can comfortably ‘pot’ at you from his shelter a mile away, as you creep forward from cover to cover in open order, as it did to storm a position in the good old and bold style, shoulder to shoulder with your companions-in-arms ready to cross bayonets with the foe man on the defensive.

The author’s nostalgia for the lost “good old” tactics does not obscure the interest in the tactics themselves and the fact that these methods of war remained relevant throughout the period.

Against opponents that used swords and spears in massed formations and who were, thus, compelled to cross the ground between the opposing armies as quickly as

38 Training and drill was the responsibility of the battalion commander. Although training manuals such as the 1889 Infantry Drill Regulations were issued they were not prescriptive. Instead, the officer was provided with principles for attack and defence that he would apply to a particular situation using the appropriate formations. Ramsay, 44. This non-prescriptive approach was theoretically correct given the varied opponents and terrains over which British soldiers fought, but it could result in terrible loss of life. At the battle of Colenso in the Second Anglo-Boer War, part of the attacking force of British – the Irish Brigade under Major General Hart -- were deployed in close order formations and were shot down by the dispersed and hidden Boers. Here the officer’s preference for the morale boosting effect of close-order was sadly misplaced. Similarly, at the same battle British artillery under Colonel Long was advanced too far forward in order to engage the Boers over open sights as opposed to shelling the Boers from afar. The crews were annihilated by Boer rifle fire. Judd and Surridge, 125-126. Interestingly, saving these guns from capture became one of the great stories of the battle in the media and obscured, in the long term, some of the worst failures in the battle. A dramatic illustration of this act was given two full pages in The Graphic: John Carlton, ‘“Into the Jaws of death”: How the Victoria Cross was won at the Battle of Colenso,” The Graphic LX, no. 1576 (February 10, 1900): supplement.

possible, Callwell notes the resurgent use of outmoded close-order tactics; especially the shoulder-to-shoulder formations of the firing line and the bayonet bristling square, and even the boot-to-boot charge of cavalry. Horribly vulnerable when facing modern firepower and the antithesis of the tactical developments of dispersion in Europe, in colonial wars close-order tactics could not only be effective, they were sometimes a necessity. For example, on January 22, 1879, at the first battle of the Zulu War the British dispersed their powerful force over a wide front below the slopes of Mount Isandlwana; they failed to appreciate the speed and discipline of the spear armed Zulus and sought to halt the Zulu envelopment of their position with fire. Although the British single shot, breech-loading Martini-Henry rifles killed and wounded thousands of Zulus as they approached, the vulnerability of the widely deployed formation was exposed when the British front was contacted, pierced and out-flanked; the army collapsed. Callwell asserts that the defeat “was directly attributable to a total misconception of the tactics of the enemy.”\textsuperscript{40} In contrast, at the last battle of the war, Ulundi, the British formed a large square against which even the aggressively mobile Zulus could find no vulnerable flanks or weak-points and were forced to engage in a losing fire-fight (Illustration 3.1).

\textsuperscript{40} Callwell, 33.
They failed even to close with the British force while suffering grievously from their concentrated fire. Hence, close-order firing lines were effective and suited a British officer corps that sought to retain tactical control of its soldiers as much as it did social control over entry to the officers’ mess. Furthermore, for these officers sometimes born of families with long military traditions, the experience of using the line and square – or charging as cavalry – would have been part of their personal lore and fed into a long established military legacy that was repeatedly represented in the mass media for the wider society.

The reintroduction of close-order formations and the reliance on controlled firepower linked well with the popularly understood tradition of British firepower (or ‘shot’). This was a long legacy going back to the longbow and the mythologized
interpretations of the battles during the Hundred Years War such as Crecy (1346) and Agincourt (1415). If Shakespeare’s brave “few” under Henry V had not fully established the notion, linear firepower continued to be noteworthy in the early eighteenth century victories of the Duke of Marlborough over the French such as at Blenheim (1713) and then again in the mid-century in New France on the Plains of Abraham (1759). While apparently winning a continent with the crash of a single volley outside of Quebec was impressive, the battles of the Peninsular and Waterloo campaigns against France in the Napoleonic wars transformed the reputation into legend particularly in the histories and stories written in the later nineteenth century. It seemed that British soldiers seemed unbeatable as they stood in their firing lines – or squares – repulsing all that assailed them whether massed French columns or charging squadrons of dragoons and cuirassiers. Maida (1806), Talavera (1809), Bussaco (1810), Albuera (1811), Salamanca (1812), Fuentes de Oñoro (1811), Vitoria (1813), Quatre Bras (1815), and especially Waterloo (1815) are all familiar and, regardless of histories supporting or casting doubt on their contribution to the reputation of the British commanders, the British soldier usually emerges from these battles as a steadfast combatant, especially when deployed in line or square.

After the Napoleonic Wars there were few major military campaigns until the

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41 Few weapons of such simplicity have received the attention showered on the longbow. Modern evaluations of the weapon’s physical characteristics have tended to challenge its inherent effectiveness. It was a large simple-bow whose value was realized by social, economic, and tactical factors. However, the bow itself has been of great interest and speaks to a nationalist discourse. A wonderful example of this fascination with the bow is an article from 1929 by Henry Pancoast who concludes that the weapon had English, not Welsh, origins. He opens his article with the following rhetoric:
There is no doubt about the effectiveness of the long-bow in the hands of a skilful archer. There is no doubt that the skilful employment of archers, armed with this formidable weapon, contributed largely to the victories in the Hundred Years War. The long-bow...seems a fitting national weapon for a nation which, even in the Middle Ages, showed a more democratic temper than did the great Continental powers. Henry Pancoast, “The Origin of the Long-Bow,” PMLA, 44, no. 1 (March, 1929): 217.
middle of the century when again the tactical reality seemed little changed. The Crimean
War and the conflicts in India (for example, the Sikh Wars and the Indian Mutiny) tended
to reinforce the image of warfare as defined particularly by the infantry line and square,
or by the cavalry charge. Rifled muskets had not substantially diminished the use of
close-order tactics and the most notable popularly represented episodes of the Crimean
War simply emphasized their persistence. Assaulting the Russian lines at Alma or
Balaclava relied on the discipline and ‘pluck’ that caused the campaign to be
romanticized in spite of its apparent (although exaggerated) mismanagement by the
amateurish aristocratic command. The firing lines of Guardsmen or Highland regiments
issuing deadly shot and pressing forward with the bayonet created an enduring image that
was not even challenged by the debacle of the British cavalry charge at Balaclava that
strangely reinforced the value of such self-sacrifice and discipline as opposed to exposing
its tactical folly in the face of modern firepower.

By 1870, then, the representational repertoire of the British soldier and the tactics
he used – and warfare generally – was well established and became only further
solidified by the observation of similar tactics in colonial wars where they found new
utility and an ever widening media willing to describe them.

Representing Close-Order Warfare: Fire and Steel

British culture, and particularly the popular illustrated press, was compelled to
depict battlefield tactics when they covered the campaigns being fought in the empire.
Inevitably, the short texts and the even more restrictive frames of illustrations confronted
the problem of representing the varied formations of soldiers. This had to be done in a
manner that made warfare knowable and communicated a sense of order over the chaos
of battle, and discipline over the wild ‘savages’ the British fought. Fortunately, the
anachronistic close-order tactics used in many colonial campaigns allowed the media to
represent warfare in a familiar manner. Of course, war coverage had to also personalize
the drama of battle, although this could be done more effectively when tactics brought the
British soldier into the fighting, a topic dealt with in the next chapter.

The simplest and clearest manner in which to describe a battle or campaign is
through the graphic of a map. The map, with its tidy but abstract depiction of soldiers as
rectangles or other geometric shapes, illustrates the interrelationship between units,
friend and foe, and their disposition in the landscape. A better imposition of order and
control over battle could not be found and the newspapers, popular histories, and fiction,
provided such renditions of battlefield deployments with their implied tactics. *The
Illustrated London News (ILN)* provided various types of campaign and battlefield maps
that assumed a familiarity with military symbols. On a map of a Franco-Prussian War
battle, no legend is provided that defines the infantry and artillery symbols.42 The Zulu
War drew extensive ILN coverage including tactical and strategic maps. For example,
based on the first-hand observations of participating officers, the British public was
shown the tactical battlefield dispositions of the British and Zulus at Isandlwana,43 and
the strategic march of Lord Chelmsford’s forces in the relief of Colonel Pearson’s
garrison isolated in their fort of Ekowe which was also sketched in plan view for the
reader.44 For the 1882 Battle of Tel-El-Kebir the actual ‘plan’ of the British army’s

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43 Lieutenant Newham Davis “Sketch of the Positions of the forces Engaged at Isandula, Jan.22,” *The
Illustrated London News* LXXIV, no. 2073 (March 8, 1879): 231.
44 “Map of Lord Chelmsford’s Route to the Relief of Ekowe, and Plan of the Fort,” *The Illustrated London
deployment, as sketched by its commander Sir Garnet Wolseley, is reproduced showing the relative positions and formations of the participating units (Illustration 3.2).45

Illustration 3.2 “Plan of the Advance on Tel-El-Kebir” from the *ILN* (October 7, 1882)

The implication of this plan, from the pen of the commanding general, is one of ordered, linear, close-order dispositions, and control, an impression that had been previously established by an article that described the general’s plan for the attack: “His orders were for the whole force to move forward at half-past one in quarter column half battalions with distance for deploying [into lines]. On approaching the enemy’s works the men were to reserve their fire till close up; and then, at 200 yards distance, to cheer and carry the position at the point of the bayonet. These instructions were carried out to the letter.”46 The combination of the sketch and the description of the British deployment and tactical plan communicate a sense of full control over time and space; there seems no

room for the frictions of war to erode this control or complicate the representation of the battle.

Not surprisingly, popular military histories included – and still do – the same kinds of maps that the press was providing to describe contemporary battles. These maps are typically more detailed than those found in the weekly journals, but add little more to the understanding of battle. Here again the maps leave an impression of control and imply close-order tactics. To a certain extent this impression is not false, especially contrasting the British tactical formations with those of their opponents in campaigns where close-order drill was utilized. In *British Battles on Land and Sea* (1899) there are dozens of maps and plans of disposition throughout the text attached to the battle narratives. Some are quite detailed and grapple with the passage of time by offering sequential plans of the changing positions of British units through a particular battle. For example, for the Battle of Tamai, fought during the Sudan campaign of 1884, the full-page map is divided into two parts. One part offers a broad view of the full battle with both the British and the Mahdist armies illustrated and arrows indicating their movements through the course of the action. The second part illustrates the change in unit disposition of the Second Brigade as its square formation was broken, forced to retire and then reformed into a linear deployment to resume its advance. The map and unit plan illustrations are useful but inevitably sterile. The character of the fighting is described in the text as “hand-to-hand” and “wild,” but the maps and plans can only communicate the transition from one ordered formation to another. Representing the discombobulated British square as a confusion of dots, as is the custom in these maps for the Native

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armies, was evidently not entertained. As correct as it was to emphasize the use of shoulder-to-shoulder tactical formations, the maps and plans fail to suggest the erosion of these formations through the process of movement over rough terrain or from combat.

Precisely the same limitations of the battle map form are exposed in the map for the Battle of Abu Klea that similarly featured the breaking of a British square (Illustration 3.3). Here, the map simply shows the Dervishes as a cloud of dots with an arrow indicating the direction of their assault on the ordered British formation denoted by a rigidly drawn square; even the British pack camels seem to be in parade order arrayed in

Illustration 3.3 “Plan of Battle of Abu Klea (January 17, 1885)” from *British Battles on Land and Sea* (1899)

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48 Grant, 576.
tidy ranks. The dispersed skirmish lines, that during the battle were over-run and
destroyed, are also illustrated in an orderly crescent formation with evenly spaced circles
each with a small line extending from the circumference to denote a uniform fighting
front. Again, to indicate this ordered manner of deployment and drill is not wrong, but it
fails to communicate the character of the fighting and how idealized tactics and
formations become seriously compromised in the course of battle.

This is only partly made apparent by a dramatic line illustration featuring a tightly
cropped view of the “Death of Colonel Burnaby” positioned on the facing page to the
battle map of Abu Klea. The orderliness of the plan view of the battle and the desperate
fighting shown in the very restricted frame of the illustration exposes the contrasting
narrative and representational choices that British culture presented to the consumer. It
marks a tension that is carefully negotiated and serves two competing but ultimately
complimentary aims: the broad narrative as depicted in the maps or sweeping ‘battle
piece’ script explores the warfare of tactical precision and control, but the personal
narratives of the close-in illustration or character focused text exposes a less mechanistic
interpretation of warfare that emphasizes the soldier’s individual valour that the higher
level of description inherently omits.

Given the emphasis on individual protagonists, it is surprising to find the use of
battle maps in juvenile fiction. However, as the ‘boys’ own historian,’ Henty’s juvenile
novels include the same kind of battle maps prevalent in the popular military histories.
Indeed, large sections of his novels read like histories or recent news reportage, and the
addition of maps that detailed the dispositions of the opposing armies leant credibility to
his unabashed claims of historical accuracy. For example, in Under Wellington’s
Command; A Tale of the Peninsular War, Henty assures his readers in the Preface “that in all the actions in which the British army took part the details are accurately given…” and supports this claim with maps for the battles of Talavera, Busaco, and Salamanca.\(^4^9\)

Similarly, for the novels recounting contemporary campaigns, The Dash for Khartoum; A Tale of the Nile Expedition and With Kitchener in the Soudan, there are battle maps for the actions at El-Teb, Tamai, Abu Klea, Atbara, and Omdurman. Henty’s willingness to leave his protagonist in the margins and temporarily replace his story with history is emphasized with his use of maps that offer precisely the same interpretive options to the reader regarding the nature of warfare as they do in the press and popular histories.

Of course, the abstraction of battle maps makes their descriptive value extremely limited. Notwithstanding the questions about the accuracy of the geography and depicted dispositions, isolated battle maps provide only a moment in time. How the units being illustrated approached their relative positions is often ignored and their subsequent movements – often chaotic, dangerous and desperate – might also be omitted or suggested by only tidy directional arrows. If the common battle piece narrative reduces the experience of battle to homogeneity, the battle map makes it utterly sterile. To supplement the battle map and explore the physicality of tactics, publications provided illustrations that exposed the composition of formations in a more detailed manner. As with the uniform plates that systematically provided clear information about military dress, many publications issued quite technically accurate renderings of battlefield formations distinct from the news or historical battle narratives, or as a supplement to them.

\(^{49}\) G. A. Henty, Under Wellington’s Command; A Tale of the Peninsular War (London: Blackie and Son,
Line, square, and extended order are terms that are basically self-descriptive of the unit formations they represent. Of course, these battlefield formations were not seen by Britons at home and certainly not in the context of actual fighting. Soldiers in parades, at state functions, and war game maneuvers would provide an impression of these formations. The popular press and art works provided representations of these formations ‘in action’ that gave dimension to the image of tactics more effectively than that offered by maps alone.

Notwithstanding the established reputation of the British firing line, the hollow square was a particularly iconic and familiar form that was repeatedly represented in the culture both as an historical phenomenon and as a contemporary tactic. As its name implies, the formation was a quadrangle that, when stationary and engaged in fighting, had soldiers facing in all four directions. Composed of single platoons, companies, battalions or even complete brigades, the square had no flanks and was originally meant to resist cavalry charges; steadied by the formation, infantry were more prepared to present their bayonets to cavalrymen whose horses more wisely preferred to avoid the points. In colonial wars, the massed charges of Native warriors, often making use of terrain to approach from any angle, resuscitated the use of the square which had been rendered obsolete in European war due to enhanced firepower.

The historical familiarity of the square was largely due to its most famous use at the Battle of Waterloo where the Anglo-Dutch infantry squares repulsed the French cavalry charges. The discipline of the British infantry squares to withstand the French onslaught significantly contributed to the defeat of Napoleon and to the reputation of the
British infantry. This scene was particularly popular with painters whose works in the late-nineteenth century shaped the most enduring images of the battle and added to the general popularity of the Napoleonic genre. The most famous of these are Elizabeth Butler’s “Quatre Bras,” William Barnes Wollen’s “28th Gloucester Regiment at Waterloo,” Richard Simkin’s “Cameron Highlanders in Square at Waterloo,” and even the French painter Felix Phillipoteaux’s familiar “Cuirassiers Charging the Highlanders at the Battle of Waterloo on 18th June, 1815” (1874). The same scene was carefully described by Henty in his novel *One of the 28th; A tale of Waterloo* where the British soldiers represented in Wollen’s painting stand ready in square eager for a “…chance of active work.”

Finally, within the limited parameters of a music hall stage, military tableaus favoured such familiar scenes of close-order drill such as the square that implied fighting without actually having to represent it. In a 1912 stage sketch *Wellington* the desperate fighting at Waterloo is communicated through dialogue, but the defiance of the British was visually presented in a tableau of actors forming a square around a mounted Wellington. Appropriately titled “The British Square,” the tableau embedded in the sketch was accompanied by martial music that made the well-known victory assured.

Already culturally understood, the square would have been familiar also due to its renewed use in countering the massed charges of Native opponents in empire as reported in the popular press. The *ILN*, for example, provided a useful rendition of how the Camel corps disposed themselves in square during their march between Korti and Metammeh to

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50 G.A. Henty, *One of the 28th; A Tale of Waterloo* (London: Blackie and Son, 1890), 337.
51 Dave Russell, “‘We carved our way to glory,’ The British Soldier in Music hall Song and Sketch, c. 1880-1914,” in *Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850-1950*, John Mackenzie, ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 64.
relieve Khartoum.\textsuperscript{52} Drawn by the ‘war special’ Melton Prior, the illustration is from a ground perspective and shows a tidy arrangement of two infantry squares positioned to provide covering fire for a larger square of their dismounted camels and attendants. To ensure that the tactical formation was unambiguous, a supplemental plan drawing of the same arrangement of units is provided. Of note is that this illustration is not linked to a particular battle narrative, but is a study of the tactical formation as employed by the soldiers operating in the Sudan. Of course, both the square and its use in battle were topical in that same issue as they related to an un-illustrated narrative of the Battle of Abou Klea. The eagerly awaited illustrations of this battle and of the march to Metammeh followed in subsequent issues, based on first hand sketches.\textsuperscript{53} Certainly two of the most outstanding of these illustrations were those rendered by Caton Woodville, including “On the Road to Metammeh: a British Square,” which was a supplementary pullout illustration, and “The Battle of Abou Klea: Repulse of the Arab Charge.”\textsuperscript{54}

Although both are drawn from a narrow perspective not showing the full nature of the tactical formation, it is worth noting that the former depicts soldiers that are clearly drilled and issuing fire as denoted by their poses, the presence of smoke, and the fact that the artillery crews, centrally positioned in the illustration, are reloading their smoking pieces. Having been educated regarding the disposition of a square in the earlier issue,

\textsuperscript{52} “The Relief of Khartoum. -- from Korti to Metammeh on the Road to Khartoum: the Start Across the Desert; Facimile of Sketches by our Special Artist, Mr. Melton Prior,” The Illustrated London News LXXXVI, no. 2390 (February 7, 1885): 162-63.

\textsuperscript{53} The \textit{ILN} sketch coverage of the campaign was provided by Melton Prior who was present at the major battle of Abu Klea. The first news of this battle was reported in detail on February 7, but was not illustrated. The readers were reminded “that sketches cannot be sent home so quickly as the verbal narratives of newspaper correspondents, which are telegraphed from Korti to London. “The Nile Expedition. The Relief of Khartoum; Our Illustrations,” The Illustrated London News LXXXVI, no. 2390 (February 7, 1885): 141.

\textsuperscript{54} Both illustrations are presented in The Illustrated London News LXXXVI, no. 2393 (February 28, 1885): 222-223.
the *ILN* reader is now shown the stance of the British soldier in that formation named in the title of the work. The illustration of Abou Klea represents a contrast in style depicting a moment of close combat that the textual description notes lasted a “few minutes”; it was, however, a few minutes that dominates the narrative of the battle in most accounts, again punctuating the representational tension between tactics and fighting, or between combat using firepower and steel. Of course, the square formation represented the perfect narrative tool for the representation of warfare. It was familiar, like a line it provided a base of fire-power, but it was also definitively a formation that anticipated close combat with a charging enemy.

Even parade ground representations of the square formation negotiate these contrasting tactical circumstances and the enduring value that even the military felt for this anachronistic formation. In the lavishly produced *The Navy and Army Illustrated* (1895-1899), there are photographs of units drilling specifically in square formation. Based on the manner of representation, it seems initially that this drill is just that, parade ground training to build unit cohesion and discipline, and not intended for practical use in the field. In a three-photograph study of on-shore drill for sailors, the first is titled “Small arm companies H. M. S. ‘Hawke.’ – ‘Square, Ready!’.”55 The caption below the photo notes that the sailors “have formed the familiar ‘square to resist cavalry’ which is very effective as a spectacle.” The implication that the formation is useful only for “spectacle” is undermined by the commentary that follows, stating that, “any modern cavalry officer who gets his squadron going against such a square awaiting him with

55 “The work of Men-of-war’s Men Ashore,” *The Navy and Army Illustrated* IV, no. 42 (July 23, 1897): 145. A similar photograph from 1896 shows a group of sailors “thrown into what the soldier calls the “prepare for cavalry formation.” There is no commentary or sense that this is an unusual piece of drill. “Naval training on shore: -- ‘Form Rallying Group,’” *The Navy and Army Illustrated* 1, no. 2 (January 3,
repeating rifles would certainly find himself ‘told off’ in uncomplimentary terms, if he survived.” Instead of the square being cast as a quaint anachronism in 1897, it is the cavalry officer who is warned against charging such a formation – a warning that would have been equally understood by the officer of 1797 facing much more rudimentary military technology. If this journal, so specialized on the military theme, explores the utility of the square, the broader public could be excused for seeing the formation as having enduring relevance as it continued to be represented even in the context of fictional European war.

War scare stories were a popular form and *Chums* featured this genre in setting varied enemies against the British. In “The Vengeance of the Motherland,” Britain resists an invasion by the Russians set in 1911.56 Clearly the British cavalry officer had not read his issue of *The Navy and Army Illustrated* as the fictional story includes a fanciful charge by the Welsh Yeomanry – led by King Edward – against a Russian infantry battalion. Ignoring the fact that modern rifles and western military training had made unnecessary both cavalry charges and the infantry square, the story describes the Yeomanry breaking into the Russian formation that had failed to fully change to their defensive formation. The implication of this story is that cavalry remains a threat and that square is an appropriate response. By 1909 (and in 1911) these lessons were long defunct in the European context and had largely run their course in colonial wars. While this might seem harmless in the context of a children’s story, the many examples of the square in the adult press throughout the period exposes the strength of tradition and the endurance of a set repertoire of representations of tactics and warfare. The press was
even intrigued by apparent tactical innovations that retained the relevance of the square: the *ILN* presented a bizarre article and series of four photographs illustrating the military use of the bicycle and its integration into a close-order square defense against cavalry attack, claimed to be the most dangerous opponent of the cyclist soldier (Illustration 3.4).\(^{57}\) Although the emphasis is placed on the firepower issued from the secure formation of the bicycle-fortified square, the last picture and commentary emphasizes the moment of “Final contact” and the crossing of steel.

Placing tactical drill into representations of real battles in a manner that demonstrated the formations without the abstraction of the map could be achieved through panoramic battle paintings. As instructive as these might be to show battle formations, panoramic paintings, like maps and battle plans also tend to lack the drama of combat presented in more narrowly focused illustrations. Two paintings by G. D. Giles

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\(^{56}\) Captain Frank Shaw, “Vengeance of the Motherland,” *Chums* 17, no. 852 (January 6, 1909): 338.

representing early Anglo-Boer War battles are instructive. In contrast to his most famous paintings from the Sudan campaigns and particularly of the Battle of Tamai discussed in the next chapter, Giles provides a wide perspective of combat in “The attack on Cronje’s Force at Vedutie Drift Near Paardeberg” and “The Advance of French’s Cavalry Brigade to Relieve Kimberly, 13 February, 1900.” Completed in 1900 and 1901 respectively, they both show the battlefield disposition of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, but the distant figures are very small and are swallowed by the large sweep of the open landscape and by the smoke from artillery fire that offers the only indication of fighting. In fact, these narrow but quite wide paintings seem true to the character of fighting in the Anglo-Boer War; the enemy is unseen and artillery played an important role in securing victory for British. The prominence of mounted cavalry and no overt suggestion of dispersed infantry tactics is, however, misleading, lending these sterile paintings an anachronistic quality embedded in the otherwise accurate portrayal. Of course, the paintings also expose the difficulty of representing modern battle defined by long weapon ranges. The fighting is impersonal and the tactics shaped by firepower. It is no wonder that the Sudan and other colonial campaigns suited the illustrator so much better and resulted in the most enduring images of warfare coming out of the late-nineteenth century.

58 G. D. Giles, “The Attack on Cronje’s Force at Vedutie Drift Near Paardeberg,” oil on canvas, 1900, 78x128cm, National Army Museum and “The Advance of French’s Cavalry Brigade to Relieve Kimberly, 13 February, 1900,” oil on canvas, 1901, 78x129cms, National Army Museum. As a war special for The Graphic, Giles observed the events in the second painting and includes himself as a tiny figure in a staff grouping shown in the painting.

59 Unrepresented in the painting, the infantry assaults that were conducted by the British temporarily led by General Kitchener at the Battle of Paardeberg, were repulsed and suffered heavy losses. What the painting of Paardeberg does indicate is the ultimate decision made by Field-Marshal Roberts to invest the Boer position and to use artillery to bombard and cavalry to isolate them. Lacking medical and logistical support, General Cronje’s force surrendered. Dennis Judd and Keith Surridge, The Boer War (London: John Murray, 2002) 165-168.
The colour illustration of the Battle of Omdurman by A. Sutherland is indicative of the kind of battle study that endeavored to be accurate in its portrayal at a macro level while having the advantage of being more dramatic due to the close-order formations and the intimate form of combat represented. Like the limited approach of a battle map, this illustration provides the viewer with a precise moment in the narrative – 6:30 a.m. – and with a commentary about the representation of the uniforms and the carefully composed legend of British regiments represented, there is a promise of accuracy. The illustration, previously considered in Chapter 2 for its uniform details, faithfully, albeit inaccurately, shows the scarlet clad British units arrayed in an unbroken series of line formations with other units in the rear, prone, or moving into positions of support. The Egyptian and Sudanese units that provided two-thirds of the army are essentially left out of the frame, the mere suggestion of their presence noted by the end of one of their infantry lines just appearing at the bottom right of the illustration. The British lines are firing at the unformed masses of the Khalifa. Within the narrowed narrative scope of this panoramic illustration, the artist has provided a basically accurate rendition of the Dervish assault on the Anglo-Egyptian position. Lord Kitchener’s army was indeed positioned along the Nile in a largely unbroken series of battalion lines. They delivered a horrifying mass of fire from their modern rifles (the Anglo-Egyptian army was equipped with the magazine fed, bolt-action Lee-Metford and the newer Lee-Enfield rifles at Omdurman) and repulsed the enemy’s charge before it made contact. Of course, the subsequent advance of the imperial forces included some mishaps, such as the charge of the 21st Lancers and

the momentary isolation of Lieutenant Colonel MacDonald’s Brigade, but these are not indicated in the illustration. Ultimately, however, the battle was a decisive victory and the viewer of the illustration can be reassured that British warfare was controlled, methodical, closely coordinated and successful.

Long before 1898 and the Battle of Omdurman, British tactical doctrine had recognized the importance of dispersed tactics. Notwithstanding the need to revert to close-order tactics and formations to repulse Zulu or Dervish, South African wars, both in 1881 and 1899-1902, made the importance of open-order fire-and-movement tactics crucial. These actions were occasionally represented in the mass media that, through their illustrations, seemed intrigued by what appeared to be novel tactics. Inevitably these illustrations are more mundane being drawn from the perspective of greater distance to display the breadth of the formation. Examples can be drawn from *The Graphic*. In one such illustration, “The Fight that Won Laing’s Nek and Majuba,” the figures are clearly shown in a dispersed and prone firing line, but lack detail.61 The rendering is almost more akin to the battle map with its labels and emphasis on geography, but without its sense of scale. Drawn from the perspective behind the British lines, the distant fighting is abstract and suggested by smoke. In an illustration from September 1900, the dismounted troopers of the Yeomanry are so accurately portrayed in their dispersed and prone disposition that they are difficult to see, and the enemy is completely out of view.62 A more detailed illustration of a skirmish line was included in *The Graphic* later in the same month, but the emphasis here is on the soldiers advancing

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to the firing line and on the ammunition carriers; the prone skirmish line is in the background firing at Boers unseen in the distance. A cover illustration for the *ILN* makes this point explicitly with prone Englishmen, one being hit by fire from an invisible enemy, looking out onto distant hills and the caption reading “all that we saw of the Boers at Majuba Hill.”

The fact that the illustrations like these are occasionally provided does expose the informative quality of the popular press and equally the diversity of tactical options supposedly evolving in the varied colonial contexts. A two illustration series in the *ILN* concerning tactical changes during the Second Anglo-Boer War is unusually candid about the effects of this evolution, although the illustrations are left without any textual explanation except their titles. The first illustration shows British infantry, advancing upright, crossing, but not sheltering behind, rocky ground while suffering rifle fire casualties from an unseen enemy. The second illustration shows fewer figures in a dispersed formation with individual soldiers prone and taking advantage of cover. This was hardly new, but it seems that the *ILN* was intent on demonstrating the idea that British commanders had learned from the many reverses they experienced early in the war such as during the Black Week in December 1899.

This overt attempt to educate the readership failed to change the prominence of the common representation of warfare that emphasized the familiar formations and

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63 The only suggestions of the Boers’ presence are either gun flashes or, inaccurately, smoke emanating from their rifles. Percy F. S. Spence “The Operations Against General Prinsloo: The Attack on the Boer Position Near Fouriesburg,” *The Graphic* LXII, no. 1608 (September 22, 1900): 438.
combat situations suited to the dramatic displays of bravery. Indeed, the first ILN image, more dynamic and illustrating an officer, erect while his soldiers lower their heads and torsos, is much more typical of the illustrations in the news and juvenile journals representing combat in the Anglo-Boer War and other conflicts.

For example, The Graphic presents a large full-page illustration of “The Battle of Dundee: Storming the Boer Position on Talana Hill” in which an officer leads his men up a steep hill, sword raised; three bayonets are conspicuous in the foreground. The caption notes that the British soldiers “rushed with a wild, pent-up yell on the bravely stubborn Boers, capturing their guns at the point of the bayonet, and rolling the retreating enemy down the reverse of the Talana slope.” Although the soldiers are not closely ranked and likely started their assault in extended order, there is certainly no sense that these men perhaps had been prone firing at the Boers from afar. Many more examples of this kind of narrative will be presented in the next chapter about the representation of combat. However, while the tactical lesson is ambiguous and actually contrasts with other illustrations of tactics showing the use of extended order firing in the Anglo-Boer War, the moral lesson is clear and consistent with the more dominant notion of tactics rendered in close-order: war is ultimately intimate and the bayonet is its definitive expression.

The difficulty in representing dispersed skirmish lines makes them inherently less dramatic, a fact which contrasts with the representation of close-order formations that has the advantage of being both often accurate and having a narrower field of view that allows individuals to be illustrated within an informative tactical context. This latter

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issue is crucial for illustrations and narratives that were associated with fiction or revolving around the exploits of named soldiers, perhaps recipients of medals. Here the transition from the representation of skirmish tactics to fighting and killing (or dying) demanded a shift in the representation of tactics that moved from fire and movement to close order bayonet charges. These were not in contradiction in terms of doctrinal theory – fire from dispersed units prepared the way for the inevitable assault – but their inter-relationship is not explored in the mass media; dispersed fire formations are rarely represented while the final charge with the bayonet is more commonly presented. The representational tensions evident with infantry tactics were not so evident with the cavalry. Although the Anglo-Boer War experience defined the worth of cavalry as essentially mobile infantry, there was no doubt that cavalry tactics could always be represented in its most idealized form in any warring context: the charge.

Cavalry tactics exposed the evolution that was occurring in tactical doctrine throughout the army, but as late as 1914, the notion that cavalry might still perform a charge was both retained by the military and celebrated in the mass culture. Callwell was certainly ready to see virtue in the boot-to-boot charge in the right circumstances, a recognition that contrasts with his overwhelming preference for the use of mounted units.

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67 The Victoria Cross is often the subject of dedicated articles especially in the juvenile press and of special mention in the adult press. A good example is an unusually long article that accounts for the VCs won in India and relies on the official dispatches – gazettes – that describe with passion the desperate events that led to the medal being awarded: W. J. Gordon, “The Victoria Cross in India,” *The Boys’ Own Paper* 27, no. 1375 (May 20, 1905): 536-539. Another *BOP* article about medals and their recipients also punctuates that “there is something especially interesting in the collection of war medals, which calls to mind these wonderful battles in which English soldiers and sailors have been engaged; every new medal secured telling of great heroes who have made England famous…” The article is candid about and almost saddened by the fact that tactics had changed the context of winning medals away from “…when war medals were first struck there were hand-to-hand fights and more brute force than strategy.” In spite of this admission, the representation of close combat persisted in the broad culture. Fred W. Burgess. “Collecting War Medals,” *The Boy’s Own Paper Annual* 34, no. 17 (January 27, 1912): 270.
as mobile firepower.\textsuperscript{68} Callwell’s understanding of the use of cavalry in wars of maneuver and counter-guerilla operations such as those conducted in the later portion of the Anglo-Boer War did little to diminish the representation of cavalry operating as close-order formations that inevitably charged the enemy with swords and lances. Since the charge leads to close combat, a topic developed in the next chapter, only a few examples need be presented here to demonstrate the remarkably tradition-bound popular preference for the charge as noted in commentaries specifically focused on the consideration of cavalry tactics.

The combat role of cavalry was a vigorously debated subject particularly after the Anglo-Boer War. Initially, those favouring the elimination of shock action as suicidal won the debate and in 1901 the cavalry lance was withdrawn from service.\textsuperscript{69} The debate continued, however, and by 1907 the cavalry successfully lobbied to have lances reissued. This controversial resurrection of an anachronistic weapon was certainly driven by arguments of tactical relevance, especially its use in colonial wars where the lance found utility against spear armed opponents.\textsuperscript{70} But after the Anglo-Boer War, Britain fought few colonial wars where this argument could be confirmed. Tradition and the cultural embrace of the cavalry charge preserved its utility and romance. In the recent

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\item \textsuperscript{68} In a long chapter in \textit{Small Wars} dedicated to “Mounted Troops,” Callwell reveals the multiple roles of cavalry and the persistence of traditional shock action: “The tendency has been of late years in some armies, and especially so in the British service, to give to cavalry shock action a very secondary place in tactics and make the rifle the main arm of the cavalry trooper. Difference of opinion exists whether in this respect the reformers in preparing the arm for the exigencies of regular warfare have not moved too fast, but it may in any case safely be laid down that in campaigns against irregular warriors the time-honoured principles of cavalry tactics still hold good…small wars affords strong evidence in favour of cavalry shock action on the battle-field.” Callwell, 404.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Callwell again effectively synthesizes the colonial experience and the utility of the lance, stating that “[I]n pursuit of an enemy who scatters in all directions, who lies down so that only the most expert swordsman can get at him effectively, who becomes panic stricken in the moment of defeat, the lance is
colonial context there were several examples of cavalry charges that were decisive and capped victory. The illustrated press and battle painters made much of the cavalry charges at Gingindlovu and Ulundi during the Zulu War of 1879. Three years later, the heavy cavalry decisively charged the Egyptian lines at Kassassin; the event drew dramatic coverage in the press. These examples represented an appropriate use of cavalry, although during the Zulu War the cavalry actions were atypical of the more common use of cavalry as reconnaissance troops and mounted-infantry. However, like infantry ‘last stands’ such as at Isandlwana, cavalry charges that were staggering tactical mistakes were made into events of glory that grew in splendor with each passing year. The charge of British horse at Balaclava during the Crimean War is the most obvious and culturally repeated example that made fictional charges more real and glorious.

Particularly after the Anglo-Boer War, *The Boy’s Own Paper’s* military content was generally less narrative and more often revolved around militaria such as uniforms and medals. But, in 1907, the charge of the Light Brigade provided inspiration for a long article titled “‘Left of Six Hundred’: an Account of the Survivors of the Ever-memorable and Ever-glorious Balaclava charge, as related by one of them, Corporal James Mustard, to the Author.” After an uncritical narrative of the action, the author concludes his interview with an assertion about the legacy of the charge: “the daring and marvelous charge that made all the world ring with its glory; that made every Briton walk next day with his head erect and with his lips quivering with pride as he remembered that these

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71 George A. Wade. “‘Left of Six Hundred’: an Account of the Survivors of the Ever-memorable and Ever-glorious Balaclava charge, as related by one of them, Corporal James Mustard, to the Author.” *The Boy’s Own Paper Annual* 30, no. 1504 (November 9, 1907): 86-88.
‘Six Hundred’ were his own countrymen and kinsfolk.”

*Pluck* offered a fictional story set in the Crimean War and the battle of Balaclava is described in detail. Positively compared to Leonidas and his Spartans at Thermopylae, “this brilliant charge of the gallant ‘Six Hundred’ stands unparalleled in the history of nations.” After the sanguine description of fallen soldiers and their riderless mounts, the charge is ultimately deemed tactically valuable for its cautionary effect on the Russian commander and, more importantly, praised for the valour of those who participated in this “splendid ‘death-ride.’” In two *Chums* war scare stories, written by Captain Frank Shaw (1878-1960) in 1909 and 1912 respectively, cavalry charges are prominently featured with reference to Balaclava. In “Vengeance of the Motherland” Welsh Yeomanry are impelled to charge the Russians by their King; it was a “ride that was to shadow Balaclava itself.” The implication of glory is unambiguous, although the context is one of desperation or even perhaps futility just as it was in 1854 (of course, in this story the charge is successful).

In 1912 the British now face the Germans in “The Swoop of the Eagle.” Above the title, the editor warns that “this story is not intended to stir up race hatred, but is written as a true picture of what would happen if a great Continental nation attacked our country.” Having now been calmed and yet assured of the accuracy of this yarn written by a “Captain” (actually of the merchant marine), the juvenile reader was exposed to a story that included modern military technology in the form of magazine fed rifle fire, airburst artillery shells, and even aero planes.

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72 Mustard, 87.
74 Rowe, 7.
But in a section titled “A Second ‘Light Brigade’” the reader was taken right back to the celebrated cavalry charge (Illustration 3.5). Having started in “open order” to avoid the worst of the German shelling, the British cavalry (again a Yeomanry regiment defending the homeland) charged:

…nothing could stop that living wave. It was like the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava – a hundred and fifty men against five times their number. And the sheer temerity of the charge carried the troop through the enemy and clean out the other side. They had closed solidly as they bore down on the German infantry; their lines were tipped with bright steel for one moment, but the brightness fled as the long swords drank deep of German blood.77

What had started as a modern open-order advance was transformed into a tactical exercise that drew on the familiar forms of warfare and historical narrative. One might assume that the captain-author understood the fancy with which he wrote, but he must also have been aware of the powerful traditional repertoire from which he drew and the readiness of his audience to absorb this representation of warfare that was converging on these familiar norms from all quarters.

76 Captain Frank Shaw, “Swoop of the Eagle,” Chums 21, no. 1052 (November 9, 1912): 151.
There were more measured commentaries on the use of cavalry in the juvenile press. Henty, for example, was not particularly complimentary to the 21st Lancers for their charge at Omdurman in *With Kitchener in the Soudan*. But even he conceded that, while the tactical decision to charge was dubious, it was not the principle of cavalry charging that was wrong, but rather the context in which it was performed. To add to the ambiguity of Henty’s tactical critique, a rare illustration is included that celebrates the charge.

The juvenile paper *Pluck* provided somewhat more nuanced representations of cavalry tactics in their fictional tales of adventure that were often set in historical campaigns or, like *Chums*, hypothetical war scares set in the future. “In the Trenches or With Burnaby in Egypt,” set in 1884, and “Britain! To Arms! A Tale of Coming Peril” about a global war against the British Empire in 1950, include battles where cavalry tactics are described. Episodes from each quite appropriately describe cavalry dismounted and using their carbines with decisive effect. Fighting Madhists in the Sudan, “In the Trenches” describes a British led and trained band of Arabs dismount,

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78 Henty compares the charge to historical precedent drawn from both the Napoleonic Wars and Balaclava:

The charge, in its daring and heroism, resembled that of the 23rd Light Dragoons at Talavera. The fall into the ravine, on that occasion, was much deeper than that into which the Lancers dashed; but it was not occupied by a desperate force, and although many were injured by the fall, it was in their subsequent charge, against a whole French division, that they were almost annihilated. Both incidents were, like the Balaclava charge, magnificent; but they were not war. A desperate charge, to cover the retreat of a defeated army, is legitimate and worthy of all praise, even if the gallant men who make it are annihilated; but this was not the case at Talavera, nor at Omdurman. It was a brilliant but a costly mistake. The bravery shown was superb, and the manner in which officers and men rode back into the struggling mass, to rescue comrades, beyond all praise; but the charge should never have been made, and the lives were uselessly sacrificed.


79 Singleton Pound, “In the Trenches or With Burnaby in Egypt,” *Pluck* III, no. 59 (1896): 1-11, and
form a square and issue a “withering volley” that shot down a charging enemy. In the fanciful war to defend empire in 1950, South African Irregular cavalry who had rallied to the side of Britain, employ their rifles against the German and Boer forces whose “lines, terribly thinned now, began to waiver.” Of course, in both cases the dismounted forces mount to cap off their victory with a charge as a “cloud of wrath” or “a serried mass of horsemen [that] crashed through the enemy’s reeling lines.” Perhaps not doctrinally incorrect, although rather dubious in 1950, the writers seemed incapable of leaving the action without a charge. Hence the juvenile and the adult press did little to challenge the idea that cavalry tactics could and should include the charge and tended to emphasize this increasingly diminished part of their tactical menu whether in colonial wars or in anticipating European warfare.

The public did not have to rely solely on the inanimate illustrations and abstract narratives of the press to explore the shape of tactics. The volunteer movement provided opportunities for diverse parts of the British public to participate in and see massed, brightly uniformed soldiers move through the evolutions of column, line, skirmish line, and square at monthly training days, reviews, and annual maneuvers. The annual Easter Volunteer Review was a large event drawing both thousands of soldiers and spectators. For example, the *ILN* reported the participation of over 24,000 troops in 1872 and in 1880 over 20,000 men participated in the war-game portion of the event including more than twenty artillery pieces. Volunteer events included displays of tactical formations. At the 1881 Scottish Volunteer Review, the *ILN* provides an illustration of men from the

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Queen’s Edinburgh Volunteer Rifle Brigade arrayed in two rank firing-line issuing a volley. In contrast with the coverage of the South African War from earlier in the year, this demonstration of tactics matches the more typical rendition of close-order disciplined drill enacted by well attired, fur-buzby wearing soldiers.

The Brighton (Easter) Review of 1883 drew lavish coverage in the *ILN* and included a mock-battle between volunteer “armies” numbering several thousands. Both the text and illustrations describe the course of the battle as viewed by the media (the *ILN* sent up a balloon for a panoramic view), by the Prince and Princess of Wales, and “many other ladies in carriages and tens of thousands of people.” The text emphasizes the

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82 Earlier coverage of the Battle of Majuba Hill shows a less ordered rendition of warfare. In April, Melton Prior sketches were reproduced showing the difficult ascent of Majuba Hill on February 26 and the disastrous retreat down the hill the following day. Both sketches expose the disorderly character of the fighting and the second shows British soldiers fleeing, with panicked expressions, many having discarded their rifles, and others fallen dead or wounded. This is unusual and contrasts with a more typical rendition of British battlefield conduct illustrated the next month by Prior showing the last stand of General Colley at Majuba Hill, standing erect, arm raised in defiance, surrounded by his soldiers. Melton Prior, “Sir George Colley’s midnight ascent of Majuba Hill, February 26” and “The scene as the last of our men retreated from Majuba Hill, February 27,” *The Illustrated London News* LXXVIII, no. 2188 (April 23, 1881): 409 and 413; Melton Prior, “The Transvaal War: General Sir George Colley at the Battle of Majuba Mountain just before he was killed,” *The Illustrated London News* LXXVIII, no. 2191 (May 14, 1881): 469.

Similarly at odds with the reality of fighting in South Africa, an August 1881 *ILN* article describes a new piece of military equipment and a uniform that the inventor, General Sir James Alexander, claims would be “most useful to troops engaged in colonial service, like that of South Africa recently.” The new innovation is a short “pike rifle-rest” that provides an “efficient weapon of offence” along with other practical uses in tackling rough terrain and acting as an improvised tent pole. In addition, the article suggests the use of a new helmet that is light but “sabre-proof.” While the reader might be able to recognize the contrasting realities of Volunteer drill and real tactics as represented in the coverage of Majuba Hill, the article on the pike, with its implications of charging with an antiquated pole weapon and fighting sabre armed cavalry exposes a confusing and conflicting representation of the nature of war. Ultimately, Majuba Hill is the unusual event both in terms of the rarity of British defeat and the predominant shape of the representation of warfare. “The Pike Rifle-rest,” *The Illustrated London News* LXXIX, no. 2206 (August 27, 1881): 211.

84 Massive crowds of spectators were a feature of reviews and maneuvers. In 1860 an audience of up to 200,000 watched 11,000 Volunteers at a review at Knowsley. Hugh Cunningham, *The Volunteer Force: A Social and Political History 1859-1908* (London: Croom Helm, 1975), 70. Even small maneuvers could draw large crowds. The annual review of the Robin Hood Rifles was viewed by 4000 spectators in 1871. “The Volunteers,” *The Illustrated London News* 59, no. 1668 (September 9, 1871): 231. Based on illustrations from the 1870 Easter Review, these crowds of viewers included men, women and children,
commanders and the “smart marching and manoeuvring” of their divisions. The illustrations are more instructive of the formations used that are clearly close-order and linear. All arms are shown and in one small panoramic illustration, a cavalry unit is prominently driving forward, boot-to-boot in a column of squadrons, across an open hillside targeted by artillery firing from the foreground in this mock-battle.85 With mounted generals surveying the field, close-order drill, and diverse uniforms, the review war game represented a shape of war that was spectacular and, more importantly, familiar; there was little to differentiate the battle from the inspection and march-past that preceded it.86

There is an interesting contrast between the collective drill performed by the volunteers at the reviews and the celebrated individual achievement in marksmanship that, at least in part, inversely parallels the competing narratives of wartime tactics that described collective British fire discipline and the heroics of individuals fighting at close quarters. Whereas battle reports relate the effects of firing in terms of a collective

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85 The Graphic presented a full-page illustration of Yeomanry performing a mock charge in training prior to their dispatch to South Africa. Although the caption describes the Yeomanry unit dismounting and forcing the retreat of a ‘Boer’ commando, the illustration emphasizes the last part of the exercise where the British “…charged, jumping the barricade with drawn swords and dispersing the Boers.” John Charlton, “Yeomanry in Training: The final Charge on the Boer Position in the Military Tournament at Hightown Camp,” The Graphic LXII, no. 1602 (August 11, 1900): 197. Even in the wake of the Anglo-Boer War, regular army manoeuvres still included mock cavalry charges. The ILN presented a carefully rendered illustration based on Melton Prior sketches of this finale to the 1903 exercises. H. W. Koekkoek, “The End of the Military Manoeuvres: The Concluding Cavalry Charge,” The Illustrated London News 33, no. 857 (October 10, 1903): 530.

86 The impact of photography, used only sparingly in the ILN until just prior to the Great War, was to diminish the sense of drama and action. In a photo essay about the 1913 British Army maneuvers, the images show an army in drab service dress, often marching or at rest and, when in ‘combat’ shown prone or entrenched firing at unseen targets. In their representation of quite mundane activities, the photos are quite ‘true’ but lack the action infused into the illustrations of warfare during the period. “Fighting in the Englishman’s Home: ‘Warfare’ during the Great British Army Manoeuvres,” The Illustrated London News
experience and comment on individual actions in terms of command decisions or intimate combat, the coverage of the volunteers can safely praise the precision of individual marksmanship. For example, in 1871, the regular coverage of the volunteers praised members of the West Middlesex regiment for winning a shooting competition over the Scots Fusilier Guards. The same article named three other volunteer shooting competitions and their winners. The Graphic also reported on the volunteers and even provided prizes for shooting. On one level, this is an understandable celebration linked to the tradition of British firepower, and yet the culture was ambivalent about Britons simply exterminating colonial Native foes from afar. As noted earlier, Henty certainly wonders if this kind of action constitutes battle at all. Of course, target shooting in England can be applauded without moral concern; here shooting is an abstract and non-lethal skill.

Unlike the viewing of royal parades or volunteer maneuvers, but similarly fanciful, toy soldiers rely upon the imagination to organize and animate them. But the poses that the toy manufacturers provided imposed a tactical narrative on the child or collector. Whether this suggested narrative was employed cannot be fully ascertained, but the cultural convergence around the notion of close-order tactics and war as a controlled activity was certainly supported by the selection of poses. Britains was easily the most successful toy soldier company after it started manufacture of cheap, hollow-cast figures in 1893 and sold millions of these to a wide public prior to the Great War (and after). For infantry, two poses were common in the early production years: the

CXLIII, no. 3883 (September 20, 1913): 426-427.
89 James Opie asserts that “Britains is the oldest substantial toy manufacturer in the United Kingdom.” His
‘on-guard’ pose (both standing and kneeling) and the marching pose, both with bayonets fixed. Not only easy to sculpt, mould and cast, the on-guard and marching poses also leant themselves to many imagined situations. These erect poses suited play or shelf arrangement in close-order – how could one resist neatly lining-up one’s bearskin wearing Guardsmen? The on-guard pose was ideal for a line formation or a bayonet-bristling square, both implying an immanent contact with the enemy. The marching pose suited parades and simulating the movement of model armies to, or during, a battle; this was what soldiers did, and they did it in close-order drill. Marching is also a positive action, done erect and assumes a forward momentum; retreating is not usually done with shouldered arms and Britains certainly never produced fleeing or surrendering soldiers. Skirmish lines also do not stand on-guard or march, and perhaps to satisfy the need for a more mobile pose, Britains produced a figure at the run with trail arms (the rifle carried in one hand at one’s side). As though it implied something of their ethnic tactical élan, this pose was first used on the Highland infantry sets such as those of the Black Watch, Argyll and Sutherland regiments produced in 1893. This pose was not, however, particularly versatile and did little to vary the tactical assumptions implied by the available poses. With each set called “Charging” and with officers only differentiated by either being mounted or provided with sword arms, it was clear that these soldiers were advancing against the enemy into close combat, and likely doing so en masse. In 1895, Set 34, a new version of the Grenadier Guards, finally provided a figure in a formal firing stance although its erect posture and full dress uniform certainly does not speak to

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90 In 1894, Set 17 of the Somerset Light Infantry introduced a kneeling on-guard pose that was sold with the
modern tactics; this figure demands a position standing next to his comrades and issuing volley fire in a disciplined line or square.91

Cavalry poses did little to challenge the traditional close-order tactical options implied by most of the figures. Typically mounted on galloping or cantering horses, the troopers were modeled with weapons ready and usually in full dress. And with articulated sword or lance arms, the collector was able to denote both rapid advances, and more importantly, the charge with leveled or raised weapons (Illustration 3.6).

Illustration 3.6 Britains Set 99, 13th Hussars (released 1903). Courtesy of Bonhams.

Most of these late-nineteenth century and early twentieth century cavalry models included holstered carbines. This was an accurate detail but one that was compromised by the rider being fixed to his mount, the lack of dismounted versions of the mounted castings, and by the arm articulation that encouraged the representation of traditional cavalry shock tactics as opposed to dismounted skirmishing. The first set of dismounted cavalry represented the 11th Hussars released by Britains in 1914. Unfortunately the

standing figure. Opie, 18.

91 Opie, 25.
figures were in full dress, standing at attention, and when first issued, two of the four figures had drawn swords.

An analysis of the new soldier sets annually released reveals that the Anglo-Boer War had a temporary impact on the type of soldier and range of combat poses that were produced to allow the collector to represent the predominant tactics of that war. Prior to the Anglo-Boer War, between 1893 and 1898, Britains released 37 cavalry sets, 21 infantry sets and 3 artillery sets. During the 1899-1902 war, the release of new sets favoured infantry with 22 new sets versus only 6 cavalry and 2 artillery. There was also a small shift in the selection of poses. Prior to 1899, only one infantry set was in the firing pose. During the war 7 of the 22 new sets were firing, with 2 sets in the prone position. These sets could have been arranged by the collector to represent a skirmish line. Of course, just like the representational tensions that exist in the graphical arts, so was it the case with toy soldiers. Firing poses represent the predominant reality of combat, but the combination of the typically modeled home service dress and firing poses (and skirmish lines) is somewhat incongruous. Furthermore, the more common poses suggested the march-advance or the charge with animated horses and soldiers running. Accounting for the on-going production of previously released sets from prior to the war, the established communication of tactics through pose selection remained predominant in the Britains range. After the Anglo-Boer War until 1914, Britains returned to a more balanced release regimen of new sets: 16 cavalry, 20 infantry, and 1 artillery. None of

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92 This analysis is based on the comprehensive index provided by Opie. I have included newly released sets of soldiers from Britain and European trained armies only since they reflect the tactics at issue in this chapter. Note that many older sets were reissued – sometimes repeatedly – in subsequent years and that this could have influenced the suggested nature of tactics. For example, the 1st Life Guards, the Horse Guards, the 5th Dragoon Guards, the 3rd, 4th and the 11th Hussars, all first introduced in 1893, were reissued between 1901 and 1903. Opie, 600-603.
the new infantry were presented in firing poses although several were animated as charging. This is exemplified by the dynamic and colourful Set 15 of charging Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders released in 1904 as a replacement for the 1893 set of Highlanders advancing with trailed rifles (Illustration 3.7).

Illustration 3.7 Britains Set 15, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (released 1904). Courtesy of Bonhams.

Toy soldiers are sculpted with poses to suggest particular tactics, but the period prior to the Great War saw the proliferation of popular war game systems that made the nature of tactics explicit. In 1888, the *ILN* reported on “The New War Game, ‘Polemos’” developed by a Dr. D. C. B. Griffith (Illustration 3.8).93

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Illustration 3.8 “The New War Game ‘Polemos’ Played at the Unified Services Institution” from the *ILN* (November 3, 1888)

The article asserts that the new game was directed to “professional and amateur students of the art of modern tactics” using a 5 by 10 foot geomorphic playing surface and model soldiers painted with the correct uniforms and arms. The “well-defined rules which are quite consistent with all the general principles of warfare” govern the movement of soldiers on the playing surface. As shown in the full-page adjoining illustration, the soldiers are arranged in close-order columns and lines and are moved by three adult men; two of the three illustrated players are uniformed members of the Royal United Service Institution.\(^94\) While the colonial experience had shown the utility of such formations, the European context of this game puts to question which principles of warfare are being represented with such an earnest tone.

Other games with toy soldiers emerged later that did little to challenge the assumptions about tactics. In 1909, Britains had released *The Great War Game* whose cover welcomed “young and old” and implied military glory for participants with portraits of “War Lords” including, from top to bottom, Wellington, the Kaiser, Roberts, von Moltke, Napoleon, and Kitchener.⁹⁵ In 1912, *War Games for Boy Scouts* and H. G. Wells’ *Floor Games* were released, followed, in 1913, by Wells’ more detailed rules for war gaming, *Little Wars*.⁹⁶ Wells’ was certainly not attempting to promote militarism with his little book of rules, but instead feared, like Jean de Bloch, the Polish financier and war theorist whom he mentions in his introduction, that war had become obsolete and fundamentally dangerous to the prosperity of Europe.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, Wells believed that his game might satisfy the martial instincts of boys and men (and even girls or “rare and gifted” women)⁹⁸ and his game became progressively more detailed with the addition of “realistic” terrain and more sophisticated rules developed with a “Captain M.,” “hot from the Great war in South Africa.”⁹⁹ By imposing time limits on the players, Wells hoped to enhance the tensions of the game: “This further removes the game from the chess category, and approximates it to the likeness of active service.”¹⁰⁰ The basic game mechanics encourages players to keep their units of toy soldiers in larger groups to resist cavalry charges and to succeed in infantry assaults which is the only way that infantry inflicts casualties; artillery is the only ranged weapon and ominously relies on a projectile crashing into the arrayed ranks to cause damage.

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⁹⁵ Opie, 127.
⁹⁶ Opie, 147.
⁹⁷ Herbert George Wells, *Little Wars* (1913), 5.
⁹⁸ Wells, 1.
⁹⁹ Wells, 6.
¹⁰⁰ Wells, 6.
Wells’ game is full of tensions about what it purports to represent: it is suitable for boys, but is played and developed by men; he asserts that it is not a Kriegspiel (a military training simulation) but also claims that playing his game exposes one to the confusion of “Great War”; finally, with some additional rules the game can, in fact, offer the soldier some of the effects of “real war, played against time, and played under circumstances of considerable excitement.” An ILN article agreed, “Little Wars approximates as nearly as may be to real war.”

Inanimate toy soldiers found their place in defining the shape of warfare through the poses that suggested tactics, the rules of war games that further encouraged shoulder-to-shoulder formations and by the broader culture that helped delineate the arrangement of the lead surrogates through ink and paint representations that drew on history, reviews, and the military anachronism of most colonial wars.

Tactics and the Individual

The foregoing commentary has emphasized the representation of British tactics through the paradigms of battlefield formations that were familiar but often anachronistic. By definition, these formations and their related tactics are about the actions of groups of soldiers working in coordination and mutual support. The individual is necessarily absorbed into the collective evolutions of maneuver and fire performed by the section, platoon, company or battalion. However, for the purveyors of commercial culture prior to 1914, losing the individual in the collective was anathema to much of its popular and commercial purpose; war allowed Britons to grow as individuals and they in

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101 Wells, 26.
102 Wells, 33.
turn shaped the character of war. The army would have also found this at odds with their ethos at a time when war was becoming increasingly materialist. This representational challenge was, then, both a narrative asset and a problem for the producers of print, illustration, or toys.

The broad narrative of battle in the colonial context was frequently one that was murderous for the Natives being defeated. Here the anonymity of the group tactics serves a valuable narrative purpose. Tommy Atkins is not gunning-down hapless Natives, he is individually shielded by the abstract construct of the unit to which he belongs but in which he is obscured due to the uniforms and drills that create the collective regimental identity. Here the ‘battle piece’ narrative, reviled by Keegan as largely obtuse and meaningless, provides a means to describe battle in a homogenous manner that reduces the disturbing qualities of war to generic mass reactions of killing and dying, fleeing and pursuit. Henty’s description of Omdurman, as considered in Chapter 4, reveals the usefulness of the broad tactical narrative. Here, the execution of the battle was so tactically sound and horrifyingly effective that to leave the narrative at a high level of description protected the individuals who carried out the massacre of the Khalifa’s Dervish army. Killing Mohammedan ‘fanatics’ was, of course, not necessarily problematic. But to do so with such technical superiority undermined an ethos of warfare prevalent in the media even if military writers like Callwell recommended the tactical methods that proved so deadly and found only praise for the dominance of British technology that was demonstrably decisive at Omdurman.104

104 Callwell makes no apologies for the crushing of the Dervish army at Omdurman (referred to by Callwell as the Battle of Khartum). Here artillery and long-range musketry both forced the Khalifa into battle and smashed his army when it charged the Anglo-Egyptian lines. Callwell, 234, 389, and 436. However, in Small Wars, Callwell generally recommends that imperial forces not demonstrate their weapons superiority
Tactical narratives can also shield the individual in defeat. In the descriptions of the battle of Isandlwana the failure of the British to repel the Zulus was deemed a tactical matter. The enormity of the Zulu army was central to the analysis of the defeat. In addition, however, the *ILN*’s assessment was that the British force might have fared better had they laagered their position in emulation of Boer tactics. Individuals, not even the commanders, are not singled out for censure. Indeed, as will be noted in the next chapter, far from considering the failure of individuals – at least those with white skins – as having contributed to the disruption of the British line, individuals are applauded for their acts of heroism in this desperate defeat.

**Conclusion**

The contrast between the homogenous broad battle narrative, with its emphasis on massed formations and ranged combat, and the significance placed on individual close-combat in both text and illustration, appear to be a contradiction, especially when presented in the same context. The Anglo-Boer War raised these tensions in the debate over real tactical doctrines and in their representation in the culture, but left them unresolved. This tension persisted even in the coverage of war between industrial powers. The *ILN* reporting on the Russo-Japanese war presented stark images of the new shape of warfare complete with trenches, artillery, barbed wire, and modern small arms. In one large illustration a Japanese charge is shown struggling through wire entanglements over too early in a battle by engaging the enemy at long range. Fearing that the enemy would disengage and rob the imperial army of its rare opportunity to fight a decisive, campaign ending battle, Callwell recommends that rifle fire should be reserved until the enemy was well within the stated 800 yards effective range of the modern rifle. Callwell, 391. In contrast to the need to fire at longer ranges in “regular [European] warfare,” Callwell asserts that “[I]n small wars…it must never be forgotten that under ordinary circumstances the great object is to let the enemy get to fairly close quarters. To drive savages off by long distance fire is a mistake, decisive victories are not gained by such methods…because savages when they are repulsed by long range fire do not consider themselves beaten and in reality are not beaten, not having suffered such
shell-hole pocked ground against a “formidable Russian defence” off in the distance.\textsuperscript{105}

The aftermath of an earlier charge is shown in another illustration by Caton Woodville, this one based on the sketches and correspondence from Melton Prior about the same battle. The view of a hillside covered with Japanese dead is appropriately called “The Best Argument Against War.”\textsuperscript{106} Killing had become mechanized and the tactics of direct assault were terribly bloody.

In their official histories about the Russo-Japanese War, the military observers from around the world revealed some sober truths about the nature of warfare in the early-twentieth century.\textsuperscript{107} Heavy casualties had to be endured and the role of artillery, the predominant but anonymous killer of the Great War, was in Manchuria central to offensive action against fortified positions; defenders had to be suppressed if movement was attempted on the modern fire-swept battlefield. Not particularly novel, these conclusions might well have confirmed the dire predictions made by rare individuals like Jean de Bloch at the start of the Anglo-Boer War. Bloch, a Polish financier and a prolific writer on finance, railways and war, had grown concerned about the consequences of fighting a modern total war. A cogent theorist on firepower, he believed war would only lead to indecisive trench fighting, massive casualties, and, exhausted on the stagnant battlefields and in the arms-producing factories, social strife and the collapse of the

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\textsuperscript{107} The Russo-Japanese War was carefully observed by military attaches and journalists assigned to both sides of the conflict. It was a rare opportunity to see war unfold in a relatively small area of operations between two ‘modern’ powers. Michael Howard, “Men Against Fire: expectations of War in 1914,” \textit{International Security} 9, no. 1 (Summer, 1984).
\end{flushleft}
international economic system. In 1898, Bloch expressed these dire predictions in a six-volume work titled *The War of the Future*; the last volume was translated into English in 1899 under the title *Is War Now Impossible?* Hobson had echoed this view (see Chapter 1) and, as noted earlier, Wells made direct reference to Bloch in his alternative to real war, *Little Wars*. Unfortunately, the lessons learned by those military observers and correspondents watching the fighting in Manchuria, was that war, the very reason for their professional existence, could be controlled and that methodical offensive action, covered by fire and using cover, and culminating in a bayonet assault, was not only possible but imperative to bring decisive victory. In 1911, almost ten years after the Anglo-Boer War and six after the Russo-Japanese War, the British army *Infantry Training Manual* still emphasized shock tactics as a means to secure the initiative and victory. The following year, the *Field Service Regulations* emphasized the importance of “engagement along the whole front and the decisive assault.”

The popular press could not resist the same conclusions although too often simplified them to the moments of intimate combat. In spite of their laments over casualties suffered from artillery bombardments and machine guns, the most notable

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109 Howard, “Men Against Fire...,” 41.
110 With the intent of assessing the likelihood of learning lessons from past wars, Gary Cox examines the German and British official histories of the Russo-Japanese War. Cox reveals that the Germans focused on “the operational art and stressed offensive tactics and strategy built upon the moral resolution of the commander.” In spite of the casualties it risked, it seemed to the Germans that the Japanese won due to their aggressive retention of offensive initiative that threw off balance the Russians who were rendered stagnant and defensive. The British, Cox observes, more cogently identified the impact of firepower technology in this war. However, *en route* to 1914, they, like all other powers, decided to ignore this factor, preferring to adopt the conclusions of the German history that de-emphasized the new technological realities that would later neutralize movement in the Great War. Gary P. Cox, “Of Aphorisms, Lessons and Paradigms: Comparing the British and German Official Histories of the Russo-Japanese War,” *The Journal of Military History* 56, no. 3 (July, 1992): 400.
111 Ramsay, 107.
feature of the Manchurian war was the collective will to combat shown by the Japanese soldiers who charged wielding the bayonet or cavalry sword. No doubt, the siege-like warfare did involve close-combat and, in their assaults on the Russian entrenchments, the Japanese soldiers were, like their opponents, demonstrably brave and successful. However, the evidence presented in the illustrated papers provided an incomplete and conflicted message on the nature of war, tactics, and killing.

The foreign observers, military and press, accurately noted that the Japanese assaults came only after preparatory bombardment and were characterized by slow and costly methodical advances across the zone of fire utilizing cover and stealth.113 These initial stages of an attack were occasionally illustrated, but the tactical nuances were difficult (or dull) to represent compared to the culminating assault that was more dramatically pictured. An *ILN* illustration, “At Close Quarters: Russia and Japan in the Deathgrip; Japanese Fury with the Bayonet,” was unambiguous about this martial drama.114 Britains joined the chorus with their 1904 set of Japanese infantry posed in a charging run although curiously without an attached bayonet (Illustration 3.9).

113 Howard, “Men Against Fire.…,” 54.
Accurate or not, with its final emphasis on the triumph of man wielding steel, the representation of tactics in the Russo-Japanese War became part of the broader confluence of war representation as decided through the intimacy of fighting at close quarters. This was left unchallenged by the Balkan Wars (1912 and 1913), and certainly by the now rare colonial wars that still looked like the small wars of old. In fact, the rarity of colonial campaigns after 1902 meant that the visioning of war increasingly relied on war scare stories in the juvenile press and the Anglo-German naval race that was played out across cultural forms. Both perpetuated an orthodox war discourse that relied on patriotic resolve and personal sacrifice.

There was no better context in which to find this personal intimacy than among soldier-comrades standing shoulder-to-shoulder in square or line using tactics that told with fire, but capped victory with steel advanced by the individual Briton. This was certainly the conclusion drawn from the 1912 *Chums* war story of a German invasion of Britain, “The Swoop of the Eagle.” In the caption for a cover illustration advertising the story, it was the “pluck” of the “five boys” that overcame the onslaught of the Germans.
“trained in the art of war” (Illustration 3.10).\textsuperscript{115} Tactics were important, but the mechanistic control over them was only of value to bring the soldiers into the moments of combat during which their valour could define their superiority in a true test of arms.

\textbf{Illustration 3.10 “The Swoop of the Eagle” from \textit{Chums} (October 19, 1912). © The British Library Board}

Colonial wars, with their sometimes sound use of anachronistic tactics within the brief and actually infrequent occurrences of large scale open battle, provided both the soldier and the public consumer of his story the opportunity to define the shape of battle tactics according to a normative and familiar narrative. Even the Anglo-Boer War, which

\textsuperscript{115} “The Swoop of the Eagle,” \textit{Chums} XXI, no. 1049 (October 19, 1912): cover.
had forced a revised consideration of tactics, presented tactical alternatives within a broader context that retained the familiar definition of war as a disciplined and orderly exercise that concluded with intense moments of intimate combat all drawn from a familiar representational repertoire. The next chapter will examine in greater detail how these popularly understood tactics shaped the way that killing, dying and injury were represented and defined.
“A second spearman wounded Burnaby in the shoulder; he turned to defend himself; but a soldier stepped a pace or so in front of the square and bayoneted the Arab, who even wriggled, like a serpent, on the steel to reach his slayer.”

An incident at the Battle of Abu Klea, Sudan, 1885.

Chapter 4: Representing Killing, Suffering Wounds, and Dying

Killing is the inherent, if not exclusive, way armies force their enemy to submit. Killing necessitates also risking wounds or death and these make the whole process undesirable; irrespective of this, both killing and dying are ultimately central to the function of soldiers. In spite of their centrality, they are problematic to represent in the media. Victorian culture delicately negotiated this problem through a refined selectivity of representation. Presenting the killing of an enemy was expected and showed dominance. However, too much killing, or relishing the act, could seem cruel and an abuse of superior power. Representing the ‘Other’ against which the Briton was measured, the enemy had to be a challenging opponent. Showing dead, dying, or wounded countrymen was also expected and was used as the very definition of military and patriotic sacrifice. What more poignant moment than, for example, a desperate but defiant ‘last stand’? Here death – or its immediate inevitability – is used to emphasize the valour of the few left living at the moment before their demise as opposed to at its aftermath; illustrating death in isolation from life would otherwise appear lonely and morose. In lieu of death, if that served no demonstrable aim, the cultural media showed wounded Britons. Of course, this too had to serve a narrative purpose. The wounded are typically rescued by fellow soldiers risking their lives for a comrade or are treated by medical personnel demonstrating the humanity of Britain’s army caring for the injured.

while their opponents leave wounded to die on the field. And when the British veteran returns home, wounded or simply aged, the media represented these old soldiers as cared for and respected. Hence, killing, dying, and being wounded are real parts of war that the culture addressed and could even emphasize. Indeed, the accuracy of the descriptions or illustrations of isolated episodes of combat is noteworthy. Notwithstanding the often explicit communication of masculine mores and jingoism, the military education embedded in these representations was distorted. As this chapter will show, the continuous representation of colonial wars failed to enhance the sophistication of representations of the results of fighting: killing, wounds, and dying. The peculiarities of colonial warfare and the moral and nationalist discourse of Britain obscured the portrayal of these salient realities of war.

All media, even children’s literature and toys, represented the physical result of fighting offering Victorians and Edwardians an education about the effects of war. Of course, in an overtly militaristic culture it should not be surprising that killing and dying in the context of warfare should be largely accepted, especially as war was itself similarly accepted. Anti-militarist movements, even on the eve of the Great War, were a

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2 The degree of popular support for Britain’s colonial wars varied and is the subject of historical debate, especially when the debate inevitably explores this issue from a perspective of class. Richard Price challenges the purported jingoism of the working classes in his study of the domestic reaction to the Boer War. Richard Price, *An Imperial War and The British Working Class: Working Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War 1899-1902* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 1972. Although this work has been challenged by scholars like Penny Summerfield who see Price as dismissive or forgiving of working-class jingoism, the fluctuating popularity of wars as ‘just’ or not by all classes is self-evident. It was shaped by perceptions of who precipitated the war, the personalities of those involved (General Gordon in the Sudan was a popular character that commanded popular support for military action), and the character of the conflict. Penny Summerfield, “Patriotism and Empire: Music-Hall Entertainment, 1870-1914,” ed., John MacKenzie, *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 17-19. Throughout his overview of British military painting and illustration, Peter Harrington notes the effect of a war’s popularity on the quantity of public art it inspired. Peter Harrington, *British Artists and War: The Face of Battle in Paintings and Prints, 1700-1914* (London: Greenhill Books, 1993). For this study, the quantity and popularity of war and war art is less important than its qualities of representation.
peculiarity linked to socialist, labour, and feminist organizations. Liberals used anti-
militarist rhetoric but could hardly be counted among those opposed to the use of the 
army in empire. The mass of Britons accepted war, saw its conduct regularly through 
news reporting of small wars around the globe, and understood that people were injured 
and killed.

Although writing of the period immediately following that of this study, Joanna 
Bourke, in her controversial *An Intimate History of Killing*, not only suggests that killing 
could be pleasurable, but that a significant part of the understanding of the act was 
derived from cultural representations of war. Unfortunately, Bourke’s conclusions 
about the reaction to killing are less exciting than the isolated bits of evidence she 
presents: some perfectly normal men found killing pleasurable while others did not. In 
asserting that historians have tended to ignore the pleasure of killing and instead have 
characterized it as “‘sick’ or ‘abnormal’ while the trauma was ‘normal’,” we owe her a 
debt. More important to this study, however, Bourke, in asserting the link between 
cultural representations of killing and combat, and the expectations of the same, offers 
compelling evidence of men expressing their reaction to killing and how their culturally 
fed expectations were either satisfied or disappointed. Short of a consistent reaction to 
this comparison between media and reality, it was clear that the consumer of war-themed 
media was presented with an education about war and its physical realities. The 
fundamental question of whether any media form can effectively ‘represent’ the 
experience of combat and its effects on the body must always be in doubt. Jay Winter 
and Antoine Prost characterize the spectators of combat representations as “voyeurs,”

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4 Bourke, 373.
with all the connotations of the passive and perhaps perverse qualities associated with the term.\textsuperscript{5} Whether as voyeurs or simply consumers, pre-war Britons ‘saw’ warfare. But, for their understanding of combat, colonial wars, and their narrowly defined representation in the commercial culture, confused the characterization of fighting for a population that had never fought an industrial European war. That soldiers facing combat in 1914 would find this representation false is not surprising, but what shaped that particular vision of war and combat is explored here.

Small wars, far away, usually fought by local recruits or a Regular Army that stayed away from Britain for long periods of time, meant that the explicit results of combat were left abstract. Killing non-white opponents was hardly considered a problem. British dead were few, there were even fewer visibly disabled, and those maimed that did come back to ‘Blighty’ were sometimes institutionalized in military hospitals such as Chelsea or became indistinguishable from the urban poor or homeless. The human price of warfare, both explicitly manifested and as presented in the media, seemed light, indeed. Yet, the manner in which the results of combat were illustrated required careful consideration. The previous chapter demonstrated that the popular representation of British tactical methods reflected accurately some of the basic battlefield deployments and formations. But this representation of tactics selectively emphasized practices that were familiar or added to the drama of war to the exclusion of tactics that were more difficult to illustrate or seemed mundane; the formations of line and square and their associated tactics were more knowable and easily represented than

\textsuperscript{5} Winter and Prost refer specifically to the representations of combat in museums in their critique of WWI combat displays. Their point has more general relevance. Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, \textit{The Great War in History; Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 210.
the dispersed skirmish line. This chapter will expose a similar selectivity of
representation by examining in turn, killing, being wounded and dying. Killing receives
a systematic consideration by examining juvenile and adult print sources and paintings.
Having established the commonalities of representation, the sections on wounded and
dying Britons in cultural representations of warfare will be examined in a more integrated
manner drawing examples from numerous sources around shared themes.

Killing

British soldiers killed many thousands of their enemies – generally poorly equipped
‘irregular’ and unindustrialized enemy – in colonial wars between 1870 and the Great
War. This act of killing was frequently illustrated in the engravings, paintings, and
descriptions of battles and skirmishes in print. As was noted in the previous chapter on
tactics, the act of killing was normally illustrated as an intimate moment between
combatants. This intimacy with the enemy was both crucial to represent, and, limited by
the page, frame, or stage, fighting was necessarily represented at close quarters and
disproportionately involved edged weapons as opposed to killing with firearms.

Potentially horrific, as blade, bayonet, or bullet penetrated flesh, Victorian depictions of
the act of killing de-emphasizes the object of the attack, and especially the physical
trauma of the event, and, instead puts emphasis on the subject doing the attacking. Since

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6 My use of “thousands” deliberately imparts a conservative tone; certainly tens or hundreds of thousands
of Native dead are more likely figures through the course of Britain’s colonial campaigns. However, no
accurate statistics exist concerning the casualties inflicted by the British on their colonial opponents, nor is
it possible to assess these. Individual battle narratives provide only an approximation of Native losses but
the wounded that left the field, often likely to die, were not enumerated. The loss of life to civilians, both
through direct military action or due to the effects of displacement or crop destruction, can only be guessed.

7 These illustrative limitations were not new. The very definition of massed collective warfare, the
Classical Greek phalanx, was rarely represented in the art and decoration of the age which preferred to
represent warfare as a Homeric contest between individuals. This fit into a cultural preference but must
have also been easier to represent within the limited frame of pottery surfaces that survive for our
examination. J. E. Lendon, Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity (New Haven:
Yale University Press, 2005), 45.
illustrating Britons being killed is relatively rare, and always rather obtuse, the representation of the act of killing was most commonly the preserve of the British soldier.

Related to the importance of close combat and the tactical methods that made close combat possible, there is a consistent fascination with the use of edged weapons in the representations of fighting and killing. These weapons include lances, swords, and the bayonet, and Natives armed with a variety of hand weapons. The representational emphasis on such weapons certainly satisfies the chivalric masculine imperative of combat and suits the archetype of spear armed Native confronted by Tommy Atkins defending empire with a bayonet of Sheffield steel. The fact that the bayonet was attached to a high powered rifle, the purpose of which was to avoid the uncertainties of close combat, was de-emphasized; deadly fire is part of most narratives but ultimately real or fictional protagonists must fight at close quarters. Within this genre of combat illustration, disproportionately common is the representation of mounted cavalry action, which, by definition, demanded representations of close combat that followed the increasingly rare tactic of the charge. Notwithstanding the issue of firepower ultimately winning and preserving the Empire, the frequency of close combat in imperial warfare was actually quite limited despite its frequency on paper and canvas. Anecdotal evidence is hazardous to navigate since campaign narratives were as much influenced by the broad culture as they in turn influenced the media; harrowing tales of hand-to-hand combat made for better script than long range sniping or murderous volleys. In addition,

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8 In a fictional story of the 1884 Sudan campaign, the British protagonist thrusts his bayonet into the chest of a Dervish opponent. Here, however, the writer notes that “the weapon encountered his foe’s breastbone, and the faithless steel – made in Germany at less than half the cost of the trusty Sheffield steel – bent like lead.” While remaining unflinchingly patriotic, British writers, even of juvenile fiction, could be critical of government decisions that compromised the effectiveness of British soldiers at war. Reginald Wray. “With the Troops in the Soudan. A Story of the War in Africa,” *Pluck* 3, no. 75 (1896): 3.
instances of close combat represented the most dangerous moments of battle for imperial forces against most opponents, so its emphasis is understandable, if rather misleading.

For example, in his narrative of the Nile Expedition of 1898, Winston Churchill dedicates almost a quarter of the space allotted to the decisive Battle of Omdurman to his participation in the charge of the 21st Lancers, a momentary and unnecessary event, but one that resonates more with any reader than the massacre that was the rest of the battle.  


Britains Ltd. were quick to represent the event with a set of charging 21st Lancers in their correct campaign dress released along with a set in full dress (Illustration 4.1).

Churchill had every right to emphasize this event in which he was a participant, but such desperate struggles, when they dominate the narrative of battle, come to shape the broader understanding of the war experience.  This is not only a problem of

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9 Winston Churchill’s account of the Sudan campaign was published as a two volume set, The River War, in 1899.  Winston Churchill, Frontiers and Wars: His Four Early Books Covering His Life As A Soldier And War Correspondent (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1962).
contemporary battle narratives, but persists in modern historiography of colonial warfare, if not all warfare studies. Indeed, cavalry charges seem to fire the imagination to a degree that even complete disasters, such as the Crimean War charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, become celebrated glorious moments of valour as opposed to wasteful, bloody mistakes. At least with the Light Brigade it could be suggested that, after the pounding they endured from Russian artillery, entering a melee was, in fact, a peculiar momentary relief, although one that simply exchanged one form of killing with another.

A relatively reliable measure of the frequency of close combat, or ‘melee’, is a comparison of casualties suffered at various battles. Statistics on Native casualties inflicted during British colonial campaigns are very sketchy. Even in set-piece battles where after-action assessments could have been done quite accurately, only British casualties were carefully enumerated; those of the enemy, or even Native levies serving the British, were often broadly estimated based only on those dead found in the immediate vicinity of the British positions. Indeed, far from being counted, Native dead were sometimes not even collected and buried. Nevertheless, those statistics that do

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10 Both scholarly and popular histories of colonial wars are often purveyors of the ‘battle piece’ narrative, and, instead of commissioning new illustrations to support the text, are also likely to use the same illustrations that shaped the contemporary Victorian understanding of war. Although the historian’s caption might note the ‘romanticized’ character of the representation, the battle paintings and press illustrations of Giles, Woodville, Butler et al are frequently reproduced establishing an image of warfare in this period that is still compelling if skewed. An example of this tendency by historians to use Victorian illustrations in spite of their flaws, is the work of Ian Knight. In his popular history of the Zulu War, Zulu War 1879, he notes numerical, tactical, accoutrement and geographic flaws in contemporary pictures that he uses because they impart a ‘sense’ of the action, or might otherwise be accurate. Ian Knight, Zulu War 1879: Twilight of a Warrior Nation (London: Osprey Publishing, 1992), 44, 48, 56, and 57.

11 References to Balaclava and the charge of the Light Brigade are numerous and celebrate the event. See Chapter 3.

12 At the major Zulu War battles of Gingindlovu and Ulundi, the British left the Zulu dead where they fell. Ian Knight, Brave Men’s Blood; The Epic of the Zulu War, 1879 (London: Greenhill Books, 1990), 107 and 185.
exist offer a glimpse into the great losses that Native armies could suffer in the field --
even when they won -- and illustrate the limited losses suffered by the British.

The Zulu War of 1879 provides some telling figures. At the Battle of Isandlwana,
January 22, 1879, the British force of 1700, including recruited Native contingents, lost
approximately 1,400 personnel including 858 white officers and men. It was the single
biggest defeat of the British army in imperial history. But even in victory, the Zulus lost
approximately 2000 dead and large numbers of wounded, many more losses than they
inflicted. With victory so costly, defeat was even more devastating.13 The lost war cost
the Zulus approximately 24,000 warriors: 8000 dead and 16,000 wounded of whom, it
must be assumed, many or most would die of their injuries. The British army lost 1,430
white soldiers, of which over 800 were killed at Isandlwana.14 Most Zulu War battles
were, thus, lopsided engagements favouring British firepower, a trend that became more
typical of later nineteenth century colonial wars.

The other Zulu War battles illustrate this lopsidedness. On the night and day
following Isandlwana, the battle of Rorke’s Drift claimed 17 British dead out of the small
garrison of 130 to the Zulu’s loss of approximately 370 of 4000, with potentially
hundreds more succumbing to their wounds later.15 Fortified and well supplied with
ammunition, firepower allowed the British to avoid the risks of sustained melee that
would surely have decimated the garrison that suffered quite a high percentage of killed
but could well have been massacred. At the Battle of Nyzane, also on January 22nd, the

13 Knight, Brave Men’s..., 68. So grievous was the loss of Zulu warriors that even their king Cetswayo
lamented their commitment to battle in spite of the victory.
15 Knight, Brave Men’s..., 80. Frank Emery puts the number of British dead at 15, although this might not
account for soldiers dying of wounds after the battle. Emery also notes the lack of accurate statistics on
Zulu losses and offers similar figures to other sources. Frank Emery, The Red Soldier; The Zulu War 1879
(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 76 (Table 1).
British lost 14 dead to a Zulu loss of 400.16 At Gingindlovu, April 2, 1879, the British lost 13 men killed to a Zulu loss of 1,100.17 At Kambula, March 29, the British losses were a mere 28 compared to the Zulus whose battle fatalities were approximately 785, but who were vigorously pursued after the defeat resulting in a total of some 2000 dead.18 Finally, at the anti-climatic Battle of Ulundi the British lost 13 men to a Zulu loss of 1500.19 So horrible had the effects of British firepower been in previous battles, the Zulu impi at Ulundi had not the will to endure the inevitable losses associated with closing the ground between themselves and the British square. The Zulu charges never got closer than 30 yards from their enemy.20 Many of the Zulu losses were inflicted during the relentless pursuit conducted by the 17th Lancers and various volunteer mounted units.

The foregoing statistics demonstrate that in these major actions the Zulus were not often given the opportunity to use their most lethal weapons, their spears and clubs. Had they closed with the British soldiers in significant strength and cohesiveness the British losses would have been greater. To suggest otherwise is to argue that British abilities in melee were superior to their opponents, a suggestion, as will be shown, made by Chums, Henty or the Illustrated London News, but one that does not stand reasonable evaluation.21 At Gingindlovu and Ulundi, the Zulus failed to make contact at all with the British, being driven off by bullets long before their stabbing spears could cross with bayonets. Somewhat ironically, the few British losses were mostly due to the firearms

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16 Knight, Brave Men’s..., 89.
17 Knight, Brave Men’s..., 107.
18 Knight, Brave Men’s..., 142.
19 Knight, Brave Men’s..., 183 and 185.
20 Morris, 568.
21 Casualty returns from the Sudan campaigns of the 1880s show that British units that were contacted by the Madhist forces suffered the vast majority of the casualties. Units that managed to repulse the Dervishes with firepower – the more common result of combat – suffered few or no casualties and those that were suffered usually came from Dervish firearms.
that the Zulus used to only limited effect due to lack of training, poor ammunition or technological obsolescence. In contrast, at the British defeats of Isandlwana and at the ambush of a supply column at Myer’s Drift, British losses were almost total and most were inflicted at close quarters.

One can conclude a number of things about the nature of killing in the Zulu war based on the foregoing statistics alone. When Zulus closed with the enemy in strength the British suffered terrible losses by hand weapons in melee. But crossing the British field of fire to make contact cost the Zulus great loss of life and frequently resulted in their advance being halted long before they could reach the enemy. Close combat was rare. A melee only occurred when the British were ambushed, when their disposition was flawed and overwhelmed by superior generalship (as at Isandlwana), or when they chose to engage in close combat on their own terms such as with cavalry in pursuit of a defeated force, such as Gingindlovu, Kambula and Ulundi. Against other Native opponents, close combat might occur in assaults on fortifications or in town fighting as was sometimes experienced, for example, fighting the Dervishes of the Sudan and the various tribes of the North-West Frontier and Afghanistan. All of these circumstances were appropriately represented in the Victorian media, but far from appearing anomalous, these instances of close combat are the typical manner that killing was represented in print and illustration. While murderous volleys of rifle fire massacring Zulu, Dervish or Pathan were illustrated and described in British mass culture, killing was more typically represented at close quarters in a valorous test of arms; this was particularly the case for the principal characters or personalities featured in the stories or historical narratives.
Not inaccurate, but certainly atypical, it was the bayonet, or even more notably, the officer’s sword or the cavalryman’s lance, that did the killing in an implied fair fight.\(^\text{22}\)

The obsession with representing the act of killing as a contest between men, although certainly not equals, is found in the juvenile literature of G.A. Henty. Henty’s young protagonists must frequently fight. They do so either as part of a body of soldiers or as individuals performing some sort of dangerous mission. To assert their gentlemanly, public school character, and to add drama to their military experience, these boy adventurers are invariably confronted with intimate hand-to-hand combat. Distinct from killing at a distance, close combat is presented by Henty as more masculine and honourable. In fact, these moments of intimate struggle are crucial narrative devices for Henty’s protagonists who are often unaware of their own good birth and demonstrate it through their actions to officers well

\(^\text{22}\) Ignoring the growing importance of their carbines, cavalrymen in one of G.A. Henty’s novels discuss the superiority of the lance over the sword when fighting the Dervishes of the Sudan who lie down to avoid sword thrusts. This approach of the “slippery black beggars” is described as being not “natural” or “decent” and that with the log reach of the lance “there will be no mercy shown.” G.A. Henty, *The Dash for Khartoum: A Tale of the Nile Expedition* (London: Blackie & Son, 1892), 135.
capable of identifying class kinship. In *With The Allies To Pekin*, the young hero Rex twice fights Chinese soldiers in close combat killing several of his opponents. In *For Name And Fame*, the central character saves an officer in a melee fought against Afghan tribesmen and he is also later aided by a kookris wielding Ghurkha (Illustration 4.2). Similarly, in *To Herat And Cabul* the protagonist Angus participates in the defence of a fortress and, under the care of a British lieutenant, fights in a desperate melee. Henty proclaims that the experience helped define Angus’s masculinity: “He was no longer a boy, for he had been doing man’s work.” Although Angus had repeatedly killed at the siege, when confronted with the need to execute a man sent to spy on him and his Afghan servant, Angus is troubled by his servant’s idea of murdering a non-combatant: “If he found us escaping and attacked us, we could kill him, Azim, but it is not an Englishman’s way to kill, except in a fight.” In *The Dash For Khartoum*, Henty puts his hero into a cavalry regiment that gets a rare opportunity to charge the enemy and fight in a melee. During the fight, Edgar rescues a corporal and is wounded, for which he is recommended to receive a Victoria Cross. Hence, killing in close combat is both an important narrative device and, in the right circumstances, provides Henty’s protagonists with a more manly and honourable way to fight, even if the frequency and emphasis placed on such intimate struggles leaves the reader with few alternatives to understand combat.

The representation of killing is no less skewed in the illustrated juvenile journals.

The half-penny *Pluck* provides some of the most explicit illustrations of killing at close

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24 G. A. Henty, *For Name And Fame; or Through the Afghan Passes* (London: Blackie & Sons, 1886), 159.
26 Henty, *To Herat...,*102. It is worth noting that the Afghan servant does kill the spy with a club and proceeds to loot the body; Angus is disgusted by this act that contradicted his orders and sensibilities, and refuses a portion of the spoils.
27 Henty, *The Dash For Khartoum*, 129.
quarters. In both fictional tales and the recounting of actual battles, bayonets and swords are shown poised to, or actually plunging into enemy torsos. For example, in a story about the Sudan campaign of 1884-85, the lead character, Dick Gascoigne, repeatedly uses his bayonet to kill ‘Arabs’. In one instance he is strangely without his rifle and uses his unattached bayonet, thrusting “the glittering steel through the Arab’s half-naked body.” Later, the writer puts Gascoigne in the historical Battle of Abu Klea, January 17, 1885. This battle, whose critical combat lasted about ten minutes, included some desperate fighting at close quarters: a British skirmish line was over-run and massacred, and one corner of the British square was driven back in a brief melee that temporarily compromised the integrity of the square (Illustration 4.3). However intense was the close combat, the battle was won by British discipline and firepower which drove out the Dervishes from the British formation and ultimately from the field. Nevertheless, the Pluck story communicated that British firepower, while impressive, had not stopped the Dervishes and that the square was rescued only by “driving back the foe by sheer bulldog courage.” Gascoigne both observes and participates in close quarter fighting driving bayonets into “sinewy chest” or “breastbone,” although the physiological results of these penetrating wounds are not explored.

28 When edged weapons are shown penetrating bodies it is uniformly in the chest and never in the face. The psychological and representational issues around showing the face being disfigured by a sword or bayonet wound are numerous, but it appears that confronting the enemy face-to-face while stabbing him in the chest is of some importance. One notable exception is a description of the Battle of Abu Klea in British Battles on Land and Sea. Having described the brutal killing of an isolated officer, Colonel Burnaby, by a group of Dervishes, the writer describes how the enemy “were driving their spears into the faces and breasts of our men.” It is not surprising that this type of weapon use is associated with the Native enemy and is never illustrated or described as a British method of dispatching an opponent. James Grant, British Battles on Land and Sea (London: Cassell and Company, 1899), 574.

Illustration 4.3 “Death of Burnaby” from *British Battles on Land and Sea* (1899)

*Pluck* presents the battle as one of intimate male conflict, and, partly due to the fact that the Dervishes actually made contact with the British, Abu Klea could have turned into a British defeat. However, the fact that it was British drill and fire discipline that defeated the Dervishes, and that most British casualties were suffered in melee contrasts with the *Pluck* rendition of the battle. *Pluck*’s narrative is broadly accurate but emphasizes a type of combat that might have lost the British the battle as opposed to defining the reasons why they won it. Few British soldiers fought in melee and those that did were either decimated or were rescued by the supporting firepower as much as their own abilities to defend themselves. *Pluck* readers were warned not to come to these conclusions: “The ignorant love to make light of the Battle of Abu Klea, and say it was against half-naked savages pitted against men armed with the deadliest weapons science
has invented….It was neither Martini-Henri nor Gatling guns which won the battle…it was British Pluck…”

Although other Pluck stories note with pride the devastating effect of British musketry, the ambivalent relationship with technological killing is revealed in the foregoing quotation. So too is the way that accurate battle narratives of a skewed and limited scope can compromise the understanding of battle and combat. British soldiers fighting at Abu Klea were brave (or desperate), but their survival ultimately relied on a combination of organizational discipline and technology, the two attributes that most colonial opponents lacked, particularly in combination. Indeed, as briefly as the battle lasted, the British casualties amounted to approximately 200 officers and men, most of whom received their wounds or death blows in hand-to-hand combat. Close combat was, therefore, a test of arms, but it was one where the Briton was as likely to die as he was to kill.

Pluck stories are often quite graphic in their textual descriptions of killing, if not in their illustrations. In a story about the Crimean War, the unnamed author describes the

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30 The contemporary popular history British Battles on Land and Sea, has a more accurate rendition of the battle, concluding that the fire from the compact British formation “grew so heavy and withering that they [the Dervishes] began to waver and recoil…” Nevertheless, earlier in the narrative the author quotes from the Daily Telegraph correspondent about the heroic death of Colonel Burnaby in melee: “’With the blood gushing in streams from his gashed throat, the dauntless Guardsman leaped to his feet sword in hand, and slashed at the ferocious group.’” James Grant, British Battles on Land and Sea (London: Cassell and Company, 1899), 574.

31 The Great Battles of All Nations, another contemporary popular history, put the figure at 168 officers and men killed or wounded. Strangely, the battle narrative in this book made no mention of the broken square but did emphasize the ill-fated charge of a small body of Heavy Guardsmen earlier in the battle. The fictional narrative in Pluck is actually more complete, but both emphasize close combat episodes. Archibald Wilberforce, ed., The Great Battles of All Nations; From Marathon to the Surrender of Cronje in South Africa (London: Peter Fenelon Collier & Son, 1899), 921.

32 The ILN gave a more measured description of the battle. Although it too noted the “desperate hand-to-hand fight” that ensued once the square had been penetrated, it ultimately credits discipline and firepower for driving out the Dervishes. Two issues offered narratives of the battle, both of similar character. “The Nile expedition,” The Illustrated London News LXXXI, no. 2389 (January 31, 1885): 112; “The Nile Expedition; The Relief of Khartoum,” The Illustrated London News LXXXVI, no. 2390 (February 7, 1885): 137.
effects of weapons quite candidly although in a depersonalized manner: “sabers flashed and rose dripping with blood”; bodies fell to the ground “trampled instantaneously into unrecognizable masses by lashing hoofs”; “men had their arms shot off…horses dashed on with headless corpses upon their backs.” In the same story there is an illustration of the British protagonist, Lieutenant Dudley, stabbing a Russian officer through the chest. Although the sword is shown exiting the back of the Russian, the rudimentary black and white illustration does not reflect the textual descriptions of blood letting. The same abstraction is evident in an illustration accompanying a story of the Third Afghan War of 1879 where a British cavalryman is shown thrusting his sword into the chest of a mounted Afghan without indication of the potentially bloody results. Ultimately, illustration, especially representing named characters, had to be more restrained than abstract text, at least in this publication which asserted its ‘wholesome’ qualities compared to the vile ‘dreadfuls’. Also, the medium of monochrome illustrations limited the degree of representation adding to the disconnectedness between graphics, text, and reality.

*Pluck*’s deliberate assertion of superiority over the ‘penny dreadfuls’ is suspect, but the qualitative high ground occupied by the illustrated publications, *The Boy’s Own Paper (BOP)* and *Chums*, is reflected in its less puerile quality of writing and illustration. This quality allowed for more detail in the representation of soldiers, their uniforms and

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34 Alec Pearson, “Campfire and Bivouack; A story of Adventure During the Last Afghan War,” *Pluck* XII, no. 302 (1900): 1.
35 A quotation from the *Evening Gazette* was presented on the front cover of *Pluck* and praised it “…as spirited as it is wholesome.” *Pluck* VI, no. 145 (1897): cover. Reacting to competition from the penny-dreadfuls, *Pluck* asked readers to share the more virtuous stories found in their publication and to dissuade their friends from reading the dubious content of the dreadfuls. Clearly a bid to hold onto their share of the increasingly competitive market, this appeal to the readers is an overt expression of the moral, military and imperial educational agenda forwarded by Victorian and Edwardian publications, albeit driven by a commercial motive.
their activities in the field, including, at least potentially, the methods and sanguine results of fighting. Generally, however, these ‘better’ papers were obtuse in their depiction of the moment of killing.

*BOP*’s military content is common but certainly not overwhelming. Military articles and illustrations are often oriented toward the minutia of uniforms, badges, rank or regimental histories. Narratives of battles and descriptions of combat tend to be broad battle pieces offering anecdotes of individual or regimental valour used to illustrate the other stated details. Within this context, the act of killing is occasionally represented. Describing the act, as opposed to the effect, *BOP* readers were exposed to the desperate struggle of close combat common to all Victorian representations of killing. Heroes are described as “bayoneting” and “clubbing” their opponents. 36 Indeed, the threat of “…the bayonet thrust of Tommy Atkins” is specifically noted.37 In an article on the Volunteer movement, the importance, but great difficulty in achieving proficiency in bayonet drill is emphasized: “those corps who include this [bayonet drill] in their annual show fully deserve the praise bestowed on them by the inspecting officer.”38 The fascination with combat using edged weapons is similarly emphasized in an article about an expedition to Tibet during which the British officer writer describes how he and his “Goorkha” contingent wondered what fighting they would face and “fingered our kookris [a curved long knife] and longed to be at the enemy.”39 What is absent from *BOP* representations of killing is the illustrated moment of bayonet or sword penetrating the

body of the victim. Instead, obtuse language is used such as “disposed of”, or an illustration will show the moment before the act of killing, with bayonet poised or clubbed rifle raised.

For reasons that are readily understood, shooting a distant opponent carries less representational complication than showing that same enemy stabbed at close quarters. Battle descriptions represent the generic results of disciplined fire using language that homogenizes the effects of, in effect, invisible bullets. In a story of the Burma campaign, the writer notes how “Gatling gun and rifle spoke out, sending havoc through the mob-like mass of assailants…every shot told.”40 “Havoc” and “told” obscure the realities of bullets penetrating various bodily locations on the Burmese with unique and horrible results. Another article, this time an interview with an aged veteran of the 16th Lancers and colonial campaigns in Asia, mentions the “great slaughter” that followed the siege of Rangoon in 1852.41 Without elaborating on this killing, the interview turns to the gallantry and bravery of the officers; the veteran describes how Lord Wolseley, then an ensign, was wounded. More specific and personalized descriptions and illustrations of Native bodies arching forwards or backwards being struck by a bullet from a rifle or machine gun are provided. For the BOP reader there was, thus, a mixed message regarding the act of killing. While the text emphasized, albeit obtusely, the importance of intimate killing with sword of bayonet, the adjoining illustrations never showed the final moment of this act. Instead, the actual moment of killing is most commonly represented at distance with rifle fire. With the exception of the slumped targets, the physical result

41 “A Chelsea Veteran’s Story,” *The Boy’s Own Paper Annual* 20, no. 986 (December 4, 1897): 145.
of a bullet striking the body is left entirely abstract in the black and white line drawings. The emphasis is thus on the shooter, not on the victim.

*Chums* was less constrained by a religious moral agenda than *BOP* but was still intent on producing a somewhat more sophisticated and less gruesome product than the overtly jingoistic publications like *Pluck*. Consequently, *Chums* follows a similar pattern in regards to the representation of killing – a general expectation of killing done in close combat, but the act itself tends to be explicit in text but only implied in illustration. The results of killing at close quarters are once again commonly represented as an action performed by cavalry.

In a 1908 war-scare story recounting a fictional Russian invasion of the British Isles, there is an extraordinary, even bizarre emphasis on cavalry actions – sometimes led by the rather unlikely war hero and cavalryman, King Edward.⁴² British cavalry – the “Welsh Yeomanry” volunteers -- charge a mass of Russian infantry and the ensuing killing is described in broad language: the cavalry “bore” into the Russian formation, “hacking and hewing” they “clove” through the enemy only to turn about and charge again. With their “red-tinged steel” they “cut a red path” through the Russians who finally break and run. When the narrative turns to individuals, the detail of killing becomes more marked. In another charge, the King “cleft a Russian captain of infantry to the chine[sic], cleared his blade and spurred forward”, while another trooper “gave the old ‘out-seven’ cut, and that Russian went down with his fierce, scowling face cut in halves.”⁴³ In spite of Russian numbers and determination, the reader is reminded that “British arms were behind the British steel, and in the front of all was Britain’s King”

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⁴² Captain Frank Shaw, “The Vengeance of the Motherland,” *Chums* 17 (September 16, 1908): 339.
whose “dripping sword” always seemed to find its mark, a Russian officer with the King’s “sword point in his throat” being just one of Edward’s victims. Another cavalryman killed a Russian with his bare hands while yet another, a trooper Jones, “cut a Russian clean in halves from shoulder to hips.” The blood-soaked narrative continues:

A trooper lost his sword; left it sticking in the scull of a Russian, and, being all unarmed, seized a Russian private bodily from the ground, dragged him to his saddle, and there slew him with his hands, flung the writhing body from him into the faces of a dozen riflemen, and followed up his attack with such terrible venom that those before him crumbled away and fled…

The killing of Russians in this story is notably graphic, but left understated just enough so as to force the reader to complete the picture of the actual effects of such violence. Doing so would reveal a physiological horror inflicted on the victims, but the writer pulls the reader away from such thoughts by alternating the descriptions of killing with passages emphasizing the desperate situation of the Yeomanry, their loyalty to the King, their camaraderie, and how ultimately they had “done their work nobly.”

Further reducing contemplation of what cutting a man’s face in half actually means, Chums offers little hint of such images in their illustrations. Although their illustrations are of better quality than, for example, Pluck, the graphic effects of killing remains a rare topic of representation and, when offered, remains restrained compared to textual accounts. The front cover illustration of an 1898 edition of Chums shows a British lancer plunging his weapon into the chest of an Afghan tribesman (Illustration 4.4). Again, the black and white print keeps the physical trauma of the moment obscure, the arching body of the Afghan offering the only indication of the violent effects. In the adjoining story of the “Lancers,” the Afghans shoot at the frustrated cavalry who await an

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46 “The Trumpeter Speared his Men as They Stood,” Chums VII, no. 311 (August 24, 1898): cover.
opportunity to charge the tribesmen sheltered in rocks and gullies. The disdain for the tribesmen who do not break cover to engage the cavalry in melee exposes a contradiction in popular narratives of war and killing. In broader narratives, British musketry is hailed as a demonstration of superiority. Native firepower, especially when directed at the protagonist and his unit, is seen as cowardly and denies that protagonist the opportunity to engage in the close-combat that will define his soldierly prowess and masculinity. Hence, mass culture has Britons kill with firepower only in broad narratives that have the Natives hurl themselves against the steady imperial lines issuing volleys of technically superior fire. In a contrast between civilized war and barbarity, these narratives emphasize a tactical analysis that in part celebrates the long standing notion of British fire discipline and the ‘thin red line’. In more narrowly defined narratives, Britons must fight in close combat, often as mounted cavalry, against an opponent that might favour firing at the redoubtable Englishmen to avoid the inevitable loss to British steel. While not a strange impulse, this

Illustration 4.4 “The trumpeter speared his men as they stood” from *Chums* (August 24, 1898). © The British Library Board.
dynamic of combat is a reversal of what was more likely to occur between the industrial soldier of Britain and the Native opponent who was often forced into close combat due to the paucity of his weapons technology.

It would be convenient for class-conscious social historians to conclude from the juvenile press that the cheaper mass-market papers directed at a working class audience were more graphic and less sophisticated. To a small degree, papers like *Pluck* were indeed more graphic and sanguine, perhaps fulfilling the expectation that unscrupulous, middle-class publishers provided a less morally restrained, sensational product for the lower orders. However, in terms of how these papers understood the nature of killing, all of them praised British firepower, but exaggerated the importance and frequency of close combat, and all failed to consider the actual effects of weapons on the body.

That the juvenile press emphasized the drama of melee in their typically plucky fictional tales might be predictable, but the adult illustrated press fell under the same constraints of a restricted narrative scope. In their limited text, and within the narrative constraints of engravings and painting reproductions, the adult media similarly celebrated the act of killing at close quarters. Both the *Illustrated London News (ILN)* and *The Graphic* are full of representations of killing – an extension of the news reporting of the continual little wars fought by the British around the world. Although more informative of a particular event or more commonly representing the collective action of the British army, the manner in which killing is presented is really little different than that of the illustrated juvenile press, although the textual descriptions are less prone to hyperbole. Broad descriptions of battles or panoramic illustrations show British firepower in action. More narrowly focused narratives emphasize the role of identifiable individuals with
adjoining illustrations often punctuating the drama of close combat as Britons fight Natives with edged weapons. The number of combat descriptions and illustrations is vast and whole issues might be dominated by military content when major campaigns were being fought, such as those against the Zulus in 1879, against Egypt in 1882, the Sudan in the 1880s and again in 1898, repeatedly in the North-west Frontier and Afghanistan, and, of course, the Second Anglo-Boer War. Some examples of the representation of killing in the ILN and the Graphic follow. Again, the Zulu War will be emphasized with some additional consideration of the Anglo-Boer War.

After some editorial speculation about the outbreak of the war, the first mention of the Zulu War in the ILN came in the February 1, 1879 issue.47 Already over a week after the January 22 disaster at Isandlwana, the ILN finally presented a more substantial un-illustrated column two weeks later, on February 15, reprinting the despatch from the British Commander, Lord Chelmsford, reporting the defeat and a list of the officers who perished.48 The first illustrated coverage of the war was offered on the 22nd showing British forces on the march or in camp,49 and, on March 1, the first illustrated suggestion that combat had occurred shows the relief of Rorke’s Drift, a position successfully defended on the same day as Isandlwana.50 On the cover of the May 10 issue, the British public was shown combat – the Battle of Intombe (also called Myer’s Drift); it was another defeat.51 The illustration shows a confused melee between countless Zulus and a

48 “The Zulu War; British Reverse,” The Illustrated London News LXXIV, no. 2070 (February 15, 1879): 146.
49 The Illustrated London News LXXIV, no. 2071 (February 22, 1879): 168, 176, 184, and 185.
British force apparently hemmed in against the left bank of a river, supported by other British soldiers firing from the opposite bank. In its broad narrative and representation of the soldier’s positions the illustration is quite accurate. The combat is intimate with most of the British on the left bank fighting with bayonets, swords and even the suggestion of bare-hands. The ‘battle’ was really a massacre of a small contingent of the 80th Regiment assigned to escort a baggage train. Surprised by an early morning attack on their ill-prepared position, the British desperately sought to withdraw to the other side of the river.

The cover illustration, based on a sketch provided by a member of the regiment that fought the engagement, a Lieutenant Beverley Ussher, certainly imparts the desperate nature of the British position, but curiously shows only three British dead and one wounded, while the Zulu dead number five. Compared to the hundreds of individual figures illustrated this total of dead is remarkably restrained. No weapon is illustrated actively being pushed into a body, although one of the British dead has a spear left sticking out from the man’s chest and another Briton engaged by two Zulus is quite clearly about to be speared and clubbed. The most obvious moments of killing are implied by the front-central figure of a Zulu with an arched back having been struck by a bullet, and the figure of an apparently unarmed Briton drowning a Zulu in the river while holding his spear arm at bay.

Another combat illustration representing the Battle of Khambula, fought on March 29, appropriately shows no close combat – the Zulus were repulsed by the firepower of the laaggered British army under General Woods.  

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the illustration, derived from a sketch by the ‘war special’ Melton Prior, does show the latter part of the battle when members of the 60th Regiment sallied from their laager entrenchments to fire down on to the demoralized Zulus. By illustrating this moment of fighting, the viewer is given a different impression of the British disposition during the battle. In their apparently exposed position and with the suggestion of some danger to themselves due to three wounded British, the killing of the Zulus at range seems less brutal than what would have occurred during the bulk of the fighting. The subject choice for the illustration thus involves a subtle yet interesting distinction between the battle’s overall character and the illustrated moment at its end.

In the same issue, the *ILN* presented a series of three large illustrations of the similarly lop-sided Battle of Ginghilovo. The most graphic display of killing is in the final illustration, and again this shows the end of the battle where British cavalry pursued the already broken Zulu *impi*. The illustration caption, however, describes this action as the “final repulse” (as opposed to a pursuit of a rout) and shows cavalry wielding swords in close combat against warriors that do not appear in flight. Once again, swords are raised but none are making contact with the semi-naked bodies of the Zulus, one of whom is fallen dead, face-down, with no overt evidence of a wound. In the same issue, there are two other illustrations of Gingindlovu showing earlier parts of the battle.

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53 Also spelled “Gingindlovu.”
55 An account of the battle in April notes that while pursued by the cavalry “[L]arge numbers [of Zulus] threw away their arms…” This contemporary observation is not reflected in the illustration. “The Zulu War” *The Illustrated London News* LXXIV, no. 2080 (April 26, 1879): 398. A similar charge of cavalry occurred at the final battle of the war, Ulundi. Scarcely a battle at all, the demoralized Zulus were broken by British fire and then pursued by the British horse. In a painting by B. Fayel, “Charge of the 17th Lancers at Ulundi,” the Zulus are shown advancing into the attacking British lancers as opposed to running from them. Instead of the close-quarters melee shown in the painting, it was a massacre of Zulu fugitives. Painting reproduced in Harrington, 192. Harrington makes no mention of the character of the representation.
from the British perspective inside their defensive laager. Although accurate about both British tactics and the battle’s narrative, it is uncharacteristic of detailed close-in battle representations in that the British are shown shooting and supposedly killing with no evidence of melee. Interestingly, there are no Zulus in either of these large graphics, so the killing is merely implied and the image of the British soldier is uncomplicated with the fact that this battle was more massacre than the test of arms as suggested by the cavalry’s aforementioned “final repulse”.

At Ulundi the Zulus again failed to make an impression on the British forces, this time arrayed in a large square. The most enduring image of this battle was an engraving in *The Graphic* that shows the full British formation. In contrast to the *ILN* images of Gingindlovu, the Zulu targets of the British firing are illustrated, but unusually, the Zulus are shown in the foreground crouching behind brush and cover often wielding small arms as opposed to spears and shields. Having lost some of their will to fight, the Zulu assaults were not as vigorous, but the illustration makes it appear that the Zulus were engaging in a fire-fight. Instead of illustrating spear armed Natives being shot down, representing Zulu firing makes the application of superior British firepower in a decisive victory understandable.

Representations of killing in Afghanistan, Egypt, and the Sudan are little different than those episodes shown or described of the Zulu War: illustrations frequently show close combat but remain only suggestive of the effects of such fighting on the body. A dramatic cover illustration shows Scots and Ghurkhas engaged in melee with Afghan

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tribesmen.\textsuperscript{57} While the mounted British officer is aiming his revolver at an enemy at point-blank range, the other imperial soldiers are fighting hand-to-hand. The most prominent figure is of a Ghurkha bayoneting an Afghan, although, typically, the wound is graphically obscured by the individual’s garments and equipment. Immediately behind this figure is another Ghurkha swinging his kookri at a sword wielding tribesman; the centrality of this Ghurkha, with his distinctive downwardly curved knife emphasizes the willingness to engage in intimate combat. It reminds one of the British officer of Ghurkhas anticipating with relish the use of these knives in the \textit{BOP} account of the Tibetan expedition noted earlier in the chapter. The Egyptian campaign of 1882 drew massive coverage from the \textit{ILN} which provided plenty of combat content. Infantry and cavalry charges abound with the language that they inspired: during preliminary skirmishes and then at the battles of Kassassin and Tel-el-Kebir, the \textit{ILN} described the action as British cavalry “sabred the gunners, and rode down the infantry”\textsuperscript{58} while elsewhere British infantry “cleared the trenches” and were “bayoneting the gunners at their guns.”\textsuperscript{59} The language is again euphemistic for what must have been terrible combat in the entrenchments of the Egyptian army that had suffered over 2000 killed at Tel-el-Kebir alone according to a correspondent witnessing the battle.\textsuperscript{60} The extensive coverage of the Egyptian War included numerous and often very large, two-page illustrations showing the combat. All the same features of Victorian battle illustration are again present featuring the work of correspondents like Melton Prior, illustrators like F.

\textsuperscript{58} “The War in Egypt,” \textit{The Illustrated London News} LXXXI, no. 2261 (September 2, 1882): 246.  
\textsuperscript{59} “The War in Egypt,” \textit{The Illustrated London News} LXXXI, no. 2263 (September 16, 1882): 298.  
\textsuperscript{60} “The War in Egypt,” \textit{The Illustrated London News} LXXXI no. 2263 (September 16, 1882): 298.
Dadd, W. H. Overend, and the iconic engravings by R. Caton Woodville (Illustration 4.5).

Illustration 4.5 “The War in Egypt: At Close Quarters” from \textit{ILN} (September 23, 1882)
Overend and Woodville, among others, illustrated the campaigns in the Sudan for the *ILN* and offer the same rendition of combat and killing as has been noted for other campaigns. An example of the dramatic illustrated coverage revolves around the Battle and relief of Suakin (sic.), fought on December 20, 1888. Based on eyewitness sketches, Overend and Woodville show close combat scenes with Egyptian infantry charging into a Dervish redoubt and British cavalry crashing into a body of Dervish horse. In both, bayonet and sword are illustrated plunging into the bodies of their victims, although Overend was less inclined to show the actual point of entry. Woodville offers a more explicit interpretation of the fight and shows a cavalryman’s sword stuck in a Dervish’s chest with the cavalryman galloping by having lost his grasp on the weapon. Thus disarmed, Woodville has offered the viewer of the illustration a small detail of combat’s physiological reality: the traumatized body, violated by a sword or bayonet, can grip onto the weapon with bone and muscle making it difficult to extricate for its owner. It is worth noting that *BOP* included an explicit commentary about this problem, this time associated with the cavalry lance:

> One who did some notable work in the Omdurman charge told us that it is a difficult, nay, almost impossible, task to quickly disengage the lance from the body of a fallen foe; this doubtless constitutes the weak point of an otherwise most effective weapon.”

Notwithstanding this interesting detail of combat, the Sudan offers little relief from the same limited narrative scope that compromises the sometimes massive volume of coverage, both textual and illustrated, of combat and killing in Britain’s small wars.

Where one would expect a change in the representation of killing is during the Anglo-Boer War. Fighting a mobile, modern equipped guerrilla force, the opportunities

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for the British soldier to use cold steel were even less numerous than in campaigns fought against spear armed Natives. Of course, the bayonet charge still features occasionally in the press coverage of the war, explained perhaps by its infrequency, but also leaving the viewer with that same impression of warfare that previous colonial war’s coverage had so firmly established.62 Inevitably, the same physical formatting restrictions of media form and the persistent preference for representing intimate combat shaped the way in which the press represented killing during this war. *Pluck* featured stories of the Anglo-Boer War that made close combat seem typical. In the story “Up Guards” an illustration shows Boers fleeing from charging British.63 The illustration’s title “Would Not Face Steel” indicates the expectation that the bayonet was feared and a useful instrument of combat. Another *Pluck* story of the Anglo-Boer War includes an illustration of a British assault on a Boer position with the central British figure bayoneting an enemy.64 In the same story, a lancer regiment is illustrated charging an enemy unit frontally. In reality this would generally be a deadly exercise, but here gets the plucky yet dismissive praise that the cavalry will be “getting their baptism of fire from the Boers.”65 Although there is a suggestion of artillery munitions exploding and firing from the Boers, the potentially suicidal charge has not suffered a single casualty. The next page shows another cavalry

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62 One example, late in the Boer war, dramatically illustrates the point. In this two page engraving, Woodville shows British soldiers assaulting a Boer position, bayonets gleaming white in the otherwise dark illustration. Only one Briton is shown firing his rifle while his many comrades surge forward – one is falling backwards having been shot and another, exceptionally, seems hesitant to press forward. The main British figure urges his soldiers forward. All the Boers appear to be firing or loading; no Boer appears ready for close combat. R. Caton Woodville, “The Engagement at Vlakfontein: The Derbyshires Retaking the Guns at the Point of the Bayonet,” *The Illustrated London News* 29, no. 743 (August 3, 1901): 178.
65 Pound, 6.
charge crashing into a Boer position with the defenders fleeing or being stabbed by lances.\textsuperscript{66} Killing is once again intimate and perhaps chivalrous in its execution.

While occasionally illustrating British infantry and artillery engaged at range against unseen enemy, representing cavalry and mounted combat was not patently inaccurate and was graphically, if not militarily, more effective. Cavalry charges happened, sometimes successfully and always dramatically; however, they tended to occur at the conclusion of a battle in pursuit of an already defeated enemy.\textsuperscript{67} More commonly, cavalry – typically ‘mounted infantry’ – became a prominent feature of the later guerrilla phase of the war and had always had a place in the vast landscape of southern Africa. However, as was noted in the chapter on tactics, the mounted units were mostly used for strategic mobility, not as shock troops. And yet, the dramatic and large \textit{ILN} illustrations of the Anglo-Boer War frequently show cavalry fighting and killing from horseback.

The 1901 volume of the \textit{ILN} demonstrates the problem of both showing the prominence of mounted troops but putting them disproportionately into close combat situations for which most were ill suited. In the March 2 edition, the \textit{ILN} printed an action filled illustration showing the charge of the 16\textsuperscript{th} Lancers. The caption makes no specific reference to the action and the illustration shows the lead cavalryman poised to

\textsuperscript{66} Pound, 7.

\textsuperscript{67} On October 21, 1899, at the Battle of Elandslaagte, a cavalry charge by the 5\textsuperscript{th} Dragoons and 5\textsuperscript{th} Lancers successfully transformed a Boer withdrawal into a rout. On February 15, 1900, the 9\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} Lancers conducted a more traditional charge against an artillery-battered Boer force that failed to stop the charge through firepower. The Boers fled. It is worth noting that the authors who described these cavalry actions continued to offer anecdotes and language that contemporary sources would have found familiar: describing the action of the 5\textsuperscript{th} Lancers the authors note that a lancer simultaneously skewered two Boers sharing a horse, and later describe the charge at the Modder as heralded with “pennants flying”. Whether accurate or not, this kind of additional description in a book that offers little purely tactical narrative is fanciful and suspect. Denis Judd and Keith Surridge, \textit{The Boer War} (London: John Murray, 2002), 110 and 160.
plunge his lance into the chest of a hapless Boer on foot.68  Thankfully, the illustrator of this anachronistic piece, regardless of the accuracy of it or not, showed some restraint and had the lance pennons furled.69  Two weeks later the *ILN* showed another dynamic cavalry action. Here, Woodville, the illustrator, describes a unit of the Imperial Yeomanry (mounted volunteers) intercepting a Boer convoy.70  Shooting from their mounts, there is a suggestion of Boer losses, but the emphasis remains with the mounted troopers.  Woodville again offered a very similar illustration of mounted imperial troops charging against a Boer convoy in June, 1901.71  Waving their rifles and pistols, the Boers seem overawed by the charge and rather than killing the Boers, the illustration shows the situation just before the Boers supposedly surrendered.

What makes these illustrations in the *ILN* disappointing is that the 1901 volume started off so promisingly with a two-illustration report on the Royal Irish Rifles in South Africa (Illustration 4.6).72  The first shows them mounted, training their horses to endure the noise of rifle fire. Both realistic and amusing, a figure in the background is shown having been thrown by his frightened, galloping horse.  The bottom half of the page is an illustration of the same Mounted Infantry unit’s dismounted defence of a kraal, shooting

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68 In the same issue the *ILN* printed a comparative set of illustrations showing the evolution of infantry tactics from close order charges to dispersed rushes using cover. It is ironic that this praise for tactical modernity should be accompanied by an illustration of a conventional and anachronistic cavalry charge. H.W. Koekkoek. “The Transvaal War: charge of the 16th Lancers,” *The Illustrated London News* CXVIII, no. 3228 (March 2, 1901): 317.
69 A Bovril ad in an earlier *ILN* illustrates a cavalryman offering Bovril – “liquid life” – to a wounded Highland foot soldier in South Africa. Strapped to his horse is a lance with an unfurled pennon, a dangerously colourful adornment. “Bovril is Liquid Life,” *The Illustrated London News* CXVIII, no. 3224 (February 2, 1901): 173. A pennon is a small triangular or swallow-tailed flag at the end of a lance.
72 “Royal Irish Rifles’ mounted infantry teaching their horses to stand fire,” and “The Royal Irish Rifles’ gallant stand against De Wet’s entire force near Ventersburg,” *The Illustrated London News* CXVIII, no. 3222 (January 19, 1901): 69.
at distant Boer attackers only suggested in the background. In contrast to the fighting and killing at close quarters as shown in the previously mentioned illustrations, these much simpler and less dramatic drawings show the more typical manner in which British mounted troops engaged their enemy – dismounted with aimed fire.

Illustration 4.6 “Royal Irish Mounted Infantry teaching their horses to stand fire” from the ILN (January 19, 1901)

They also expose the problem that horses had in dealing with the noise and confusion of battle, a problem that would have made charges rare and often impossible. The Graphic
included a full-page illustration of the same horse training but for a different purpose (Illustration 4.7). The title suggests the ultimate use of these horses as “chargers” which again emphasizes a type of combat rarely encountered, although in 1899 this might have been a lesson yet to learn.  

Illustration 4.7 “Converting omnibus horses into chargers” from *The Graphic* (November 11, 1899)

One notable addition to the type of killing perpetrated by the British soldier should be added: the execution. In contrast to the intimacy and desperation of the melee,

73 *The Graphic* included a full-page illustration of the same horse training but for a different purpose. The title suggests the ultimate use of these horses as “chargers” which again emphasizes a type of combat rarely encountered. John Charlton, “Converting Omnibus Horses into Chargers: A Sketch at Hounslow Barracks,” *The Graphic* LX, no. 1563 (November 11, 1899): Supplement.
the representations of executions separate the British soldiers firing from their victim in a manner that contrasts with other representations of British ‘firepower.’ Whereas British firing is usually shown in broad panoramas or in isolation of the targets so as not to diminish the importance of martial ability at close quarters, the execution demands a different kind of negotiated rationale. Like Henty’s aforementioned character that is loath to murder a spy and asserts that Britons only kill in a fight, the judicial aspect of the execution is emphasized in the text and graphical representations in the ILN.

During the Second Afghan War the ILN printed a cover illustration of an Afghan about to be executed. The caption read: “The Afghan War: Execution of a Ghazi, or Mohammedan [sic] fanatic, at the Peshawur Gate, Jellalabad.” The illustration captures the moment before the rifles were fired and shows the back of the Afghan and the grim faced men of the firing squad prominent in the background facing the viewer. After commenting on the Christmas festivities and inter-racial camaraderie between British soldiers and their Ghurkha allies, the adjoining article describes how a Ghazi had “savagely and without provocation attempted to slay an unarmed man of the Punjaub Guides….” The Ghazi was executed. The article goes on to emphasize that local officials approved of the death sentence; the illustration shows the British commander and Afghans looking on. The fact that the article labelled the condemned man a religious fanatic (and therefore an unstoppable danger to the British garrison) and that judicial proceedings were dutifully carried out mitigates what is an act of killing that has none of the dangers and qualities associated with the oft represented killing done in battle. This is

74 “The Afghan War,” The Illustrated London News LXXIV, no. 2069 (February 8, 1879): 122. Henty also describes executions of Afghans who similarly attacked imperial troops in non-battle circumstances; he offers no criticism of this policy and makes it clear that General Roberts was “obliged to punish [these attacks] with severity…” Henty, For Name and Fame, 228.
the British Empire doing its duty to bring peace and order to its territories. Of course, the fact that the ‘Ghazi’ purportedly attacked an unarmed Punjabi soldier might also imply that the assailant deserved his execution because of his lack of valour.

Another execution is illustrated in the *ILN*, this time in Egypt, 1882. Similar to the example in Afghanistan, the condemned man is identified as an “incendiary or looter” by Melton Prior who sketched the scene, reducing the man to that of a dishonourable individual who could be killed in such a manner in accordance with law and morality. Another sketch on the same page illustrated an imprisoned Egyptian Army spy whose devious actions had him first “shaved and later on he was shot.”

Emphasizing the distinction between murdering the enemy (i.e., a massacre) and just execution, whether in the context of a judicial proceeding or a battle, appears important to the writers and illustrators of the mass culture. Two examples concerning the wars in the Sudan illustrate the tension. In the 1884 Sudan campaign the *ILN* reproduced field sketches from their special artist Melton Prior who had witnessed the February 29 Battle of El Teb. On the cover the *ILN* printed one of these sketch facsimiles that clearly illustrates British soldiers bayoneting Dervish wounded described by Prior in a note embedded in the sketch as “Rebels all huddled together dying or dead.” Whether Prior interpreted the summary execution of these wounded enemy as somehow merciful or just, the killing is quite clearly casual with some of the British soldiers using

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their enemy’s spears to do the killing while they have their own rifles shouldered. The textual description of Prior’s sketch puts a very different light on this scene. Here the enemy are not “huddled” and “dying” but were “concealed [ready] to rush out and attack our soldiers, or to fire upon them as they went past.” Bayoneting these apparently unscrupulous rogues is justified and not execution at all.

Henty, too, struggles with this distinction between massacre and battle in his novel *With Kitchener In The Soudan*. Henty mentions the Battle of Ferket that he notes was not “glorious” since the British forces outnumbered the massacred Dervishes; glory, it seems, can only be won if the situation is desperate. In the final major battle of the 1898 campaign, Omdurman, the hero momentarily feels sorry for the “valiant savages” being shot down in the thousands as they attacked the Anglo-Egyptian lines. In contrast to the previously mentioned *Graphic* illustration of the Battle of Ulundi where the Zulus are shown to have refrained from assaulting the British square, at Omdurman the Dervish army advanced *en masse* and paid the price. Compelled to describe this great Imperial victory, Henty has to justify the mass execution by reminding the reader of the terrible cruelty inflicted by the Madhi and Khalifa with language that features words like “slaughter”, “annihilation”, “murder”, and “slavery”, and he concludes that “wiping out their false creed was a necessity.” Necessary or not, British soldiers were experiencing the execution that firepower could impose on an opponent using outdated tactics; at Omdurman about 10,000 Dervishes were killed and many more thousands had been

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80 Henty, *With Kitchener...,* 238.
81 Henty, *With Kitchener...,* 238.
wounded. As a percentage of their total strength, the Khalifa's army suffered much more grievously than the British did on the Somme in a much smaller area; and while the Germans allowed the British to extricate wounded from that 1916 battlefield, there was a systematic bayoneting of Dervish wounded in 1898. The unavoidable facts of the battle demanded a rhetorical juggling act from Henty, but it seems that General Butler found it more troubling when he disapproved of his famous wife – the painter Lady Elizabeth Butler – deciding on painting battle subjects of imperial campaigns which he believed lacked glory and were not adequately desperate affairs.

Paintings were a dramatic medium through which the narrative of battle could be communicated. In contrast to the small black and white line illustrations quickly and cheaply produced by the weekly papers, paintings could provide an even more detailed and accurate image of fighting. Indeed, as noted in the introduction and in Chapter 2 on uniforms, battle painters of the late-nineteenth century were captivated by accuracy which had the unfortunate effect of capturing them as illustrators as opposed to artists. Notwithstanding this distinction made in the art world, battle painting became a popular subject in the elevated realm of the Royal Academy (RA). J.W.M. Hichberger asserts that this popularity was largely driven by middle and elite class interest in empire. While true of the RA and the art culture of formally exhibited paintings, this popularity became more widespread as reproductions of these same paintings found their way into the juvenile and adult illustrated press, whose line illustrations were often rendered or at least

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84 General Butler complained specifically about a painting of the 1898 Sudan campaign and the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir which his wife commemorated with a painting, but which he described as an easy victory over poorly equipped opponents. J.W.M. Hichberger, *Images of the Army; The Military in British Art, 1815-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 82.
85 Hichberger, *Images of the Army*, 75.
inspired by the very same artists who painted for the elites. Frederick Villiers, one of the best-known war specials for *The Graphic* and later the *ILN*, also exhibited paintings in the Royal Academy as did Woodville. Again, however, the representational convergence around certain criteria about how combat and killing should be handled limited the possibilities of the great canvases in much the same way as the news illustrations narrowed the scope of their content. Several great paintings of the era punctuate the point: “The Death of Nelson” (1864) by Daniel Maclise, “The Death of General Gordon,” (1895) by George Joy, and the coverage of the French Prince Imperial’s demise during the Zulu War, particularly featuring the work by the Frenchman Paul Jamin (“The death of the Prince Imperial”) and that of Woodville. Although these represent the quintessential meaning of death as a masculine, moral and valorous sacrifice, a topic to be more specifically addressed later in the chapter, they also reveal the intimate nature of combat and shape it according to narratives that often neglected the broader reality of battle.

There is a notable collection of military-themed paintings in the gallery of the National Army Museum (NAM) in London. Seeing these works in person as opposed to relying on reproductions does impart the effect of scale – may of the paintings are very

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86 “Thus, those affected by such painting [battle iconography] were not solely the observers of Royal Academy exhibitions or those readers of illustrated guidebooks (for example, *Royal Academy Pictures, Academy Notes* or reviews; these images were circulated through all social ranks and in non-artistic locales.” Joseph A. Kestner, *Masculinities in Victorian Painting* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), 190.

87 This work was featured in a *Chums* article that showed reproductions of famous paintings and commented on their artists. It is interesting that the title, “Stories Told by Famous Pictures”, does not explicitly imply a military theme, but the two works featured are both military and Napoleonic: “The Death of Nelson” and “The Meeting of Wellington and Blucher.” Also notable is that these images are presented after the Anglo-Boer War when such themes became more common. “Stories Told by Famous Pictures,” *Chums* 15 (1907): 749.

88 Harrington, 190-191. *The Graphic* dedicated a complete illustrated supplement to the death of the Prince Imperial. “Supplement to the Graphic,” *The Graphic* XX, no. 503 (July 19, 1879). The cover of the following issue presents a series of illustrations showing the retrieval, transport and arrival of the body at the British encampment. *The Graphic* XX, no. 504 (July 26, 1879): cover.
large – and also exposes the possibilities size presents the painter to include detail. Analysing the manner in which killing is represented in these paintings illustrates the contemporary desire to show both narrative and physical accuracy while also exemplifying the way that subject selection favoured those parts of the narrative that emphasized intimate close combat. The works of Godfrey Douglas Giles are notable for their familiarity, scale, and drama, and provide useful case studies of popular military paintings by an artist who was a RA exhibited painter, war special correspondent, popular illustrator, and a former soldier. Giles painted two publicly displayed works on the Battle of Tamai in 1885, both simply named after the battle (“The Battle of Tamai, Soudan Campaign, 1884” and “The Battle of Tamai”). The first, exhibited at the RA in 1885, represents a moment in the battle after part of the British force had been repulsed and forced to abandon the Gatling guns and dead of the Naval Brigade contingent that manned these weapons. Painted from the perspective of the ‘Fuzzy-Wuzzies’ (A name popularized by Rudyard Kipling for the Beja tribesmen of the Sudan made famous in his martially complimentary, but racially derogatory, poem, “Fuzzy-Wuzzy” written in 1890 as part of his Barrack Room Ballads) it shows the advance of the reconstituted British formation. The tribesmen are illustrated taking cover in a shallow rocky ravine; many are already dead or wounded, and many of those issuing from the ravine are shown being struck by bullets. Like so many broad narrative pieces, this shows the British advance only in a general manner in the background. Killing with firepower does not compromise the reputation of Tommy Atkins in this context. Indeed, the fighting demonstrates the British soldier’s superiority by revealing the Native’s need for stealth and cover, and, perhaps, by the fact that the machine gun has failed the British soldier who instead has to
rely on his rifle, bravery and, of course, his bayonet. And to make certain of this, there is a distant suggestion of close combat and the death blow of a bayonet in the centre background of the illustration. It is also worth noting that the Native warriors have turned around the Gatling gun but appear unable to make use of it to kill the British, implying their own technical and perhaps intellectual limitation.

Giles second “The Battle of Tamai” was painted for the York and Lancaster Regiment and is from a perspective behind the advancing British line (Illustration 4.8).

![Illustration 4.8 “The 65th York and Lancaster Regiment at the Battle of Tamai, Sudan 1884” (print reproduction) G. D. Giles (1885). Courtesy of the National Army Museum.](image)

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89 Kestner asserts that Giles’ paintings “record a bare survival rather than a resounding victory…[and] depict a Native resistance threatening to Caucasian superiority.” Although this supports his focus on masculinities in Victorian art, it is unconvincing. Instead of showing the moment when the square was broken and the British being forced to withdraw, Giles shows the reformed British formation advancing to reclaim their guns against an enemy that is clearly vulnerable both to British fire and bayonet. Kestner, 202.

90 Hichberger, *Images of the Army*, 226. Kestner claims that the second Giles painting of Tamai is set prior to the breaking of the square. There is no evidence of this, although it makes little difference to the interpretation of the painting. Kestner, 201.
Here the fighting is more intimate with clearly illustrated individuals engaged in hand-to-hand combat in the left foreground. The effects of this combat are suggested by the dead Dervishes behind the British line and the presence of those being fought in front of it. Uniform and equipment details are accurately portrayed and the intensity of the fighting is well represented. The large area of empty space in the foreground communicates the advance of the British and the ground regained after their previous withdrawal suggested by his first painting of the battle.

In 1897, Giles returned to a popular theme in battle painting: the Crimean war and cavalry action. However, in contrast to the more infamous and perhaps peculiar reinterpretation of the British light cavalry charge at Balaclava common in a number of media forms, Giles chose to represent “The Charge of the Heavy Brigade.” At the moment of impact, Giles shows masses of horsemen from both sides poised to strike with their swords. Only three actual casualties are illustrated in this painting of hundreds of subjects, and of these, only two at the moment of their demise. A British trumpeter is apparently being shot (an interesting combination of an unarmed Briton being shot at range by the Russians) while in the foreground a British cavalryman thrusts his sword into the chest of a Russian; only a subtle red streak of paint suggests the exit of the blade. Giles chose two moments of killing of very different character in a battle painting depicting the drama of a charge before the full carnage of the ensuing melee must be negotiated by artist and viewer. For Giles, the charge and the early moments of close combat were enough to communicate the nature of war and killing without having to actually show the latter in detail.
To conclude, the mass culture of Victorian and Edwardian Britain did not shy away from describing the act of killing. However, the narrow narrative scope that shaped that description favoured a kind of killing that certainly occurred and was undoubtedly desperate and dramatic, but it was also atypical. Killing at close quarters was comparatively rare. Natives died in the thousands from bullets more than bayonets and, notwithstanding the fact that disease killed many more imperial soldiers than did any act of violence, ironically many – perhaps most – Britons were killed in combat by bullets and other missile weapons too. And yet the popular understanding of killing in Victoria’s wars was fed by a mass media representation of killing at close quarters where men could assert their gender and national superiority not just in technical, industrial, or organizational superiority, but in a more fundamental superiority of race and valour. Even playing at war emphasized the consistent image of this intimate test of arms. Army and volunteer manoeuvres could be concluded with the drama of a cavalry charge,91 and even inanimate toy soldiers were made to kill in hand-to-hand combat in H.G. Wells’ *Little Wars*, a set of rules for war games that adjudicated casualties by firing a projectile from a miniature cannon or by soldiers being moved to simulate a charge into a melee; there was no game mechanism for rifle fire. But as with toy soldiers who never showed the effects of weapon strikes, what killing meant remained vague.

To contemplate killing, or even worse, to try and represent it accurately, was too much to ask of the Victorian mass-market media. Sensationally graphic text might offer a glimpse into what swords and bayonets do to the body, and illustrations only a suggestion of the same, but the narrative value of killing had limits. Representing wounded Britons offered the possibility of showing another aspect of the British soldier’s

91 *ILN*, 1903.
character: sacrifice and brotherhood. Of course, it also communicated the idea that war did wound, but rarely killed, the British protagonist of empire, whether imagined or real.

**Suffering Wounds**

The enemy had to die, but, while British mortality was shown as rare, the representation of wounded British soldiers in the mass culture was a highly effective way to illustrate the price of war without making that price appear too dear. In combination with the unwarranted emphasis on close combat, illustrating wounded Britons also mitigated the impression that British campaigns were morally unsound massacres; Tommy Atkins got hurt too. Indeed, enduring pain was part of the measure of British superiority. Finally, showing wounded soldiers offered the viewer a chance to see their comrades come to the rescue and to witness the reformed, caring army attend to its own – and even perhaps the enemy. Hence, the narrative around showing the wounded accurately presents a reality – British soldiers were wounded much more commonly than killed -- but it is one that avoids the worst aspects of the condition. With the physiological effects muted and the pain barely suggested, the wound becomes secondary to its narrative purpose and the character of war is again skewed.

Having a British soldier wounded in action is a common feature of both fictional narrative and news reporting, in both juvenile and adult media. Wounds speak to

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92 Lucy Bending asserts that by the late-nineteenth century the discourse on pain was shifting away from an endured phenomenon that revealed God’s displeasure to one that medical science was progressively eliminating. Bending relates the complex meanings of pain to a variety of Victorian concerns including imperialism and, by extension, warfare. If pain was not something that had to be endured, Bending claims that Victorians were concerned that British soldiers might not be strong enough to fulfil their role in expanding or defending empire. Of course, the ability to treat pain and sensitivity to it were marks of civilization lacking in savage peoples. Lucy Bending, *The Representation of Bodily Pain in Late-Nineteenth Century English Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

93 The post Crimean Cardwell reforms were really less dramatic than they purported to be, but in combination with the much publicized efforts of Florence Nightingale, the army’s medical services were significantly improved.
sacrifice and suffering, and elevate the protagonist even higher if he achieves his objective while injured. The assumption of pain associated with a wound was significant in the Victorian context. It was a period of growing confidence in the medical profession and a time when their cultural sense was that pain could be and should be avoided.\(^94\)

Short of dying, a wound was the epitome of sacrifice and was often part of the narratives that garnered the Victoria Cross.

The actions of fictional characters or accounts of the deeds of real decorated soldiers provided useful examples of the strangely beneficial effects of being wounded. In Henty’s *The Dash For Khartoum*, he provides a narrative of the Battle of El Teb where General Baker is struck by shrapnel in the face, “but the gallant officer, having had his face bandaged up, remounted his horse, and continued his duties throughout the day.”\(^95\)

In the same novel, the young protagonist, Edgar, who joins the 1\(^{st}\) Hussars avoiding the age requirement by becoming their trumpeter, participates in a charge at El Teb; he is wounded saving a corporal in the ensuing melee. Typical of Henty novels, his actions draw the attention of officers who recommend him for a VC; this elevates his reputation in the regiment, especially among the officers who correctly identify Edgar as being a gentleman.\(^96\)

\(^{94}\) Lucy Bending suggests that in the late-nineteenth century there was a debate in Victorian culture about the representation and nature of pain. At odds with religious sensibilities that opposed the scientific intervention and inquiry into pain that was God’s will, Victorians dissected pain and believed that it both reflected their own elevated development – savages and criminals don’t feel pain – and that it could be relieved or avoided. Bending makes only passing comment about war wounds, but does suggest that these could contribute to the definition of manliness and service to Empire, and these impulses conflicted with the broad aversion to enduring pain. Lucy Bending, *The Representation of Bodily Pain in Late-Nineteenth Century English Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 69-70.

\(^{95}\) Henty, *The Dash for Khartoum*, 122.

\(^{96}\) Henty, *The Dash for Khartoum*, 126-129. It should be noted that not all wounds are so easily ignored in Henty novels. In *For Name and Fame*, the lead character, Will fights Afghans and is shot through the leg and cut with a sword in the shoulder. The latter wound required a long convalescence with his Afghan captors. Of course, this particular episode was a narrative device to both emphasize Will’s “good constitution” and to place him, alone, in the midst of the enemy. Henty, *For Name and Fame*, 179-182.
Real VC recipients are celebrated in *Chums*, and their wounds are seamlessly embedded as a part of their celebrity in the battle narratives.97 An article announcing a new Cassel published book commemorating these VC heroes, *Britain’s Roll of Glory; or The Victoria Cross, Its Heroes, and Their Valour*, by D. H. Parry, is replete with soldiers being wounded in combat, sometimes mortally. The examples are drawn from numerous colonial campaigns of the recent past. For example, a Captain Towse of the Gordons held off a force of Boers, “but just when assistance was coming a Boer bullet struck the gallant captain in the face…[W]hen they raised him he was blind; the bullet had ripped away the eyes that had shown him the way to victory.” The unimaginable shock, pain and ongoing price the soldier had to endure with such a wound are not addressed except that “…he will never see the Cross they awarded to him.”

Another soldier, a corporal, was shot through the lungs and yet still managed to capture a group of Boers. Within the same column of text another British officer is described, also shot through the lungs, this time during the Boxer Rebellion in China, and who also still managed to lead a charge that helped save the British Peking legation. The descriptions seem horrid, but the writer of the piece seems intent on using the sacrifice, heroism, and royal recognition as a lesson of behaviour for the young *Chums* readership:

> There is a halo about all of these tales of heroism which somehow never fails to warm the reader’s enthusiasm with its rays. They are the best possible lessons in self-sacrifice as well…

Far from morose, these stories represent wounds without emphasis on the immediate pain or long-term disability, but instead place the emphasis on the actions that precipitated the wounds and made them worth it.

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The graphic representation of wounded soldiers in battle is also common; virtually every battle illustration shows at least one or more British soldiers identifiably wounded. Lady Butler’s paintings are notable for their representation of the wounded that she used to communicate the moral and noble sacrifice of British soldiers without having to show actual combat: “She had a strong moral resistance to depicting bloodshed, and regarded her art as celebratory only of the virtues which emerged during the extreme situations of war.” Her most famous Crimean war paintings illustrate this use of wounded Britons in lieu of scenes of combat. In “Balaclava” (1876) the light cavalrmen who had been decimated by the Russian artillery, are shown returning to their lines. The detail in the facial expressions and evidence of blood and damaged kit make the wounds suffered – physical and psychological – unambiguous. While some emphasize that this is a stark criticism of war, Butler and her contemporaries recognized the moral virtues of the experience of war while not endorsing its base violence and dubious imperial or political motivations. “The Roll Call” (1874), showing the exhausted and battered members of the Grenadier Guards after an undisclosed action achieves much the same message of stoic sacrifice and moral elevation of the British soldier.

Butler’s canvases lent themselves to detailed representations of the effects of battle on soldiers. This was much more difficult to achieve in the black and white illustrations created for the mass market papers. Unlike their textual descriptions of the wounded, illustrating wounded men was problematic since, for example, a prone

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99 Kestner, 200.
100 Hichberger emphasizes the positive reaction to “Balaclava”. Kestner notes its controversial content, but Hichberger convincingly suggests that this work not only achieved Butler’s intet to elevate the soldier, but a quote from a contemporary unnamed *Times* critic notes that even war itself is celebrated in the work: “Here is war, shorn of its glitter if you will, but so shorn that the brave virtues which make war so terrific a good, so potent an educator, so worshipful an influence, shine out with a power making all the heart in a man rise to the godlikeness of self-sacrifice.” Hichberger, *Images of the Army*, 81.
unconscious figure is undifferentiated from one that is dead, especially since neither dead nor wounded are illustrated with significant evidence of physical trauma. The key differentiating element in illustrating wounded men is not so much the injured individual himself, but the comrade coming to his rescue or providing comfort and medical aid. Examples of these occurrences are again numerous and have a consistency between media forms and intended audiences. What follows is a fraction of those examples available, but they represent the various kinds of rescue and care given to the wounded as represented in the mass media.

Rescuing a man just wounded, especially in the midst of a melee, is, of course, the height of drama and is a prominent element of many battle illustrations and paintings of the period. A Pluck story set in the Sudan includes an illustration that shows a prone wounded Englishman defended by the story’s protagonist who adopts the ubiquitous heroic stance of his rifle at chest level with bayonet at the ready faced by on-coming Native warriors. 101 Chums similarly featured a previously mentioned cover illustration of a lancer killing an Afghan with a wounded Briton lying in the foreground. The related fictional story clarifies that the lancer was a young trumpeter who returned to a fallen officer and saved him from certain death and mutilation by “six bloodthirsty warriors…”102 Not only had he saved the officer, but was wounded by a musket ball that “shattered” and “crippled” his lance arm; “undaunted,” he was forced to draw his sword, the sight of which put to flight the two assailants whom he had not managed yet to dispatch. In this example, wounds not only gave reason for a brave act, but further

emphasize the sacrifice performing it risked for the rescuer. In an *ILN* illustration the price of coming to the aid of wounded comrade was death. An episode from the Boer war presented by Woodville shows a Lieutenant Moir surrendering to the Boers while attempting to aid his Captain – a Boer aims his rifle at the Briton whose fate is certain. The caption to the illustration exposes the Boer treachery as Moir was subsequently shot down and “murdered”.

Coming to the aid of a fallen Briton away from the fighting, or after it, is another theme explored in illustration. Although the context of these examples is less desperate, the emphasis is again less on the wounded man, but rather on the camaraderie and care granted to the wounded by their fellow soldiers in the field. The *ILN* coverage of the Zulu War, and specifically the large illustration of the Battle of Khambula based on a Melton Prior sketch, exemplifies this inter-play between the wounded and their comrades as represented in the popular media. With a British firing line engaged to the front, the three sole British wounded are all attended to, either protected by a comrade at-the-ready, or comforted and carried to the rear again by fellow soldiers; no wounded soldier is left to suffer and no dead are shown.

Similarly, *The Graphic* reproduced a field sketch from their ‘special’ C. Fripp of a wounded Canadian receiving aid from British soldiers whose comrades drive off the

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Boers who had ambushed the lone colonial scout (Illustration 4.9).  

Illustration 4.9 “Helped by Fellow-Colonials” from The Graphic (September 8, 1900)

Another useful example of this attentiveness to the wounded is found in an ILN illustration of one of the innumerable uprisings on the North-West frontier in 1897.  

Again based on a field sketch, the large, two-page illustration shows British-officered Ghurkhas assaulting a hilltop enemy position in the background, a general issuing orders in the right foreground, and a wounded soldier receiving medical attention prominent in the left foreground. The idea that the British soldier is well taken care of by both their officers and by medical aid if needed, seems apparent; there is no suggestion of other wounded or dead in the picture.

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Occasionally, the moral superiority of the British is expressed through the care given to the fallen enemy left behind by a defeated and obviously morally unsound Native opponent. The *ILN* illustrates this generosity in an illustration based on a field-sketch of the 1886 Sudan campaign at the Battle of Ginnis. With artillery and an infantry line pouring deadly fire into a distant enemy and a dead Dervish lying in the left foreground, the right foreground is occupied by British soldiers or medical personal providing care to a wounded Dervish; a stretcher lies next to the grouping implying that the wounded foe will be moved to even better medical facilities or at least away from harm’s way. The fact that in the middle of the picture is the staff of the commanding general provides an interesting part of the picture’s narrative. The two sides of Britain’s impact on the enemy is, thus, shown: the general commands troops who execute tremendous firepower against the enemy in the distance (as evidenced also by the dead Dervish), but can provide care to that same enemy when he has been neutralized.

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107 Forester, illustration, “The Soudan (sic) Frontier Conflict: The Battle of Ginnis, on Dec. 20,” *The Illustrated London News* LXXXVIII, no. 2441 (January 30, 1886): 108. Text on the previous page describing the origins of the sketch note that the artist was a Captain F. W. Romilly of the Scots Guards and that he died in action ten days after the scene he sketched.

108 Providing medical care speaks to the Victorian recognition that pain could be controlled and should be. That it was given to fallen Native opponents reveals a sense of superiority, but contradicts the idea that “savages” do not feel pain, an idea reflected in Victorian culture. Bending, 125.
*Chums* provided their young readership with a similar theme of British moral superiority by aiding the wounded enemy. In “An Enemy in Need”, the title of both a story and a full-page adjoining illustration, a Boer helps a British prisoner escape to make good on a debt of gratitude.109 The father of the young British soldier had saved the Boer from capture after he had been wounded and was lying helplessly on the ground. Although a soldier himself, the British soldier knew the Boer from prior to the war and showed his personal loyalty to the Boer by aiding his escape. The Briton was shot by another Boer immediately after seeing his friend to the safety of his own lines. The fact that this act of selflessness cost the Briton his life adds to the perception of moral superiority in much the same way as the aforementioned Woodville illustration of the ‘murdered’ rescuer in the *ILN*. In contrast to the British, the narrative of this *Chums* story makes it clear that the Boers were unscrupulous cowards. Even the illustration juxtaposes the unarmed and vulnerable British soldier giving water and aid to the

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109 “An Enemy in Need,” *Chums* IX (October 17, 1900): 142.
wounded enemy with the Boer himself who retains a revolver in his hand. The Graphic illustrated precisely the same scene although the Boer seems less potentially threatening (Illustration 4.10).  

Ultimately the institutional superiority of the British Army is demonstrated with the systematic care given to British soldiers in field hospitals or permanent facilities. With no lack of military content, it is not surprising that the religious codes that informed the content of BOP would find value is showing the care given to Britain’s Christian soldiers. Consistent with its greater emphasis on the uniforms and trappings of the military -- as opposed to dwelling on the details of combat -- the 1899-1900 bound Annual included a colour inside cover that featured scenes of British soldiers “Before the Battle” and “After the Battle.” The front inside cover features a chaplain leading a prayer for the soldiers. With a Union Jack draped on a rock in the foreground, the theme of muscular Christianity is unambiguous. The back inside cover shows wounded arriving from the field in an ambulance wagon and receiving medical attention from doctors, nurses, and orderlies. In the former the soul of the British soldier is cared for while in the latter it is his body. Either way, the viewer is provided with a number of messages about Britain’s moral, military and imperial agenda, but also derives an understanding of the physical reality of war’s result: wounded soldiers are treated and well cared for, a message worth emphasizing in 1899 or 1900. A later story written by the Reverend E. J. Hardy, Chaplain to the Forces, offers anecdotes of hospitalized soldiers and makes light of the wounds suffered by them. One soldier had been shot seven times at Spion Kop,

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110 The Graphic provided an explicit commentary on British moral superiority with a full-page illustration of British soldiers providing medical care and water to wounded Boers after the Battle for Talana Hill. This act “reflected great credit on our soldiers [and] spoke volumes for their generosity and humanity.” W. Hetherell, “A Scene On Talana Hill After the Battle,” The Graphic LX, no. 1566 (December 2, 1899): 2.

111 The Boys’ Own Paper Annual 22 (1899-1900): inside cover, front and back.
but Hardy emphasized that this man joked about it saying that “he had stopped a whole [Boer] volley himself.”  The well-known English sarcasm is much more noted in this short article than real contemplation of the wounds themselves.

A more systematic analysis of hospital care is provided by an illustrated article in the *ILN*. Although the sketches of “Tommy Atkins” by Miss Evelyn Hardy again make light of the hospital experience, the text is quite explicit in stating the medical services offered to the soldiers since, “everybody knows that soldiers engaged in an actual campaign of warfare are now and then liable to be wounded…” The rather dismissive language regarding the sustaining of wounds and the fact that sickness as a reason for hospitalization is emphasized exposes the rather obtuse manner with which wounds are dealt. Nevertheless, it is stressed that “The Army Medical Department is ably and diligently served…” although it is also immediately noted that part of the reason for this attention to care was to ensure that public funds were not unduly spent on soldiers not performing their duties. The *Graphic* was less obtuse about the medical care given to the soldiers going to the Boer War. The caption to a full-page illustration of Army nurses leaving for South Africa asserts that “with hospital ships and an efficient staff of nurses in addition to a highly skilful medical staff, the unfortunate soldiers who are hit or fall ill will, we may be sure, be well cared for.” An article in *The Navy and Army Illustrated* assures its readers that “the Army Medical Staff keeps itself well up to date, and no new ideas likely to be of service in caring for the physical welfare of the soldiers are allowed

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113 Hardy, 14.
114 St. George Hare, “‘Good-bye!’ The Army Nursing Sisters’ Farewell,” *The Graphic* LX, no. 1563 (November 11, 1899): supplement.
to go unheeded.” An earlier article seems to verify this claim with its enthusiastic description of the effective use of x-ray machines in the Sudan campaign of 1898. While text and illustrations praised the medical care for Britons, a more interactive experience in tending to the wounded could be played out with toy soldiers. Britains Ltd. was not eager to produce wounded or dead miniatures, but finally in 1905 released Set 137 which comprised eight casualties in 3 poses (a head wound, arm wound and leg wound), doctors, nurses, and stretcher parties. Perhaps not surprisingly, Britains did not manufacture figures representing the dead. It was, of course, part of the process of play that soldiers would ‘die’ – Wells’ Little Wars game had no wounded, only dead that were removed from the battlefield. So, while wounded toy soldiers could receive some attention from the hospital set, the burden of wounded or the more direct representation of the dead was avoided. This speaks to the broader approach of the mass culture regarding the topic of death in war.

**Dying**

British soldiers died in colonial wars in significant numbers although they are a fraction of those losses endured by their enemies, or their imperial allies. Disease killed most of these Britons, small arms and artillery most of those killed in combat, and finally, close combat weapons killed the balance, but usually from infection after the battle. Victorian and Edwardian culture kept death muted in their depictions of warfare. Disease is rarely mentioned and difficult to illustrate. Consistent with the restrained manner

118 Visitors to the Cathedral of Winchester in South-East England can observe a plaque commemorating the losses sustained by the 60th King’s Royal Rifle Corps serving in the Zulu War of 1879, the Afghan campaign of 1878-1880, the First Anglo-Boer War of 1880-1881, and the Egyptian War of 1882. What is
that killing and combat wounds were represented, figures illustrated in the mass media as dead might often just as well be wounded, consciousness being often the only differentiation between such representations. Death, then, was something that was rarely considered in the broad narratives of warfare except perhaps at a statistical level enumerating British losses.

However, sometimes death was front and centre. In defeat, British forces could be annihilated when confronted by overwhelming numbers and better led opponents who were also more mobile than the British army burdened by its supply columns. In these relatively rare instances of defeat, the media had to deal with the representation of death and this often became transformed into the heroic last-stand typifying the patriotic sacrifice for race, religion and nation. Sometimes this sacrifice was only part of a well-known battle narrative that had to be explained; why did the square break at Abu Klea or at Tamai? Sometimes this defeat was also individual, and here again, the media transformed the death of a general, officer, or protagonist into a worthy sacrifice. Finally, as with the care for the wounded, respecting the dead and overtly memorializing them was another aspect of the representation of warfare and death. This ritual was a familiar part of the military experience and understood by the consumer who would have been at least nominally religious, and would have seen value in commemorating British military sacrifice. If the reality of war meant the risk of dying, Britons could be sure that this risk was rare and if it occurred, worthy of remembrance. Indeed, some of the most enduring

immediately apparent is that few died from wounds and the vast majority from disease. Discounting the Anglo-Boer War, the ratio of casualties from enemy action against disease of accident was 11 to 119. Although these statistics do not speak to the quantity of combat, they are a remarkably candid indication of how people died in colonial campaigns and contrasted with the other publicly accessible accounts of the war that usually describe the death of Englishmen in rather more dramatic terms. Only against the Boers were British fatalities principally derived from enemy action. Here the 60th suffered 60 dead from wounds and only 10 from other causes.
images of Victorian warfare are of the moments just before death: the last stand at the Battle of Isandlwana and General Gordon’s death at Khartoum are two examples.

Although generally triumphant, British imperial forces did suffer defeats. Many were small losses involving a supply convoy, outpost, or isolated unit. The Boer War provided many such examples. Other defeats were more spectacular, although very rare, and these certainly featured prominently in text and image, albeit in a carefully constructed manner. Due to its infrequency, defeat could safely serve as a reminder that Britain had to be vigilant, while not undermining the essential superiority of British military strength. More importantly, defeats played a crucial role in the mass cultural negotiation with the topic of soldierly death. Unusually, Britain suffered three significant defeats in successive years starting in 1879. The defeat inflicted by the Zulus at Isandlwana was a startling experience and will be emphasized in the commentary below. Maiwand (Afghanistan, 1880) and Majuba Hill (South Africa, 1881) also inspired close consideration of Britain’s military status and the price of defeat, but like at Isandlwana, the narrative of glorious sacrifice is close at hand.

The defeat at Isandlwana was one that immediately needed explanation. The first ILN report largely relied on the British Commander Lord Chelmsford’s own evaluation of the defeat in a despatch from February 10 that emphasized the number of Zulus that

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119 In addition to the spectacular defeats faced by the British early in the war, there were many small battles later in the war which saw isolated units of British fight in desperation against Boers who are characterized as using unscrupulous tactics and having a disdain for the rules of war, especially in regards to the treatment of those who surrender. In a war that by 1901 had become long, costly, and morally dubious, the valiant stand of British soldiers defiantly opposing murderous Boers revealed British valour. For example, in November and December, 1901, issues of the ILN, featured full, two page illustrations of British soldiers surrounded and defiant in Boer War battles. The first, by Caton Woodville, shows the 17th Lancers “surprised and surrounded” by the Boers, losing two-thirds of their strength in the ensuing battle. “Death or Glory’: C Squadron of the 17th Lancers at Modderfontein on September 17,” The Illustrated London News 29, no. 758 (November 16, 1901): 738-739. The second example, another Woodville, again shows an isolated British garrison facing immanent defeat and many dead. “'No Surrender!': The defense of Fort Itala, Zululand, on September 26,” The Illustrated London News 29, no. 761 (December 7, 1901): 870-871.
“overwhelmed” -- a term Chelmsford uses twice in his despatch -- the British line that had been “enticed” away from its camp. A more detailed report of the battle in the *ILN* followed on March 1 transcribed from the *Daily News*. This narrative and adjoining map of the battle offered more details regarding the disposition of the various forces involved and a broad narrative of their movements. However, the explanation for the defeat was no more nuanced in this longer report than that presented in Chelmsford’s despatch: “the Zulu host came down with the weight of its battalions and literally crushed the small body [of British]”.

Although the article gives a positive assessment of Zulu tactics, it stops well short of recognizing Zulu operational proficiency: “the impression in Natal is that this engagement on the part of the Zulus is not attributable to generalship.” Hopelessly exposed to the “overwhelming hordes of the enemy” the article makes it clear that British soldiers died fighting: “Our officers and men were assegaiied [speared] where they stood” and many of the dead were found with “sixty or seventy rounds of empty cartridges alongside them, showing they had only died after doing their duty.” A survivor fleeing the scene stated that “looking back he saw our men, completely surrounded, firm as rock, falling rapidly, but fighting to the last.” Notwithstanding the apparent contradiction in the description, the valiant character of their death is again made explicit.

One of the earliest representations of this defeat showed nothing of the fighting at all, and hardly anything of the dead. In March, the *ILN* presented a two-page illustration.

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120 The despatch dedicates only half of its length to the defeat and the balance went to the successful defence of Rorke’s Drift. Lord Chelmsford’s dispatch is quoted in the following *ILN* column: “The Zulu War; British reverse,” *The Illustrated London News* LXXIV, no. 2070 (February 15, 1879): 146.


122 “The Zulu War,” (1879): 194.

123 “The Zulu War,” (1879): 194.


125 “The Zulu War,” (1879):194.
showing Chelmsford’s column arriving at the scene of the battle with the immediately recognizable Mt. Isandlwana dominating the background. The illustration shows British soldiers marching toward the dead who are only faint suggestions in the shadow of the mountain. In contrast the approaching troops are clearly illustrated and are labelled with numbers so that the viewer can identify the regiments accurately. Although later illustrations of the disaster are more ready to show the dead, here the emphasis is on the living; the causes of the defeat had to be yet negotiated. Even as late as 1899, a Chums article revisits the defeat when “a little British army was overwhelmed by the Zulus…” whose “mad rush” could only have been resisted by the British adopting other, then unknown, tactics. In addition to a lack of proper tactics and perhaps substandard leadership, it is again implied that the British soldiers were in a hopeless situation – their defeat was not their fault. And when they faced their fate, the mass media ensured that it was faced with bravery and defiance.

Perhaps the best-known representation of the Battle of Isandlwana is that by Charles Edwin Fripp, presently exhibited at the National Army Museum (Illustration 126 “The Zulu War: Scene of the Battle of Isandula with Lord Chelmsford’s Advancing Column,” The Illustrated London News LXXIV, no. 2073 (March 8, 1879): 232-233.

126 Part of the negotiation was to consider the victory over the Zulus by the small garrison at Rorke’s Drift. The ILN issue from the previous week provides an interesting contrast to the representation of the field at Isandlwana with its illustration of the relief of Rorke’s Drift. Here the Zulu dead are most prominent occupying more of the foreground than the arriving cavalrymen. There is no suggestion of British casualties at all. “The Zulu War: The Intrenched (sic) Position at Rorke’s Drift,” The Illustrated London News LXXIV, no. 2072 (March 1, 1879): extra supplement.

127 The anonymous author suggests that the British force should have adopted a defensive position behind a wagon laager, a Boer tactic of using their wagons as a circular barrier. It should again be noted that the Zulus are not given credit for their victory which is reduced to a function of their numerical superiority; British officers were not bettered by Zulu generalship. “When Zulus took the Field; A Spot that is Still Held Sacred,” Chums VII (1899): 653.

128 This picture and the assertion that the soldiers themselves were not to be blamed for the defeat might be construed as a class-conscious attack on the British officers and a vindication of the working-class ranker. Of course, the officers did make errors from the deployment of the British companies right up to Chelmsford’s decision to divide his force in search of a Zulu army that had eluded him. However, while working-class entertainments could sometimes make cutting remarks about officers, at Isandlwana the officers are ultimately celebrated, particularly those that saved the colours of the 24th regiment.
Initially displayed at the RA in 1885 and titled “The Last Stand at Isandula (sic)” — later renamed “The Battle of Isandhlwana” — Fripp’s rendition was not particularly well received, being out of step with more current events in empire. Nevertheless, the portrayal of the 24th Regiment at the moment of its “last stand” is a dramatic example of the Victorian interpretation of death, or rather its immanence in the context of this battle.

Illustration 4.11 “The Battle of Isandhlwana” by Charles Fripp (1885). Courtesy of the National Army Museum.

In the chaotic scene of hundreds of figures, the Zulu warriors have obviously shattered the British defensive line. The only sense of stability is of the centre-left grouping of British soldiers, back to back in an ad hoc square, resisting the onslaught of Zulus that occupy the right and left foreground and much of the background; once again, the “British square itself becomes symbolic of the dominant ideology of British masculinity and its impregnable, impenetrable authority.” Few British shoot, while bayonet and

\[130\] Kestner, 202.
bravery is all that is left to those who remain. Strangely, there are few British dead
illustrated even though the inevitability of annihilation for the surviving soldiers is both
obvious and understood.

Indeed, the only instructive part of this painting, given its well-known narrative
subject, is both the general accuracy of the uniforms and equipment of the soldiers, and
the moral and patriotic lessons. The painting suggests that British soldiers, many
wounded including the stalwart central figure of a sergeant, stood firm to the last. Even
those incapable of fighting remain defiant. One semi-prone wounded soldier hands a
cartridge to another Briton which both indicates his own determination to resist and the
desperation of the situation as ammunition was depleted. Even the slumped figure to the
left of the main grouping keeps his rifle erect with bayonet extended determined to
oppose the inevitable. Other isolated British soldiers, some wounded, all doomed, serve
a narrative purpose. The Zulus attack these men from behind or are shown revelling in
the killing. The contrast between British resolve and Zulu barbarity is unambiguous.
Consistent with previously mentioned representational conventions, no weapon is shown
penetrating the body of a victim and there are at least equal numbers of Zulu dead
illustrated as there are British.\(^{131}\) Nevertheless, the British demise is immanent but with a
few red-coated dead illustrated to remind the viewer that this is the fate of those who
stand so defiant in face of that inevitability.

The destruction of an army spoke to the failure of that particular unified body but
really was about the loss of individuals who collectively stood firm in anticipation of

\(^{131}\) As previously noted, there were more Zulu dead than British and their Native levies. However, at the
moment represented in Fripp’s painting it is unlikely that this gap in casualties would be so evident. Prior
to their disruption of the British line, Zulu dead would have been very numerous as they crossed the British
field of fire. But once inside the British position, the British casualties would have likely mounted quickly.
death. Last stands were thus exceptions that demonstrated the otherwise inherent superiority of British imperial might. In contrast, individual sacrifice could be more readily considered by the mass culture that respected the loss of these defiant individuals who fell for empire and a moral agenda while the broader institution remained intact. Previously mentioned stories of VC recipients fit this theme, but the officer and general are more commonly emphasized as martyrs for race and empire.

The death of Charles Gordon in Khartoum in 1885 generated copious coverage in the mass culture. Gordon was a charismatic and religious man sent to the wilderness of the Sudan in 1884 by Gladstone’s Liberal government under public pressure to organize its defence but with Egyptian troops in order to avoid the deployment of British soldiers.132 Already a well-known figure for his exploits in China commanding the locally raised “Ever Victorious Army” at the end of the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), ‘Chinese’ Gordon’s death at the hands of the Mahdi’s Dervishes in Khartoum was immediately seen as a failure of the governmental policy, but also as an example of a British soldier’s individual sacrifice worthy both of avenging and commemoration. There were various reports about how Gordon died; the ILN noted that initially it was thought that he had been shot, but subsequently reported that he had been killed with swords and spears.133 Gordon’s final moments, facing the spear wielding Dervishes who would kill and behead him, was most notably represented in the painting by George Joy titled “The Last Stand of General Gordon.” This iconic representation of defiant muscular Christianity, personified in the erect frame of Gordon, fixed the narrative that

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shaped most renditions of the scene. In a 1905 issue of *Chums*, the death of Gordon is similarly played out although, what the painting suggests as inevitable, the *Chums* story offers in detail, with the barbaric Dervishes mutilating the beheaded body of the General and then presenting the head to the Mahdi. The article concludes that it took 14 years and another British invasion to make good on the loss of Gordon whose efforts in the Sudan had been unrecognized until his death when “men realize how noble his unselfish life had been.” *Chums* gave Tennyson the last word with the script that marked Gordon’s monument: “Strong by death, by failure glorified, O never proud in life, lie down in pride.” This soldier’s sacrifice typified the Victorian ideal as represented in the culture and remained topical in post-Boer War Edwardian Britain.

The narratives of individual sacrifice are numerous and sometimes served a multifaceted iconic purpose even when the lost individuals were not of high rank or popularly familiar. For example, the death of soldiers – usually officers – in defence of a regimental colour is often recorded and is replete with explicit meaning. As developed in Chapter 2, the colours, and the battle honours they display, place a unit within its own history. In a very direct manner, they demonstrate the legacy that soldiers had to realize including, of course, the national expectation denoted by the inclusion of the Union Jack on both the Queen’s colour and that of the regiment. If death was noble, dying in the defence of this symbol was assuredly of value. *Chums* made this unambiguous in a large illustration from the Indian Mutiny presented early in 1914 (Illustration 4.12).

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134 Kestner, 231. In contrast to this image of “unresisting disdain,” Strachey suggests that an alternative narrative of his demise had Gordon attack vigorously the Dervishes, succumbing only when his revolver ammunition was exhausted and his swordsmanship was overwhelmed by sheer numbers. Strachey, 347.  
Illustration 4.12 “His Life for the Flag” back-cover from *Chums* (February 21, 1914). © The British Library Board.
The defeats at Isandlwana and Majuba included much publicized sacrifices for the unit flags. At Isandlwana, the saving of the Queen’s colour of the 24th Regiment by two officers, Lieutenants Melville and Coghill, became a celebrated part of an otherwise depressing narrative in much the same way that the successful defence at Rorke’s Drift was heralded. Fripp’s later interpretation of British defiance at Isandlwana satisfied a longer-term memorialising of the sacrifice, but the deaths of Melville and Coghill represented a more knowable and personal sacrifice; in a lost cause, these two soldiers gave their lives for a higher purpose represented by the colours. The ILN coverage of Coghill and Melville’s efforts to save the colours starts in the March 1 issue that briefly notes their effort to escape the over-run camp with the colours. Although this in itself was praised, when the Queen’s colour was retrieved later, the sacrifice of the two officers was given attention distinct from the overall war coverage. The March 29 issue includes textual and graphic content of the colour’s retrieval including a description of how the bodies of Coghill and Melville were discovered just prior to the flag itself and a cover illustration of the formal re-issuing of the colour to the regiment.138 Two weeks later, a full page illustration shows again both the discovery of the flag and the burial of the two officers, to which the adjoining text notes that the men were “decently interred” immediately and religious rites performed.139 The two part illustration has a clear narrative: elation at the discovery of the colours and the respectful commemoration of the sacrifice that made it possible.

If saving the colours was impossible, dying in their defence continued to be made into a valiant sacrifice in the culture. The Battle of Maiwand in 1880 during the second

Afghan War was another shocking defeat following Isandlwana the previous year, but here again stories of British defiance when facing death revolve around the colours:

Then Lieutenant Barr, the colour bearer, fell dead across his flag: his part played, his duty nobly done. The flag, however, was not yet lost. Lieutenant Hopgood, though seriously wounded, quickly raised it, and then was shot down while holding the colour high above his head.\(^{140}\)

Another example of defending the colours again followed closely on the heels of Maiwand: the defeat at Majuba Hill to the Boers in the First Anglo-Boer war of 1881. A Pluck story transforms a disaster into a moment of glory in a timely fictional reformulation of the story in 1899. Described as a “rattling Transvaal War story,” the “exciting incident” recounts the deadly defence of a regiment’s colour that bore its battle honours including familiar Napoleonic battles won by the British. The ensign was shot, but before dying managed to exclaim, “though choking with blood, ‘save the flag!’” The title illustration shows the incident, with, unusually, several Britons already dead or wounded, as the ensign is shown shot, but still holding the colours. The melodrama is self-evident, but the communicated message is also clear: as the title suggests, ‘remember Majuba,’ the valiant defence of the flag, and all that it means to regiment and country.

The transformation of deadly defeat into a triumph of British valour was a contortionist act for which Henty showed adeptness. The early phase of the Anglo-Boer War was marked by a series of defeats, particularly in December and January, 1899-1900, at key battles like Colenso and Spion Kop. Henty was not averse to narrating these battles and offering a tactical critique. In *With Buller in Natal* the protagonist is attached to a volunteer horse unit that Henty observes was ideal for outflanking movements that

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more effectively dislodged the Boers from their entrenchments with less loss of life than frontal assaults. Of course, such assaults were undertaken and described by Henty with a faithful indication of their failure. However, he cannot resist communicating the quality of British valour in defeat. Of Colenso Henty asserts that “It had been a day of misfortunes, and yet a day of glory, for never had the fighting power of British troops been more splendidly exhibited, never were greater deeds of individual daring performed; never had troops supported with heroic indifference so terrible a fire.”

Illustration 4.13 “Only a Pawn!” from The Graphic (July 14, 1900)

Occasionally the press provided a more nuanced commentary on soldierly death.

In 1901, *The Graphic* presented a large illustration based on a correspondent’s field sketch, titled “Only a Pawn” (Illustration 4.13)\(^{143}\) It shows the reclined body of a ‘Colonial trooper’ having been killed on a reconnaissance mission during the Anglo-Boer War. As revealed below, the soldier, mortally wounded, manages to place a chess piece – the pawn – on his water bottle. It seems an act of political and social critique. But the commentary is much richer. While a mere ‘trooper’ pawn, this individual, a chess player, is not represented as a grotesque corpse; his wound is not visible on a body positioned as to reveal no final pain. And while this man might well have been a common pawn in the military and in British society, he reveals his defiant individuality by separating out one pawn from the dispersed collection of pieces before him.

Immediately attending to the dead is a subject represented in the illustrated press. Based on a sketch of operations on the North-West Frontier by their ‘war special’ Melton Prior, the *ILN* presented a cover illustration that showed shrouded dead being extricated by stretcher from the site of a battle.\(^{144}\) Officers are shown saluting as the stretcher party pass denoting the respect given to those fallen in the line of duty. Who these individuals are is obscured, but this is not of importance; the sacrifice and its immediate commemoration by comrades is the value of the illustration.

Respecting the retired soldier, whether disabled or simply aged, is an issue occasionally addressed in the media. Its relevance here relates to the chapter’s question of the soldier’s fate. Not only did the mass culture provide vision to the act of soldierly killing, being wounded, and even dying, but after all that, the consumer of the commercial media found some idea of the fate of those who survived the exigencies of

\(^{143}\) “Only a Pawn!” *The Graphic* LXII, no. 1598 (July 14, 1901): 48.

colonial warfare. This fate was somewhat ambiguous according to the media. In the
*Chums* article celebrating the VC recipients, there is a suggestion that veterans were ill-
treated and on the social margins. Indeed, the article appeals to the young readership not
to “despise” the disabled veterans who impose a burden on the society. Instead, these
individuals are to be respected for their service and sacrifice, and, if one listened to them,
the article suggests that their stories of daring deeds might inspire the youth: “VC men
are modest. Follow their example.”145 This vision of the old soldier exposes an earlier
attitude that was not so complimentary. Prior to the Crimean War, Royal Academy
images of discharged or retired soldiers were rare and fed the common idea that soldiers
were immoral and a dangerous element among the broader population.146 After the
Crimean War the image of the poor veteran became less dangerous and instead was used
to bolster social reform of the army and state; he became representative of the
“‘deserving poor,’ worthy because of his ‘patriotic’ military service.” Always a safe
image of the veteran, the Chelsea veteran served the post-Crimean War culture with the
notion of a state that took care of its servants who deserved public respect.147 The *ILN*
was quite direct in identifying the social value of the old soldier. For example, in 1882
the Queen issued campaign medals to those participants of the Egyptian Campaign. The
*ILN* made an unambiguous appeal to respect both of these veterans by illustrating a
young soldier walking with an aged veteran of Waterloo (Illustration 4.14).148 The
Napoleonic legacy was unassailable and the children observing these two veterans from

148 King, illustration, “After the Review: Waterloo and Tel-el-Kebir – A sketch on the Chelsea
the background further emphasizes their worth to the nation, secure and prosperous (and perhaps a little naïve) by their sacrifice.

Illustration 4.14 “After the Review: Waterloo and Tel-el Kebir – A Sketch on the Chelsea Embankment” from the *ILN* (December 2, 1882)
Conclusion

Intellectually it is understood that soldiers must kill and in the process also risk being wounded or killed. That intellectual understanding fails, however, to shape the experiential qualities of those events. The fact that they appear indefinable except through the experiences themselves has not dissuaded the culture from representing them and in the process attaching to them a meaning. In late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain, the various mass media forms had a vast quantity of raw material from which to draw their examples. Indeed, the illustrated newspapers offered text and pictures of the British colonial campaigns that occurred relentlessly throughout the period and these provided the predominant interpretation of war in a manner that was largely shared by other media such as novels, paintings and toys. In this vision of war, killing either offered an expression of technological superiority through massive firepower or an assertion of chivalric masculinity in close combat that favoured the valorous Anglo-Saxon. Wounds could occur but were not unendurable and comrades ensured that the injured Tommy was protected and ultimately cared for by medical services in the field and in hospitals. Death in combat was very rare and if it should occur it was profoundly meaningful. Lest this appear cynical, all of the foregoing was faithfully presented with a promise of accuracy. And it was accurate in its broad narrative. British soldiers fought battles and won. Close combat occurred quite frequently and, notwithstanding the silence on the actual effects that weapons inflicted on the body, seemed a greater test of bravery than shooting an opponent from afar. British soldiers were wounded and, compared to many of the Native dead, were better cared for, although much of this had to do simply with the opportunity to rescue the casualties from fields of battle often held by the British. And while death
was harder to rationalize, the oft presented memorials to those who had fallen ‘gloriously’ must have made it difficult to ignore death’s manufactured and compelling meaning as represented in the culture.

But even accepting this culturally communicated value structure, the representational accuracy of this military education provided by the mass culture was limited by the parameters of medium and by a selectivity of subject that narrowed the narrative scope to avoid or reinterpret the awkward parts of the experience. Parcelled into discrete moments, the realities of war were more easily communicated and could be quite accurate. But this narrative accuracy in presenting these discrete moments and exceptional events not only shaped the cultural meaning, but also limited the interpretive options for understanding the explicit nature of war. If war found its worth in morally just killing and sacrifice of the individual officer or soldier ‘pawn,’ there was little in the culture that would have undermined that underlying discourse.
Chapter 5: Representing the Enemy

The complex organization and doctrines of a modern army are the products of the society that forged them, but they also reflect an assumption about the kind of enemy the army expects to fight. For Continental European armies this meant war facing other Europeans using the same or similar technology and tactics, and, since the French Revolution, accepting the imperative of mass armies of conscript citizen soldiers. Britain resisted this transformation of war and retained its gentleman-led volunteer army, although much expanded, during the Napoleonic Wars. Success encouraged the British to keep this ultimately anomalous approach to army recruitment and service through to 1916. In addition to this distinction from its Continental neighbours, and the historical legacy that encouraged it, imperial warfare further encouraged a rather conservative evolution of British military preparations.

For Britain, fighting in Africa and Asia, addressing the complexities and scrupulous preparations required of emerging industrial warfare was made more challenging for a military that had to be flexible enough to adjust with each enemy and landscape it encountered in empire. As we have seen, the British found solutions inspired by tradition and the rediscovery of tactical doctrines that were understood as anachronistic but suitable for fighting massed and often poorly equipped enemies. More importantly, organization, modest technological superiority and the arrogance of the vocationally driven officer corps compensated for their disdain of the disciplined
professionalism they expected of their rank and file. These officers of the social elite favoured ‘pluck’ over a systematic and studied doctrinal evolution; it was clear that theory and book learning were anathema to a British army that formed a General Staff only by 1906, almost a hundred years after Prussia.\(^1\) In a forward praising the content of a series of books published under his name, Field Marshal Wolseley warns that his junior officers not become too bookish.\(^2\) He was relieved that this was unlikely: “There is happily at present no tendency in that direction, for I am glad to say that this generation is as fond of danger, adventure, and all manly out-of-door sports as its forefathers.”\(^3\)

Sometimes the entrenched amateurism failed, but reverses were temporary and success always followed reinforcing British dominance over their contemporary enemies in a manner that resonated in the culture and added to the historical record. Colonial wars and the Native enemies were, therefore, used as a proof of British racial superiority but importantly confirmed the appropriateness of the army retaining an institutional and doctrinal conservatism.

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\(^1\) Howard Bailes makes a convincing case for the effectiveness of the British army. Claiming that too much contemporary and historical attention has been given to the vociferous critics of the British performance in Anglo-Boer War, Bailes asserts that the vagaries of colonial warfare benefited from a lack of dogmatic attachment to doctrine. Local circumstances had to be accounted for and the flexible, if amateurish, methods sometimes employed were often perfectly appropriate. Howard Bailes, “Technology and Imperialism: A Case Study of the Victorian Army in Africa,” in *The British Army 1815-1914*, ed. Harold E. Raugh (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 323-344.

\(^2\) He expected more from his own staff drawn as they were from devotees in his ‘ring.’ Intellectual reputation based on studies, writing and teaching at the training facilities of Woolich, Sandhurst, the Staff College, were all deemed important for entry into Wolseley’s campaign staffs. Ian F. W. Beckett, “Wolseley and the Ring,” *Soldiers of the Queen* 69 (1992): 16. This expectation of professionalism also reveals Wolseley’s basic support of the Cardwellian reforms that sought to improve the quality of officers by ending the commission purchase system as an initial step toward more fundamental reforms of the army. Howard Bailes, “Patterns of Thought in the Late Victorian Army,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 4 (1981): 30.

\(^3\) It is telling that this sentiment was printed in a book by the German Lieutenant-General von der Goltz, the product of a long established staff system with a more refined intellectual approach to war studies. Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz, *The Conduct of War* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1899), v.
Popular representations of war in Britain inevitably used the ‘enemy’ as an oppositional means of comparison and, like the diverse character of the actual campaigns, the culture eagerly represented the full range of opponents. Usually the comparison was favourable and assured Britons of their military prowess and national character. But even temporarily unfavourable comparisons were ultimately self-affirming as the army seemed able to adjust – rather than change – in the face of adversity. For all their cultural diversity voyeuristically observed through print, image, and performance, the enemy became homogenized. The ultimately normative interpretations of the enemy’s military capacity, if not his methods, verified the British way of war shaped less by doctrine and more by the peculiarities of British history, tradition, and race.

This sense of superiority was not simply based on a racial-cultural juxtaposition, or at least not one limited to what one might characterize as Orientalist. Some of the most dramatic and affective war stories were fictional war-scares setting British soldiers against various European enemies in narratives like The Battle of Dorking⁴ and the juvenile stories of Captain Frank Shaw written for Chums. While the stories were often cautionary and lobbied for greater public support for the military, it was also made clear that the Continental conscript was not up to facing the British volunteer soldier. These fantasies revealed the historical importance placed on European war. Edward Creasy, in his 1851 study of decisive battles in history fails to include any battle from imperial campaigns. In a passage relishing the thirty-seven years of peace since the Battle of Waterloo, the last “decisive battle,” he admits that, “our troops have had battles to fight during this interval for the protection and extension of our Indian possessions and our

colonies." But he dismisses them as being against "distant and unimportant enemies."
Left to this historian, war was defined by the great battles fought by armies of the west or
at least those that threatened western liberties. This was not Orientalism but rather an
outright dismissal of the peoples confronted by empire. Of course, just a few years later
in the Crimean War (1854-1856) and then in the Indian Mutiny (1857), the British public
was introduced to these marginal wars and their army in a manner that would cast both in
a much higher profile. Contemporary and imperial wars would remain a prominent
feature of the mass culture; Briton’s enemies might well have been “distant” but they
were not “unimportant.”

Britain fought all of its real wars in the empire between 1870 and the Great War.
Sometimes the reaction to the Native enemy was dismissive and mocking, and it was
always racially homogenous. Occasionally the enemy were so disregarded that they
barely qualified as an “army” at all, and fighting them seemed less battle and war than
skirmish and occupation. In spite of this organizational disregard, the opponent Natives
could be admired for their innate martial traits even if they were coupled with negative
attributes. The Zulus are praised for their bravery and (somewhat unusually) their
hierarchical discipline, but are savage and cruel; the Dervishes are courageous, but find
their inspiration from religious fanaticism; the Pathans and Afghans have good field-
craft, but are fickle and undisciplined; and the Boers are fine marksmen, but are also
unscrupulous in spite of their white skins. While praise for the enemy might be seen as

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6 Campaigns fought against enemies that lacked clearly defined military organization were often much
more difficult. Battles were what the British wanted to fight as these meant that the enemy’s military
strength could be faced and defeated decisively. Colonel C. E. Callwell, *Small Wars, Their Principles and
merely a device to bolster the prestige of the Britons facing them, the representation of the enemy in the mass culture contributed to the manner in which war was defined.

The savage, exotic, and unchristian characterization of most of the peoples of empire have been used by cultural historians to expose or debate the function of the ‘Other’ in shaping almost every facet of British culture and social construct. Edward Said’s work will be duly noted. In this final chapter, the ‘enemy’ will be considered for their contribution to the mass culture’s representational repertoire for warfare. The enemy could be as much praised as mocked, and like the tensions that exist with regards to representing tactics and killing, the image of the enemy suffers too from the limits imposed by the media forms and the agenda that the mass culture communicated through its content. If this content is often contradictory, this is what often characterizes the underlying message. Earlier we saw how Britons could kill at range and celebrate their technology but equally found valour in using the bayonet; although both types of fighting can be used to praise different features of British culture, one puts to question the efficacy of the other. Regarding the enemy we will see a similar inconsistency with one Native trait or another being praised and then dismissed or contradicted. While the mass culture had a repertoire of representations of British warfare, Native enemies (and allies) were pushed into certain forms to suit that vision.

This chapter must face the inevitable assumption that the characterization of the enemy served an Orientalist purpose, as defined by Edward Said in Orientalism and, in a much more directly relevant manner to this thesis, Culture and Imperialism. In a general sense, it did. The Native enemy Other, engaged in colonial wars alien in form

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and locale, was a useful comparative tool for the elite owned commercial culture. This culture could propagate an oppositionally defined vision of Britishness that was globally and racially hegemonic. It also established a discourse of national character that encouraged domestic social and political pacification. Even critical voices of imperialism distinguished between the Briton and Native. In his 1901 scathing assessment of popular imperialism, J. A. Hobson differentiates the British “spectatorial passion of Jingoism from the cruder craving for personal participation in bloodshed which seizes most savage peoples when the war-spirit is in the air.”

Benedict Anderson notes that in the development of the national imagined community, racial distinctions provided a sense of superiority over the Other that could even temporarily provide a social levelling effect: “English lords were naturally superior to other Englishmen [but]…these other Englishmen were no less superior to the subjected natives” as revealed in the mass culture.

Said affirms that “culture comes to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state; this differentiates ‘us’ from ‘them,’ almost always with some degree of xenophobia.” Ben Shephard offers an explicit example of this voyeuristic fascination, but revulsion for the Other in his racial, cultural, and gendered analysis of a travelling ‘show’ created by a theatre and circus producer Frank Ellis called ‘Savage

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9 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities; Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verson, 1991), 150. David Cannadine challenges the exclusively race based view of imperial history and emphasizes the importance of tradition bound social hierarchies that the British elites respected, regardless of race, and used to administer their empire, or at least, imagine how it should be moulded: “social ranking was as important as (perhaps more important than?) colour of skin in contemplating the extra-metropolitan world….” David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism; How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
10 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xiii.
Opening on May 8, 1899, the show included a cast of 200 ‘imported’ Natives of various ‘savage’ tribes including the purportedly captured chieftain of the Matabele, Lobengula. The performance had a narrative form and included identifiable episodes from the Matabele wars of 1893 and 1896 presented in an action-packed spectacle. The histrionic reaction by the media to this showbiz invasion of savage and sexualized Natives was certainly an example of how culture served an Orientalist purpose – Britons were titillated and shocked by the cultural Other presented in the show.

Examining the works of Henry Rider Haggard and Kipling, Gail Ching-Liang Low analyzes this dual reaction by suggesting that the superiority of the Briton over the ‘savage,’ was coupled with an underlying “libidinal” desire.

Of course, our observation of the racially charged cultural exploration of non-white peoples should not diminish or obscure the military content communicated through various media. The scarlet or khaki line or square stood in sharp relief to the various Native hosts that the British faced, and generally defeated, throughout the empire. This was a script of military contrasts and success that the culture provided its consumers whether they accepted the racialist discourse or not. This script also provided the shape of fighting that confirmed the relevance of those familiar tactics and traditional leadership styles, albeit with the risk of intimate death and defeat. It was a limited hazard. Even

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12 Shephard, 97.
14 Excited and reviled by the salacious news that Lobengula was going to marry a white woman, reporters were quite disappointed that the chief was western-educated and articulate thereby undermining their expectations defined by the show and the racial discourse in British culture. Shephard, 100.
Kipling’s ‘Fuzzy-Wuzzy’ that “broke a British square” did so in vain as the poem makes his ultimate defeat and subjugation clear.\(^{15}\)

Beyond this general observation that verified a sense of British superiority, Said’s interpretation of the Orientalist construct is largely self-evident; contrasts always serve to shape discourse. And like so many broad-based theories, its usefulness fades on closer inspection of the specific context. John MacKenzie provides an excellent commentary dismantling parts of Said’s argument in *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*.\(^{16}\) Far from simply presenting a vulgar contrast with the Other to raise the profile of Britishness, MacKenzie detects a conflicted discourse that includes admiration of eastern culture and intellectual developments in significant parts of British culture. In their edited work, Julie Codell and Dianne Sachko Macleod similarly reveal the more subtle inter-relationship between Britain and empire and “fracture Said’s monolithic Orientalism into the multiple instabilities and complexities of colonial discourse.”\(^{17}\) Revealing much more than self-confidence in racial superiority, Orientalism “becomes a highly moveable phenomenon in which Self and Other become absorbed in common objectives and fears, ideals and neuroses.”\(^{18}\)

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\(^{15}\) The Dervishes, including the tribes described by Kipling as Fuzzy-Wuzzies, broke two British squares, one at the battle of Tamai and also at the battle of El Teb. Although broken, the reverse was temporary and in both cases the British were able to repulse the enemy and reform their squares. Although this is left un-stated by Kipling, he prefaces his praise of the enemy’s temporary tactical successes by stating that “our orders was to break you, an’ of course we went an’ did.” So while the Fuzzy-Wuzzies broke a square, the British broke them as a people. Kipling, “Fuzzy-Wuzzy,” *Barrack Room Ballads* (Amsterdam: Fredonia, 2001), 97. Said, who writes in praise of Kipling’s work, asserts that he fully accepted the racial divide: “The division between white and non-white, in India and elsewhere, was absolute…a Sahib is a Sahib, and no amount of friendship or camaraderie can change the rudiments of racial difference.” Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 135.


The interaction with the Other was also not just binary. B. J. Moore-Gilbert positions Kipling’s works in the multi-faceted inter-play between the various religious and ethnic groups of India, British culture, and the Anglo-Indian community that negotiated a unique position between the other two.\(^{19}\) Indicative of that complex interaction is the simple, but explicit, military example of the adoption of khaki uniforms first by British units in India, then by the British army serving overseas, and finally by the entire force.

Notwithstanding these nuances of the imperial dynamic, it must also be remembered that the colonial context was not the only comparative device or influence. The historical, and often fictional, enemies of Britain were Europeans; the ‘thin red line’ faced French, Russian and German conscript automatons in the stories of war past and future. More famously, the naval race between Britain and Germany was, after 1909 when Germany had clearly lost the ‘race,’ an enduring and potent theatre played out in spectacles and stories.\(^{20}\) A cultural and military contrast is presented in these manifestations of conflict, but hardly one that might be defined as Orientalist.

Britain’s Asian and African enemies fought differently and were motivated by cultural and religious impulses that were generally distinct from those of the British. But the enemy also helped expose the limits of British military proficiency. Firepower could stop massed enemies, but as the representations of killing expose, the enemy frequently weathered that storm of bullets to engage in close combat. While such fighting was often


\(^{20}\) Jan Rüger, *The Great Naval Game; Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 245.
a narrative requirement or might be discounted as a function of overwhelming numbers
and a barbaric disregard for life, it sometimes spoke to a warrior ethic of an enemy that
the British could respect. G. A. Henty offered this commentary in a novel about the
1884-5 Sudan Campaign to relieve Khartoum:

The idea that savages, however brave, could cope with British troops with breech-
loaders had then seemed absurd; but the extraordinary bravery with which the
Arabs fought, the recklessness with which they threw away their lives, and the
determination with which they had charged through a fire in which it seemed
impossible that any human being could live, had created a feeling of respect.21

Later, another group of soldiers again marvel at the ability of the Arabs and the
Zulus to endure British firepower concluding that these Natives “must be braver than
civilized soldiers.” Concern over the physical health of Britons and their inherent martial
suitability was exposed by colonial wars – especially in times of defeat such as at the
beginning of the Zulu War or during and after the Anglo-Boer War. Observing the
‘natural’ warrior traits of Native Others, Orientalist discourse reflected back onto British
society by scrutinizing the degree to which Britons satisfied the expectations of
“Britishness.” In reference to Haggard’s characterization of the Zulus, Low identifies a
sentiment of nostalgia for the virgin lands of Africa and for Zulu culture.22 Were the
British retaining their natural superiority?

Henty provides an answer when he has a soldier protest the assertion that Natives
were superior to “civilized soldiers”: firepower would not stop the British if the order to
attack was given: “it did not at Balaclava.”23 Soldiers were expected to kill and they
should risk dying without question. The whole trajectory of western warfare has

21 G. A. Henty, The Dash to Khartoum: A Tale of the Nile Expedition (London: Blackie and Sons, 1892),
134.
22 Low, 40-44.
endeavoured to keep soldiers ‘in the line’ with the effect of creating a horrifying record of casualties in European wars. It seemed that the Arabs, Zulus and others, for all their much-emphasized savage mores, had developed a type of discipline or martial ethic worthy of recognition, albeit one founded on different motives that still fell short of the British capacity to sacrifice.

The Orientalist oppositional comparison is further complicated by the recruitment of the ‘enemy’ into the ranks of the British armed forces used in the empire. The colonial recruits from Africa, Asia and especially India represented a huge proportion of the soldiers fighting Victoria’s little wars, usually as soldiers trained in the western fashion. While these too could provide a contrasting comparison to the British, their like ethnicity to the ‘savage’ enemy adds variation to the Orientalist discourse.

If praise of the Native’s warrior ethic was often undermined by a supposed lack of discipline, the colonial recruit, drawn from the same culture, but tempered with training, should have well exceeded the soldiering skills of the Briton. That was, of course, culturally impossible, but the negotiation of this vision of the enemy through the intermediary of the colonial recruit communicated something of the character of war. Soldiering could be taught. This training could impose a discipline over warfare that was natural to the Briton but had to be learned deliberately by the Native recruit. However, while the killing instinct and disregard for death of the Native enemy had to be harnessed through regular training, the British soldier embraces similar innate fighting traits when

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24 Some Native contingents were recruited for campaigns on a temporary basis, often manipulating local rivalries. These forces, such as the Fingoes fighting the Galekas in the Kaffir War of 1878 or the Swazis fighting the Zulus in 1879, were not formally trained by the British and retained their own fighting methods. Although the British often favoured recruiting those individuals with firearms, or supplied them, the ambiguous position of these warriors fighting for the British, but in an undisciplined manner, inspired an undercurrent of criticism from their European masters apparent in the culture. Specific examples will be shown later in the chapter.
fictionally opposing rigidly trained European conscripts. These enemy soldiers lacked British pluck and the essential moral and psychological composition to triumph; too much training and discipline could rob the soldier of natural vigour. It seems war was not just about externally imposed skills, nor was it solely about an innate warrior culture, but it was a combination of these, and Britons achieved the ideal balance demonstrated by the fictional and real prosecution of war as represented in the products of the commercial culture. Nevertheless, negotiating the character of the Native recruit required a representational juggling act.

The ‘enemy’ were not just foils for the British, although this was often the cultural intent. The enemy were ethnically diverse and approached warfare in a variety of ways, but British culture exposed its soldiers as ready to face them all. It was not a vision of the enemy that was inaccurate, but it was again selective, sometimes to the point of appearing contradictory. And in encouraging a normative image of British approaches to war, the representation of the enemy served to diminish the recognition of the varieties of warfare. Indeed, the outmoded methods of most imperial enemies reinforced the confluence of war representation (and even applied military tactical doctrine) around historically celebrated and knowable methods of close-order tactics that emphasized firepower combined with assaults with bayonet and sword. These tactics and weapons found relevance in empire where the Native warrior was often also transformed into an imperial soldier. This transformation was further verification that the British understood the character of war and imposed it on those they used and controlled. The following sections are organized to mirror the previous chapters and will explore the explicit
Orientalist dynamic while being mindful that the enemy did more than offer just a contrast to the British way of war, they verified the relevance of its long existent form.

The Enemy: Representing their Appearance and Cultures of War

There is little more obvious place to see a contrast between the military cultures of the British and their enemies than in the appearance of their soldiers. For the mass culture, describing and illustrating the enemy offered the consumer an exotic journey visiting lands and peoples that they would never otherwise see. The ‘Savage South Africa’ show exemplified this irresistible fascination that existed in the broader culture. Since much of this content was linked to the wars of empire, much of the illustrated emphasis was on the warriors who fought them. Like the previously considered representations of the British army, the representations of the enemy also included portraits of key leaders, the peculiarities (if any) of the warrior’s dress, and the details of his weapons. Also presented were some of the martial ceremonies enacted by these cultures. The sometimes rudimentary and certainly irregular appearance of the Native soldiers of Africa and Asia indicated a usually simple and less disciplined form of warfare compared to the uniformed appearance of British units that denoted controlled and organizationally sophisticated means of war.

The adult and juvenile illustrated press was systematic in providing their readers with studies of the Native peoples of empire and especially those with which the British were fighting. These cultural explorations revealed aspects of tribal politics, economics, and social life. The underlying discourse that these societies were quaint, savage, and ultimately primitive is unambiguous. Much the same conclusions can be applied to their
ways of warring as communicated by their appearance and reported habits. In contrast to Europe, where soldiers were deliberately separated from the broader society and signalled this distinction with uniforms, Native soldiers are represented as more seamlessly embedded in their communities. For the uninformed viewer, the appearance of the warriors is not inherently different from others and is distinguished only by the weapons he carries. For example, a study “Arabs of the Soudan” in the *Illustrated London News* (ILN) shows individuals, all men, of unnamed tribes described as “Bedouins,” “Dervish,” Shepard,” and “Barbarians” (Illustration 5.1). Notwithstanding the rather limited value of these monikers, six of the eight figures illustrated are armed, although none of them are wearing anything that looks like distinctly military clothing and certainly none of them are uniformed.

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It appears, therefore, that these men are armed because of their custom and gender. Similarly, the *ILN* provided a study of the inhabitants of the Gold Coast including women, a child, and two Ashantee “fighting men.”\(^{26}\) The warriors are not wearing a ‘uniform’ but are each in different attire; one is covered in an animal pelt and carries a spear. The other is bare-chested and holds a musket. Although there is nothing immediately martial about their clothing, the varied appearance and weapons speaks to an expectation that these Natives might fight in a similarly irregular manner.

The tribes of southern Africa drew extensive coverage from the illustrated press. Inter-tribal warfare on the frontiers of the empire and direct confrontation with these peoples inspired the media reportage, especially in the wake of the Kaffir Revolt (1877-

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78) and the Zulu War (1879). Although, here again, all members of these societies are represented with illustrations and text, the appearance of their warriors was specifically presented in much the same way that the British forces *en route* to these wars had been illustrated (see Chapter 2). Lacking uniforms, the warriors from these tribes are noted for their varied hair cuts, personal ornaments such as feather accoutrements and piercings, and weapons. A detailed *ILN* study of Zulu figures shows women and men, but there is no apparent inherent distinction between the chiefs, doctors and warriors except for the shield and spear carried by the latter.27 An illustration of a Zulu kraal in the popular military history *British Battles on Land and Sea* similarly offers no distinction between the male figure tending to cattle and the warriors occupying the centre of the frame except for the weapons they carry.28

Front cover illustrations of an unnamed Kaffir chief29, the Zulu king Cetewayo30 and his brother Dabulamanzi,31 “commander of the Zulu army at Isandlwana,” demonstrate the high profile that imperial war and the image of the enemy could command in the illustrated press. These representations (the one of Cetewayo apparently based on a sketch done from life two years earlier) are not crudely overwrought images of savages, although their skin tone and lack of clothing might well have led the Victorian viewer to arrive at that conclusion. In essence, they are little different from the *ILN* portraits of Lord Chelmsford and his officers lost at Isandlwana and those who

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30 “The Zulu War in South Africa: Cetewayo, the Zulu King,” *The Illustrated London News* LXXIV, no. 2071 (February 22, 1879): cover.
31 “The Zulu War: Dabulamanzi, brother of King Cetewayo, Commander of the Zulu Army at Isandhlwana,” *The Illustrated London News* LXXIV, no. 2078 (April 12, 1879): cover.
defended Rorkes Drift save for the salient fashion differences in grooming and clothes.  

If savages, they are the imagined noble savages of the eighteenth century tradition transformed through the lens of the late-nineteenth century’s mass media for a broad viewing public. The anonymous Kaffir is most ornate with a small feather head-dress and an animal skin wrapped around his exposed bare chest; he carries a club and spear. Cetewayo is seated for the portrait, bare-chested and with limited adornment and no weapons. Dabulamanzi has virtually no adornment and, ready for war, carries a firearm; the mass of warriors illustrated behind him are also simply dressed and carry a variety of weapons including shields, spears and, again, a number of firearms (Illustration 5.2). Of note here is the accurate portrayal of Zulus in their plain war attire as opposed to the more wild and ornate ceremonial dress that would have encumbered the combatant. This is in sharp contrast to the warrior figure in the previously noted ILN study of “Zulus and Kaffirs” that is covered in an exotic feather-and-hide costume.

Of course, celebrating a soldier’s martial and social prowess

Illustration 5.2 “Dabulamanzi, brother of King Cetewayo, commander of the Zulu army at Isandhlwana” from the ILN (April 12, 1879)
by illustrating them in their impractical ‘tribal’ full dress was not relegated to representations of the enemy. The *ILN* and *The Boy’s Own Paper* (BOP) both presented fallen heroes – Colonel Burnaby and General Gordon, respectively – in uniforms that revealed their rank but bore no resemblance to the dress they wore when they were killed. Burnaby, killed in the Sudan in 1885, is illustrated in the armour and full dress splendour of his regiment, the Royal Horse Guards.\(^{35}\) The disconnectedness between this image and the reality of his soldiering is marked, but the connoted status and grandeur of this version of Burnaby justifies its presentation in spite of its anachronistic qualities. His sword, plumed helmet, and breastplate are no more relevant to war than the feathers and spears of African warriors. *BOP*’s colour portrait of Gordon is similar in its formulation (Illustration 5.3).\(^{36}\) That the *ILN* showed such restraint with the African leader portraits and most of the warriors pictured in the combat illustrations of their war coverage, is thus noteworthy.

\(^{35}\) “The Late Colonel Frederick Burnaby, Royal Horse Guards, Killed in the Soudan,” *The Illustrated London News* LXXXVI, no. 2389 (January 31, 1885): cover.

Although some *ILN* illustrations of Zulus at war do include some of the accoutrements associated with their feather and hide ‘full-dress,’\(^{37}\) most images show no such decorations. The Kaffirs and Zulus did go to war in very simple attire carrying a minimum of additional gear. Some had guns, but most used their spears and shields to fight. All of this is quite appropriately represented in the adult illustrated press and implied an equally simple kind of warfare that the more elaborately dressed British

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soldier would face. This combat reality was denoted by the general disappearance of firearms in the representation of Zulus fighting, as they predominantly did, at close quarters. Zulus might have had firearms, even in large numbers, but the *ILN* got it right when they omitted them from the fray.

If Zulus and other southern African tribes went to war with simple clothes and weapons that forced them to seek close combat, other peoples of empire were better equipped and this too was represented in the illustrated press. Two such enemies were the various tribes of the North-West Frontier and Afghanistan, and the Boers. Here again the appearance of the enemy combatant was little different from the general population and this too spoke of an irregular character of warring but also one that was embedded in their culture.

Of the dozens of wars and punitive ‘expeditions’ conducted by the British a conspicuous number were in the ill-defined border region of the North-West Frontier of India and Afghanistan. Although the vast majority of illustrations of frontier and Afghani tribesmen show the ubiquitous male figures wearing turban or skullcap, a long shirt (*khurta*) and loose trousers, there is some interest in noting the character and temperament of the various groups. One such article adjoins a series of *ILN* sketches done by a special artist, W. Simpson. Complimenting illustrations of warriors and portraits of tribal leaders detailing various clothing and grooming styles, the article makes note of their allegiances and the number of warriors they could field; the availability of firearms is also noted as these proliferated and their method of warfare evolved to favour ranged skirmishing.  

Another *ILN* article, anticipating war, describes the Afghans as

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“strong, active, and warlike…clans” who are continually armed. Their fundamental character as warriors made them eager to enlist in the Indian Army and the article encourages the idea that they be recruited on “our side.” Many Pathans and other tribesmen were so recruited, and especially populated regiments of the Frontier Field Force of the Indian Bengal Army. In For Name and Fame, or To Cabul with Roberts, the juvenile novelist George Alfred Henty echoes this praise of the tribal warriors for their bravery but also expresses a concern for their “want of organization” and “tribal jealousies.” The cumulative impression presented is of a divided and varied people, well armed (sometimes with guns of “English manufacture”), innate warriors, but prone to thievery, feuding and undisciplined warfare. According to Henty, their full potential as soldiers could only be realized “when led and organized by English officers.”

The notion of Natives finding entertainment in their perennial fighting is a commonly presented assertion. In the aforementioned ILN article, “Hill Tribes of Afghanistan,” the author comments on the persistent intertribal warfare found in the region. Asserting that the various tribes “fight one another” as readily as they oppose an “invader,” the article further asserts that they “look upon desultory fighting as an ordinary amusement.” Of course, the unintentional irony in this statement is rife; British culture systematically made warfare entertainment through war stories found in newspapers, journals, novels and history books, theatre and spectacles, paintings, and all other types of illustration, and, explicitly in the form of toy soldiers. Notwithstanding this fact, the

40 “The Khyber Pass,” 327.
41 G. A. Henty, For Name and Fame, or To Cabul with Roberts (London: Blackie & Son, 1886), 3.
42 “Hill Tribes of Afghanistan,” 360. Henty makes a similar assertion about a Sudanese tribe: “They are fine-looking fellows these blacks…they love fighting for fighting’s sake. It is in their opinion the only worthy occupation for a man…” G. A. Henty, With Kitchener in the Soudan: A Story of Atbara and Omdurman (London: Blackie and Sons, 1903), 97.
notion of warfare as embedded in culture was a hypocritical observation the British could make of their Native enemies. While the British fought their entertaining wars in distant corners of the empire, Natives, according to the papers and novels, seemed to fight their neighbours continually and without decisive victory. They lived with war as a defining feature of their societies. This lack of a distinct and disciplined method of warfare that occupied the male portion of these societies without respite or result again punctuated a distinction between Britain and its enemies. While full of cultural and racialist overtones, this distinction also communicated the idea that British methods of war combined innate abilities with the discrete organization and sophisticated doctrines. These filled history books, parade grounds, and newspapers with pageantry and success while keeping at a distance the unpleasant effects on the domestic society. War was not intrusive on British society, but was a persistent reality for Natives whose warriors appeared little different from the rest of their societies.

In spite of their white skins and a basic belief that these Dutch settlers should not be fighting fellow Europeans, the Boers are specifically studied and represented in a manner surprisingly common to other enemies of empire. At the start of the Second Anglo-Boer War, Melton Prior sent sketches of various “types” in South Africa that featured “Fighting Boers.” Except for the ubiquitous ammunition bandoliers and rifles, the Boers are illustrated with ill-fitting plain attire, usually bearded and somewhat unkempt. As combatants, their civilian garb and the differences in coat and hat styles

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43 An *ILN* news item from 1881 explicitly asserts that the English and Dutch “ought to be friends” and should not again face each other with “hostile intent.” The reference to ‘Dutch’ might be indicative of a subtle distinction made between the Dutch whose race is common with the English and the Boers who are more directly associated with Africa and often described as culturally crude. “The Transvaal War,” *The Illustrated London News* LXXVIII, no. 2185 (April 2, 1881): 318.

contrast with uniformed soldiers and connote an irregular force, albeit one well armed. One significant exception is the illustration of an officer and two gunners belonging to the State Artillery. These men are smartly uniformed and, as such, communicate a more professionalized technical modern arm; this was an arm that was lacking in the First Anglo-Boer War and its availability in 1899 is therefore significant. In fact, these uniforms were not long used in the war and the artillerists soon resembled the informal appearance illustrated for the common Boer soldier, rough and rural. Nevertheless, their illustrated uniforms serve to emphasize the lack of the same among the “Fighting Boers.”
In the *Boy’s Own Paper* (BOP) a one-page article offers an assessment of Boer culture communicated through the evolution of a man’s life as he transitions through the stages from birth to adulthood.45 “The Boer Boy” is described as a wild creature, “left to his own devices” by a mother who “allows nature to look after him.” Dispersed and isolated on the veldt, without a strong community and having to survive a competitive relationship with siblings, the author notes that the Boer boy must seek friendship with Kaffirs. Most importantly, “the one ambition of every Boer boy is to possess a gun.” This assertion is followed by the ubiquitous generalisation that “the Boer is a born ‘shot’ and every boy seems able to handle a gun naturally.”46 An

45 Ormund Lodge, “The Boer Boy,” *The Boy’s Own Annual* 22, no. 1099 (February 3, 1900): 286.
46 The notion of Boer marksmanship is repeatedly noted in news items, histories, fictional stories, and illustrations. Although there may be some validity to the claim, it is too often used to explain Boer military success in battles. Here individual marksmanship would only contribute to the more important factors of tactics, deployment, and fire control. These attributes, achieved in spite of the lack of a rigid and hierarchical military organization, would generate the volume of fire that the Boers achieved with such damaging results against the British whose tactics made them vulnerable at the start of the war. To admit to being tactically outmatched was very different to explaining Boer success from some innate skill with the rifle. Of course, even recent histories cannot resist the notion of the Boer’s fascination with rifles. Denis Judd and Keith Surridge note that “for men who were connoisseurs of the rifle, the Mauser was indeed a piece of art.” Denis Judd and Keith Surridge, *The Boer War* (London: John Murray, 2002), 91. But then, the authors explicitly debunk the myth that all the Boer fighters were independent farmers as opposed to town’s people or poor labourers without the military or rural experience of the veld that purportedly made them such natural combatants. Judd and Surridge, 94-95.
ILN cover illustration titled “How the Boers become good marksmen” shows concealed Boers relishing their successful shots as two animals collapse to the ground in the distance (Illustration 5.4). These are not trained shots but individuals that have sharpened their skills as a basic need to survive in the hostile wild environment. Like the other Natives of Africa or the tribes of the North-West Frontier, the Boers are characterized as natural combatants, but this praise of weapons skills belies an underlying cultural or racial criticism. The Boers are rather too close to nature and allusions to animals are not uncommon. In a Chums story that purports to be based on “actual happenings” a young British soldier is wounded and captured by two Boers who are described as “huge apes dressed in men’s clothes.” The boy soldier is saved from theft and physical abuse by a Boer officer who whips the “apes” with a riding crop. Although class seems to trump race, it is clear that, like animals born with innate killing instincts, the Boers are without clearly defined and uniformed structure, nor do they possess military discipline. Civilized war demanded both of these.

The toy soldier manufacturer Britains produced a mere two types of enemies to fight their massive range of accurately produced British soldiers: Boers and Zulus. The Boers were made in 1900 concurrent with the campaign being fought in southern Africa. The sets were Boer Cavalry (Set 6) and Boer Infantry (Set 26). The

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Zulus were released as two sets: the 1906 Zulus (Set 147) and the much later 1914 Set 188, the Zulu Kraal.49

The Boers are unusual for their regular appearance. As was common practice, Britains used existing models from (ironically) the 1896 Dr. Jameson raid set of mounted troopers and from the 1898 American Infantry set, released for the Spanish-American War.50 Both sets were painted in yellow-brown uniforms with black belts and broad-brimmed hats. The consistent, if rather drab, appearance was coupled with uncharacteristic marching poses for the infantry (Illustration 5.5). If these were the farmer-guerrillas that gave the British so much grief with their mobile tactics and shrewd use of cover, these models would not have communicated it. Indeed, the collector might assume that the Boers fought as other European armies in uniformed and drilled formations and cavalry charges. The only concession made to adjust the appearance to match their tactics was to clip the bayonets from some of these models; the Boers did not have bayonets to attach to their Mauser rifles that would rarely have been shouldered to march.

49 The Kraal set used the regular Zulu warriors from Set 147 and combined them with palm trees and huts. This set did not therefore add much new dimension to the representation of the Zulus for the collector. James Opie, The Great Book of Britains: 100 Years of Britains Toy Soldiers, 1893-1993 (London New Cavendish Books, 1993), 155.
50 Opie, 66.
Illustration 5.5 Britains Set 26, Boer Infantry (released 1900). Courtesy of Bonhams.

Using the existing American infantry models might have made economic sense, but this choice is especially perplexing as the concurrent release of the British City Imperial Volunteers in an ‘at the ready’ pose offered, by comparison, a misrepresentation of the likely tactics employed by both sides of the conflict. If these were the only pose choices of models wearing slouch hats, the marching pose should have been the British figure, while the slightly more dynamic pose would have suited the Boers marginally better. Either way, compared to the “apes” described in Chums these Britains toys are a peculiar anomaly to the typical way the Boers were represented.

In contrast to the Boers, the Zulus are represented as ‘savage’ warriors and, as an indication of the character of warfare, these models also communicate a more expected form (Illustration 5.6). For warriors in battle, as opposed to in a ceremonial setting, these very simple models are quite accurate. Although the Zulus were known for their ornate regimental feather and animal pelt costumes, these accoutrements were appropriately omitted by Britains as they had been in many – but not all – of the news illustrations. Painted with different coloured loincloths to individualize each of the eight figures, the Zulus were modelled in one pose, wildly running, with shield and a variety of hand
The right arm was articulated at the shoulder and allowed for different poses. One arm positioned the short stabbing spear in an over-head position while another held the spear at waist level. A third arm option held a club, the knobkerrie. These weapons were quite correct and indicated that the Zulus would need to close with the British to fight. As noted earlier, the omission of firearms from the models did not fundamentally compromise the representational quality of this small figure range.

It is interesting that Britains decided to release the Zulus in 1906 and 1914. In the wake of the Anglo-Boer War, revisiting the campaign against the Zulus might indicate nostalgia for this kind of imperial war. As previously noted, Britains left few records and certainly no written rationale for their design decisions. What is noteworthy in the manifest decisions communicated through the actual models is that many wars fought after Britains started manufacturing soldiers in 1893 received immediate attention by the company. Dr. Jameson’s raid, the Spanish-American War, the Anglo-Boer War, and the

Illustration 5.6 Britains Set 147, Zulus (released 1906). Courtesy of Bonhams.

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51 Opie, 106-107.
52 There was a so-called Zulu Revolt in 1906 that might have inspired the release of these models, but the legacy of 1879 must have been the real inspiration for their unique selection by Britains.
Russo-Japanese War all had both sides represented almost immediately. Some of the impetus must have been to allow collectors to play out the conflicts in war games. Why Britains manufactured no Dervishes to compliment their extensive range of British colonial troops made to represent the Sudan campaign of 1898 seems an odd omission. There subsequent decision to produce Zulus – the only non-white Native opponent produced by Britains -- perhaps communicates the well-established respect that British mass media held for the Zulus. Compared to the Dervishes driven by their fanatical creed, the famously disciplined Zulu ‘regiments’ that fought at Isandlwana and Rorke’s Drift deserved representation.53

The illustrations and descriptions of non-white opponents and the Boers are deliberately rendered to accurately inform. They are generally consistent with the manner that these same combatants are represented in the combat illustrations that will be examined later in the chapter. In their appearance they communicate something of the character of the warfare that these people intend to use against the British. It was a type of warfare that was as irregular and amateur as their dress. It was also a kind of warfare that communicated something of these less developed societies that accepted war as the norm. Britons found militarism anathema to their society and relished the Pax Britannica. This was a delusion and false, but it did align with their historical military record and that over these peoples in empire who they fought and usually defeated. For Britons, war was an unpleasant necessity that showed character, but it was meant to be a decisively short exception to getting on with business. Of course, the business of culture

53 In 1914, Britains made a set of robed Bedouin Arabs. Although painted in various colours to individualize the figures, the set was composed of eight identical models and, like the Boer’s, they were designed marching with shouldered rifles. Along with a mounted version, these sets were not suitable as opponents for the British, but might have been made as adversaries for other European colonial powers modelled by Britains. Opie, 154.
loved war. If Native enemies used strange methods of fighting that made Britons feel secure in their own vision of war, so much the better.

The Enemy: Representing Their Tactics and Fighting

The Native enemies of Africa and Asia used a variety of tactics when confronted by the usually better equipped and organized British. Commonly armed with edged weapons or outdated firearms, Native tactics relied on skirmishing and harassing raids with a skilful use of terrain and stealth, but in battles Natives sometimes launched massed frontal assaults. Native combatants were, of course, loath to be massacred and direct attacks were either meant to surprise the British in a disadvantaged position, or had been forced upon the Native army. As recommended by the military writer Colonel C. E. Callwell, this could be achieved by threatening the Native seat of power such as at Ulundi or at Omdurman. In both cases the Zulus and Dervishes were pressed into a major battle that was decided by firepower that inflicted crippling and decisive losses. That Native opponents were therefore fickle about open battle and used deception and evasion when possible, or, conversely, charged the British like bygone warriors of the antiquated past, was a disdainfully observed feature of imperial warfare. Either way, in contrast to the enemy, the British way of war was presented as sophisticated, honourable, and aimed at decisive results even at risk of injury or death.

If ‘tactics’ denote a systematic application of military doctrines to units operating in the face of the enemy, British culture made these seem anathema to Native warriors. These were shown to rely upon their innate fighting cultures, motivated by bloodlust, religious fanaticism, or some other desire to defend their territories from the benign

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British Empire. Often this was accurate; compared to the complex industrialized systems of warfare developed in the west, the tactical flexibility of Native forces was more limited. In recognition of that, sometimes the enemy did not come out to fight in the open at all. Although these various fighting characteristics might be associated with particular Native groups, all the enemies of the British might be faulted for two or more of these supposed uncivilized traits that, by juxtaposition, usually framed the correctness of British tactics and methods.

The illusive decisive battle on which western warfare is largely founded was the ultimate military goal and the ideal stage to set the drama of conflict between the contrasting cultures of Britain and their imperial enemies. Not only did representing ‘battle’ reduce a bigger conflict into a more manageable context, it was also a more knowable, if misunderstood, concept. Instead of reporting a litany of indecisive skirmishes, raids, and marches (the typical stuff of colonial campaigns), the producers of print and image put greater effort into narrating the great episodes from battles. This was completely understandable and appropriate, if somewhat misleading. Large battles were rare and noteworthy. British military history is sprinkled with memorable names like Hastings, Agincourt, and Waterloo, and not unlike today, these and other battles populated books dedicated to such dramatic moments.55 In colonial wars, of course,

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55 The most famous of this genre of battle narrative was the aforementioned Edward Creasy’s *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World; From Marathon to Waterloo* (1851). John Keegan contends that Creasy’s work was more popular than Darwin’s *Origin of Species*; it was republished over 40 times between 1851 and 1914. John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London: Pimlico, 2004, first published 1976), 57. Its fifteen battles proliferated as new editions were released; the 1908 printing included an additional eight battles, including Gettysburg (1863), Sedan (1870), and Tsu-shima Bay (1905). Edward Creasy, *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World; From Marathon to Waterloo* (London: Harper, 1908). An editor of the *Boy’s Own Paper*, in response to a question about decisive battles, listed the battles in Creasy’s book. *Boy’s Own Paper Annual* (Volume IV, March 4, 1881), 370. Others took advantage of this fascination with battles such as Archibald Wilberforce (ed.) *The Great Battles of All Nations* (New York: Peter Fenelon
major battles could provide particularly decisive results since significant losses of warriors might not be easily sustained. But more important here, major battles often compelled the Native enemy to expose themselves to the best the British could offer in effective tactics and technologies of killing.\textsuperscript{56} Battles like Ulundi (1879) or Omdurman (1898) saw Native formations, predominantly armed with lesser weapons, cross the field of British fire with usually horrid results. Whether or not these and other frontal assaults were acts of desperation, or were frenzied and undisciplined charges without regard for tactics, the latter interpretation was certainly how the mass media presented these events.

The critical and oppositional discourse applied to the enemy is evident in both illustration and especially the language used to describe Native attacks presented in all forms of media, regardless of the intended audience. Illustrations and paintings present an image of the Native attack that is massed, without apparent form, and leads to individual combats. There are certainly no drilled formations. Charles Fripp’s “Last Stand at Isandhlwana” communicates this lack of tactical control even for the respected Zulus who are shown having penetrated the British line. In this painting, the broken British are the ones who have formed little groups for mutual defence; the immanently victorious Zulus move around these groups without obvious control or method, relishing the killing but being killed as often as their British victims.

Giles’ series of paintings on the Battle of Tamai similarly juxtaposes the identifiable formation of the British with the amorphous mass of the Dervishes. In one of

\textsuperscript{56} The Zulu King Cetewayo specifically ordered his army to avoid pitched battle with the British. Saddened by the loss of so many warriors in victory at Isandhlwana, Cetewayo was proven correct when his warriors lost every other major battle of the war with high losses. Victims of their own culture and the euphoria of victory, the Zulus presented themselves for the British Martini-Henry rifles to shoot them down.
his renditions he does give credit to some of the Dervishes for their use of cover as they approach the British line, but others in the same painting are throwing themselves at the British in the expected manner. These images of massed attacks are not grotesque racialist simplifications, although their accuracy is somewhat compromised by the lack of obvious wounds that even the juvenile press seemed more inclined to describe in text.

Indeed, text also communicates a more critical discourse about the nature of Native attacks and tactics. The *ILN* articles on the battles of El Teb and Tamai are useful examples since in both cases the British infantry squares were penetrated – temporarily ‘broken’ – and this should have perhaps inspired a closer consideration of Dervish tactical methods. Instead, even temporary Native successes emerge as much from chance as from deliberate planning. The article on the Battle of El Teb does give the “Arabs” the credit of employing “tactics of rushing” at the British from previously prepared concealed positions.57 Little more is revealed about the Native approach to battle that was even more neglected in a subsequent *ILN* news item about the Battle of Tamai. After a careful description of the British formations, with each unit named and its relative position defined, the writer describes the Native enemy as composed of undefined “bodies” of “Arabs” who “suddenly appeared in great numbers, leaping from behind rocks, and made a wild charge.”58 Unorganized and driven by emotional or ‘wild’ instincts, these enemies are not given much credit, beyond that of their nature, for their ability to fight battles.

The juvenile press embraced similar language concerning the methods of war used by the Native enemies featured in their texts. Henty’s novels are full of battle narratives. Like press reports (and often based on them), British dispositions and tactics

are detailed, but Native battlefield actions emphasize emotion over military theory and practice. For example, amazed at the ability of the African soldiers to endure British firepower, Henty notes that at El Teb the Dervishes closed on a British square “with wild courage” but to “no avail against the steady discipline of the sailors.”

Chinese Boxers “will fight with fanatical fury” but to describe their tactics, even to dismiss them as rudimentary or non-existent, is ignored. Remembering Henty’s educational agenda, this might be seen as an omission.

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The *Pluck* story “With the Troops in the Soudan” integrates the adventure of the protagonist into the historical narrative much like Henty. At the Battle of Abu Klea the narrator describes the Arab attack as “an overwhelming black, heaving mass, driving their foes before them as surf drives the shingle up the storm lined beach.”\(^{61}\) A story in *BOP* uses a similar allusion when it described a Dervish attack as a “surge” of “loathsome savagery.”\(^{62}\) This language is not just a fanciful indulgence for the juvenile press. Melton Prior, so influential on the popular discourse on war through his sketches, describes the same action in his memoir using the same diction. The “fanatical host” approach the British “surging down over the sand like an inundation.”\(^{63}\) These wonderfully organic descriptions make no attempt to impose form on the Native attack that is explicitly and uncontrollably a force of nature.


\(^{63}\) Melton Prior, *Campaigns of a War Correspondent* (London: Edward Arnold, 1912), 221.
If Native tactics seemed organic and based on innate skills as opposed to imposed discipline and training, it also implied their failure to effectively use modern technology for ranged warfare. Sometimes this failing seems quaint as antiquated weapons of Native armies were paraded out for the British reader of the illustrated press to observe. Sketches of a Kashgari five-man crew firing an enormous musket – the “tai-foo-chee” – drew the observation in the *ILN* that “judged by the requirements of modern warfare [the weapon] appears a ridiculously unwieldy contrivance” (Illustration 5.7). Ridiculed as a weapon, the article adds to the cultural critique by stating that it might still be effective against local Native opponents. Even Afghani tribesmen, renowned for their use of firearms including their long *jezzail* muskets, generally failed to impress the British correspondent or writer, excepting Kipling’s prose. The aforementioned comments on Afghan tribal tactics of desultory skirmishing implies an inaccurate or ineffective use of firepower; according to Henty, their inter-tribal fights could last for days and might end due to lack of ammunition or the loss of a few casualties. Other enemies were even less impressive. In spite of possessing large numbers of small arms and artillery, even captured machine guns, Dervishes firepower was not particularly telling during the Sudan campaigns. *Pluck* described Dervish shooting as a “scattering but futile fire” in a narrative of the Battle of El Teb. A Scottish soldier in the *BOP* story “Damon and Pythias,” notes how the Dervishes were

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65 Henty, *For Name and Fame*, 223.
66 Singleton Pound, “In the Trenches, or With Burnaby in Egypt,” *Pluck* III, no. 59 (1896): 3.
“‘firing wildly as usual,’” causing no casualties with their small arms.\textsuperscript{67} Even the Boers, praised for their marksmanship, are deemed lesser opponents not just for their lack of drill, but also for their lack of artillery in 1881.\textsuperscript{68}

Lacking structured tactics and failing to harness science and technology to advantage, Natives, according to the mass culture, relied on the external stimuli of numerical superiority and religious fervour to stimulate their innate savagery. Indeed, some sources marvel at how Natives could withstand the firepower of the British so as to close into striking range with their swords and spears. While raw numbers are sometimes noted to the point of dismissing Native victories such as Isandlwana,\textsuperscript{69} religion is also seen as a potent stimulant. This is particularly emphasized for the Dervishes of the Sudan and some of the Afghani tribesmen. R. Caton Woodville prepared a wonderfully detailed illustration titled “A Dervish Preaching the Holy War to Arab Chiefs.”\textsuperscript{70} The explanatory article notes that the picture shows “the character of the present attempt to rouse Moslem fanaticism among the wild and warlike nations of East Africa, who are incited to follow the conquering standard of the Mahdi.”\textsuperscript{71} It seemed that this religious influence could be dangerous.

In \textit{Pluck}, Wray’s story about the Sudan asserts that the British were faced with “one of the bravest savage races on earth – a race which knew no fear, whose very

\textsuperscript{68} “The Transvaal War,” \textit{The Illustrated London News} LXXXVIII, no. 2177 (February 5, 1881): 126.
\textsuperscript{69} A \textit{Pluck} story narrates the Battle of Isandlwana emphasizing that the “little English force” was doomed facing “Africa’s fiercest warriors.” With the death of the last Briton the story notes that the “battle, if such as an unequal conflict could be called such, was over.” Edgar Hope, “Saving the Colours; A Romance of the Zulu War,” \textit{Pluck} 1, no. 6 (1895): 2. The \textit{ILN} marvels at the way “our gallant force sustained the assault of the overwhelming hordes of the enemy.” “The Zulu War,” \textit{The Illustrated London News} LXXXIV, no. 2072 (March 1, 1879): 194.
\textsuperscript{71} “The War in the Soudan,” \textit{The Illustrated London News} LXXXIII, no. 2332 (December 29, 1883): 634.
religion taught them that to die in battle was a sure passport to heaven.”

Of course, this was also met with disdain in a culture that habitually describes this devotional inspiration as fanatical. As such, this again puts a qualification on the fighting qualities of the Native enemy and substitute military skill with irrational spiritual motivation drawn from a false creed. The Religious Tract Society’s Boy’s Own Paper (BOP) was particularly enthusiastic to pass comment on this dubious religious motivation, this time in reference to the Afghans: “the whole borderland swarms with ghazis, religious fanatics excited by the preaching of the mullahs or priests, whose sole aim in life is the murder of infidels.”

This view did not, of course, stop BOP from adopting a hypocritical stance regarding religion. While British soldiers always fought with pluck and discipline, they also occupied the moral high ground based on their Christian beliefs. In an adventure story set in the Sudan, Dervishes, motivated by the “spirit of fanaticism,” attack two isolated British soldiers who counter this ‘spirit’ equipped with their own spiritual antidote:

that invincible courage and persistence which God has put into the heart of the Briton, and made part of his inmost being... that spirit which, under Heaven’s providence, enabled the defenders of Lucknow to hold out for three long months, against the murderous sepoys, for the safety of those helpless women and the honour of that stainless flag; which nerved the arms and brains of Chard and Bromhead at Rorke’s Drift, and gave them strength to hurl back the savage foes once and again from the frail barrier of mealie-bags and biscuit tins which, during those terrible hours, alone stood between the defenceless farms of Natal and the ravages of Cetewayo’s Zulus...
Natives did not always throw themselves into the path of British bullets and bayonets, but this sensible caution also drew the ire of the mass culture that praised offensive action – at least when conducted in the British fashion. The tribes of the North-West Frontier and Afghanistan were particularly known for their fickle tactics of concealment, skirmishing, and withdrawal when attacked. All Natives, however, were liable to stay clear of open battle. This was a problem noted by Callwell and expressed in the mass culture with disdain. *Chums* illustrated this reticence to break-cover in a story recounting a battle where Afghani warriors hold a position behind rocks and cover, much to the annoyance of British cavalry waiting to ride down “the murdering hillmen [who do not] forsake the shelter of the gullies and rocks.” In *For Name and Fame; or, Through the Afghan Passes*, Henty similarly observes that the “Afghans never come to close quarters” and preferred to be “posted behind rocks and huge boulders.” A story in *Pluck* confirms this impression: “Scowling Afghans watched us from inaccessible crags or caves…from which points of vantage they would harass us with

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76 G. A. Henty, *For Name and Fame; or, Through the Afghan Passes* (London: Blackie & Son, 1886), 223.
long-range shots to which we could make effective reply.”

In 1886, Kipling revealed the economy of such tactics, so sensible for the Afghans, but frustrating to the British:

“A scrimmage in a Border Station; A Canter down some dark defile; two thousand pounds of education; Drops to a ten-rupee jezail…”

If there was any doubt that the Frontier and Afghani tribesmen used these tactics, an ILN cover illustration shows these warriors firing down from prepared positions, one emotively wide-eyed looking for a victim as he cocks his musket (Illustration 5.8).

Their readiness to withdraw is noted both by Henty and by an ILN illustration of Afghani tribesmen abandoning stone sangars (protective walls) with the advance of obviously British-led Ghurkhas. Henty notes the irritation felt by the soldiers of the Seymour Expedition when the Chinese Boxers kept avoiding battle by giving ground which was seen as “cowardice.”

Even the religiously motivated Dervishes are feared likely to withdraw than to fight in one great battle as the British advance on to Omdurman in the Henty novel With Kitchener in the Soudan: A Story of Atbara and Omdurman.

The Native penchant for withdrawing from a frontal fight is coupled with their use of unscrupulous opportunism, deception and ambushes as means to engage and kill the British. That these were perfectly sound tactics to employ by technologically outclassed Native combatants did not have currency in the mass culture. Avoiding

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77 Alec G. Pearson, “Camp Fire & Bivouack; A Story of Adventure During the Last Afghan War,” Pluck XII, no. 302 (1900): 3.
pitched battle was cowardly, but these other methods of fighting were anathema to ‘war’ and were instead represented as dishonourable brigandage and murder. Afghani warriors seem opportunistic and savage in their predation of supply columns or wounded enemies. In anticipation of war in Afghanistan in 1878, the *ILN* presented a characterization of the tribes that the British would encounter. The “fierce Khails” are deemed particularly dangerous as they hang “about on the line of march, [and] can swoop down like hawks upon stragglers; and their long knives are deadly weapons.”

No long range sniping here, this was presented as intimate butchery of helpless victims.

Juvenile fiction made use of this behaviour in their narratives of survival, brave rescues and desperate combats. In *To Herat to Cabul: The Story of the First Afghan War* the protagonist is captured and contemplates the fact that “the Afghans never spared those that fell into their hands, and fortunate were those who were speedily killed, for in many cases they were tortured before they were done to death.”

The cruelty of the Dervishes to isolated and wounded Britons caused anxiety to a *BOP* character that contemplated the “atrocities to their captives,” their use of “tortures,” and “their brutal mutilation of the wounded.”

This concern was confirmed in an earlier *BOP* story in which a Dervish surprised a British picket at night and then pursued his already wounded victim “thirsting for his blood.” His body was found mutilated punctuating the dishonour of this already cowardly attack. Of course, the most famous mutilated body of imperial history was that of General Gordon. In a biography of Gordon written for

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Chums, the death of this personification of muscular Christianity is offered in graphic detail. Killed by Dervishes that had successfully broken into Khartoum, “his murderers seized his body and dragged it down the steps to the palace door, where one of them cut off his head, and the rest plunged their spears into the headless corpse.”

Precipitating a battle with an ambush was a sound Native tactic. Sometimes this was a natural ploy for peoples like the Ashanti whose jungle terrain on the Gold Coast made other tactics untenable (Illustration 5.9). Representations of Ashanti ambushes in the ILN pass no harsh judgement on this, but for others the ambush made their martial valour appear questionable. It was also frustrating to a British army (and culture) that sought decisive battles as opposed to being the targets of hit-and-run actions. In a BOP article written by the late commissioner to Burma, W. de Courcy Ireland, the Burmese insurgents are noted for their

88 “The War on the Gold Coast: Ashantees in Ambush,” The Illustrated London News LXIV, no. 1793 (January 3, 1874): cover. The adjoining article describes the illustration as “a lively representation of the Native manner of fighting in the bush or forest.” The article claims that British officers have to be careful not to be surprised on the march, but the article ultimately dispels any grave concern over this risk as it describes the Ashanti warriors as poorly clothed and equipped, there old muskets often only capable of wounds “not always mortal.” “The Ashantee War,” The Illustrated London News LXIV, no. 1793 (January 3, 1874): 3.
preference to ambush the British.\textsuperscript{89} De Courcy notes that “this kind of warfare greatly exasperates Englishmen as they can hardly ever get a Jack Burma in the open.” The article does concede that the Burman (sic) was quite right to stay clear of the fire and “bayonet thrust of Tommy Atkins.”

An \textit{ILN} illustration of Dervishes advancing to attack entitled “An Ambush of Arabs”\textsuperscript{90} is accompanied by text that similarly warns of the “guerrilla warfare” that the British will face.\textsuperscript{91} Emerging from the rocks, the Dervishes appear organically connected to their environment, hostile and in need of taming just like the Dervishes. The robe of one fallen warrior is illustrated with the same texture and form of the rocks around him while others seem to rise straight out from the ground. If battle failed them, the Dervishes seemed to further flout honour by feigning death and lashing out at unsuspecting British soldiers, often after an action had apparently concluded. A \textit{Pluck} story featured this experience describing British soldiers preparing to continue their march after the Battle of Abu Klea and were surprised by two apparently dead “Arabs…[who] sprang to their feet and dashed at them.”\textsuperscript{92} The bayoneting of wounded Dervish casualties was necessitated by this behaviour and drew some public and political criticism, but for the mass media this dishonourable Native ploy simply revealed their deviousness.\textsuperscript{93} Natives who had hidden from open combat, enacted ambushes, and

\textsuperscript{91} “The Nile Expedition,” \textit{The Illustrated London News} LXXXV, no. 2375 (October 25, 1884): 390.
\textsuperscript{93} A Melton Prior sketch from 1884 illustrating the bayoneting of wounded Dervishes after the Battle of El Teb drew criticism from the government opposition. “Scene on the Battle-field of El Teb: Behind the Old Boiler of the Sugar-Mill,” \textit{The Illustrated London News} LXXXIV, no. 2344 (March 22, 1884): cover. Prior
attacked the wounded and vulnerable clearly deserved the disdain of the British who could therefore justify the use of their murderous technological superiority.

Religion, opportunism, and simple savagery might have motivated the Native will to combat, but British culture was also quick to note that this will was easily broken. Brave and fanatical on the one hand, British soldiers could tame these passions into cowardice or childlike timidity. Usually this transformation of the enemy’s will was achieved by using one or more of the essential traits of British military prowess: firepower, tactical manoeuvre, or the charge with bayonet and sword. That these often worked to dishearten all but the most fanatical enemies indicated further failings in the Native’s martial capacity.

Henty asserts that the Boxers were easily dispersed by western artillery. 94 This was an observation that concerned Callwell, stating that long range artillery fire might discourage the enemy from closing into the desired decisive battle. 95 By the end of the Zulu War even these most celebrated of British opponents had been discouraged. In the most famous illustration of the Battle of Ulundi, presented in *The Graphic*, British fire seems to have halted the Zulus who are represented in the foreground disorganized, inactive, and defeated. 96 Deliberate and well-timed manoeuvres also seemed to

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94 G. A. Henty, *With the Allies to Pekin; A Story of the Relief of the Legations* (London: Blackie and Sons, 1904), 117.
95 In recommending that artillery be used at close range, Callwell concludes that “the enemy generally does not understand daring and resolute tactics…and they demoralize him. Battles may be won by long range bombardments in the sense that the adversary quits his position, but they are not so won in the sense that the adversary is crushed, cowed, and convinced that unless he lays down his arms he will be utterly destroyed.” Callwell, 432.
demoralize an enemy that feared getting outflanked or directly assaulted. In *For Name and Fame*, Henty confirms the soundness of General Robert’s plan to assault an entrenched Afghan position: “against semi-savage enemies flank attacks are particularly effective.” In an earlier novel, Henty explains through his protagonist why such manoeuvres or direct attacks are so effective: “I say not a word against the courage of your people, but they want discipline and training, and even a host of men, fighting each for himself, cannot withstand the charge of well disciplined soldiers.” For Afghans (and other Natives) accustomed to indecisive skirmishing it seems clear to Henty and British culture that “the idea that English Soldiers would, under heavy fire from their [the Afghans] concealed force, steadily climb up the broken mountain-side and come to close quarters probably never entered their calculations.”

It seemed that the British were more willing to risk death than the Natives that they sometimes praised for their reckless bravery and disregard for life, but equally condemned as fickle cowards. Of course, from the British cultural perspective the apparent contradiction in all of this was not problematic. British soldiers were brave and they were disciplined to the point of facing inevitable death. This was a fact that could be celebrated through the cultural fascination with futile charges such as at Balaclava or last stands such as Isandlwana. Natives are never illustrated in this manner. Victims of their own passions, the savagery and even religious fanaticism were easily reversed to their timid opposites.

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97 G. A. Henty, *For Name and Fame; or, Through the Afghan Passes* (London: Blackie & Son, 1886), 224.
99 Henty, *For Name and Fame*, 223.
All the enemies of the British drew criticism and praise for their martial attributes. Criticism served to underline, by implicit or explicit comparison, the superiority of the British. But so too did praise of an enemy that only British character and training could overcome; massacring a helpless foe was hardly acceptable to a culture that represented victories as triumphs over tough opponents. One enemy that derived significant praise were the Zulus who occupy a special place in the cultural representation of warfare in Britain. As noted above, Britains manufactured only one non-white opponent of the British, the Zulus, and this speaks to their status as an enemy of empire, still savage, but respected.

In the same year that Britains released their set of Zulu models the *ILN* published a long article by the adventure writer and essayist Henry Rider Haggard considering the history of these Zulus who were again a threat to peace in 1906. The article is representative of the ambivalent perspective held by British culture regarding these Africans. On the one hand, Haggard emphasizes what he considered the uncivilized character of the Zulus who had no written history and whose fragile culture and traditions were vulnerable to extermination by the “constant slaughter” that forged them. Haggard’s article is split by a full-page illustration of a witch-doctor performing an incantation “to be proof against British bullets.” Other sources also reveal what appear to be brutal behaviours. A story in *Pluck* notes that after Isandlwana “not even the dead

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100 A soldier in a Henty novel, dismissing the Dervishes as savages and not worthy of battle, is rebuked by another who noted that “the Zulus were savages, and they made a pretty tough fight against us…” G. A. Henty *The Dash for Khartoum: A Tale of the Nile Expedition* (London: Blackie and Sons, 1892), 118.


102 Haggard, 778.

were sacred to their stabbing spears.”104 An oddly perverse illustration in the Graphic, titled “Captured,” shows King Cetewayo seated before a bound British prisoner. Behind him are warriors with maniacal expressions shared by a knife wielding Cetewayo seemingly ready to execute the captive.105

Nevertheless, Haggard communicates a fascination with the Zulus beyond that normally attached to an enemy. First, he claims that “the Zulus differ entirely from the people whom we know as negroes” and are instead Semitic in origin. Then, having differentiated them from the rest of the indigenous African population, he describes the rise of their famous chief Chaka (sic) and the creation of the Zulu army. Just like the racial differentiation, the Zulus are noted for their distinct military system of regiments and tactical discipline. In addition, Haggard makes special mention of the short stabbing spear that Zulus used in lieu of throwing spears. These military attributes, so effectively employed in the early phases of the 1879 war, captured the imagination and needed explaining.

How could Africans develop a distinct military system? The answer, provided by Haggard and other contemporary sources, was that the Zulus were inspired by the British. So the story goes, the predecessor of Chaka observed “English soldiers drilling in regiments.” He passed this onto Chaka, and so “it came about that the terrible Zulu impis are in reality formed upon the model of our own military system.” It seems that the Zulus were not simply a military ‘Other.’ Comparing him to Napoleon and even a Nero, it seems that Chaka commanded an army organized in regiments inspired by those of the

104 Edgar Hope, “Saving the Colours; A Romance of the Zulu War,” Pluck 1, no. 6 (1895): 2. Not explained in this story is that the Zulus disembowelled all dead warriors to release their spirit as part of a purification ritual. Ian Knight, Great Zulu Battles 1838-1906 (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1998), 122.
105 “Captured,” The Graphic XX, no. 502 (July 12, 1879): 36.
British with predictably victorious results. These regiments also adopted decisive means of combat in the western style: the Zulus stabbed an enemy at close-quarters as opposed to indecisively exchanging javelins. The use of western military nomenclature to describe a Native army (e.g., “regiments”) challenges Zulu agency in the creation of their army, but it does also imply an admiration for that system. The Zulus lost the 1879 war under their chief Cetywayo (sic), but Haggard notes that to do so the British had to deploy almost as “many soldiers armed with rifles in his land, as he had naked Zulus left armed with assegais.”

Haggard’s piece is not atypical of how the Zulus were represented. Almost precisely the same narrative of Zulu history and military evolution was presented in much greater detail in *British Battles on Land and Sea*. Here again, the British could claim some credit for the Zulus military system. And in spite of their supposed non-African origins, they were still ultimately defined as savages as evident in the box art of the 1908 Britains Zulu set: “Africa’s Savage Warriors.”

The Zulus were respected for their innate warrior ethos and discipline, but fictional stories of Britons fighting wars against Europeans seem to emphasize that relying on conscripts controlled by too much discipline and training could retard decisive warfare. *Chums* and *Pluck* offered their readers exciting tales of war against the French, Germans and Russians. These narratives certainly borrow from the representational discourse defined by colonial wars and the historical past. For example, in “Britain! To Arms! A Tale of Coming Peril” Russian conscript “hordes” seem to be thrown into

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combat against an Anglo-Indian Army with little regard for tactics or casualties. Although certainly not described as fickle or fanatical like Native armies in the empire, the conscripts are, however, similarly shot-down and thrown back at the tip of the bayonet. Set in India and rekindling the fears of the Great Game, the narrative makes no effort to distinguish this battle between Europeans from narratives of colonial battles against non-white opponents. Ultimately, the Russians withdraw back into Afghanistan and face the embarrassment of being “cut to pieces by the Ameer’s subjects.”

The decisive battle of this fictional war was fought at Calais between the British and a massive force of French, Russian, and German soldiers. This time the enemy has mass but also control: “The serried Continental ranks were thrown forward in vast numbers, and advanced with skill and daring.” Here the narrative of the British response to this ominous attack draws on the tradition of British firepower as used against the French in the eighteenth century and, explicitly, the Napoleonic Wars: “The British lines stood firm and immovable, as at Waterloo, and the waves of living valour dashed in vain against them.” Written in 1900, the discourse on warfare presented in this fictional narrative describes a kind of war desired, but certainly not the kind being experienced in South Africa.

108 “Britain! To Arms! A Tale of Coming Peril,” *Pluck* VL, no. 286 (1900): 8. It seems that the Russians could never win in the mass culture. In a story set during the Crimean War, the Russians, rather ironically, are criticized for relying too much on firepower as they defended the heights at Alma. A Scottish officer in the Grenadier Guards deemed it not “very brave wurruk shootin’ down men as they climb a hill.” But he concludes that “they didn’t stand long before us whin we did reach them.” “The Siege of Sebastopol; A True Tale of the Crimean War,” *Pluck* VI, no. 145 (1897): 2.

109 A *Chums* war scare tale makes the comparison unambiguous: “a huge sortie of Russians poured out from behind the enemy’s defences, and swept towards them like a cyclone. But if there is one thing the British excel in it is in receiving a charge. Some of these men had, in their early youth, faced the yelling, fury maddened hordes of the Khalifa at Omdurman.” Frank Shaw, “Vengeance of the Motherland; A Thrilling Tale of War with Russia,” *Chums* 17 (1908): 347.

110 “Britain! To arms!” 8.

111 “Britain! To arms!” 10.
Throughout this dramatic tale of global war the Continental armies are defeated by British firepower (including the novel technology of an “electric gun”) and by bayonet assaults and cavalry charges. The combined discourse of colonial war and military tradition resonates in these British victories against an enemy that is similarly a hybrid of Native hordes and European doctrines. The British can defeat both by a balance of character, discipline and technological sophistication that all opponents fail to equal.

A more tactically detailed war scare story (ominously written early in 1914) that features a German invasion demonstrated that even correctly disposed, professionally officered European conscripts were no match for the British volunteer.112 Here, instead of being thrown into the battle, German units are carefully deployed and move with sophisticated fire and movement tactics. An under-strength battalion of British reservists and Territorials, “with a stiffening of Regulars, [veterans of] actual service on the frontier and in South Africa,” face this attack by the German brigade and issue a murderous fire that shocks the Germans by its audacity. Although they had exacted a terrible toll on the German infantry, the German artillery cut down the small British force. With no means to reply to the artillery and with a second German assault approaching, the British do what war in the colonies had been shown to break the will of even the most stubborn enemy: they fix bayonets and charge.

In spite of grave losses, the British halt the German attack in the “fine traditions of the British Army, and covered themselves with glory.”113 Singing “God Save the King,” the British prepare to meet the “scientifically” performed German attack “shoulder to shoulder in the good old fashioned way” (Illustration 5.10). Of course, the

112 Captain Frank Shaw, “Lion’s Teeth and Eagle’s Claws; The Story of a Struggle to the Death between Our Empire and Her Enemies,” Chums 22, no. 1113 (January 10, 1914): 320-322.
113 Shaw, “Lion’s Teeth and Eagle’s Claws,” 322.
British are saved by reinforcements including a squadron of cavalry, “swords gleaming in the sunlight.” More importantly, this narrative made it clear that while conscript automatons might be able to perform the mechanistic evolutions of modern tactics, the art of war demanded the spirit of the Briton. In these stories we can see expressed the belief that British firepower can kill, but the bayonet and cavalry sabre are decisive even against European riflemen. It was a vision of warfare that should have died in the open veldt of South Africa fifteen years earlier but instead carried the British army – and most others – into the trenches of the Great War.

Illustration 5.10 Defiant British Territorials sing “God Save the King” from *Chums* (January 10, 1914). Courtesy of the British Library.
Zulus had a fighting will and discipline but lacked modern firepower. German and Russian conscripts had training, but an excess of discipline sapped them of their essential martial spirit. In the Boers the British confronted an enemy whose tactics were problematic to oppose in the field and equally difficult to negotiate in the culture consumed by a public accustomed to easy victories. An *ILN* cover illustration from 1881 presented the problem explicitly showing Boer riflemen, prone behind elevated cover, with horses at the ready for a speedy withdrawal.\(^{114}\) The adjoining article notes the Boer’s excellent horsemanship and, of course, his ubiquitous marksmanship.\(^{115}\) While describing their fluid combat methods, the article reminds the reader that “there have never been any regularly drilled troops in the service of either of the Dutch South African Republics; and they are equally unskilled in the formation of a line or column of infantry, and in the use of artillery.” In hindsight these comments about formations seem tragically ignorant given what these formations caused in both the Anglo-Boer Wars. However, they expose the prevalent notion that the Boers are natural combatants but not effective soldiers.

Even in the wake of defeat in the First Anglo-Boer War the debate about tactics would continue. A fictional dialogue between two British officers in 1880, just prior to the first war but written for *Pluck* in 1899, exposes the character of this cultural and military negotiation. One officer claims that the Boers “will not dare to fight. They know better than to face British soldiers in the open.”\(^{116}\) The other officer, a British landowner in South Africa, corrected this view: “They will not face us in the open. You

\(^{114}\) “The War in the Transvaal: The Boers’ Method of Fighting,” *The Illustrated London News* LXXVIII, no. 2177 (February 5, 1881), cover.


forget they are born guerrillas…their advantage over us will lie in the irregular tactics they will adopt.” Anticipating the Second Anglo-Boer War, this exchange in “Remember Majuba!” summarized the competing visions of war as Britain prepared for the opportunity to avenge their defeat of 1881. But its discourse on tactics is that the Boer methods can be overcome by British fighting spirit. The Boers are seen as unscrupulous and brutal, but rely on concealment and numbers to bolster their will to fight. However, even the soldiers on Majuba Hill, according to Pluck, were sure that the more numerous Boers could not face a British bayonet charge; the British “were growling and muttering in fierce impatience” to be allowed to attack. 117 In a remarkable illustration of a British bayonet assault, presented in the Graphic, the adjoining text asserts that this form of attack “is the kind of fighting that the Boers do not understand.” 118 In Henty’s 1901 novel, With Buller in Natal, he dissects Boer tactics accurately and reveals their deadly effects on the British at battles like Colenso and Spion Kop, but Boer unwillingness to close with the British is again seen as a flaw: “The Boers did not await the onset; the great body had already fled. They had believed it impossible for mortal men to scale the hill under their continuous fire, and our steady advance through the hail of bullets had astounded them and shaken their courage.” 119

That British culture saw one solution to Boer tactics in the bayonet has been previously considered, but what is significant here is that the methods used by the Boers were recognised and accurately disclosed in a number of cultural forms. However, they became strangely homogenized into the same discourse applied to many of the methods

117 Drew, 12.
of war used by Britain’s imperial opponents. The culture was determined to entrench itself in the familiar. The Boers fought differently, but their martial attributes relied on similar innate characteristics and irregular methods that other ‘native’ opponents relied on; and these attributes would also fail the Boers. Already doomed, *The Graphic* even asserted that the Boers lacked a sense of humour.\textsuperscript{120}

To conclude this commentary on the representation of enemy tactics it would be useful to return to Henty, although his observations about Native tactics and fickle skirmishing are unintentionally ironic. Native warriors, who are referred to as fanatic, “plucky”, fearless, courageous, and “…love fighting for fighting’s sake”\textsuperscript{121} do not compare with the fighting spirit of Europeans whose military capacity actually defines war for Henty. In this respect, the enemy provides a crucial element to the way that the mass culture represented war and defined the nature of the British military experience.

While watching a battle between Persians and Afghans, a Lieutenant Pottinger in the novel *To Herat and Cabul* concludes that what he observed was merely “playing at war” as the opponents repeatedly demonstrated, exchanged shots and withdrew. In contrast, observed the officer, “…between two European forces of the same strength a long day’s fighting would probably have caused three or four thousand casualties” as opposed to the hundred or so suffered by the Afghans.\textsuperscript{122} For all their much touted bravery and uncivilized savagery, Natives are lesser warriors and it is the Europeans that Henty praises for their capacity to make war, remain steady, and, perversely, sustain casualties. While his assessment of Native combatants might be racist and trite, Henty understood

\textsuperscript{120} “Boer Humour: Attack on Chamberlain’s Shop at Newcastle, Natal,” *The Graphic* LX, no. 1576 (Supplement, February 10, 1900): no page #.
\textsuperscript{121} Henty, *With Kitchener in the Soudan*, 197.
\textsuperscript{122} Henty, *To Heart and Cabul*, 57.
the European willingness to bleed and made a virtue out of it. And according to Frank Shaw’s war scare stories, the British were the most virtuous in this regard, a trait they would have to test in 1914.

Friendly Enemies: Representing Native Recruits and Allies

Native soldiers recruited into British service are a common feature in the representation of warfare in the mass culture. Indian troops are, of course, most prominent in this representation and deserved this prominence for their extensive service to the crown around the empire. But they were not alone in performing this service and African soldiers, usually locally recruited, were vital to the campaigns fought in all of Africa except in the Boer Wars, although even here thousands were employed as labourers and auxiliaries, and occasionally combatants. In terms of how British culture negotiated this concept of the Native recruit, an ambiguous intermediary between friend and foe, depended on the degree to which the Native soldiers were trained and officered by white Britons.

The army of post-Mutiny India – the British Raj, directly administered and controlled by Britain as of 1858 – became the model of what Native soldiers could achieve. The process of reform was gradual for the army that arrived at full integration only in 1903 when the Presidency Armies of Madras, Bengal and Bombay were joined with the nascent Indian Army established only in 1895. Particular ethnicities and units in this reformed army were models of that ideal combination of Native fighting abilities coupled with the training, discipline and leadership only the British could provide.

123 Judd and Surridge note that the black Africans are the unmentioned victims and combatants of the Boer War, a supposedly ‘white’ war. In addition to both sides using thousands of black labourers and logistical auxiliaries, the British recruited black soldiers and also encouraged the Zulus to raid and harass the Boers across the Transvaal-Natal frontier. Judd and Surridge, 85-88.
Northern Indian peoples were particularly good raw soldiers, such as the Bengal Army Sikhs, Punjabis and Pathans, and Nepali Ghurkhas. In contrast to European conscripts made into obedient and unthinking cannon fodder by their studious professional officers (or even Wellington’s British “scum” that needed army discipline to realize their natural potential), the British allowed the innate warrior instincts of the Native individual to emerge tempered by the honourable restraint and valour of the Briton. Like the wild reputation of the Highlanders, the commercial culture took pleasure in emphasizing the warrior qualities of these “martial races” while being reassured by their British leadership.

Of course, not all Native contingents were so effective. Some Native recruits had to be more rigorously trained and disciplined, such as the Egyptians and Sudanese, although even these peoples could make effective soldiers. After the defeat of Egypt in 1882, Britain found itself administering this territory and supporting the reorganization of its army. It was a shaky start. The newly recruited Egyptian units, “cruelly forced into service they detest,” were not deemed particularly strong army candidates, the *ILN* describing them as “the worst material for an army.”125 A Melton Prior sketch of “Bashibazouks bringing in Black Recruits” certainly communicates their lack of enthusiasm.126 Another sketch indicates the less rigorous adherence to military standards of uniform dress as Egyptian soldiers disembark in the Sudan on a beach at Trinkitat prior to the ill-fated march to relieve the besieged garrison of Tokar.127 Although the basic white jacket and trousers are uniformly indicated, headdresses are varied, some of

the men have no shoes, and the manner of wearing their equipment is inconsistent. All of this is likely quite realistic of soldiers on campaign performing this kind of landing, but the *ILN* writer commenting on this scene notes that the earlier British landing at the same location “will have been conducted in a more orderly manner.”\textsuperscript{128}

The poor reputation of the newly recruited Egyptian Army improved with training and direct British leadership. W. H. Besant, a British officer reminiscing about his time in the Egyptian Army during the 1896-1898 campaign in the Sudan, described these young recruits as “docile” but also malleable “plastic…automatons.”\textsuperscript{129} He went on to describe the need to “stiffen” the force with units of Sudanese recruits.\textsuperscript{130} These soldiers, drawn from the frontier regions and sometimes from the same tribes that peopled the ranks of the Dervishes developed a more vigorous warrior reputation; Besant describes them as “wild and loveable” but a type of soldier that “requires firm and careful control.”

The entire army was prone to mutinies and the Sudanese required extra British officers to ensure control. These remembered traits are borne out in the representations of the Egyptian army in the mass culture of the 1880s and 1890s.

Compared to the formally recruited, British trained Indians and Egyptians, allied local tribes or temporary irregular levies are represented in a much more disdainful manner. Here the vestiges of British influence might be nothing more than a red headband as issued to the Natal Native Contingent. If warfare was shaped by the delicate balance between the character of its combatants and their discipline, the various grades of


\textsuperscript{130} Besant, 167.
Native soldier fighting for the British had to be placed within the spectrum of civilized to savage in the edifices of mass culture.

The post-Mutiny Indian Army is well represented in the mass culture of Britain. Frequent players in campaign narratives and illustrations in the news and historical fiction, they were modelled by Britannia, and even directly observed in parades in Britain. As with other Native peoples, the diverse races of India are variably assessed for their martial skills. The contemporary importance of this is revealed in the beautifully illustrated book *The Armies of India* that dedicates a full chapter to the “The Military Races of India.” As a general rule, the northern Indians are more highly touted as warriors, and their fighting characteristics and uniforms became iconic of an empire loyal to the Crown. Of these, perhaps the most iconic were the various Indian cavalry regiments (often identified as “Bengal” cavalry) and the Kookri wielding Ghurkhas. It is notable that both of these troop-types are best known for their use of edged weapons even though their carbines and rifles would have normally served them in their most common deployments along the North-West Frontier. Made into modern soldiers, the ‘Native’ was still alive in these warriors.

The cavalry, with their marvellous uniforms, feature prominently in British culture when Indian soldiers are represented. Many of the illustrated regiments were Bengali whose reputation was perhaps excitedly dangerous given that the Bengal Army had been the most active in the Mutiny; notably, all the cavalry units revolted. Largely disbanded, the Bengal Army was completely reorganized in the early 1860s and all its

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132 In 1874 the five Bengal lancer regiments were issued dress regulation that had nine different uniform permutations depending on context, particularly Review Order and Marching Order. Mollo, 115. Many Indian cavalry regiments shared the uniform characteristics of the Bengal regiments. The high profile of the Bengal regiments owes much to their use in foreign campaigns that featured in the British press.
regimental officers above the level of company or squadron commanders were British. Nevertheless, the ubiquitous Bengal lancer became a powerful symbol of the army of the British Raj. In 1878, Woodville produced a pair of illustrations of Indian Army units stationed in Malta. This European deployment of Indian units obviously excited the press noting that “the Sepoys have responded with loyal, cheerful alacrity.” The 9th Bengal cavalry regiment, “loyal” having been “formed after the Mutiny”, was part of the deployment and featured in a two-page illustration that showed off their uniform splendor. In a 1906 ILN illustration of the Prince of Wales reviewing the Indian Army, of the forty-five thousand troops on parade, the special artist S. Begg decided to illustrate a regiment of Indian lancers in their ubiquitous uniform. Of the eight sets of toy soldiers made by Britains in 1896 depicting Indian cavalry, four were Bengali and all shared the same basic lancer model most recognizably associated with these horsemen.

Representations of Indian cavalry are not just limited to parade formations and dress; lancers in action feature in the press. The ILN could not resist the drama of cavalry charging the enemy and Indian cavalry made good subjects for text and illustration. Indeed, Bengal lancers are deemed so good at charging that an ILN cover illustration has them galloping up the side of a boulder-strewn hill-face at an enemy that has fled (Illustration 5.11). The only indication of the enemy in this detailed depiction of lancers charging over impossible terrain is the presence of a knife wisely discarded in the

133 MacMunn, 114.
135 “Indian Troops Ordered for Service in Europe: The 9th Bengal Cavalry,” The Illustrated London News LXXII, no. 2027 (May 4, 1878): 408-409
face of these cavalry. A grander example of mounted action occurred in the 1880 Afghan War and involved the failed charge of the 9th Lancers and 14th Bengal Lancers to cover the retreat of an isolated artillery battery. It was a futile gesture that derived praise for its valour in spite of the loss of the guns.

Illustration 5.11 “Bengal Lancers Charge a Steep Position” from the ILN (October 2, 1897)
After an initial charge that was “gallant” but “quite unsuccessful in checking the enemy,” the writer emphasizes “The 14th Bengal Cavalry are said to have covered the retreat with great steadiness under Captain Neville.” Of significance here is the Bengali’s steady performance but one led by a British officer. Nevertheless, in the large illustration of the event, the Indian cavalry dominate the right side of the frame as guns, inaccurately, are withdrawn to the rear. Henty also offered a detailed account of this action comparing it to the Balaclava which was “scarcely more desperate than this.”

Representing cavalry in close combat is ubiquitous (if not always appropriate) but the Ghurkhas, some of the best-known Native soldier types in British service, were also disproportionately represented in the press, often engaging the enemy at close quarters. Having remained loyal during the Mutiny was a feather in the pill-box hat worn by the Ghurkhas; the ILN made particular mention of this when the Prince of Wales Own “Goorkhas” were deployed in Malta for European service along with other Indian army units. But loyalty was not what made the Ghurkhas famous. A reputation for hard fighting had been established in the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-1816. Tough opponents, the Ghurkhas developed the same reputation in British service. A BOP story about the 1904 expedition to Tibet has a character assert that “the Goorkhas were the finest, absolutely the finest (although the shortest) of our Native Indian soldiers.” This status was given a symbol in the knife (the kookri) that these soldiers used with such

141 Henty, For Name and Fame, 244. Henty emphasises the 9th Lancers whose Chaplin, Reverend Mr Adams, won a Victoria Cross in this action.
apparent relish. British culture seems to have had an ambivalent view of this weapon that was symbolic of its broader view of Native soldiers. In the *ILN* coverage of the 1879 Afghan War, the defence of a supply column is described involving the 5th Ghurkhas fighting off the “marauding” Afghans. The combat devolved into a melee, according to this account, and the Ghurkhas successfully drove off the attackers using their rifles, bayonets, and, with particular emphasis in this report, “their broad curved knives, or ‘kookries,’ with terrible effect.”

The purported pleasure of using their kookri knives fulfils an expectation that these Asian soldiers have retained part of their innate fighting character. In the aforementioned *BOP* story of the Tibet expedition the writer describes the Ghurkhas as fighting “by instinct.” Not dissimilar to the praise granted to Dervishes or Zulus, the Ghurkhas also seem ready to endure significant risks in order to engage the enemy in melee. However, in contrast to untrained Natives motivated by religion or their savage mores, the Ghurkhas are not thwarted by firepower or casualties. In Henty’s *For Name and Fame* an Afghan position is attacked by the British with Ghurkhas leading the advance, themselves led by their British officers. The attack culminated in a melee in which the protagonist is saved by a kookri wielding Ghurkha. It seems that nothing could stop the Ghurkhas, and British officers, crucial to their success, are equally excited at the prospect of getting stuck-in: “officered by Britishers…[the] Gurkhas just fingered our kookris and longed to be at the enemy.”

The Ghurkha example illustrates that the essential Native identity of recruited peoples was still valuable and this, in turn, influenced the way in which their units were

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146 Henty, *For Name and Fame*, 157-159.
organized and subsequently represented in the mass culture. Explicitly, the regimental
names of African and Indian units included the racial designation. In Egypt units were
either Egyptian or Sudanese. In India it was more complex, having to account for the
great many ethnicities, castes, and religious affiliations. After the Mutiny, Indian
regiments were formed on a “class-company” basis whereby units of mixed ethnicity
would have homogeneous company compositions to take advantage of “their feeling of
clan emulation and martial characteristics.”148 Only some Sikh and Ghurkha regiments
were “class-regiments” (regimentally homogeneous) although this recruitment and
organization policy was ultimately applied throughout the Indian Army by the turn of the
century.149

Like the Ghurkhas, the Sikhs had a particularly good reputation as one of the
‘martial races’ of India although the traits that made them effective relied upon British
leadership to draw them out. First, it was said that the “austere faith” of the Sikh made
him ideal “as the simple, faithful soldier…[who adheres] to the simple tenants and hardy
life of his forebearers.”150 Instead of religion providing fanatical enthusiasm to fight, the
Sikh faith made him into a disciplined person, obedient and suitable for soldiering. Of
course, “as a fighting man, his slow wit and dogged courage give him many of the
characteristics of the British soldier at his best.”151 Here the author manages to express a
racist and classist slur, but exposes a perspective on the Native ‘qualities’ that the British
observed in the peoples of empire. It also again implies the importance of British
leadership.

148 MacMunn, 119.
150 MacMunn, 135.
151 MacMunn, 139-140.
In spite of their raw martial skills, even the best Native recruits were improved when led by British officers. In the forward to MacMunn’s book, Field Marshal Roberts explicitly states that great Indian martial achievements in the past and into the future relies upon “the help of British training and example.”\(^{152}\) Popular fiction confirmed this cultural belief in virtually every narrative of Native units being led by British officers. Indeed, child like Natives are even inspired by British adolescents. In Henty’s *For Name and Fame* the British protagonist, Will, and a Dutch boy of similar age find themselves shipwrecked on a Malaysian island. The resident tribe, previously oppressed by a more savage neighbouring tribe, looks to Will’s leadership. After some hesitation, Will organizes the timid Natives into a fighting force and, with his Dutch boy adjutant, leads them to victory in a battle.\(^{153}\) The narrative is unambiguous in its discourse on the innate British capacity to lead Natives whether they were primitive Malays or Robert’s Indians.

In this respect the Orientalist divide was explicit – dressed in identifiable uniforms, drilled and professional, Indian army soldiers were still Indians and could succumb to their unpredictable nature. This was true of all Native regiments regardless of the degree of training. Victims of their inescapable identities, the mass culture noted their military failings.

The poor performance of Native regiments featured in the narratives of defeat. In an official dispatch transcribed in the *ILN* recounting the defeat at Maiwand (July 27, 1880) an unnamed unit of Indian Infantry (subsequently identified as the 19th Native Infantry) is seen to be the first to “fall back in confusion.”\(^{154}\) This break in the line

\(^{152}\) MacMunn, v.

\(^{153}\) The reputation of the white boys’ leadership was so marked that the emboldened Natives use it to intimidate other tribes. Henty, *For Name and Fame*, 92-101.

undermined the entire position as the Indians routed into a British regiment, the 66th.

From this point, the remarkably brief narrative simply describes the retreat. Other than the inaccuracy of a unit name (it was the 30th Bombay Native Infantry), the narrative is not inaccurate, but just too short. Not surprisingly, the cover illustration depicts four British soldiers facing all directions fighting charging Afghan cavalry. Natives caused the defeat but the British demonstrated their pluck.

The defeat of General Baker Pasha’s force of newly recruited Egyptians on February 4, 1884 was at least partly blamed on the poor performance of the Egyptian soldiers he led into the ambush that crushed his entire force. While Melton Prior was hospitalized (fortunately for him, it would seem) the ILN relied on a correspondent from the Standard for their written coverage of the defeat. The account noted the “disorderly manner” of the advance that lacked “discipline and steadiness,” and ultimately failed to form a defensive square being a “dull, half-disciplined mass.”¹⁵⁵ Having been broken by the Dervish assault, the “miserable Egyptian soldiers refused even to defend themselves, but throwing away their rifles, flung themselves on the ground, and grovelled there, screaming for mercy.” A Caton Woodville illustration verified the lack of Egyptian steadiness as an officer grabs a fleeing Egyptian soldier by the collar to keep him in the fight.¹⁵⁶ The ILN reader was, therefore exposed to an unambiguous representation of these African soldiers who had to be closely monitored and disciplined. And yet, later campaigns did illustrate their effectiveness. In the ongoing defence of Suakim in 1888, the ILN celebrated the performance of a “Black Soudanese Battalion” storming one of the

¹⁵⁵ “The War in the Soudan,” The Illustrated London News LXXXIV, no. 2338 (February 9, 1884): 133.
besieging Dervishes’ field fortifications. Native soldiers, especially of the more notably “martial races,” could be effective, but there is always this underlying question of their reliability that seems directly proportional to the degree of control the British had over these troops.

In addition to ‘regular’ Native units, most British colonial campaigns were accompanied by combatants either levied from local tribes on a temporary basis, or contributed by allied Natives usually seeking regional advantage over the victim of the British campaign. While they could be useful in secondary operations or as labourers, as combatants they were generally not trusted. This low opinion was certainly communicated in the commercial culture through the disdainful language used to describe them and how their representation in illustrations is constructed.

Native auxiliaries often appear in hybrid attire combining their own dress with irregular and ill-fitting western dress. Not inaccurate, it seemed that this combination of dress spoke to their ambiguous relationship with the British and their ambiguous fighting style. An ILN illustration of Tembus warriors fighting with the British in the Kaffir War of 1878 are depicted in a variety of western hats, coats and shirts, some civilian and others apparently military. Intermixed with these items are Native feather and hide adornments. They are also armed with a variety of weapons: two carry spears, one a

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158 The British had an ambivalent relationship with allies throughout their military history. During the Napoleonic Wars the British had their doubts about the reliability of their Spanish allies in the Peninsula and those that had recently changed sides to fight Napoleon in Belgium in 1815. Henty tapped into that familiar concern in a novel about the Waterloo campaign. Concerned over the Dutch-Belgian allies, a character suggests that “if I were the duke, I wouldn’t depend (sic) on them at all…I would put them all in the rare (sic), and lave (sic) our fellows to do the work.” G. A. Henty, *One of the 28th, A Tale of Waterloo* (London: Blackie & Son, 1890), 262.

rifle, and one still wields a shield. An *ILN* illustration of Fingo auxiliaries “a loyal and partly civilized people under British rule” fighting for the British in the 1878 Kaffir War are described as “grotesque” for their mixed European and Native attire.160 This harsh characterization is echoed by Melton Prior in his memoir where he describes a “bold and impudent” Kaffir who dressed and spoke like an Englishman. Referred to as “Missionary Kaffir” Prior derides such presumption which renders the individual a “liar and thief… whereas a raw Kaffir is one of the most honest men.”161

The difficulty of bridging the cultural barrier between Native and Briton is revealed in another *ILN* illustration where Fingoes perform a war dance (Illustration 5.12).162

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**Illustration 5.12 “Fingoes Dancing their War Dance” from the *ILN* (May 11, 1878)**

161 Prior, 96.
Interestingly, the “special artist” shows the dancers having removed their hats and as bare-chested, but holding their spears as they perform. Their dark skins sharply contrast with the crescent of British soldiers observing the dance. The racial discourse is obvious, but the removal of most of their western attire and weapons offers a military discourse – these are not the Indians or Sudanese moulded by the British into effective soldiers. The Fingoes and their warfare are, just like their war dance, still Native and irregular which they communicate by stripping away the vestiges of western dress. War and culture are inter-twined for the Fingoes in a manner foreign to the British soldiers watching. When the British perform a ‘war dance’ – a martial parade – they are fully adorned in their military regalia. Part of British society, their distinct military identities are nonetheless made unambiguous and separate.

Rarely represented in illustration, the military effectiveness of Native levies is questioned. In an *ILN* report about the 1874 Ashanti war, the writer describes an operation to secure a village conducted by levies from various allied tribes. One tribe, the Opobos, are praised for their vigorous performance.\(^{163}\) However, in a similar action described in the same piece, the warriors from the Houssas tribe withdraw to cover and go prone to avoid the firing from the Ashantees. The British officers in-charge “literally kicked the Houssas” back into the action. Sometimes unenthusiastic, other Native levies might be too opportunistic. In the Kaffir War, the aforementioned Tembus allies were equipped by the British to perform a patrol against the Galekas, the main opponent in the Kaffir War. But the adjoining *ILN* article suspects that “they are but too likely to convert

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[this patrol] into a mere raid for plunder.”\textsuperscript{164} Tribal enmity, it is asserted, has made the Tembus willing servants to the British, “though in an irregular and licentious manner.”

References to the performance of the Natal Native Contingent (NNC), predominantly recruited from disaffected Zulus, are also rather critical, if inconsistent. In an \textit{ILN} narrative of Isandlwana the NNC, fighting alongside the British, are initially praised as having “fought bravely.”\textsuperscript{165} However, in contrast to the British defenders of the camp who were “crushed down by weight of numbers” the NNC are noted as having fled rather than be annihilated. In \textit{British Battles on Land and Sea} the narrative of Isandlwana fairly describes the desperate fighting and defeat of the British at the hands of an “enormous force” of Zulus “hurling their strength against the camp regardless of the heaviest losses.” However, it seems that the NNC had a particular role to play in this defeat: “the foremost ranks of the Zulus were within 200 yards of the Native Contingent, which broke and fled, this leaving a gap in the line, through which the Zulus poured like a living flood, and all in an instant became hopeless confusion.”\textsuperscript{166} With few survivor records and on-going debate about the battle’s narrative, the contemporary critique of the Native levies might be unjust, but it fulfilled an expectation both about them and the superior performance of their British masters.

That Native levies sometimes performed poorly was not surprising nor is the fact that these failings were described. Often disaffected traitors from the tribes the British fought or opportunistic mercenaries who needed to survive to profit from their fighting, Native levies had few incentives to fight in the manner of the British or even their recruited Native regulars. Consequently, Native levies were more commonly kept out of

\textsuperscript{165} “The Zulu War,” \textit{The Illustrated London News} LXXIV, no. 2072 (March 1, 1879): 194.
\textsuperscript{166} Grant, 215.
major actions and, within this context, are appropriately represented in a passive role in the mass media. Routed at Isandlwana, the NNC are represented in a large *ILN* illustration of the Battle of Gingindlovu poignantly crouching behind their shields in reserve behind the Naval Brigade soldiers massacring the charging Zulus.\(^{167}\) The passive role reinforces the same vision of the enemy as that of the Natives being shot down: Native peoples that oppose the British are killed and defeated and subsequently become the emasculated and passive primitives seen in reserve behind the British warriors doing the actual fighting.

**Conclusion**

Whether a fanatical dark skinned “savage” or a conscripted European drone, the cultural representation of the enemy exposed fundamental differences between the British and those they fought. The physical appearance of their warriors, their methods of fighting, and their revealed cultures of warfare seem to offer an explicit juxtaposition that left the British appear superior in all aspects of warfare. Even the Boers were deemed lesser combatants and were temporarily successful only because of devious methods; British victory would have been quickly assured had the Boers – and the Afghans – come out to fight in the manner expected of real soldiers. This contrast of war cultures, broadly Orientalist in character, cast war in a familiar form drawn from historical precedent. In fact, the enemy Other reinforced the idea that warfare was not just a question of modern training, but relied perhaps more on innate ‘Britishness’ combined with tried technology and tactics. Said appropriately asserts that the British “sense of power scarcely imagined that those ‘Natives’ who appeared either subservient or sullenly uncooperative were

\(^{167}\) “The Zulu War: inside the Laager at Ginghlovo During the Zulu Attack,” *The Illustrated London News* LXXIV, no. 2084 (May 24, 1879): 484-485.
never going to be capable of finally making [them] give up India” or other territories.\textsuperscript{168}

While some liberal politicians might have understood empire differently, soldiers would have agreed with this assured position of superiority. Colonial campaigns, even against varied opponents like the Zulus and the Boers, confirmed the British approaches to war as represented in the culture. And these approaches, anachronistic as they were, succeeded even against the best and largest European armies. For Frank Shaw, Russians and Germans might just as well have been Native hordes, albeit drilled and disciplined and flawed for it.

In this respect, however, Orientalism does fade in significance. Colonial opponents did define much of the identity of the British army. But with the fictional Other being Europeans, who still serve to expose Britain’s essential superiority, Said’s racially based analytical approach is exposed as only contextually relevant; there are other types of oppositional comparisons that shape identity. More importantly, the large-scale use of Native soldiers as regularly trained recruits or temporary levies clouds the issue. While their core identities as ‘Natives’ was never eliminated, these basic traits added to their soldiering quality when trained and led by the British.\textsuperscript{169} In this way the culture was ambivalent about Native soldiers: these combatants were excitingly exotic and had innate fighting skills to draw upon and even emulate. In this military context, then, some peoples found protection for their martial ethnicity, for example, in their

\textsuperscript{168} Said, \textit{Culture and Imperialism}, xxii.

\textsuperscript{169} Said observes that “all cultures tend to make representations of foreign cultures the better to master or in some way control them. Yet not all cultures make representations of foreign cultures \textit{and} in fact master or control them.” Said, \textit{Culture and Imperialism}, 100. Britain’s relationship with Native recruits and levies reflects some aspects of Said’s assertion, but it is clear that the control over Native soldiers was not complete and sometimes their ethnicity was allowed to coexist with their British training (e.g., Ghurkhas). In this respect, John MacKenzie’s attack on Said’s definition of Orientalism is confirmed. “Orientalism” was not just a tool of hegemony but also a form of protection for cultures that were controlled by the west. MacKenzie, \textit{Orientalism...}, xii.
uniforms and weapons. Some of these accoutrements even migrated to the British, a fact most easily observed in the wearing items of ‘foreign’ uniforms such as the turban or fez, or, more fundamentally, the adoption of khaki fabric. Whether this was genuinely protecting or borrowing Native (“Oriental”) culture could be debated, but as John MacKenzie notes, it seems that Orientalism was a two-way relationship. While Natives retained fragments of their cultures, they could be also trained to fight like British soldiers. And yet, Native units could prove unreliable due to the very same traits that made Natives dangerous when they opposed the British. It was a complex relationship that included Said’s Orientalism but also more nuanced forms of cross-cultural relations. But through all of this, the mass culture communicated an essential truth: training might make European conscript armies seem menacing while Native savagery could be equally dangerous, but through it all stood the British volunteer, triumphant against all enemies including those found in the historical past, the colonial present, and the dangerous future. This was a vision of war that respected existing racial, social and military hierarchies. It could be framed in the mediums of culture and, in that representation, protected the relationship between the military and society that had improved since the mid-nineteenth century, but did not demand subservience to the state or the machinery of the industrial age. Warfare, fought against a great diversity of peoples, in the manner represented in the mass culture, had worth in revealing what it meant to be British.

Conclusion

Wounded on July 1, 1916, the British scholar, socialist, and now soldier, R. H. Tawney reflected on his war experience and the chasm of perception that had opened between him and the people he encountered on the home front while convalescing.\(^1\) Although he had changed, he observed that the nationalistic mood of 1914 persisted amongst Britons deceived by the press and its representation of the war. The pictures and script describing the war, he asserts, include “traits which are not untrue to life,” but he saw that “the general impression given is tragically false.”\(^2\) He continues:

I can forgive you for representing war as a spectacle instead of as a state of existence, for I suppose that to the correspondent who is shepherded into an observation post on a show day it does seem spectacular. But the representation of the human beings concerned is unpardonable. There has been invented a kind of conventional soldier, whose emotions and ideas are those you find most easy to assimilate with your coffee and marmalade. And this ‘Tommy’ is a creature at once ridiculous and disgusting. He is represented as invariably ‘cheerful,’ as reveling in the ‘excitement’ of war, as finding ‘sport’ in killing other men...

Interestingly, Tawney argues that the soldier could be particularly vulnerable to this persistence of representation since the principle that motivated the volunteer soldier was passionately retained even when the reality of war became apparent.\(^3\) The combination of some ‘truth,’ or accuracy, in the way war was popularly presented combined with jingoistic enthusiasm made war acceptable. And the power of that pre-war perception of war might even have informed how the actual experience was

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\(^3\) In *Goodbye to All That* (1929), Robert Graves also comments on the disconnect between reality and perception, but sees this phenomenon as distinct to the home-front. In this respect, Graves shares the common post-war literary theme of a “lost youth” and the isolation felt by soldiers when returning home on leave or as veterans. Eric Maria Remarque made these themes famous in his *All Quiet on the Western*
understood.\textsuperscript{4} Winston Churchill famously asserted that soldiering was an exotic, healthy, and “open-air” pleasure; war was exciting until you got shot.\textsuperscript{5} The fact that over half the soldiers of the Great War were killed or wounded must have dispelled the illusion of military glory for many. But in colonial wars the rates of combat casualties were not so large, and while harsh climates, disease and long marches must have tried the notion of warfare as exciting, in its selective representation in the mass culture, there was little to find disagreeable.

Tawney’s commentary speaks to the importance of how war and soldiering was represented prior to, and even during, the Great War. In addition to his observation about the endurance of the false image of warfare is the underlying acceptance that the commercial culture provided an irresistible vision that even he had accepted such that he was horrified by its reality in 1916. But what was so different between the lived experience of warfare in 1916 and the way war had been represented earlier? Most of the basic elements of warfare experienced in the Great War had been reported and represented in the popularly consumed culture prior to 1914. Entrenchments and wire had been seen in the reports from the Anglo-Boer War and more recently in the Russo-Japanese War and those in the Balkans. Mass killing, on a scale more concentrated than the Somme, and certainly more immediately visible to those doing it, was consumed through the reports, history, fiction and paintings of battles such as Ulundi and Omdurman. Heavy losses, again clearly communicated and represented in a manner that

\textit{Front} (1928) and more explicitly in \textit{The Road Back} (1930). Robert Graves, \textit{Goodbye to All That} (London: Penguin, 1960), 120.


\textsuperscript{5} Quoted from the Churchill’s 1898 \textit{The Story of the Malakand Field Force} reprinted with other works in, Winston Churchill, \textit{Frontiers and Wars; His Four Early Books covering his Life as Soldier and War
made it personal through anecdote and survivor testimonies, occurred at Isandlwana, Maiwand, Majuba, Colenso and Spion Kop. Industrial warfare and intense, if not relentless, killing was, therefore, represented before 1914.

The problem was not that these elements were absent from the products of mass culture. The problem was that these elements of warfare were represented selectively and discretely, albeit with the promise of accuracy and through the lens of tradition and popular history. As such, it seemed that these isolated features of emerging modern war failed to upset the basic manner in which warfare was described; traditional and anachronistic tactics could co-exist with novelty and innovation and largely did so in colonial wars. The fascination with rapid firing rifles and machine guns inspired images and reports, but these were not wedded with the effects of these same weapons; either the targets fell off the edge of the frame or were ignored in lieu of other kinds of killing. The sword and bayonet were honorable forms of combat against an enemy that was given an opportunity to rise, or more likely fall, by his valour. Dying was rare, but always meaningful, and mass killing of enemies was negotiated through a racialist discourse that found justice in killing oppressive savages, even if their ability to endure the volleys was praised. Wounds were attended to. None of this was wrong, *per se*, but there were too many details missing from a narrative that was divided into digestible pieces; the unsavory morsels were presented with particular care for the sometimes poorly educated and usually unworldly consumer who had never seen real war. If actually lived, war is experienced in its multiple layers of reality simultaneously or in unavoidable succession, not in a selected and separated series of experiences from history, tradition or distant

campaigns in alien lands. By the late-nineteenth century the vision of warfare as a controlled and personally meaningful event was being challenged by the reality of its ever growing scale and its potential to kill impersonally, indeed, anonymously.

After decades of mass-market media representing military subject matter, Britons of all classes had experienced an education about war and the army. It was an education borne not just of glorified fiction, but of journalism, history, theatre, music hall performances, paintings, toys, advertising and, significantly, the physical presence of soldiers on parade and participating in the popular volunteer movement. Britons enjoyed their *pax Britannica* but fought too much, and, yet, most experienced war too little. As Tawney notes, from afar, war, or at least military pageantry, is “spectacular.” Irresistibly, there was a rarely contradicted form of representation that emerged that celebrated the army’s exploits in colonial wars and those from the historical past.

Present sensibilities aside, there was much to celebrate in this uncritical reportage of one conquest after another. With scant exception, British forces defeated more numerous opponents in offensive wars. Exceptional defeat provided the myth of glorious valour and apparently proved the rule of British superiority and the need to bring to heel the savage Other. Britons had gotten war right in the past too. The Napoleonic legacy was powerful both in building up the Corsican antagonist and demonstrating that British firepower, issued from steady lines, could thwart the French column of conscripts every time. Victory was just a cheer and a bayonet charge away. It was all so very orderly, controlled, and easily represented. Between this historical record and colonial military success, Britons could confidently teach their Native recruits how to wage war.

Although this exposed an ambivalent position about of what the ‘uncivilized’ Native
warrior was capable (and how much of British success was simply due to training), led
by British officers, Indian and African soldiers marched to victory in the British manner.

The Anglo-Boer War experience was apparently an exception to this generally
positive vision of warfare. But, most importantly, Britain won this war. Even the army
itself was unsure about how to respond to the experience doctrinally; Callwell’s Small
Wars found little call for revision when a third version of the book was published in
1906; he recognized the military distinction between the Boer and other opponents but
British resilience was proved in Boer defeat. According to the mass culture, even the
methods used to fight earlier opponents seemed to have continued relevance. British
culture cast the Boers as little different to other Natives, with a dangerous aptitude for
warring, but not the discipline or grit to face its intimate reality. Death from the
anonymous origins of a Boer bullet or shell, definitively the kind of death most
commonly experienced in the Great War, was juxtaposed to the British will to fight at
close quarters. The morale to press home the fight was lacking in the Boers and the
importance of this attribute, central to British character, was also shown as central to the
Japanese triumph in Manchuria over Russia in 1905. Heavy guns and strategic
superiority may have secured the victory, but it was Japanese cold steel that featured
large in the press just as it did for the Anglo-Boer War. It was false, but to expect the
public to understand the complexities of this war, or any other, when they were presented

Callwell did express a concern that the Boer’s fighting characteristics had been underestimated, but he
applied the same observation to the Afghans whose persistence could be admired but were never deemed a
threat to British military dominance. C. E. Callwell, Small Wars, Their Principles and Practice (Lincoln:
Nebraska University Press, 1996), 47. Callwell’s biggest recommendation drawn from the experience of
the Anglo-Boer Wars was the expanded use of Mounted Infantry in mobile operations. Quite appropriate,
with a generally uncritical and familiar representation of it, would be asking too much.

British culture provided a hungry consumer audience with a notably consistent representation of the army and warfare. It was a representation that its authors asserted was accurate, even those writing fiction for youth or providing them with toy soldiers. Of course, much of this consistency derived from the fact that the writers and publishers of the written material drew from the same sources of fact and inspiration, whether the item was a novel or a popular history. Hence, the differences between fiction and non-fiction, or between history and journalism, were blurred in *Boy’s Own Paper (BOP)*, for example, by the evangelical mission to educate, even in the context of entertainment. It is impossible to definitively ascertain the degree to which any of this education was absorbed in a general sense. However, it can be asserted that the representational convergence of military content around a set of reoccurring forms would have offered few alternative interpretations of the life and experiences of the British soldier at war.

Having reduced warfare to its knowable components, it is not surprising that the commercial cultural media selected for this study, created to simplify, educate, and especially sell, would lack highly critical content. When *BOP* ended articles on military subjects with prayers that war would cease to exist, the disingenuous rhetoric is immediately apparent.\(^7\) *BOP* articles praise military valour and a muscular Christian sense of sacrifice and duty. Even class-based criticism of officer corruption and this was a trend that Callwell favorably observed in many colonial wars.

\(^7\) For example, at the end of an article that with relish details the history of British ordinance in all its technical nuances, the anonymous writer yearns for a time “so grandly foretold by the inspired prophet, when men ‘shall beat their swords into ploughshares.” “Our Great Guns,” *The Boy’s Own Paper*, IV (February 11, 1882): 322. Similarly, another article declares that “we would that grim war itself were passing away with its ancient slogans.” “Slogans and War Cries,” *The Boy’s Own Paper*, VI (August 30, 1884): 763.
incompetence in working class music hall and song is debased by the fundamentally uncritical view of the soldier and Briton’s right to empire. Starting this conclusion with Tawney’s reflections on the falsity of the popular image of war in the media is, therefore, both useful, but, like any anecdote, limited in broader value. What is much more useful is the culture’s largely unchallenged representation of the army and warfare which one must conclude provided a baseline image of warfare for the majority. It was an image that endured, even after the experience of the Anglo-Boer War (and perhaps as a result of it), and was rarely challenged with regards to its explicit character in the mass culture.\(^8\)

The discourse on war, long established by history and reinforced by the selectively presented narrative of colonial wars, triumphed over the reality that seemed anyway not to contradict it. This suited the commercial culture, and even the army itself, both of which had to contain the experience of warfare into a knowable and limited framework in order to define its worth and then sell it.

Victorians were habituated to war and seemed more prepared to accept a price for it, albeit a small one compared to that suffered in the Great War.\(^9\) From a current

\(^8\) As previously noted, moral concerns over warfare were a regular feature of the Boy’s Own Paper articles. Less disingenuous was the remarkably detailed predictions of doom by Jean de Bloch. In his work from 1898, The Future of War, Bloch described the indecisive and exhausting trench fronts, fixed by wire and guns. Bloch’s work was not that of a pacifist but rather a laissez-faire liberal fearing the economic repercussions of this kind of war. Grant Dawson, “Preventing ‘a great moral evil’: Jean de Bloch’s The Future of War as anti-revolutionary pacifism,” Journal of Contemporary History 37, no.1 (2002): 5-19. Bloch’s predictions made little impact on military readers and there is no evidence of significant popular impact.

\(^9\) The ‘price’ in blood was a cause for some concern, but monetary price was often more vigorously noted. This has been exposed earlier in the work, but one more example might be instructive. In British Battles on Land and Sea, the author presents a very detailed narrative of the British defeat at Isandlwana against the Zulus. After describing desperate fights and heroic deaths, the inevitable cost of the defeat is enumerated. Typically, the number of dead, with named officers, is presented. Losses of firearms and ammunition is also noted, particularly as these were (falsely) reportedly used by Zulus in the attack on Rorkes Drift that evening and on the following day. Finally, and perhaps typically for business oriented Britain, the author detailed the £60, 000 cost of destroyed commissariat supplies. James Grant, British Battles on Land and Sea (London: Cassell and Company, 1899), 219.
perspective, this might seem a peculiar attitude. When soldiers die in combat, public sentiment regarding the war being fought can be challenged. The reactions are varied from further resolve to resignation, or can turn to defeatism. But these reactions all imply that, at least in part, people failed to appreciate the reality of war prior to the conflict, and only come to realize its price when confronted by its deadly results (itself only a small part of war’s reality). Today, the speed with which people react negatively to the price of war is also, however, a measure of a growing skepticism about the inherent value of soldiering and the war experience. This kind of skepticism had existed in nineteenth century Britain where the soldier had long endured a poor reputation. However, the sensibilities of late-nineteenth century and early twentieth century Britons were more vulnerable to the way in which the new mass culture shaped the image of war. Britons saw representations of killing that were readily reported, just as injury and death of British soldiers were represented and eulogized. But all of this content of warfare was experienced by an army that was uniformed and fought according to familiar forms, won its battles, and was far away.10

Paul Fussell’s classic, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, suggests that the singular experience of the Western Front in 1914-1918 caused a shift in social discourse in British culture ushering in modernity.11 Challenging assumptions about war, social structures and moral codes, cynicism and irony crept into the cultural edifices that grew

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10 We have not allowed ourselves to escape the discrete moments of warfare that shape our conception of it. Air shows, war movies, and military pageantry still draw crowds. Combined with martial games and hobbies, it seems that war still occupies a significant part of mass culture that simplifies the experience of it for public consumption. David Grossman’s *On Killing* concludes with a cautionary narrative that reveals the relationship between the mass consumption of war entertainment and the desensitization of the public with regards to war and killing. David Grossman, *On Killing* (New York: Back Bay Books, 1995).

out of the trenches. Assertions of change always inspire contrary positions that observe continuities. Jay Winter’s *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* and Jonathan Vance’s *Death So Noble* offer measured challenges to Fussell by observing the persistence of old, if altered, rhetoric about war. Winter declares his opposition to the ‘modernist’ perspective; the war was not such a “rupture” with the past and modernism was also a temperament that drew from much earlier philosophies. Similar to Vance’s work that is focused on the Canadian perspective, Winter considers the complex negotiation of memory, memorial and meaning that could not entirely do away with elements of high diction and patriotism. Vance adds that, for Canada, this included diction that supported nation building. It was not always a convincing rhetoric for such groups as new immigrants, French-Canadians, and Natives.

This debate is compelling; however, the point here is not to define how effectively the Great War challenged or reinvigorated the nineteenth century vision of war. For some, like Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, the romanticized high diction of war had died in the industrial killing of the trenches. But for the broader culture the old discourse still had currency sustained in the public memory by cultural edifices like war monuments. What is more important here is to recognize that that old representation of warfare has to be understood and defined. In so doing, Fussell’s modernity is revealed by the contrast between the discourse and the reality as experienced by those like Tawney in the trenches. But the need to impose order on war to find its meaning and to be able to

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communicate it is equally evident. During the war it was found in duty, first to the nation and then to family and regiment. In spite of Fussell’s discovery of cynical modernity, the old hierarchies and obedience persisted and few soldiers stopped fighting.\(^{14}\) Later it was manifested in the memorials and serried ranks of gravestones in the war cemeteries. This continuity of war’s imagined form is here of utility. It was obviously a difficult vision to dispel.

In 1914, the illustrated adult and juvenile popular press had to narrate the story of a war that immediately drew in hundreds of thousands of young men. Although it extends the parameters of this dissertation, a brief consideration of how the opening months of the Great War were represented in some of the sources used in this study is revealing. The persistence of the old myths, traditions and forms of war representation marked the interpretations of the new experiences. Kept away from the front, reporters had to rely as much on their imagination as they did on what facts were made available.\(^{15}\)

For the illustrated press, making sense of the news reported by the dailies was even more of a leap into the imagination. Inevitably, the convergence of every source of military discourse was in evidence in the illustrated weeklies as Britons were forced to understand this new event of war. This is most evident in the juvenile paper *Pluck* where war coverage was integrated into its regular content in their “Special War Pages” that by October 1914 had the added subheading “Pages of Interest To All Patriotic Britons.”

The format of these pages was quite consistent in the opening months of the war.


\(^{15}\) Lord Kitchener had long disapproved of war correspondents in his colonial campaigns and in 1914 demanded that they remain removed from the front. In lieu of embedded reporters, the army established the Press Bureau that released news bulletins. Martin J. Farrar, *News from the Front; War Correspondents on*
Scanning the two pages from left to right the reader encounters “‘Pluck’s’ Almanac of Battles” which comprised a list of battles drawn from Western and imperial history that occurred on the dates of that week’s issue. Other short articles of historical interest follow: “Tales of Heroism” featuring historical anecdotes of combat\(^\text{16}\); “Famous Leaders” offering brief biographies of contemporary commanders like Lord Kitchener\(^\text{17}\) or Sir John Jellicoe\(^\text{18}\); history pieces like an article on the Battle of Marathon\(^\text{19}\) or regimental histories\(^\text{20}\); and finally, starting on September 12, a “Diary of the Terrible War” that considered the immediate causes and course of the war.\(^\text{21}\) The combination of military history, military biography, and unit honours aligned with the war “diary” exposes a typical form of war representation. Contemporary warfare had long been understood using established forms of military discourse and this combination of content in the “Special War Pages” seems a deliberate effort to make the new experience of warfare knowable. However, in contrast to the frequently reported colonial campaigns that were sometimes anachronistic in form and scale, the Great War was already identifiable as somewhat different and “terrible.”

Illustrations are squeezed onto these pages that, like the written content, present the historical legacy of war while introducing aspects of the new warfare. Header images in the “War Pages” feature a combination of familiar and novel subjects. German and

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\(^{16}\) One such article features the exploits of the Highland Brigade at the Crimean War Battle of Alma. “Tales of Heroism; No. 2. – ‘A’ma’,” *Pluck* XII, no. 516 (September 19, 1914): 12.

\(^{17}\) “Famous Leaders; No.1 – Lord Kitchener.” *Pluck* XII, no. 515 (September 12, 1914): 12.

\(^{18}\) “Famous Leaders; No. 2. – Sir John Jellicoe,” *Pluck* XII no. 516 (September 19, 1914): 12.

\(^{19}\) “Marathon,” *Pluck* XII, no. 517 (September 26, 1914): 12.


\(^{21}\) The first entry for the “Diary of the Terrible War” presented the events of June 28, 1914. The description of the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand is quite accurate, if brief, and asserts that the Serbian government was involved precipitating the Austrian demand for an “explanation.” *Pluck* XII, no.
British limbered field artillery (attached to their horse-drawn ammunition vehicle) dashing forward at the gallop are relevant and familiar images, especially since the British artillerists are wearing the ubiquitous sun helmets of colonial wars. Other issues show more modern arms and technology. Silhouettes of contemporary warships and aircraft expose the industrial qualities of the new war. One issue has header images that contrast the infantry tactics of the Germans with those of the British. The Germans are illustrated with fixed bayonets and “in the close formation they have been taught to use.” The British in the opposite corner are shown behind sandbags aiming their rifles. The reader is invited to “notice [the] distance between firers.” This shows an awareness of the increasing importance of fire tactics and implies that the Germans are less tactically sophisticated. However, the other images on these “Special War Pages” conflict with this message of modernity in war; honour and courage were still to be found in the charge, as communicated by the illustration of “The Charge of the Black Watch at Alma,” or by an illustration of charging cavalry commemorating “The Battle of Jena, one of Napoleon’s triumphs.”

The adult illustrated press coverage of the early war was similarly ambiguous in what it communicated about the nature of warfare. As one would expect, the uniform details are quite faithfully depicted and there is a deliberate effort to expose the new realities of the fire swept battlefield. But old forms of representation also persist, problematic in their selectivity and artistic rendering. On the same day that *Pluck*  

515 (September 12, 1914): 13.  
featured the historical exploits of the Black Watch in the Crimea, the *ILN* presented a somber cover photograph of a Highlander’s grave in France.26 Tellingly, the cross was made from an ammunition box by men who “dropped their death-dealing rifles for the moment” to lament the loss of their “good pal.” The caption assures its readers that “war has its redeeming humanities as well as its repulsive horrors.”

In spite of this moment of mourning the content of this issue offered an exciting anecdote of combined arms tactics presented in a full two-page illustrated spread. Looking over a French position, occupied by infantry and artillery with British cavalry in reserve, a large mass of German infantry approaches in the distance.27 The heading describes the scene: “German troops trapped by the ingenuity of the Allies: A remarkable combined attack near Cambrai.” Compressed into the frame, all arms are shown in a scene that compositionally might well have been Napoleonic and certainly implied that ideal. Of course, the title is misleading. The French and British are actually demonstrating the effect of defensive firepower and the “attack” is an action presumably yet to come. Indeed, it is the perils of performing an attack that are illustrated by the approaching Germans in this scene.

Only poised to advance in the preceding illustration, British cavalry are elsewhere shown in full charge. In the same issue of the *ILN* another combat anecdote highlights the continued importance of cavalry. Frederick Villiers provided the *ILN* with a sketch and description of a German infantry corps that had been burned out of their forest hiding-place by British infantry only to be attacked by British cavalry with “destructive

26 “He was a good pal,” *The Illustrated London News* CXLV, no. 3935 (September 19, 1914): cover.
27 “German troops trapped by the ingenuity of the Allies: a remarkable combined attack near Cambrai,” *The
effect.”28 The two-page illustration shows the cavalry charge ploughing into the dispersed German infantry, swords slashing at the retreating enemy.

Another combat anecdote explicitly revisits the past glories of British cavalry and Highland foot who purportedly repeated a feat of arms conducted at Waterloo. Complete with a Caton Woodville illustration inspired by Lady Butler’s “Scotland Forever,” the news item reported a charge of the Scots Greys at the Battle of St. Quentin in which Highland soldiers “burst into the thick of the enemy holding on to the stirrups of the Greys as the horsemen galloped, and attacked hand to hand” (Illustration 6.1).29 The Germans were “taken aback” and suffered “severe losses alike from the swords of the cavalry and from the Highlanders’ bayonets.” Woodville made the immanent melee inevitable by relieving the Germans of their ammunition, pictured

Illustration 6.1 “How History Repeated Itself at St. Quentin: A Stirrup Charge” from ILN (September 12, 1914)

abandoned in the foreground with other discarded accoutrements as the Germans fled. Whether this incident actually occurred as described, or was accurately portrayed if it did, is less significant than the fact of its selection and how it interacts with additional content in the *ILN* and other publications. Waterloo had already been the focus of some attention earlier in 1914 due to the approach of the battle’s centenary. Revisiting the battle in the context of the Great War, partly fought over the same ground, was not surprising, but exposes a naïve appreciation of war’s new reality.

More somber consideration of the price of cavalry actions was presented. On the cover of the September 26 issue of the *ILN* a Woodville illustration considers this price in “On Britain’s roll of honour: the return from the charge.” Featuring two wounded cavalrymen who seem to have stepped right out of Butler’s “Balaclava,” the remaining eight horsemen in the frame are unscathed (Illustration 6.2). Praised for their “honour” it seems that the charge was worth the price that was, in any case, paid only by a few.

3934 (September 12, 1914): 392.  
30 In May, the *ILN* featured reproductions of paintings displayed at the Royal Academy. One of the five pictures was W. E. Wollen’s “The 28th (1st Gloucestershire) at Waterloo.” *The Illustrated London News* CXLIV, no. 3916 (May 9, 1914): supplement. In June, the *ILN* printed an appeal to its readers to donate funds to oppose a development proposal for part of the battlefield of Waterloo. The appeal was illustrated with a large landscape that indicated the disposition of the armies that fought on the field in 1815. “Threatened by the speculative builder! – The battlefield of Waterloo, which may be hidden by ‘suburbia.’” *The Illustrated London News* CXLIV, no. 3923 (June 27, 1914): 1092-93.
Illustration 6.2 “On Britain’s Roll of Honour: The Return from the Charge” *ILN* (September 26, 1914)

It would be false to emphasize the illustrations of cavalry, images that were, however, prominent in their size and position in the journals, without recognizing that other illustrations and text did reveal something of the infantryman’s plight in the wire and fire maelstrom of the Great War in 1914.\(^{31}\) An October *ILN* cover features an illustration of massed British infantry encountering German wire entanglements during a

\(^{31}\) During the initial months of the war, where offensives shaped the action, the armies on all fronts experienced the most intense losses. It was a difficult adjustment for both the soldiers and those trying to report on the war as the expectations of war, defined by movement and bayonet charges, were realized but
night attack. It is clearly a difficult circumstance as three soldiers are shown falling wounded and others use their bare hands to move the wire. Their advance is not, however, thwarted as individuals are shown beyond the wire. This is confirmed by the caption: “British infantry forcing their way through a German defence.” Overcoming this adversity is all the more poignant as the Germans are cast as brutally clever in their placement of the wire concealed in depressions and woods and covered with a “cross-fire” from artillery similarly out of sight but capable of targeting the British due to the use of spotlights. Hence, as with the representation of cavalry combats, the new realities of warfare are both frankly presented in their mechanical detail, but are surmountable using the same attributes that feature in the discourse of British warfare that we have seen develop since 1870. If the Japanese could prevail over the same impediments in Manchuria, the British would certainly do so in Belgium and France.

Sometimes the representation of the new warfare was too frank about its violent reality and the established ideal of warfare failed to overcome it. In 1915, Britains produced a mechanical model of a trench. A disjunction is immediately evident between the dirt trench and the erect pristine figures available with which to defend the position. This is not surprising given the manner in which warfare was communicated by Britains models. However, this discourse was presumably overcome when the model trench ‘exploded’ with a sprung loaded release launching its occupants in all directions. This rather explicit manifestation of artillery fire or mining rendered the tidy toy soldiers at a terrible cost as the weapons that forced the war underground were doing their work against exposed targets.

32 “Caught in the entanglements and revealed by the enemy’s searchlight: British infantry forcing their way through a German defence,” The Illustrated London News CXLV, no. 3937 (October 3, 1914): cover.
33 James Opie, The Great Book of Britains; 100 Years of Britains Toy Soldiers, 1893-1993 (London: New
as farcically false. The toy was made available in 1916 but did not sell well and never
appeared in a catalogue listing. There were limits beyond which the discourse of war
could not endure a more accurately portrayed reality. The precise shape of that vision
and why it came to be so formulated is a neglected aspect of cultural history. Perhaps it
seems too ‘military’ and is often left assumed in the dark margins of studies on
masculinity, gender, racism, nationalism, and imperialism.

Examining the commercial culture’s representation of warfare for its distinct
military content is different from the typical cultural approaches that examine these
sources. A military analysis considers a more explicit meaning; it defines the discourse
on warfare, its imagined forms. This has something to offer both cultural historians and
military historians. For cultural and social historians, a military analysis of the
representations of soldiering and warfare reveals why certain types of uniform or tactic
reoccur in the cultural record that then are used to define social values and national
identities. For example, the British square, an iconic bulwark against all kinds of attacks
on the British Empire and culture, had a strong military legacy and a lasting utility in
colonial wars. Clearly defining why its military value persisted serves to expose its
cultural endurance that has, in turn, been used to comment on social, imperial, and
national discourses. Britain remained strong as long as the square, formed of the
regimental community, remained unbroken or was reformed when breached. In fact, it
can be asserted that the military lessons embedded in the images and text were more
explicitly edifying and consciously absorbed than other types of implicit meaning that
might only have been recognized by first understanding the military content in its

Cavendish Books, 1993), 160.
historical and colonial context. Certainly for the consumer of these military narratives, the shape of war had to be understood enough to know that war, when conducted by the British army, was a controlled experience from which all other values attached to it could flow. The metaphors of nation, community and individual communicated through war stories and images fail to have value if war is solely defined by, for example, artillery fire from an unseen enemy.

Imperial historians should also recognize the representation of warfare for its explicit form. Seeing empire through the image of the soldier and warfare is not novel, but the anachronistic qualities of that image made the empire more knowable. In spite of its alien landscapes and enemies, the Native Other was defeated in a manner that was historically familiar and immortalized in the culture. With its uniforms and close-order tactics, drilled firing and bayonet assaults, imperial wars spoke to an enduring British might not just won on the playing fields of Eton, but also on the regimental parade grounds and the volunteer displays played-out on greens and commons. The British volunteer could defeat Zulus and then, in war scare stories, might equally defeat Russians or Germans too. Although the individual Briton was heralded for his pluck when opposed by any enemy, this individual showed his valour in a context of warfare that allowed him to do so collectively, but not anonymously. Compared to the conscripts of the Continent, Tommy Atkins had a name.

The relationship between culture and the military is important to observe for the military historian too. First, the mass cultural rendition of warfare reveals a discourse of military control over chaos that paralleled the army’s own doctrinal agenda. In an age of the new mass public, with its increasingly democratic politics (in which suffragettes
sought even to include female participation) and mass consumption undermining the old fair economy, mass war was similarly heading to a place of impersonal slaughter and uncontrollable scale. The prayers in *BOP* that future war be avoided were partly based on this emergence of battles defined by “long range rifles and skirmishing order,” or, in other words, the modern anonymity of the empty battlefield. Colonial wars and the battlefields of the Napoleonic period were not empty nor, it seemed, devoid of recognized heroism. Here, the very form of warfare, its uniforms and methods, spoke to a continued relevance of an old army institution that resisted fundamental changes.

Historical analyses of tactical doctrine and training must remember that the soldiers formulating these military practices were part of the broader society and influenced by its culture. This was particularly the case in the pre-war period when strict professionalism was only slowly taking hold in the British army and soldiers might just as well contribute to popular representations of warfare as consume them. Indeed, officers serving in colonial campaigns frequently drew sketches and wrote dispatches to supplement their income needed to preserve their position in the officer elite. Military culture was, therefore, inter-twined in the mass culture and satisfied its expectations.

Another consideration for the military historian examining mass culture is both the historical and contemporary role of historical writing about warfare. By contributing to a culture through their writing and influencing other media, historians add to a society’s understanding of war. Keegan was quite correct in admonishing nineteenth-century historians for offering simplistic “battle-piece” narratives that satisfied national, racial or even military assumptions, but did little to explain the actual experience of

warfare. Indeed, he expressed a concern over his own ability to navigate a subject that was totally alien to his own experience. Limited by language and image, historians have, and continue to be, selective in the narratives they tell of war. Often these narratives are anchored in the material realities of war: uniforms can be paraded or guns can be tested on a range. Alternatively, the narratives can be based on the theorized visions of war, namely the tactical doctrines espoused by the militaries themselves. Isolating weapons from their physical effects, heroics from pain and suffering, or victorious battle from tedious campaigning was not patently wrong. But when this kind of selective representation is simplified, without context, and repeatedly presented in an uncritical mass-market media, the exasperation expressed by Tawney can be understood.

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According to the products of British mass culture between 1870 and 1914, war was a play in three acts: departure, fighting and triumphant return. It was performed by volunteers, either from the Regular Army or from the various non-regular formations, such as the Yeomanry or Volunteer Force. Sometimes, especially in fiction, the soldier was one of good stock who had lost his way but found it in the army, usually by officers who, seeing something of themselves, recognized the gentlemanly qualities of the protagonist. These soldiers were dressed in various well-tailored uniforms in familiar colours and styles and provided with weapons that were technologically sophisticated. Sometimes these soldiers were also given special accoutrements to confront the hostile environment in which they would fight: goggles to protect their eyes from the desert sun or wind blown sand, and netting to resist the flies and mosquitoes. Portraits of officers and illustrated uniform and weapon studies provided the details that were confirmed by
the familiar uniforms that many saw at state occasions, publicly viewed maneuvers and volunteer events. Marching in parade, off they went to fight in the empire, hailed by crowds and praised by their monarch.

Then, according to this cultural representation, these soldiers were suddenly fighting battles. While there were certainly some illustrations and descriptions of ‘camp life’ or soldiers marching in an alien environment, the long process of campaigning featured little in the news, illustrative art, and fiction in the mass culture. The tedious and often cruel aspects of colonial war, as described and prescribed by Cardwell in his *Small Wars*, provided little stirring content. Ideally, soldiers went to war to fight with offensive spirit, and that was what the culture presented.

Fighting in battles, as opposed to indecisive and incessant skirmishes, was the ideal most often represented in the culture. Battle was defined by the application of tactics and technologies that satisfied military, historical and national expectations. Familiar formations of line or square for infantry, and linear charges for horse were the norm. Skirmish lines of dispersed soldiers were also sometimes illustrated or described, particularly after the Anglo-Boer War. From these formations the British soldier could deploy his technological and innate advantages. Irresistible firing could often win the day, but if this seemed too brutal, the narrative of war featured the moments of close combat where bayonet, sword and lance found their mark. Behind the British steel was the stalwart soldier whose character was largely defined by these moments when firepower, already established as crippling to the enemy, failed. Why it failed had often to do with the nature of the enemy who either had a savage or fanatical disregard for their own lives, or, it was hypocritically asserted, the enemy had employed devious tactics that
avoided the mass casualties that civilized Europeans had spent centuries perfecting the ability to endure.

Although logically problematic, Britons could relish their modern technological achievements and yet also express their racial and national superiority through the age-old test of arms in melee. The officer elite relished these moments, as they always had, for they communicated their social and military prowess as leaders both of British society and the army. Even common soldiers demonstrated their role in the service of the state through these individual moments of bravery in the face of danger. Defeat was rare. The inevitable end of the narrative of war was the representation of the soldier returning in triumph in the third act. If however, the previous act ended with his defeat and death, the return was one of ceremony and respect.

None of this was entirely wrong and much was scrupulously described and illustrated. The problem was the assurance of accuracy that seemed to be confirmed by the superficial, but fundamentally correct, representation of the material aspects of war, such as uniforms and weapons. This emphasis on the knowable aspects of warfare exacerbated the falsity of the representation when combined with the gaping lacunae remaining in the narrative whose structure selectively emphasized the good bits and left out the bad. It was an uncritical and marketable form of news, history, and entertainment fed to an audience that was itself inexperienced in military service and warfare, but, through the new mass culture, was constantly exposed to war. Borne by the newness of the media forms themselves, it was a similarly new and compelling discourse of warfare that did not lose its appeal, perhaps not even after two world wars.

In 1968, the juvenile journal *Look and Learn* advertised for the Children’s Book
Club an offer of a free book with each new membership. The book was *A Pageant of History; the Reigns of Kings and Queens; Famous People and Events in Our History*. The front cover features three rows of illustrations that reinforce the whiggish emphasis on “famous people,” but the central row of illustrations – apparently representing the “events” of history – is exclusively populated with soldiers from British military history: a scarlet-coated eighteenth century musketeer; a Napoleonic period Highland infantryman (again in scarlet); a khaki-clad imperial soldier; and finally a pair of twentieth century paratroopers. Collectively they represent the history of Britain, obviously marked by the grandeur of monarchy and the selective glories of war revealed by the army’s most ubiquitous types. *A Boy’s Own* boy would find little to dislike.

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