

Positive Images of War: A Study of British First World War
Newsreels

By

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Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	iii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	iv
<i>List of Graphs and Figures</i>	v
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 - Propaganda vs. Profit	
1. The Institutional Development of Newsreels before the War	17
2. The First World War and Newsreels	19
3. Graphs	30
Chapter 2 - Men and Women of War	
4. Men for War: Women for Work	43
5. Class and Femininity	53
6. Wounded Soldiers and Performative Masculinity	59
Chapter 3 - Smiling Soldiers and Critical Voices	
7. Smiling British Troops and German Prisoners of War	79
8. Critical Voices: The Irish Rebellion	88
9. Pacifism and Married Men	92
Chapter 4 - War on the Home front	
10. The Mobilisation of Children	100
11. The Mobilisation of Animals	111
12. The Militarisation of Sport in Civilian Society	113
Conclusion	120
Appendix	123
Bibliography	124

Abstract

The First World War represents a monumental and defining moment in the twentieth century, where historians continue to argue over its significance and impact on contemporary social and political culture in modern scholarship. Despite the extensive examination of both propaganda and cinema during this period, scholarship of newsreels remains scarce. This thesis examines this gap in historiography, arguing that newsreels provided a directed and positive image of war, which reinforced social structures within British society and set a visual precedent to how Britons should function during the war.

The moving image or newsreel represented a key facet of British leisure past-times. Newsreels were depicted in cinemas before, during breaks and after feature productions in cinemas and in other social and educational environments throughout Britain. Newsreels were shown bi-weekly in cinemas, making them a key aspect of what Britons saw of the war, whether it was on the home and on the war fronts. Newsreels also depicted what was considered 'topical' at different times during the war. This thesis discusses two of the three most popular producers during this period: The Topical Film Company and Pathé Gazette. Despite institutional studies of the former British based producer, the content of their newsreels remains overlooked. Even though Topical Budget was absorbed by the War Office, becoming the main outlet for film domestic propaganda in 1917, historians have still left its content unexamined as it was viewed as ephemera. Conversely, other sensationalistic aspects of British propaganda, such as atrocity material, have received greater observation when modern studies demonstrate that such material was a minority. This research quantitatively and qualitatively examines newsreel material, identifying what was, and also what was not being depicted to contemporary British audiences.

This thesis covers the institutional development of British cinema with an emphasis on newsreels, demonstrating that they developed as the result of increasing public popularity, governmental propagandistic policies and their potential for gaining revenue. Subsequent discussion is split thematically, covering the depiction of gender and convalescent soldiers, the representation of smiling German and British troops, critical voices of war, and the British home front. This thesis argues that First World War British newsreels provided a positive and directed image of war, which was shaped with the purposes of creating a precedent to acceptable wartime practices and also maintaining and expanding public morale.

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List of Graphs and Figures

Figures

1. Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.1: Primary Categories', <i>Positive Images</i> .	32
2. Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.1: Primary Categories', <i>Positive Images</i> .	32
3. Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories', <i>Positive Images</i> .	33
4. <i>PG</i> , 71709, 1858.43	40
5. <i>TB</i> , 265-2, 23-09-1916	41
6. <i>WOOTB</i> , 346-2, 13-4-1918	44
7. <i>TB</i> , 247-2, 20-05-1916	46
8. <i>WOOTB</i> , 326-2, 24-11-1917	48
9. <i>WOOTB</i> , 326-2, 24-11-1917	49
10. <i>WOOTB</i> , 324-2, 12-11-1917	52
11. <i>WOOTB</i> , 353-1, 27-05-1918	52
12. <i>WOOTB</i> , 317-1, 19-09-1917	58
13. <i>PG</i> , 1932.34, 73702	64
14. 'With the Soldiers at Drury Lane', <i>The Sphere</i> , 1 Jan. 1916.	67
15. <i>TB</i> , 271-2, 04-11-1917	68
16. <i>TB</i> , 248-2, 27-05-1916	72
17. <i>TB</i> , 257-1, 26-07-1916	73
18. C.E. Brock, 'Fine Feathers', in G. Goodchild (ed.), <i>The Blinded Soldiers and Sailors Gift Book</i> (London: Jarrold & Sons, 1916), 61.	75
19. <i>PG</i> , 1866.46, 71829	83
20. <i>TB</i> , 178-1, 20-01-1915	84
21. <i>WOOTB</i> , 371-2, 03-10-1918	86
22. <i>TB</i> , 245-2, 06-05-1916	90
23. <i>TB</i> , 238-1, 15-03-1916	96
24. <i>WOOTB</i> , 357-2, 27-07-1918	102
25. <i>PG</i> , 1866.15,71798	103
26. <i>PG</i> , 1918.18, 73308	105
27. <i>TB</i> , 265-2, 23-09-1916	107
28. <i>PG</i> , 2448.04,76979	114
29. <i>PG</i> , 2448.04, 76969	116

List of Abbreviations

BBK	-	Beaverbrook Papers
MOI	-	Ministry of Information
PA	-	Parliamentary Archives
PG	-	Pathé Gazette
POWs	-	Prisoners of War
PRO	-	Public Record Office
<i>Somme</i>	-	<i>The Battle of the Somme</i> (Film)
TB	-	Topical Budget
TFC	-	Topical Film Company
TNA	-	The National Archives
WO	-	War Office
WOCC	-	War Office Cinematograph Committee
WOOTB	-	War Office Official Topical Budget
WAAC	-	Women's Army Auxiliary Corps
WLA	-	Women's Land Army

Introduction

The First World War represented the first full media war of the modern period as all belligerent nations engaged in mobilisation of the masses through multiple avenues. However, one medium that remains largely overlooked in the vast expanse of historiography during this period is the 'newsreel'. This thesis addresses First World War British cinema, alongside multiple scholarship strands portrayed within newsreel material. It argues that such depictions portrayed a 'positive' image of war that reaffirmed existing ideologies and social currents within British society. Newsreels were also used for 'educational' purposes, to set a precedent to British society. Therefore, using newsreels, this thesis explores this most widely viewed cinema outlet that Britons were regularly exposed to throughout this war.

Similar to Luke McKernan's study of Topical Budget (TB) newsreels, and to avoid anachronistic lexical ambiguity with contemporary resources, this research also applies the phrase 'newsreel' to encapsulate what was described during the First World War in many varied phrases. Indeed, the modern concept and terminology of the newsreel has been applied loosely to the history of film. Frederick A. Talbot, a contemporary writer on 'moving pictures', referred to 'newsreels' as an 'illustrated newspaper', 'animated newspaper', 'moving picture newspaper', 'topicals', 'topical film', 'animated news-sheets', and 'the cinematographic newspaper'. However, the term 'newsreel' was not used officially until 1917, with the American *International Newsreel*, and in Britain not until the 1920s.¹ When the British government used newsreels for propaganda purposes, they coined them as being 'educational films',² which demonstrated their perceived purpose of newsreels. Therefore, for the duration of this research, 'moving picture' is used to refer to actuality material before the invention of cinema newsreels in 1908. The term 'newsreel' will be applied for the period after 1908, as this is when newsreels entered into the format that modern historians understand today. This is justified by Talbot's comments that after 1908 newsreels started to depict 'regular features' or recurring topics. These topics included: sports, topical events in society, dedicated women's sections, and

¹ L. McKernan, *The Great British News Film: Topical Budget* (London: British Film Institute, 1992), 6; R. Fielding, *The American Newsreel 1911-1967* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 87-88; F.A. Talbot, *Moving Pictures: How they are Made and Worked* (London: William Heinemann, 1912), 278-285.

² Parliamentary Archives (London), Beaverbrook Papers [henceforth PA, BBK], BBK/ E/2/19: Report of the WOCC: MOI Cinema, 2/8/18.

images of prominent figures or royalty. Talbot further remarks that it was also during this period that cinema attendance became less stigmatised by the bourgeois classes of society, as it became ‘essential that [newsreels] should be diversified in its contents so as to appeal to the tastes of all classes of the community.’³

This research uses digitised film of newsreels that are accessed remotely from both the Imperial War Museum and British Pathé online archives.⁴ Like any medium, there are benefits and limitations to using this form of resource. Correspondence with archives’ staff has revealed information as to why certain newsreels were digitised, while others were not. In the Imperial War Museum’s case, David Walsh, the Digital Preservation Consultant, states that the newsreels are digitised as a result of the following factors: frequency of use in the last decade to avoid the ‘anniversary effect’, where certain topics may experience a spike in usage rates due to commemoration and potential damage; the completion of reel sets; adding to the body of existing material on a particular subject; anticipation of future demands for research and the condition of the reel itself.⁵ Digitisation biases, such as research bias, have been taken into account when considering the claims that this study makes. For example, topics addressed in this study are determined by quantitative data, and not subjective choice. Correspondence with British Pathé staff reveals that such digitisation methods demonstrated by the Imperial War Museum were not applied. All surviving material that British Pathé possesses during this period was digitised, removing the potential of bias from this source.⁶ Therefore, this research’s claims are indicative of all existing newsreel material digitised by the Imperial War Museum for TB, the War Office Official Topical Budget (WOOTB), and British Pathé’s Pathé Gazette (PG) during the First World War as of January, 2018.⁷ Undoubtedly, more newsreel material will be digitised in the future as it is often the case that historical studies gain more accessible material over time.

Accessing the newsreels remotely from a digital archive offers both benefits and drawbacks. Indeed, the digitalisation of historical mediums represents a paradigm shift in

³ Talbot, *Moving Pictures*, 278-285.

⁴ Accessed from: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/film> (accessed: 24 June 2018). Accessed from: <http://www.britishpathe.com/workspaces/page/ww1-the-definitive-collection> (accessed: 24 June 2018). TB and WOOTB newsreel references contain their publication and then date details. PG newsreel references contain their Film ID and then Media URN number.

⁵ Personal correspondence with the Imperial War Museums’ Digital Preservation Consultant David Walsh (1 June 2017), Assistant Curator, Helen Upcraft (10 April 2017), former Film Curator, Paul Sargent (20 May 2017), and former Head Curator, Roger Smither (25 May 2017).

⁶ Personal correspondence with British Pathé’s Archive Coordinator, Elizabeth Bowley (3 August 2017).

⁷ This research uses 949 Films: 756 PG; 115 TB; 78 WOOTB. Dates attached to Topical Budget material are accurate as they were archived by the Imperial War Museum. Conversely, Pathé material is not.

historical methodologies. Bob Nicholson states that the increasing digitisation of historical mediums following the twentieth century has inevitably led to a ‘digital turn’. He acknowledges that the digitisation process provides many advantages and also disadvantages.⁸ Nevertheless, this is true of all historical mediums as each possesses its own parameters. Discussing digitised newspapers, Adrian Bingham states that the historian overlooks contextual elements, such as images and societal currents, by only analysing the language itself through keyword searches,⁹ and this is true of newsreels as well. Silent newsreels were generally accompanied by musical performances,¹⁰ demonstrating another facet that could change the reception of accompanying newsreels. For instance, if images of soldiers marching were shown alongside sombre music this would elicit a different response from the same depiction with more upbeat music. To counteract the possibility of lacking proper contextualisation, both the language of the newsreels’ intertitles and the images themselves will be examined within the broader context of British society and the war. Another disadvantage is addressed by Joanna Guldi, who identifies the issue of ‘word selection’. She states that historians must select a range of terms that indicate the same meaning, such as troops and soldiers, and that those words must be contextualised to that period and not anachronistic terms.¹¹ To avoid this bias, digital humanities methodologies have been applied.

This study applies two programmes to aid the qualitative and quantitative and feasibility of analysing digitised newsreels. The first is Laurence Anthony’s AntConc, which allows the mass viewing of multiple files and location of similar words within such files. Additionally, this programme compiles all words within said documents, creating a list that states the appearance frequencies of each word. Therefore, using word lists created from the corpus’ compilation of all words in the text files avoids the injection of anachronistic terminology or word choice bias, as previously stated by Guldi.¹² All intertitles have been manually transcribed, resulting in a 13,851-word corpus from 188 files.¹³

⁸ B. Nicholson, ‘Digital Turn: Exploring the Methodological Possibilities of Digital Newspaper Archives’, *Media History*, 19:1 (2013), 59-73.

⁹ A. Bingham, ‘The Digitization of Newspaper Archives: Opportunities and Challenges for Historians’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 21:2 (2010), 230.

¹⁰ McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 74-75.

¹¹ J. Guldi, ‘The History of Walking and the Digital Turn: Stride and Lounge in London, 1808-1851’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 84:1 (2012), 116-144.

¹² Guldi, ‘Digital Turn’, 117-120.

¹³ T. Gilmour, ‘Appendix 2: Corpus’, *Positive Images of War: A Study of British First World War Newsreels*. Intertitles contained both spelling and grammatical errors. To access ‘Appendix 2: Corpus’, see e.g. Appendix 2: *Topical Budget* (Intertitles): <https://figshare.com/s/709eb28dfd6dca9298c8>
Appendix 2: *War Office Official Topical Budget* (Intertitles): <https://figshare.com/s/372e253b3fcd7c3bc6cb>

Finally, an Excel spreadsheet was constructed to quantitatively record the appearance of multiple topics within unique newsreels. Topics were split into primary and secondary thematic categories based on both the Imperial War Museum's and British Pathé's own categorisation. Furthermore, just as categories are constructed to demonstrate what is present in the newsreels, these categories also represent what is not shown. Classification has also been influenced by Nicholas Reeves' coverage of WOOTB newsreels as similar categories have been addressed in this study.¹⁴ Both elements complement this researcher's approach to newsreels. This spreadsheet contains: 756 PG newsreel fragments, 115 TB newsreels and newsreel fragments, and 78 WOOTB newsreel and newsreel fragments.¹⁵ Tagging each newsreel and newsreel fragment for themes resulted in 3647 unique tags.¹⁶ Additionally, War Office (WO) material is supplemented by 'shot sheets', which provide descriptions and intertitles of nearly all of the remaining WO newsreels that this research cannot access.¹⁷

The measurement of reception and the targeted audience form part of the basis for understanding many historical resources. In this study the central focus is the newsreel. Due to the study's parameters and the resources, it is not viable to measure reception of newsreels. Factors that make evaluating the reception unrealistic are the ability to differentiate between the reception of newsreels alongside other entertainments being shown and the lack of both personal and official writings addressing newsreels as contemporary audiences did not usually correspond with newspapers describing their cinematic experiences relating to newsreels. Newsreels were an ephemeral resource as they were created for temporary enjoyment, and not as a sustained or continued form of popular entertainment. This was solidified by their lack of discussion in British newspapers as they were perceived as 'passive' forms of entertainment that played during breaks, or before and after the main feature. British audiences did not enter cinemas with the primary aim of viewing newsreels, but came to see the feature-production. Studies, such as Nicholas Reeves' discussion of the audience's reaction to *The Battle of the Somme (Somme)* with the British audience, measure reception through newspapers.¹⁸ However, this methodology is not applicable to newsreels. For example, *The Times* only stated where TB

¹⁴ N. Reeves, *British Official Film Propaganda during the First World War* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 198.

¹⁵ All PG newsreels are fragments as they've been split into a commercial archive for individual sale. TB and WOOTB are stored in their existing condition as both full and fragmented newsreels as they are in a museum's film archive.

¹⁶ 'Tagging' and 'tag' refers to the labelling of the appearance of a specific theme within the newsreels.

¹⁷ Thank you to Helen Upcraft for providing this material.

¹⁸ N. Reeves, "Through the Eye of the Camera: Contemporary Cinema Audiences and their Experience of War in the Film, 'Battle of the Somme'," in H. Cecil and P. Liddle (ed.), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), 780-801.

was shown and what was considered important images within the newsreels, such as the signing to the Treaty of Versailles.¹⁹ Furthermore, content of the newsreel was not always referenced, where newspapers simply contained advertisements, such as: ‘TOPICAL BUDGET [sic] LOOK OUT FOR OUR NEW SERIAL NEXT WEEK.’ Additionally, newspapers also only commented on the newsreels’ venue, without commenting on the material again.²⁰ Therefore, reception of newsreels is not covered as there are no existing documents accessible to measure audience’s opinions on depicted material.

Understanding the target audience for newsreels is a more viable object of study. Newsreels’ audiences are closely aligned to the attendance numbers of cinemas, as this is where newsreels were mostly shown. Additionally, newsreels were also shown in various other locations, such as in schools for educational purposes.²¹ Prior to the war, cinema attendance was perceived as a working-class entertainment. This was largely due to its association with vaudeville shows. However, as newsreels progressively became a separate form of entertainment, sentiments started to shift with their growing popularity. The First World War ushered in a greater ‘social acceptance of cinema’, where pre-existing working-class stigmas were quashed by the British audience’s desire for war related material.²² Rachael Low’s statistics on cinema attendance during the war reveals that ‘there were some 1,075,875,000 attendances a year in [the] British Isles or approximately twenty million a week’.²³ In 1915, when cinema attendance was 10,000,000 per week, only two thirds of cinemas presented newsreels.²⁴ However, by the end of the war, newsreels were shown in nearly all cinemas, which meant they were viewed by the majority of British society. Nicholas Hiley also suggests that the British public’s ‘choice was determined less by the films on offer than by which venue was the closest and the cheapest.’²⁵ However, as newsreels were shown almost universally by the end of the war, such arbitrary choices by viewers are irrelevant to viewership.

¹⁹ ‘Peace Signing Film: Versailles Scene on View To-Morrow.’ *The Times*, 2 July 1919, 12. For other examples, see e.g. ‘Theatres (continued).’ *The Times*, 13 Feb. 1918, 6; ‘Films from the War Fronts.’ *The Times*, 21 Sept. 1917, 3.

²⁰ *Biggleswade Chronicle*, 3 Nov. 1916, 1; ‘Cinema House, Fargate.’ *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 15 May 1918, 1.

²¹ P. Sorlin, ‘The French Newsreels of the First World War’, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 24:4 (2004), 514.

²² A. Smith and M. Hammond, ‘The Great War and the Moving Image’, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 35:3 (2015), 553-558.

²³ R. Low, *The History of British Film, 1914-1918*, vol. 3 (London: George & Unwin, 1948), 23.

²⁴ McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 25.

²⁵ McKernan, 64; N. Hiley, ‘The British Cinema Auditorium’, in K. Dibbets and B. Hogenkamp (ed.), *Film and the First World War* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), 160.

Another field that overlaps with the study of newsreels and its audience is that of propaganda. This thesis defines propaganda within the contemporary context of the First World War. Reeves asserts that the term ‘propaganda’ has been misconstrued and stigmatised by both academic scholarship and public memory alike, where this word was negatively treated as coercive and manipulative following the war for many decades.²⁶ This paradigm was instigated by Arthur Ponsonby’s scathing criticism of wartime propaganda as inciting hatred through falsehood.²⁷ Following this war, theorists, such as Harold Lasswell, were quick to highlight how propaganda quashed dissent and was used as coercion to elicit the desired response of hatred.²⁸ Even modern research, such as Brock Millman’s and Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell’s works, identify how lies were circulated to manipulate hatred for the enemy.²⁹ Such research focuses on ‘black propaganda’, which theorises that all propaganda is lies.³⁰ However, John Horne and Alan Kramer demonstrate that atrocities undoubtedly occurred throughout the war,³¹ making such sweeping generalisations incorrect. Furthermore, Adrian Gregory asserts that ‘black propaganda’ was in the minority in comparison to the positive examples shown.³² David Monger comments that this focus on sensationalism has resulted in ‘nuances of the patriotic messages’ being overlooked. Furthermore, Nicholas Hiley argues that the most successful recruiting posters were those that emphasised positive messages.³³ Therefore, this thesis adheres to a similar stance to Monger, Gregory and Hiley, arguing that British propaganda encouraged and motivated patriotic duty in everyday life by conveying positive images that set a precedent for society.³⁴ Propaganda stimulated patriotism and war participation by reaffirming existing war times ideologies and sentiments. This echoes Jacques

²⁶ Reeves, *British Official British Film Propaganda*, 8-9. For examples of studies that perceive propaganda as a wholly negative form of influencing the masses, see e.g. J.M. Read, *Atrocity Propaganda, 1914-1919* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941); C. Haste, *Keep the Home Fires Burning: Propaganda in the First World War* (London: Allen Lane, 1977); M.L. Sanders and P.M. Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-1918* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 137-167.

²⁷ A. Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime: Containing an Assortment of Lies Circulated throughout Nations During the Great War* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1928). For a deconstruction of Ponsonby’s work, see e.g. A. Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 40-44.

²⁸ H. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927), 195.

²⁹ B. Millman, *Managing Domestic Dissent in First World War Britain, 1914-1918* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 7-25; G.S. Jowett and V. O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 6th edn. (London: Sage, 2015), 236-239.

³⁰ D. Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain: The National War Aims Committee* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 6.

³¹ J. Horne and A. Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (London: Yale University Press, 2001), 227-317.

³² Gregory, *Great War*, 69.

³³ Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda*, 6; N. Hiley, “‘Kitchener Wants You’ and ‘Daddy, What did YOU do in the Great War?’: The Myth of British Recruiting Posters”, *Imperial War Museum Review*, 11 (1999), 40-58.

³⁴ Monger, 6-7; Gregory, 69.

Ellul's reasoning that effective propaganda must attach itself to 'the fundamental currents of society it seeks to influence.'³⁵ This thesis agrees with this stance, developing it further through the novel medium of newsreels.

Newsreels, unlike newspapers, also provided another avenue of appeal to a wider demographic. For example, the metropolitan dailies, such as the *Daily Herald* and *Daily Mirror*, did not cater to the working-classes until the 1930s,³⁶ whereas the newsreels' main audience during the First World War was the working classes.³⁷ Therefore, especially with the WOOTB's involvement in the production and the dissemination of newsreels in 1917, newsreels provided the British government an important propaganda outlet to address parts of society that may not have been susceptible to other communication forms. Even with cinema becoming a more acceptable leisure activity for wider demographics of British society, the 'special relationship' between the working classes and cinema continued to exist. This relationship continued into the Second World War, where the lower classes demonstrated the highest cinema attendance rates as weekly 'regulars'. Conversely, the upper classes displayed far lower attendances and were rarely regulars.³⁸ Therefore, newsreels had the potential to influence a much broader audience, as well as offering a different perspective in World War One.

In the significant quantity of historiography that covers pre-war and First World War Britain, cinema has been widely examined. Typical to such studies is the analysis of feature-length films, the institutional development of cinema, and its use in domestic and international propaganda during the war. Michael Hammond and Stephen Badsey argue that feature-length films, such as the *Somme*, were created as the result of the British government's endorsement of varied forms of propaganda. Additionally, both historians similarly contend that while the *Somme* was exceedingly popular, it was also fundamentally a missed chance for propaganda as it was unable to represent the true 'tragedy' and 'consequences' of the conflict.³⁹ The

³⁵ J. Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, trans. K. Kellen and J. Lerner, intro. K. Kellen (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 38.

³⁶ A. Bingham and M. Conboy, *Tabloid Century: The Popular Press in Britain, 1896 to the Present* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), 175-183.

³⁷ S. Badsey, 'Press, Propaganda and Public Perceptions', in M. Howard (ed.), *A Part of History: Aspects of the British Experience of the First World War* (New York: Continuum, 2008), 31.

³⁸ N. Pronay, 'British Newsreels in the 1930s: 1. Audience and Producers', *History*, 56:188 (1971), 414.

³⁹ S. Badsey, 'Battle of the Somme: British war-propaganda', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 3:2 (1983), 99-115; M. Hammond, "*The Battle of the Somme* (1916): An Industrial Process Film that 'Wounds the Heart'", in M. Hammond and M. Williams (ed.), *British Silent Cinema and the Great War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 19-39, the quote is from Hammond and Williams. For other studies on *The Battle of the Somme*, see e.g. Reeves, 'Through the Eye of the Camera', 780-801; D. Culbert, "The Imperial War

institutional development of cinema is demonstrated by Low's seminal study of First World War film and cinema, set more broadly in twentieth-century Britain. She provides a narrative on the institutional development of film, as she examines multiple genres, while affirming that cinema evolved as a result of public interest in the 'moving-picture'.⁴⁰ Low affirms that 'films of any type not connected with the war, were of little importance', which was due to public desire.⁴¹ Studies on the overlap of propaganda and film represent another key facet of First World War British history. Reeves's scholarship of both official and unofficial film propaganda during the First World War provides a further example of historians focusing on the sensationalistic element of feature film content, while inherently subordinating the newsreels as a minor information source.⁴² Nevertheless, Reeves' exhaustive coverage of both topics addresses the depiction and development of official British film propaganda. Reeves argues that even though the *Somme* was a significant success, its accompanying films, *Battle of the Ancre*, *The German Retreat* and *The Battles of Arras*, did not receive similar public acclaim due to the British people's growing discontent with this medium. Additionally, Reeves argues that a fundamental shift occurred with the *Battle of Arras*, where dead bodies were removed from the public footage, compared to the film's precursors.⁴³ Indeed, this parallels images in TB and WOOTB newsreels, as images of dead bodies were also in a minority, being depicted only eight times.⁴⁴ Reeves argues that feature-length films functioned on 'positivity' and that they 'confirmed and reinforced existing ideas and attitudes.'⁴⁵

Besides addressing newsreels rather than feature films, this research analyses newsreels' intertitles, a largely overlooked variable. Reeves argues that the '[t]he dominant approach of the newsreels' editorial comment as carried by the titles was factual and restrained.'⁴⁶ However, this research argues the opposite to this stance. Even when the newsreel institution was private, intertitles were loaded with propagandistic language and directed material. McKernan's discussion of TB is simplistic as he only interprets intertitles at 'face value' to contextualise the newsreel, without analysing what is being implicitly inferred.⁴⁷

Museum: World War I Film catalogue and 'The Battle of the Somme' (video)", *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 15:3 (1995), 575-581.

⁴⁰ Low, *British Film*, vol. 3, 35-38.

⁴¹ Low, 146.

⁴² Reeves, *Official Film Propaganda*, 113-116, 197-201. In Reeves' entire coverage of film during the war, he only dedicates six pages to newsreels. Moreover, most of the discussion is related to the institutionalisation of TB, and its acquisition by the WO.

⁴³ N. Reeves, *The Power of Film Propaganda: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Cassel, 1998), 27.

⁴⁴ Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories', *Dead Bodies Entente; Dead Bodies Central Powers*.

⁴⁵ Reeves, *The Power of Film Propaganda*, 239.

⁴⁶ Reeves, *Official Film Propaganda*, 199-200.

⁴⁷ For examples of this, see e.g. McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 27-28, 30-31, 34-35.

While McKernan argues that the intertitles were propagandistic, he does not provide tangible examples or justification for this claim. Indeed, this is a passive premise that this study intends to rectify. With the inception of the WOOTB, McKernan argues that:

The language of the official newsreel was always more outspoken and propagandist in tone than was generally the case with other [War Office and Ministry of Information] films... [T]he advance here is in the way titles cut into the item, offering genuine commentary to guide audience reactions. It is a step forward in newsreel technique, springing from the desire to speak out more and having the confidence to do so.⁴⁸

Like Reeves, McKernan's discussion of intertitles is insufficient. Although he claims that they provided commentary on upcoming newsreel content, thereby pre-empting potential impact, he lacks tangible examples to justify this stance. The importance of intertitle language in newsreels was further addressed following the war, as the Imperial War Museum regarded intertitles from the WOOTB with scepticism: 'It has been found that the titles used by the Ministry of Information (MOI), while excellent for war propaganda purposes, are useless, and in some cases, misleading as historical records.'⁴⁹ PG's intertitles were not a viable source for this research as they only exist in a minor quantity. This is largely due to their position in a commercial database where newsreels are separated into single clips, and not as editions, as demonstrated by the Imperial War Museum. This thesis argues that intertitles are more than contextual linguistic prompts, but are rhetoric that directs opinion on a topic before its appearance. Indeed, the combination of both visual material and intertitles reaffirmed existing wartime social currents within British society through positive imagery.

Despite the extensive historiographies of First World War film, propaganda and the development of British cinema, newsreels have received scarce scholarship.⁵⁰ Indeed, 'propaganda scholars' have not even examined newsreels. Interdisciplinary studies of both aforementioned topics focus on feature-length films, overlooking newsreels. Moreover, the existing limited scholarship that discusses newsreels focuses on their institutionalisation and

⁴⁸ McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 57.

⁴⁹ Imperial War Museum. 6th Annual Report (3rd Report of the Board of Trustees) 1922-1923. Produced by Order of the Trustees. Thank you to Mathew Lee for providing this report.

⁵⁰ See e.g. Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*; Low, *British Film*, vol. 3.

development; not newsreel content. This is exemplified by McKernan's research on the development of newsreels in Britain, specifically TB. McKernan traces their evolution by focusing on the institution itself. When he discusses newsreels, he only uses them as context to wider events, such as the Treaty of Versailles.⁵¹ Similarly, Reeves's coverage of TB focuses on its development as a private institution and then its subsequent take-over by the WO. While he provides analysis of WOOTB newsreels, his discussion draws limited conclusions from only the shot sheets, which list the intertitles' content, but evidently he did not view the visual content as well.⁵² Nicholas Hiley's research during this period discusses the British government's growing interest in cinema at the start of the war. He demonstrates that the British government's policies reflected those in France, where that government adopted an official newsreel as a propagandistic outlet.⁵³ France's official Newsreel, *Annales de la Guerre* (War Annals), has been studied by Pierre Sorlin and Laurent Veray. Both historians affirm that, unlike the British example, *Annales de la Guerre* lacked variety and that newsreel images were far more military focused.⁵⁴ Thus, previous studies of First World War British newsreels focus on their institutionalisation and scholarship of film focuses on feature-length films. Analysis of the newsreel content itself will fill these explicit gaps in scholarship.

Since the inception of film, historians have grappled with its viability as a historical source. As Fritz Terveen stated:

Ever since the invention of cinematography the question has been raised again and again whether and to what extent it would be possible to use films as a way of documenting contemporary history.⁵⁵

⁵¹ For an example of McKernan using newsreels as a contextual device, see e.g. McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 62.

⁵² Reeves, *Official British Film Propaganda*, 113-116, 197-201. These same shot sheets are also used within this study.

⁵³ N. Hiley, "Making War: The British News Media and Government Control 1914-1916", PhD Thesis, The Open University, 1984, 347-415.

⁵⁴ P. Sorlin, 'Film and War', in J. Horne (ed.) *A Companion to World War I* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 353-369; P. Sorlin, 'The French Newsreels of the First World War', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 24:4 (2012), 507-515; L. Véray, '1914-1918, the First Media War of the twentieth Century: The example of French Newsreels', *Film History*, 22:4 (2010), 408-425. For a study of First World War American newsreels, see R. Fielding, *The American Newsreels, 1911-1967* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972).

⁵⁵ F. Terveen, 'Film as a Historical Document', trans. C.L. Burgauer (ed.), *Film and the Historian: A Combined Reprint*, vol.1 (London: University Vision, 1968), 23.

Terveen's initial assertion on the feasibility of film as a viable historical encapsulated the debate of film as worthwhile historical resources as newsreels as historical evidence have seen a diverse historical debate over their value as information. Christopher Roads' seminal lecture on film as historical evidence categorises film into five generalised classifications, each with distinct features.⁵⁶ Roads asserted that newsreels have value as a 'historical record', but, 'in general, it sacrifice[d] much in status as a basic record' because of contemporary censorship.⁵⁷ Roads focused on whether the historical evidence is considered factual or fictitious. He asserted that the footage's value can only be established with the cameraman's notes, leading him to describe newsreels as not being 'authentic', and therefore, not viable as a resource.⁵⁸ However, as aforementioned, this study does not need to account for newsreel authenticity. Newsreels are a viable resource to research as parallel to non-staged content, fake material also indicates what narratives the producers wanted to disseminate. Roads' conservative stance changed with J.A.S. Grenville's examination of newsreels as viable historical resources. Grenville distinguished between the different types of evidence that can be extracted from newsreels. He asserted that, dependent on the questions posed, the historian can retrieve either primary or secondary evidence.⁵⁹ While such distinctions are true of many resources, Grenville's study revealed that newsreel historians needed to "distinguish broadly between 'information' and 'message.'"⁶⁰ This thesis will focus on the latter concept of identifying the 'message' that is implicit in the newsreel content. Parallel to Grenville, William Hughes argued that newsreels, like other documentary footage, provides a 'partial record of events and personalities' and they must be understood within the broader context of their publication. Furthermore, he asserted that sponsored films 'are best viewed as propaganda' as they provided an insight into what the particular institution denotes as necessary to be viewed by the audience.⁶¹ Most of these accounts pre-existed the onset of post-modernism, which argued against Rankean objectivity, as demonstrated by previous discussion.⁶² Instead, post-modernism challenges 'truth claims', arguing that previous historians have focused too heavily upon realism, thereby rejecting other

⁵⁶ C. Roads, 'Film as Historical Evidence', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 3:4 (1966), 183-191.

⁵⁷ Roads, 'Film', 184.

⁵⁸ Roads, 184. For a similar view, see e.g. J.B. Kupiter, 'The Historical Value of Motion Pictures', *Library of Congress*, 31 (1968), 385-390.

⁵⁹ J.A.S. Grenville, *Film as History* (London: University of Birmingham, 1971), 7- 8.

⁶⁰ Grenville, *Film as History*, 9-10.

⁶¹ W. Hughes, 'The Evaluation of Film as Evidence', P. Smith (ed.), *The Historian and Film* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 56-65.

⁶² For a discussion of 'Rankean historiography', see e.g. K.R. Eskildsen, 'Leopold Ranke's Archival Turn: Location and Evidence in Modern Historiography', *Modern Intellectual History*, 5:3 (2008), 425-453.

resources,⁶³ like film. Nicholas Pronay argues that previous historiography on 1930s newsreels wrongly contended that newsreels were a subsidiary to newspapers, only providing ‘peripheral value’. While he acknowledges the pitfalls of garnering primary information from newsreels, he identifies that newsreels contain a wealth of material relating to what contemporary audiences saw. Pronay’s discussion of newsreels, while after the time period of this research, alludes to the many benefits and limitations of newsreels. He suggests that historians need to ask the ‘correct’ questions.⁶⁴ The differentiation of material from newsreels is later demonstrated by Robert Herzstein’s discussion of newsreels. He moves beyond limitations, instead focusing on both the explicit and implicit material that can be received from newsreels. He argues that the explicit material is the picture or image itself; the implicit material is how the image influences historical events.⁶⁵ While Herzstein’s latter point relies upon audience anachronism and reception, a difficult measure within the parameters of this study, both implicit and explicit material will be covered throughout this thesis. Finally, McKernan’s modern study of newsreels as a medium deviates dramatically from early discussions of their viability as historical records. He argues that newsreels occupy an ‘integral part of the bigger picture’ as they represent a single facet in understanding wider currents in society. McKernan states that just as newsreels reflected topical events, they also made them.⁶⁶ Similar to this thesis, he argues that newsreels influenced contemporary audience’s perceptions of what was considered topical during the war by presenting it to them in this medium. Conversely, the potential influence of newsreels resulted in possible censorship with the omission of information being viewed as potentially undesirable for public consumption. This thesis argues that newsreels are a viable historical resource as they were the most widely viewed visual media during the war, thereby making them an ideal medium on examining what Britons associated with the war.

This research has been separated into four chapters that have been determined by both quantitative data and focus. Chapter One addresses the institutionalisation of TB and its take-over by the British government as the official newsreel outlet for actuality footage. This

⁶³ W. Thompson, *Postmodernism and History: Theory and History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 27-41.

⁶⁴ Pronay, ‘Audience and Producers’, 411-418; N. Pronay, ‘British Newsreels in the 1930s 2. Their Policies and Impact’, *History*, 57:189 (1972), 63-72; N. Pronay, ‘The Newsreels: the Illusion of Actuality’, P. Smith (ed.), *The Historian and Film* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 95-121.

⁶⁵ R.E. Herzstein, ‘Newsfilm and Documentary as Sources for Factual Information’, in J.E. O’Connor (ed.), *Image as Artifact: The Historical Analysis of Film and Television* (Florida: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1990), 171-175.

⁶⁶ L. McKernan, ‘Newsreels: Form and Function’, in R. Howells and R.W. Matson (ed.), *Using Visual Evidence* (London: McGraw-Hill Education, 2009), 105.

represented a clear paradigm shift from feature-length films that no longer were popular. This chapter traces the development of the French-based producer, PG, and its influence on the broader newsreel market. Although this newsreel is French-based, it held an office in London. Since the institutionalisation and development of newsreels has already been examined in historiography, this study provides a novel angle to viewing its evolution through the elucidation of WO documents, which other studies have previously used, but have overlooked certain facets.⁶⁷ Newsreel content remains overlooked in historiography and this research will begin to fill this gap. This section argues that newsreels evolved as a result of changing public sentiment towards actuality footage, the government's domestic film policies and potential revenue. This section also contains a statistical breakdown of topics discussed throughout this thesis.

Chapter Two analyses the depiction of masculinity and femininity. This methodological approach has never been covered in newsreel historiography of the First World War until now. This thesis discusses how newsreels depicted both men and women within wartime narratives, such as civilisation against barbarism and socially appropriate gender roles. Finally, this section concludes with a case study examining convalescent soldiers, arguing that newsreels affirmed the masculinity of convalescent and injured soldiers, depicting them in manly activities and work.⁶⁸ This chapter argues against the First World War as constituting a 'watershed' moment for women.⁶⁹ This section develops the already broad range of First World War gender studies by approaching this discipline through the newsreel. It continues to develop this thesis's argument of newsreels being a directive medium that depicted positive images of war with the purpose of boosting public morale.

Chapter Three addresses British soldiers and critical voices of war. This section compares the repetitive images of smiling British soldiers to their counterpart, the German

⁶⁷ See e.g. McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 1-19; A. Aldgate, *Cinema & History: British Newsreels and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Scholar Press, 1979), 17-43; Hiley, "Making War", 347-415.

⁶⁸ For a discussion on convalescent soldiers see e.g. J. Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); J. Meyer, "'Not Septimus Now': Wives of Disabled Veterans and Cultural Memory of the First World War", *Women's History Review*, 13:1 (2004), 117-138; J.S. Reznick, *Healing the Nation: Soldiers and the Culture of Caregiving in Britain During the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); J. Meyer, *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 97-128.

⁶⁹ For discussion on the First World War not constituting a watershed moment, see e.g. S.R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (London: Longman, 2002), 101-110; G. Braybon, 'Winners or Losers? Examining Gender, Morality and Sexuality in First World War Britain and France', in G. Braybon (ed.), *Evidence, History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914-1918* (New York: Berghahn, 2003), 86-113. Conversely, for a historian who argues the First World War did constitute a watershed moment, see e.g. A. Marwick, *Women at War: 1914-1918* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 11-27.

prisoners of war (POWs). The depiction of happy POWs contrasted British people's beliefs of the maltreatment of their own troops in German prisoner of war camps. As soldiering represented the archetypal image of manhood during this period, its supposed polar opposite, dissenting and critical voices, are also examined. Critical voices were represented through multiple perspectives in British newsreels: the Easter Rising, pacifism and married men delaying service for marital reasons. Discussion of the Easter Rising demonstrates that newsreels represented the rebels as a minority fringe group and that Irish sentiments were largely in favour of British authority. Portrayals of pacifism, compared to men who delayed service on a marital basis demonstrated that more empathetic, public sentiments were displayed in relation to the latter group. Pacifism was presented as anti-patriotic, while the latter stance was depicted neutrally. Thus, this chapter solidifies this thesis's argument of newsreels depicting directed and positive images of war by discussing images of smiling soldiers in contrast to the public's reaction to pacifism.

Finally, Chapter Four discusses British civilians on the home front. Due to the practicality of filming during this period, it is unsurprising that this material is a central image of British newsreels. The image of children on the home front demonstrated simplistic narratives of participation and self-sacrifice, with children depicted in various forms of war work and patriotic activities. A seminal text to such discussion is Philippe Ariès's study of medieval children. He recognised that children have their own agency and that they were their own independent actors, making their experiences potentially different to adults.⁷⁰ While there is a growing field of research on children during the First World War,⁷¹ newsreel's depictions of this group have not been discussed. This section identifies that newsreels conveyed messages of cheerful youth participation in everyday life on the home front through images of children contributing the war effort. Children were used within propagandistic narratives to support participation with the sale of loans, encourage participation in broader society, and foster greater diplomatic relationships. Moreover, such images also prescribed gender roles to children, mirroring adult roles. Girls were depicted in gathering roles; boys were depicted as uniformed Boy Scouts, inferring their affinity with the militarism of soldiers. Similar to

⁷⁰ P. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. R. Baldick, 1st Vintage ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1965).

⁷¹ B. Blades, *Roll of Honour: Schooling & The Great War 1914-1919* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2015); R. Kennedy, *The Children's War: Britain, 1914-1919* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); H. Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society 1880-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); M. Pignot, 'Children', in J. Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Civil Society*, vol. 3 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 29-46.

children, images of animals working on both the home and war fronts further reinforced the implicit message that everyone willingly participated and contributed to the national war effort. The final case study in this chapter focuses on the depiction of sport and how war rhetoric paralleled descriptions of sporting activities. Images of sport demonstrated how war impacted all of society, where even leisure became legitimate if it was related to service. This chapter reaffirms that newsreels set a precedent to British society, depicting a directed image of what is acceptable behaviour during wartime.

In addressing the content of First World War British newsreels, this research provides a fresh discussion of images that the contemporary British audience viewed on a regular basis. This thesis complements and extends existing areas of scholarship from multiple disciplines by qualitatively and quantitatively analysing newsreels to deepen discussion of First World War British newsreels.

Chapter One: Propaganda vs. Profit

First World War British silent newsreels remain an understudied area of wartime film and popular entertainment. Newsreels represented a key facet in shaping domestic views of the war as they provided a prominent source of contemporary actuality footage. The history of newsreels is synonymous with the history of ‘moving pictures’, or what is now called the modern cinema. As newsreels were predominantly shown following or during intervals of the main feature in the entertainment schedule at picture palaces, they represented an intrinsic component of British cinema during the First World War. While silent newsreels reached their peak in popularity during this period, their inception as a visual medium predated the war itself as newsreels were initially unsustainable to produce due to the lack of topical materials.¹ Similar to other official war film propaganda mediums, newsreels did not integrate black propaganda to initiate or encourage prejudice or hatred, but depicted actuality footage of the war and home fronts to promote patriotism.² This chapter examines the establishment of newsreels within British popular culture, arguing that government policy, public popularity and revenue directed its development. It discusses two of the three main producers of newsreel material before, and during the war: TB and PG.³ The first producer was a British-based company, and the second was French. While both producers are discussed, greater attention will be directed to TB due to the availability of British WO material and the lack of resources relating to PG’s wartime procedures. This section also examines the inception of newsreels before the twentieth century and the period before the beginning of the First World War. Finally, newsreel’s depiction of the war events and the British government’s engagement in the production of an official newsreel from May 1917 till the end of the war are examined. The institutional focus of this chapter identifies that before the war newsreels evolved from vaudeville to picture palaces as a result of the novelty of the medium to the British public. Additionally, during the war, this novelty was again demonstrated by TB replacing feature-length films as the main outlet for actuality footage due to changing public sentiment and potential revenue. This chapter argues that the evolution of newsreels was influenced by public reception of war actuality footage, and additionally, the government’s perception of public reception and its potential for gaining revenue from films. This latter point on revenue remains

¹ McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 8-9.

² Reeves, *Official British Film Propaganda*, 4-10.

³ ‘Gaumont Film Company’ was the third producer. This study could not integrate Gaumont newsreels due to the unavailability of English related materials and newsreel copyright.

unexamined in previous historiography. Indeed, WO files elucidate that revenue was a central facet that led to this policy change in domestic British newsreels.

The Institutional Development of Newsreels before the War

Newsreels existed before the First World War, but it was during this conflict that they gained greater positive public popularity from wider British society, as they were initially stigmatised as a lower-class and working-class entertainment. Crucial to understanding any historical medium is examining the atmosphere in which the medium was received and its public reception. Therefore, it is essential to understand the atmosphere in which newsreels were displayed, and how this environment changed public consciousness before, and during the war. When discussing pre-war British sentiments of cinema, Roger Smither states that the venue itself 'continued to carry with it the perceived taint of its fairground origins and its largely working-class audiences'.⁴ Such beliefs were exacerbated by ongoing 'indecent practices' in cinema auditoriums, which further alienated the possible attendance of the genteel and aristocratic demographics. Paul Moody identifies that British cinema auditoriums accommodated more than just cinema-goers, permitting 'improper behaviours', pickpocketing, and the sale of 'indecent materials'. Many such activities continued far into the war.⁵ These antisocial habits, alongside clear class segregation within British society, split the cinema audience. Conversely, David Mayall states that pre-war cinema attendance was largely related to the convenience of the closet cinema, instead of a 'desired' film. Furthermore, when in the cinema venue, the public were quick to respond either positively or negatively to screened material. Contemporary commentators stated that both adults and children caused uproars when material was not to their tastes.⁶ Therefore, the venue and practice of viewing the moving image before the war was perceived as a form of working-class entertainment and was stigmatised by upper classes.

⁴ R. Smither, 'Film/Cinema', in ed. U. Daniel et al. (ed.), *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopaedia of the First World War*, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, 2015. Accessed from: <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/filmcinema> (accessed: 2 March 2018)

⁵ P. Moody, "'Improper Practices' in Great War British Cinemas", in M. Hammond and M. Williams (ed.), *British Silent Cinema and the Great War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 49-61.

⁶ D. Mayall, 'Palaces for Entertainment and Instruction: A study of Early Cinema in Early Birmingham, 1908-1918', *Midland History*, 10:1 (1985), 96-98.

During the silent period of newsreels, from the final decade of the nineteenth century until 1927,⁷ three newsreels producers ‘held sway over the newsfilm industry of Britain’: PG, Gaumont Graphic, and TB.⁸ As the newsreels were silent during this period, they also contained linguistic prompts (‘intertitles’) that pre-empted the audience on its content. Even though the majority of British people were literate by this period,⁹ newsreel intertitles were also read aloud, which meant that everyone was able to understand what was being presented.¹⁰

Even though this thesis focuses more on TB, it also uses material from PG, who were the creators of the newsreel. Therefore, it is intrinsic to understanding PG’s development as it led to the establishment of other newsreel producers. PG was part of the French-based newsreel producer which was established in 1896 in Paris. Charles Pathé and his brothers, Émile, Théophile and Jacques founded *Société Pathé Frères* (Pathé Brothers Company), which represented the inception of the moving picture into a commercial medium for mass viewing. Initially, Pathé recorded, produced, and distributed rudimentary material, such as citizens walking in the park and sports events. Most of the Pathé film material was shown at vaudeville shows as a form of comedic and burlesque entertainment.¹¹ Competition between proprietors and attractions inclined the owners of these shows to constantly seek new attractions with the moving picture filling this niche. Richard Abel notes that the rise in popularity of vaudeville shows was also closely related to a corresponding rise in the popularity of moving image. As vaudeville expanded to different areas of Europe and America, so did the Pathé material. Abel’s examination of vaudeville pamphlets and programmes reveals that advertisements for the moving picture gradually became more prominent, demonstrating the growing public attraction of this spectacle to contemporaries. From 1903-1905, Pathé expanded their newsreel distribution by setting up independent theatres throughout Europe and America. During this same period, many other moving picture producers also formed. However, due to Pathé’s monopoly on this market, because of their own theatres, they became the major power in the film market, relegating other starting producers as secondary.¹² In 1908, Pathé introduced the first cinema newsreel to be shown on a weekly basis outside vaudeville shows called the *Pathé Journal*. As newsreels gained popularity, their frequency increased to bi-weekly editions.

⁷ Pronay, ‘The Illusion of Actuality’, 97.

⁸ McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 1.

⁹ J. Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 83.

¹⁰ McKernan, 79.

¹¹ R. Abel, *The Red Rooster Scare: Making Cinema American, 1900-1910* (London: University of California Press, 1999), 4.

¹² Abel, *Red Rooster* 2-33.

Additionally, Pathé opened a British office in 1910, thereby spreading Pathé material to a new audience.¹³ This represented a clear shift in the history of newsreels as they were no longer part of an entertainment schedule, but were now considered as a primary, standalone entertainment. This was tangibly demonstrated by the creation of picture palaces solely dedicated to presenting the moving image material.

The second newsreel producer this research discusses is the Topical Film Company (TFC), producer of TB, which was created as the result of increasing public fascination with the moving picture in 1911. Unlike Gaumont Graphic and PG, TFC was solely British-based, and its productions were focused entirely for a domestic audience. Thus, initially, TB did not have the same level of material that larger producers, such as PG, had to maintain their audience.¹⁴ TFC was established by William Jeapes and Herbert Wrench, with their first issue released in September, 1911.¹⁵ Their company specialised in actuality film and rudimentary topicals for the following decade. Before TFC, Jeapes and Will Barker partnered with the founder of the Warwick Trading Company, Charles Urban, which created moving image and newsreel material until 1915 when it went into receivership due to competition for footage. Initially, TFC's newsreel functioned as a weekly feature, but this quickly changed to bi-weekly on Wednesdays and Saturdays in November of the same year because of increased positive public responses. Unlike PG, TB only produced newsreel material. As a result, all of TB's newsreel footage was domestic. 'Feature length' actualities were not created by Topical until 1915, when the British government took control of this company.¹⁶ Thus, TB was created as an outcome of the British public showing an increased interest in topicals. Together with PG and Gaumont, these three newsreel producers represent the foundations for British newsreels before the First World War.

The First World War and Newsreels

At the beginning of the First World War, many newsreel producers saw this conflict as constituting a 'golden age' for material. However, the cinema was still aligned with negative

¹³ Aldgate, *British Newsreels*, 18.

¹⁴ McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 1-10.

¹⁵ McKernan, 4.

¹⁶ McKernan, 2-6.

public connotations due to pre-war stigmas, prejudices and contemporary war perceptions of society not openly enjoying leisure activities during an international conflict. Jan Rüger identifies that even before the war there were multiple moral arguments against cinema attendance. Arguments included the ‘loose sexual morals’ that were associated with the darkness of the cinema auditorium. Furthermore, at the start of the war, cinema attendance was perceived as distasteful as home audiences should not experience ‘amusement, diversion, and pleasure’, while soldiers were experiencing ‘death, suffering and sacrifice.’¹⁷ However, as the war continued, these beliefs faded in public consciousness, resulting in a wider class demographic attending the cinema.¹⁸ The price of a cinema ticket remained static from the pre-war period, which meant it remained an affordable wartime leisure activity. It was threepence to a shilling for the majority of cinema seats, with two-shilling seats for those of higher class.¹⁹ Adam Smith and Michael Hammond comment that the war provided the environment for making cinema respectable within all of British society, and no longer a stigmatised working-class entertainment.²⁰ Reasons for this shift from pre-war sentiments range from the possibility of a person seeing a family member or friend on the screen, to vicarious exposure to war events, participation, or the inducement of patriotic fervour. Hiley states that the increasing popularity of cinema was tangibly demonstrated in two ways. Firstly, the government acknowledged its popularity. Secondly, the British government actively capitalised on this by creating its own official films. This is demonstrated by the feature length film, *Britain Prepared* (1915), being released internationally to promote British strength to belligerent nations, and domestically, to boost public morale and recruitment numbers.²¹ Secondly, music halls and cinema attendance had dramatically increased, with the primary attraction being newsreels. Hiley demonstrates this public hold by illustrating how attendees remained in the cinemas to watch the ‘newsfilm’ at the end of programme.²² Therefore, the newsreel’s presence in the cinema contributed to increasing the moral legitimacy of war as well as the growing popularity of cinemas or music hall attendance.

¹⁷ J. Rüger, ‘Entertainments’, in J. Winter and J. Robert (ed.), *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 110-113.

¹⁸ Pronay, ‘Audience and Producers’, 414.

¹⁹ Low, *British Film*, vol.3, 24.

²⁰ A. Smith and M. Hammond, ‘The Great War and the Moving Image’, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television*, 35:4 (2015), 556-557.

²¹ For a discussion of official films, see e.g. N. Reeves, ‘Film Propaganda and its Audience: The Example of Britain’s Official Films during the First World War’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18:3 (1983), 466-472.

²² Hiley, “Making War”, 382.

McKernan states that during 1915, PG was the most prominent newsreel producer, with an estimated audience of ten million equating to 30% of the British audience. TB was the third most prominent producer, garnering 11% of the British audience.²³ However, McKernan's statistics only take into account the cinema audiences, and not attendees at other social events, like school screenings. For this reason, it is highly probable newsreel viewing rates were higher than what McKernan states. This was certainly the case internationally, as in America and France newsreels were used to 'illustrate patriotic talks in schools, educational societies', and wider public ceremonies and events.²⁴ Thus, although newsreels still possessed pre-war stigmas at the beginning of the war, these public perceptions changed dramatically with the increasing British interest in newsfilm and the war culture itself.

As the war continued, newsreel producers became increasingly frustrated with their lack of access to more sensational material. Even with the consistent trickle of film material, they were unable to secure warfront material.²⁵ Newsreel producers believed such footage would potentially expand their viewership, resulting in more revenue. Low states that 'at the beginning of the war cameramen, like journalists, found it hard to secure not only facilities, but even permission to visit the front.' Due to government censorship, cameramen were prohibited from recording military training, tactics and positions on the war front at the start of the war. In efforts to resolve this issue, many newsreel companies joined together to form the 'Cinematograph Trade Topical Committee' in October 1915. This committee consisted of 'Barker, B. & C., Eclair, Gaumont, Jury, Kineto and the Topical Film Company.'²⁶ As a result of the establishment of this committee, newsreel producers collectively negotiated with the military authorities and government officials to send cameramen to the front with proceeds from the films to go towards war-related charities.²⁷

The British government's intervention in newsreels began with the WO and Cinematograph Trade Topical Committee forming the 'War Office Cinematograph Committee' (WOCC) in 1916.²⁸ Due to internal disagreement between these producers, increasing competition for material and its use, the WOCC was formed with Lord Beaverbrook

²³ McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 25.

²⁴ Sorlin, 'The French Newsreels of the First World War', 514.

²⁵ This was a similar issue for the British press. For discussion of this topic, see e.g. N. Wilkinson, *Secrecy and the Media: The Official History of the United Kingdom's D-Notices System* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 74-97.

²⁶ Low, *British Film*, vol.3, 34.

²⁷ Low, 34-35.

²⁸ McKernan, 10-11.

(previously Sir Max Aitken) as the Head, William Jury, the owner of Imperial Pictures, and Sir Reginald Brade, the Under-Secretary of State for War for the WO. As the committee evolved, Sir Graham Greene, the Permanent Secretary to the Board of Admiralty, was added to supply footage of the Navy.²⁹ WO memorandums and reports revealed that the primary purpose of this committee was to disseminate TB material into 'Allied and Neutral Countries' to propagate the British cause.³⁰ This committee functioned outside of the Wellington House, the British propaganda outlet for domestic and neutral opinion.³¹

By the beginning of 1917, three newsreels were in regular public circulation with the monopoly of the market held by the two French companies, Gaumont Graphic and PG and TB being less prominent. Because the WOCC naturally favoured the British-based company it turned to TFC,³² even though it held a comparatively smaller audience than its two French rivals. This represents the end of the 'unofficial' period for British newsreel during the First World War.

The official period of British newsreels began in May, 1917, when the WOCC took control of TB, renaming it as the 'War Office Official Topical Budget.' WOOTB's viewership quickly expanded over the remainder of the war from 600,000 at the start of 1915 to three million by the end of the war. With its association with the WO, TB gained access to exclusive war front material, including soldiers marching, training and interacting with allied troops. This official newsreel eventually became the main avenue for the British WO to present actuality footage as propaganda until the end of the war.³³ Reeves comments that the shift towards newsreels as an outlet for propaganda had two motivations. Firstly, Beaverbrook instigated this shift in emphasis by recommending the move from feature-length films to shorter pieces, such as newsreels.³⁴ As revealed by personal correspondence between Beaverbrook and other members of the cinematographic department, this recommendation in itself was not just because of declining public reception but also because of the potential revenue newsreels may have. This policy change came from a noted decline of public interest in 'feature' length films subsequent to *Britain Prepared* (1915) and the *Somme* (1916).³⁵ However, underpinning this

²⁹ Low, *British Film*, vol. 3, 36.

³⁰ PA, BBK/E/2/9: Memorandum re War Office Cinematograph Committee and War Office Topical Budget, N.D.

³¹ McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 37.

³² Reeves, *Official British Film Propaganda*, 65.

³³ McKernan, 10-19.

³⁴ Reeves, 65-73.

³⁵ Reeves, 'Film Propaganda and its Audience', 482-485.

policy change was also government commercial interests in newsreels as possible income. This latter reasoning is illustrated by Beaverbrook being one of the three majority shareholders in The Topical Company.³⁶ Furthermore, in November 1917, Beaverbrook privately purchased all this company.³⁷ Indeed, from the outset of the war ‘the film trade had been keen both to prove itself loyal [to the British government] and exploit the situation financially’.³⁸ This former point on reception is identified by Horrall and Reeves’s analyses of British popular culture and film during First World War Britain, which state that the longer the war continued, the less the domestic British audience wanted to see it.³⁹ However, neither historian acknowledges that this shift was also the result of potential governmental and shareholder revenue. Producing feature-length films required an extended timeframe and substantial capital. Conversely, newsreels required minimal funding and production. Indeed, newsreels contained only around five minutes of content, which is simplistic, easy to capture and requires minimal cuts between cameras. Therefore, from a commercial standpoint, newsreels were much easier to produce and attract larger crowds, making them a far more profitable medium than feature-length films.⁴⁰

Returning to the aforementioned discussion on policy change, the government turned to different outlets for distributing actuality footage. Reeves argues that the second impetus in 1917 was the introduction of domestic official film propaganda. He states that the causation for this was because British public morale was decreasing at the end of 1916, and the government needed a propaganda department to deal effectively with domestic, neutral and allied opinion.⁴¹

The British WO’s adoption of an official newsreel was public, as *The Times* newspaper published an article detailing how:

³⁶ PA, BBK/E/2/9: Memorandum re War Office Cinematograph Committee and War Office Topical Budget, N.D.

³⁷ McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 44.

³⁸ McKernan, 11.

³⁹ Reeves, *The Power of Film Propaganda*, 28-38; A. Horrall, *Popular Culture in London c. 1890-1918: The Transformation of entertainment* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 208-211.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of commercial interests in film and the British government’s propaganda policies, see e.g. D. Archibald and M. Velez-Serna, ‘Kilts, Tanks and Aeroplanes: Scotland, Cinema and the First World War’, *Necus: European Journal of Media Studies*, 3:2 (2014), 155-175.

⁴¹ Reeves, *Official British Film Propaganda*, 27.

The War Office Cinematograph Committee have taken over the Topical Film Company for the period of the war, in order to issue, bi-weekly, a Topical Film budget showing all the principle events of interest in the war. Arrangements have been made to include pictures from the British front in France and elsewhere, and the French official films from the Western front have been placed at the disposal of the Budget... The Budget is circulated throughout the British Empire and France, and arrangements are being made to circulate it widely in the United States and other countries. It is, therefore, invaluable for propaganda.⁴²

As demonstrated by *The Times*'s article, the WO's takeover of TB was publically advertised. It also described how the TFC will exchange material with the French government, who had previously created their own official newsreel. It is likely that the French government's creation of a similar method of propaganda acted as a positive influence on encouraging the British government's own adoption of a domestic newsreel producer as well. Furthermore, the newsreels' propagandistic elements were overt, as demonstrated by its advertisement in one of Britain's dailies, which highlighted that newsreels were not considered black propaganda.

The British and French Official cinematograph producers, WOOTB and *Les Annales de La Guerre* respectively, entered into a mutual, exclusive relationship of exchanging newsreel material. Under this agreement, Beaverbrook proposed that each government send negatives of their respective official newsreels to the opposing government and incur no commercial charges; out of good-will. This exchange ensured that both governments gained material that promoted allied diplomatic relationships, whilst also diversifying their own content and avoiding repetition.⁴³

From the outset of the war, it was inevitable that multiple producers recorded the same events, therefore presenting identical material to the same audiences. However, with the French government's agreement with the British government to exclusively exchange material, such content could not be duplicated by another producer in either country. This issue came to a head in August 1917, when PG used French official newsreel material in its own production. PG used *Annales de la Guerre* of War no. 20, and *Annales de la Guerre* issues eleven through

⁴² *The Times*, 'Films from the War Front', 21 Sep. 1917, 3.

⁴³ PA, BBK/E/2/5: John Chatertis (Chief Intelligence Officer at the British Expeditionary Forces) to Beaverbrook, 5/5/17.

to *Annales de la Guerre* seventeen.⁴⁴ Consequentially, Lord Beaverbrook demanded appropriate compensation and an explanation for this error. Pierre Marcel, the head of the French Cinematographic Department, commented that this was the result of Paris PG's lack of contact with the British government.⁴⁵ From reading the correspondence between departments, it can be inferred the material being shown was neither offensive nor critical to British strategy, as censorship would have removed this content. Thus, this disagreement fundamentally concerned the commercial aspect of the newsreel and the duplication of content that may detract from newsreel interest due to repetitive content and led to Britons no longer watching them. This demonstrates that the use of French material in British newsreels, and vice-versa, impacted on both diplomatic relationships and commercial interests between these two countries. Indeed, the emphasis on the relevance of potential revenue from newsreels is demonstrated by Beaverbrook instigating this partnership when revenue for feature-length films was dwindling due to 'declining interest'.⁴⁶ From the outset of the exchange of French and British material, the commercial aspects were already outlined by Beaverbrook. He stated that under such an agreement: 'The use shall be gratuitous, no charge being made' to either party.⁴⁷ Therefore, initially, vaudeville shows were the basis to present this material, but eventually film started to dominate other contemporary acts and attract a wider international audience. PG's interactions with TB further reinforce that the British government's change from feature-length productions to newsreels was the result of both increasing positive public responses and the potential for greater revenue through the latter medium.

Following the WO's adoption of an official newsreel, British and French material was quickly disseminated beyond domestic boundaries to neutral countries such as the United States of America.⁴⁸ Charles Urban introduced British film propaganda, where he promoted the allied cause. Initially, Urban presented newsreel material to the American Congress before exploring a potentially broader audience.⁴⁹ He worked with the British Foreign Office in the United States to create contracts with existing American picture palaces to disseminate both

⁴⁴ PA, BBK/E/2/10: Pierre Marcel to Lord Beaverbrook, 21/8/1917 - 8/9/1917.

⁴⁵ PA, BBK/E/2/10: Marcel to Beaverbrook, 21/8/1917.

⁴⁶ PA, BBK/E/2/5: Capt Holt-White (Representative of the Canadian War Records Office) to Beaverbrook, 15/5/1917.

⁴⁷ PA, BBK/E/2/5: Beaverbrook to Marcel, 10/5/1917.

⁴⁸ PA, BBK/E/2/7: P. Gilmour (Member of the Department of Information) to Beaverbrook, 15/6/17 – 18/6/17.

⁴⁹ *The Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly*, 'The British War Films in America: Official Statement, on oath, by the Managing Director of the Patriot Film Corporation: Mr Charles Urban's Part in the Transaction', PA, BBK/E/2/1: Clipping of *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly*, 26/10/16.

feature-length and newsreel film propaganda.⁵⁰ WO correspondence reveals that the Department of Information, which controlled film propaganda, stated that TB ‘should be placed on the American market as the very earliest possible moment.’ Indeed, the purpose of the British adopting an official newsreel was to spread propaganda in both domestic and neutral countries.⁵¹ Sir William Jury commented on the importance of this multifaceted purpose by insisting that American troops should be incorporated in newsreel material for diplomatic relationship purposes.⁵²

Supplementary to the newsreels, the WOOTB also produced longer five to twenty minute films, which covered different aspects of the war. Like newsreels, these longer features provided a spectrum of material and topics, including: foreign countries, troops and events of significance during the war. For, example, there were features showing specific regiments, such as *With The Royal Flying Corps* or *The Essex Regiment*,⁵³ which provided insight into different aspects of war culture.

All newsreel content during this official war period adheres to what Reeves and McKernan describe as a ‘factual’ war film approach. This meant newsreels material was based in actuality footage. Charles Masterman, the initial head of the Wellington House, implemented a policy from the outbreak of the war, stating that all propaganda was to be fact.⁵⁴ Masterman was prescribed the task of disseminating propaganda in both neutral countries and British Dominions, which justified Britain’s entrance into the war and continued governmental policies.⁵⁵ Britain’s entrance into the First World War was not justified in newsreels by the use of atrocity material. The WOOTB deliberately chose not to use or apply ‘atrocity narratives’ or sensationalistic material in their war coverage. Indeed, there were only ten examples of this, which equates to 1.25% of British home front material. Furthermore, out of these eight examples: four are from PG and independent TB, before its takeover, which reinforces that the British government deliberately avoided the use of false atrocity material.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ L. McKernan, ‘Propaganda, Patriotism and Profit: Charles Urban and British Official Films in America during the First World War’, *Film History*, 14:3/4 (2002), 369-389.

⁵¹ PA, BBK/E/2/7: Beaverbrook to Gilmour, 18/6/1917.

⁵² PA, BBK/E/2/17: Holt-White to Lt. H.G. Bartholomew (Photography section of General Headquarters), 10/4/1918.

⁵³ ‘With The Royal Flying Cops’, 12-1917, IWM 141; ‘The Essex Regiment’, 03-1918, IWM 394.

⁵⁴ PRO/FO371/2207/88913/33913, FIRST PROOF OF WELLINGTON HOUSE INTERIM REPORT, 2nd December 1914, cited in Reeves, *Official British Film Propaganda*, 10.

⁵⁵ Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*, 39-42.

⁵⁶ Gilmour, ‘Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories’, *Stock atrocities or atrocity related material*.

This focus on actuality footage in newsreels meant that there was a lack of 'black propaganda' with falsified sequences.⁵⁷ The concept of atrocity propaganda was identified by James Morgan Read, who states that there are three 'general types of cruelties: (1) massacre, such as the Armenian massacres; (2) mutilation, such as the gouging of eyes of German soldiers; (3) maltreatment of civilians and prisoners.'⁵⁸ None of these images were shown within newsreels. Indeed, newsreel material was always happy in tone. Commonly compounded with the concept of atrocity material is the romanticised narrative of civilisation against barbarism. This thesis argues that these facets can be examined separately, and that newsreels only presented the latter concept. That is, atrocity material is not synonymous with the wartime narrative that both self-aggrandised the British as civilised and denigrated the German army as barbaric. This narrative was proliferated through many other propaganda and non-propaganda mediums. During the war, many belligerent nations imbued the war with a symbolic narrative. Britain and its allies fought for civilisation. Conversely, German and its allies demonstrated an affinity for barbarism in British consciousness.⁵⁹ Such beliefs were fanned by contemporary official atrocity reports, such as the 'Bryce Report',⁶⁰ which provided multiple factual accounts of the German army's 'barbaric' acts in Belgium.⁶¹ Cate Haste states that British official propaganda was a 'gradual process', where the 'government did not have a conscious policy for propaganda until later in the war' when public morale was low.⁶² However, as demonstrated by Michael Sanders and Philip Taylor's study, just over a month into the war official propaganda measures were implemented under the 'Wellington House', headed by Masterman.⁶³ Therefore, from the outset of the war, film propaganda was expected to be factually based. Newsreel content provided myriad images of war culture, adhering to contemporary British film propaganda policies of factual film.

In February 1918, although WOOTB was renamed as 'Pictorial News (Official)', it still continued an identical role of distributing newsreels for the MOI via correspondence with the

⁵⁷ See page 6 for a discussion of 'black propaganda'.

⁵⁸ Read, *Atrocity Propaganda*, 3.

⁵⁹ S. Audoin-Rouzeau and A. Becker, *Understanding the Great War 1914-1918*, trans. C. Temerson (London: Profile Books, 2002), 113-159.

⁶⁰ Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages. Appointed by his Britannic Majesty's Government and Presided over by the Right Hon. Viscount Bryce, O.C., The Right Hon. Sir Frederick Pollock, Bt. K.C., Sir Alfred Hopkinson, K.C., Mr H.A.L. Fisher, and Mr Harold Cox, 1915. Accessed from: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/brycere.asp (accessed: 2 March 2018)

⁶¹ Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 229-237.

⁶² Haste, *Home Fires Burning*, 21.

⁶³ Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*, 15-55.

WO Cinematograph.⁶⁴ The first issue of the newly renamed TB was ‘General Allenby’s Entry into Jerusalem.’⁶⁵ This event was widely celebrated by Britain and their allies as it was seen as symbolic and it helped boost public morale.⁶⁶ From both a propagandistic and militaristic standpoints, taking the ‘Holy Land’ of Jerusalem was also seen as another blow against Germanic expansion into the Middle East with the Berlin-Baghdad railway. Additionally, it was viewed as ‘a positive mark on public opinion.’⁶⁷ Stefan Goebel illustrates that images of General Allenby, as a humane ‘pedestrian’, juxtaposed the 1898 ‘pomp of the Kaiser’s visiting Jerusalem.’⁶⁸

Correspondence between members of the Cinematograph Department in the Department of Information and the WOCC highlighted that the name change to the ‘Pictorial News (Official)’ was primarily due to the government’s desire to distance itself from an overt, publically recognised channel of domestic propaganda. Indeed, as stated in a report by the MOI: ‘In short our activities in cinematography are universally as a Government enterprise specially designed for propaganda purposes.’ This report stated that it is:

...desirable to produce and distribute films which have no apparent propaganda value, a fact which may at times give rise to public criticism. This applies more particularly to The Topical Budget, which as a bi-weekly news service must necessarily include many pictures that have no direct bearing on propaganda aims. As a whole, however, the Budget is an instrument of undoubted propaganda value.⁶⁹

This report further pointed out that ‘[f]rom a financial point of view the Budget may be described as self-supporting’, and that ‘[o]ur activities under this heading [MOI] are productive of revenue.’ This demonstrates that the Ministry was both defending itself from suggestions of potentially wasteful spending, while also affirming that the TFC was very profitable. Therefore,

⁶⁴ To avoid the potential ambiguity of the correct newsreel producer, ‘WOOTB’ will be used for the entire official period under the British government, and not ‘Pictorial News (Official)’ for newsreels in the final months of the war.

⁶⁵ McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 48.

⁶⁶ L. McKernan, “‘The Supreme Moment of the War’: ‘General Allenby’s entry into Jerusalem’”, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 13:2 (1993), 169-180.

⁶⁷ J. Fantauzzo, ‘The Finest Feats of the War? The Captures of Baghdad and Jerusalem during the First World War and Public Opinion throughout the British Empire’, *War in History*, 24:1 (2016), 84.

⁶⁸ S. Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 117.

⁶⁹ PA, BBK/E/2/18: Report of the Cinematograph Section of the MOI, 1/8/18.

while the overt purpose of TB was as a commercial company producing news material, its real purpose was as an avenue for film propaganda. Throughout this aforementioned report, universal public recognition of the government's adoption of an official newsreel was criticised as detracting from its propagandistic impact. The writer stated that the most opportune propaganda is that which remains 'discreet'. Indeed, TB, unlike other forms of contemporary propaganda, was not 'forced' or conveyed passively, such as in the case of posters, upon Britons. The British public had the choice to attend, or not attend, this paid leisure activity.⁷⁰

This report continued by stating that the 'educational' value and 'lesson' of newsreels was detrimentally impacted by the audience being predisposed to knowing that what they are viewing was propaganda. Therefore, changing the name from 'War Office Official Topical Budget' to 'Pictorial News (Official)' disassociated newsreel producers and their material from government intervention. Alongside this effective propaganda element, the report also ascertained that newsreel sales increased because many cinema owners believed that they were performing a government service by displaying their footage. This belief was reinforced as the profits went directly to the WO and not the cinema's accounts.⁷¹

The report also illustrated that film suffered a relatively short moment of unpopularity. Correspondence between the Canadian War Records Office and Lieutenant Colonel A.H. Hutton-Wilson states that this effect was global:

The truth of the matter is that the present style of Film is played out. The public is jaded and we have to tickle its palate with something a little more dramatic in the future, if we are to maintain our sales. From this point of view one is naturally compelled to look at the matter from an entirely commercial standpoint.⁷²

Therefore, just as the turn from feature-length film to newsreels was the result of changing public opinion and the desire for potential revenue, so was the change of name of the newsreel producers. In both instances, historians such as Reeves, McKernan and Badsey suggest that these changes were due to the lack of public understanding and reception of government film

⁷⁰ PA, BBK/E/2/18: Report of the Cinematograph Section of the MOI, 1/8/18.

⁷¹ PA, BBK/E/2/18: Report of the Cinematograph Section of the MOI, 1/8/18.

⁷² PA, BBK/E/2/5: Beaverbrook to Lt Col Hutton Wilson (General Headquarters), 8/5/1917.

propaganda.⁷³ However, as elucidated by WO documents, this was only a partial motivation for this change. Poor revenue impacted negatively on the WOCC's investments in the newsreels, which may have been a more pivotal factor for this shift. Beaverbrook, initially one of the three majority shareholders (98%) of the TFC,⁷⁴ bought this company outright in November 1917 and personally stood to gain significant wealth from this investment.⁷⁵ Thus, there were social, political and personal factors that all impacted on the evolution from feature-length movies to newsreels, and the different name changes to the newsreel producers and distributors related to reception and potential revenue.

In June 1918, the Department of Information took control of this committee, becoming the head of the TFC.⁷⁶ Lord Beaverbrook, the head of film propaganda, commented on this period, stating that:

The Topical Budget shown in every picture palace was the decisive factor in maintaining the morale of the people during the black days of the early summer of 1918.⁷⁷

Whether true or not, Beaverbrook's statement illustrated how contemporary domestic propaganda authorities perceived the newsreels' effectiveness as a propaganda medium and also potentially how he perceived his own importance. This statement affirmed the contemporary propaganda effect, while interestingly overlooking Beaverbrook's private monetary and political investments in this institution and situation.

Graphs

This thesis's chapters are determined by both quantitative data and this research's focus on Britain and British people, as newsreels were created to convey positive messages to

⁷³ Reeves, *The Power of Film Propaganda*, 28-38; McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 35-50; S. Badsey, *The British Army in Battle and its Image, 1914-1918* (London: Continuum, 2009), 130.

⁷⁴ PA, BBK/E/2/18: Report of the Cinematograph Section of the MOI, 1/8/1918.

⁷⁵ McKernan, 44.

⁷⁶ McKernan, 47-50.

⁷⁷ Cited in A.J.P. Taylor, *Beaverbrook* (London: Hamish, 1972), 144.

Britons. Due to the quantity of newsreels, which are largely fragments and not full reels, PG and TB newsreels will be used alongside each other to acquire a representative sample of what newsreel content the British public viewed during the war. As a newsreel generally contained five stories, it can be assumed that this study's 756 PG fragments is equivalent to 151.20 newsreels. This is then added to 115 TB and 78 WOOTB newsreels, which equals 344.20 newsreels in total. This corresponds to 172.10 weeks or 3.30 years, as newsreels were shown bi-weekly.⁷⁸

This thesis is split into thematic sections, which have been determined through quantitative data that is differentiated into eight primary categories. These primary categories are then separated into secondary categories and percentages. Even though chapters are split thematically, subjects in each section are also drawn from different primary categories. For example, 'British Royalty' will be briefly discussed within the context of the 'British Home front' in chapter four, and 'British Politicians' is examined alongside gender within chapter two. This research mainly focuses on representations of Britain and Britons as newsreels from both TB and PG were created to convey positive, directed narratives to British audiences and boost public morale. The two largest British orientated primary categories are: 'Home Front (Britain)', appearing 800 times (21.94%), and 'British Soldiers and Nurses', appearing 640 times (17.55%), which are both discussed in separate chapters. Conversely, 'Foreign Countries, Troops and Civilians (Allied Nations)' is not covered, even though statistically it was the most tagged category, receiving 957 tags (26.24%), as it is beyond the scope of this research. Similarly, 'War Zone', which appears 694 times (19.03), is not covered as it is beyond this research's focus.⁷⁹ Indeed, British material collectively represents 47.69% of newsreel material in this research, which makes it the most thematically prominent topic.⁸⁰ Therefore, Britain and British people are the central focus of this thesis as they were the intended audience for TB and PG newsreels, and, they are the quantitatively largest theme.

As demonstrated by figure 1, the categories of British Politicians and British Royalty were a minority, represented 109 and 190 times respectively. This demonstrates that newsreels

⁷⁸ T. Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.0: Newsreel Data', *Positive Images of War: A Study of British First World War Newsreels*. This data is expressed as a table, pie graph and bar chart in Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.1: Primary Categories', *Positive Images*. To access the 'Appendix 1.0: Newsreel Data', see e.g. <https://figshare.com/s/f0bb006f199de698bf35>

⁷⁹ Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories', *Positive Images*. To access 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories', see e.g. <https://figshare.com/s/f0bb006f199de698bf35>

⁸⁰ Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories', *Positive Images*. This percentage is the sum of primary categories: Home Front (Britain), British Politics, British Royalty, and British Soldiers and Nurses.

from both TB and PG were not created to legitimise leadership of the aforementioned categories. Indeed, the lack of newsreel coverage conveyed that newsreels were really created to reflect their audience: British civilians, soldiers, nurses and allied troops. This non-partisanship reflected wartime domestic propaganda that was also constructed to not further ‘party political ideals’.⁸¹ Furthermore, WO reports during the end of 1917 highlight that the public believed “[t]hat the Budget contains too much ‘Royalty’”,⁸² even though this material was scarce in this sample (figure 2).

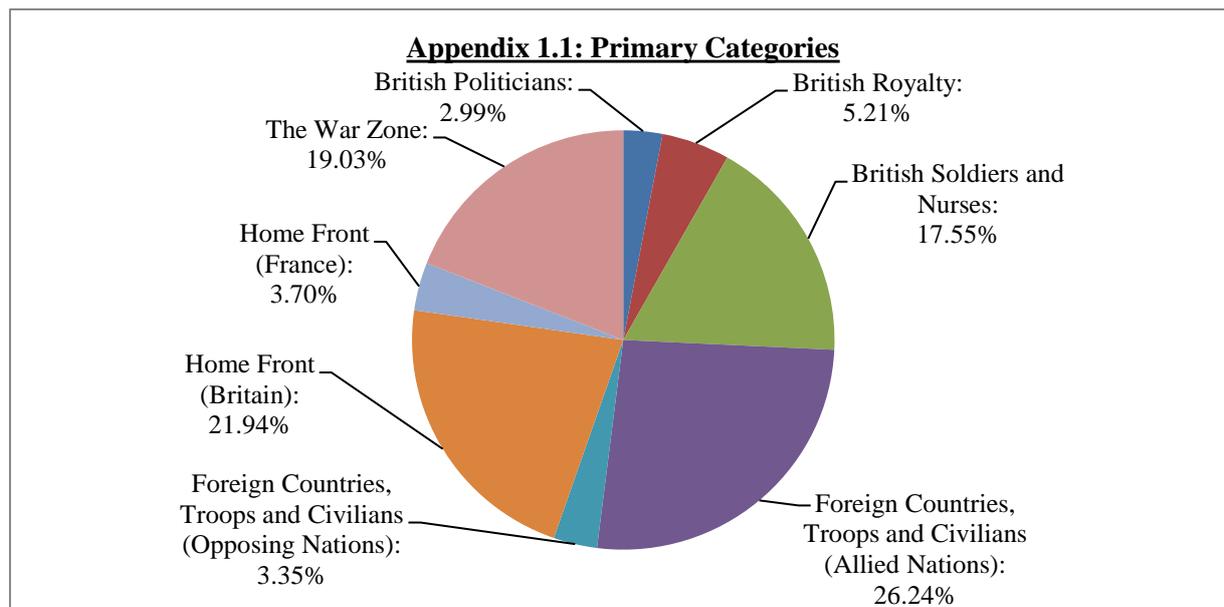


Figure 1. T. Gilmour, ‘Appendix 1.1: Primary Categories’, *Positive Images of War: A Study of British First World War Newsreels*.

Appendix 1.1: Primary Categories (Table)	Tags	%
British Politicians	109	2.99%
British Royalty	190	5.21%
British Soldiers and Nurses	640	17.55%
Foreign Countries, Troops and Civilians (Allied Nations)	957	26.24%
Foreign Countries, Troops and Civilians (Opposing Nations)	122	3.35%
Home Front (Britain)	800	21.94%
Home Front (France)	135	3.70%
The War Zone	694	19.03%
Grand Total	3647	100.00%

Figure 2. T. Gilmour, ‘Appendix 1.1: Primary Categories’, *Positive Images*.

⁸¹ Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda*, 44-45.

⁸² PA, BBK/E/14, William Tewson (Sales Manager for TB), Report of Sales Department, W.E., 27/10/1917.

This research discusses topics that are both a statistical majority and minority. Indeed, both recurrent and also, scarce depictions of newsreel images are essential to discussing what was screened during wartime Britain. For example, in later discussion, pacifism and married men against war are discussed in chapter four, even though it only represented 1.00% of British home front material.⁸³ The appearance of this material revealed that the British government was not against depicting such material, even if it was anti-war.

Primary Category: British Politicians	Tags	%
Secondary Categories	109	2.99%
Female political activity	1	0.92%
Interaction between politicians and the army	26	23.85%
Interaction between politicians and the public	50	45.87%
Interaction with foreign Politicians and Royalty	15	13.76%
Miscellaneous	9	8.26%
Political activities	8	7.34%

Figure 3. Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories', *British Politicians*.

Topics within each chapter are derived from secondary categories, which as demonstrated by 'Appendix 1.2 Secondary Categories' are separated by primary categories, and then converted into percentages.⁸⁴ Due to the parameters and length of this thesis, all topics of higher or lower frequencies cannot be addressed. Indeed, even though categories like 'Demonstration of Weapons', which was depicted 122 times (17.58%) in the primary category: 'The War Zone', it will not be addressed here.⁸⁵

Dissimilar to quantitative approaches, not all topics can be qualitatively measured through tagging. For example, chapter two, which discusses gender and the First World War, applies qualitative analysis alongside quantitative material as it is not possible to identify and then tag all instances of femininity or masculinity as such concepts are abstract. This thesis applies both qualitative and quantitative methodologies throughout. However, in particular examples one approach is used more frequently.

Figure 3 demonstrates the breakdown of a single primary category, British Politicians, into secondary categories with its corresponding results. This illustrates the percentage of

⁸³ See pages 92-97.

⁸⁴ Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories', *Positive Images*. This table contains a breakdown of tags and their corresponding percentages within the primary category.

⁸⁵ Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories', *Demonstration of Weapons*.

images within each primary category. The breakdown of each secondary category, alongside its newsreel producer is illustrated in ‘Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories’.⁸⁶

Conclusion

Newsreels evolved as a popular entertainment activity for many Britons throughout the First World War as a result of propaganda policy, increased public interest and the potential it offered for profits. TB and PG both had roots in pre-war newsreel production. PG created the first cinema newsreel that revolutionised the moving image. In the twentieth century, this popularity for viewing moving images flourished, leading to the creation of more producers, such as TB. Many newsreel producers believed that the beginning of the First World War would provide them with greater sustainable material to present to their viewers and, therefore, a more consistent and wider audience. In 1917, TB was absorbed by the British WO, which demonstrated an overt shift away from the official feature length films, which were previously used as the main outlet to actuality footage. Therefore, the British government’s takeover of TB was also because they wanted to capture potential future revenue, which was detrimentally impacted by the declining public interest in feature-length films, and their propagandistic interests. This facet of commercialism remains overlooked in historiography as previous historians have not acknowledged Beaverbrook’s investment in the TFC or the broader context surrounding the changes in film mediums, including significance of the renaming of TB. Indeed, this break in film policy was exemplified by Beaverbrook’s action of buying the TFC outright. Thus, the evolution of newsreels in British society, and their adoption by the British government as an official outlet for actuality footage was the result of government film policy, change in public interests and increasing film earnings.

⁸⁶ Gilmour, ‘Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories’, *Positive Images*. This table is also differentiated by institution.

Chapter Two: Men and Women of War

Gender and the First World War are widely covered in historiography as historians have identified and discussed many aspects of war relating to both masculinity and femininity.¹ Indeed, studies that are not directly related to gender and the First World War integrate many social themes related to the suffragist movement and the apparent ‘watershed’ moment of the war for women.² Furthermore, the event of ‘war’ itself is gendered as being a male practice, where masculinity forms the basis for participation, patriotism, and protection of patriarchal institutions.³ However, these perceptions altered when the First World War evolved into a ‘total war’ involving men and women alike. Despite the involvement and contribution of women in the war effort, many pre-war, patriarchal social constructions of femininity persisted as most women remained in domestic roles. Studies of gender and history began with the rise of feminism in the late 1960s, when many theorists wanted to illuminate and understand the role of women within many historical contexts, where previously they were regarded as peripheral.⁴

This research draws influence from gender studies by analysing the depictions of both masculinity and femininity in First World War British newsreels. Newsreels reinforced separate, but equally important, roles for females and males during the war, but integrated war narratives of participation and patriotism into such roles to make them war-related. Indeed, ‘men for war; and women for work’ was the primary message about gender in First World War British newsreels. Newsreels presented a positive image of wartime gender roles, reinforcing that newsreels avoided divisive topics, while also reaffirming existing trends within British society. Representations of females and males within newsreels rhetoric will be discussed, illustrating how an explicit dichotomy is drawn between the sexes. Additionally, divisions by class will also be discussed to demonstrate that a woman’s class directly impacted she was were represented contributing to the war effort. Depictions of convalescent, wounded, and disabled soldiers will also be discussed. These soldiers’ aesthetic relationships with sport and interactions with nurses will be examined through the lens of gender. Furthermore, a

¹ For the purposes of this study, the terms ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ will not be used as synonyms, but as isolated concepts. ‘Gender’ will refer to social constructions imposed by society. This will be expressed by the terms ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’. ‘Sex’ will refer to the biological denominator.

² Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, 101-117.

³ K. Hutchings, ‘Making Sense of Masculinity and War’, *Men and Masculinities*, 10:4 (2008), 389-404.

⁴ J.W. Scott, ‘Rewriting History’, in M.R. Higonnet et al. (ed.), *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two Wars* (London: Yale University Press, 1987), 19-31.

contemporary gift book from a British convalescent soldier's hospital will also be used as it also conveyed similar underlying messages.

Historical methodology in the latter twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries has instigated multiple forms of enquiry that focus on the minority or the oppressed. This represents a shift away from political history that focused on the dominant group.⁵ This thesis adheres to the former approach by using the methodological approaches of gender studies to discuss femininity and masculinity within First World War British newsreels. Joan Scott's pivotal discussion of gender as a category of analysis represented the formal inception of gender studies into history, and, therefore, is fundamental to discussing masculinity and femininity. Previous to Scott's study, many gender or 'women's' histories employed the term 'gender' as synonymous for 'women', resulting in a highly reductive analysis. This method actively omitted the dialogue between men and women, and also the differences of identity with these categories, thus leading to only a partial historical picture. Scott affirmed that gender history requires a multi-faceted definition that represents multiple areas of society.⁶ Her multi-faceted definition theorised that gender formed the basis for many historical events, and that it is subjective to the cultural, societal, social, political and racial contexts where it is interpreted. Scott affirmed that masculinity and femininity are a binary of power, where the former is privileged.⁷ Although Scott did not invent gender as a historical category, she did adapt it into a workable definition for historical methodology. Indeed, her definition is widely accepted in modern liberal arts studies.⁸

Gender history in the 1980s continued to challenge the reductive nature of early feminist and gender histories by focusing on what constitutes masculinity and femininity. This is demonstrated by Judith Butler's theorisation of the performative aspects of gender. Butler stated that society prescribes ideal roles for both masculinity and femininity. Such roles are then internalised by the person and 'performed'.⁹ Butler asserted that both verbal and non-

⁵ G.R. Elton, *Political History: Principles and Practice* (London: Allen Lane; The Penguin Press, 1970), 3-23.

⁶ J.W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Review*, 91:5 (1986), 1067-1068.

⁷ Scott, 'Gender', 1067-1072.

⁸ P. Zazueta and E. Stockland, *An Analysis of Joan Wallach Scott's Gender and the Politics of History* (London: Routledge, 2017), 62.

⁹ J. Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Theatre Journal*, 40:4 (1988), 519-531. Butler discusses the performative aspects of gender further in J. Butler, *Gender and Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity*, 3rd edn. (London: Routledge, 2006), 25-26.

verbal communication contributes to the formation of gender identity, as the individual reinforces social constructs of masculinity and femininity through ‘performance’. Butler’s theory will be later discussed alongside images of convalescent soldiers remaining ‘masculine’ and continuing to ‘perform’ masculine acts despite injury. Therefore, these gender ‘roles’ are the subjects analysed in this research. Acknowledging that these roles are performative highlights that masculinity is not reserved to men, and femininity is not restricted to women. Indeed, newsreels depicted socially constructed ideals of both gender identities.

At the end of the 1980s, and into the 1990s, gender history drew on intersectional studies that discuss compounding forms of oppression. Kimberlé Crenshaw’s pivotal work on intersectional forms of oppression identifies that various other factors, such as race and class, compounded to form greater levels of discrimination. Crenshaw’s work focuses on ‘women of colour’,¹⁰ but has been applied more broadly in gender studies. For example, Joanna Bourke analyses gender, class and ethnicity simultaneously in her discussion of British history.¹¹ Furthermore, this ‘intersectional’ approach is also demonstrated by studies on disability and gender, which be discussed in relation to convalescent soldiers.¹²

Modern gender theorists demonstrate growing support for following intersectional aspects of this methodological approach to analysis history. Their influence on intersectional gender history is displayed in many gender studies and histories.¹³ Modern gender studies have moved beyond examining the dialogue between masculinity and femininity, to focus on what defines the ‘masculine’.¹⁴ Jeanne Boydston's genealogical discussion of gender history affirms that the 'cultural processes that has produced 'women' have also produced men, making it necessary to discuss masculinity.¹⁵ In modern gender historiography, many historians have moved beyond early gender views, stating that, instead of the primary focus being on gender, there should be a discussion of broader 'processes and meanings that constitute a social or

¹⁰ K. Crenshaw, ‘Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against women of Colour’, *Stanford Law Review*, 43:6 (1991), 1241-1299.

¹¹ J. Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity* (London: Routledge, 1994).

¹² See pages 59-76.

¹³ J. Boydston, ‘Gender as a Question of Historical Analysis’, *Gender and History*, 20:3 (2008). 558-583.

¹⁴ K. Davis, M. Evans and J. Lorber, ‘Introduction’, in K. Davis, M. Evans and J. Lorber (ed.), *The Handbook of Gender and Women’s Studies* (London: Sage, 2006), 2-3. For an example of a ‘masculine study’, see J. Hearn and M. Kimmel, ‘Changing Studies on Men and Masculinities’, in. Davis, Evans and Lorber (ed.), *Gender and Women’s Studies*, 53-71.

¹⁵ Boydston, ‘Gender’, 558.

cultural history'.¹⁶ Thus, gender studies emerged from earlier feminist scholarship and has itself fragmented and diversified into specialised areas.

Initial studies of the First World War and gender largely focused on the apparent success of female suffrage through war work and their representation within atrocity narratives. Additionally, many gender theorists, like Margaret R. and Patrice L.-R. Higonnet, used the First World War as a case study of the evolution of gender roles. The Higonnets contended that historians have anachronistically 'attached female suffrage to their participation in that war.'¹⁷ Indeed, many historians following the First World War have incorrectly romanticised this period as constituting a significant social change for women, when this was largely erroneous.¹⁸ The Higonnets' metaphorical employment of a 'double helix' demonstrates that gender differences between males and female, should not be understood in isolation but in a 'persistent system of gender relationships', which adheres to binary models of analyses, placing females as 'subordinate' and inferior.¹⁹ Since their seminal approach gender studies has expanded to explore other aspects of gender.

Gender and atrocity narratives of the First World War are widely covered in historiography and previous historians have discussed how atrocity images were ingrained into the British public's wartime imagination. Many of this school, such as Ponsonby and Read, asserted that the British government's domestic propaganda was false, manipulated to fan hatred of Germans and the German army.²⁰ The archetypal images of the intersection between gender and war atrocity stories are the 'Rape of Belgium' and the killing of Edith Cavell. The term 'Rape of Belgium' was used to describe the German army's entry into Belgium and their subsequent maltreatment of their civilians. Nicoletta Gullace argues that wartime rhetoric commonly expressed events such as this through gendered language.²¹ This term was used for propaganda and widely disseminated by the Bryce Report, which contained multiple lurid accounts of atrocious acts in Belgium. Following the German invasion, Belgium was personified as a female, creating the metaphorical and literal rape of Belgium and its women. After the war, many of these accounts were condemned by early historiography as lies. Modern

¹⁶ Boydston, 'Gender', 576.

¹⁷ M.R. Higonnet and P.L.R. Higonnet, 'The Double Helix', in M.R. Higonnet et al. (ed.), *Behind the Lines*, 31-47.

¹⁸ Braybon, 'Winners or Losers?', 89-105.

¹⁹ M.R. Higonnet and P.L.R. Higonnet, 'The Double Helix', 34.

²⁰ Ponsonby, *Falsehood in War-Time*; Read, *Atrocity Propaganda*. Neither historian took a gendered approach to propaganda.

²¹ N. Gullace, *"The Blood of Our Sons": Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 18-33.

historiography has revised this initial assertion though, arguing that many accounts of rape did actually occur, but were embellished in this report.²² Additionally, Trevor Wilson argues that the Bryce committee ‘did not produce a dishonest or fraudulent report’, but they avoided verifying the truth.²³ John Horne and Alan Kramer comment that acts of rape and mutilation by German soldiers played a “special role in the construction of ‘German atrocities’” by allied opinion.²⁴ Similarly, Gullace states that atrocity narratives used gendered language to emphasize the negative impact of war on women through imagery of rape.²⁵

The second archetypal image illustrated in gender studies of the First World War is the killing of Nurse Edith Cavell by German ‘Huns’.²⁶ Following her death, Cavell became a national martyr for the British war cause. Newsreel depictions of Cavell focus on her funeral, where citizens, politicians and royalty all publically commemorate her death. A PG newsreel depicting her funeral ends with an image of her over the cross (figure 4), symbolically linking her martyrdom for the British war cause to Jesus Christ on the cross. Thus, Christianity became linked with both gender and war.²⁷ Such allegorical imagery used the example of Cavell’s martyrdom to engender support for the British war cause. Examining Cavell’s death, alongside the themes of religion and gender, Katie Pickles’ study of international coverage of this event reveals that many countries’ discussion of this topic showed that while ‘the allied accounts emphasized the differences between men and women, the Germans had their minds on equality between the sexes.’²⁸ This was evident in the German army’s willingness to carry out indecent acts indiscriminately on both sexes; meaning equal treatment for both sexes. Examining other depictions related to this, a PG newsreel showed Cavell’s funeral service at Westminster Abbey, a hospital with her namesake, and a headshot of her.²⁹ All depictions of Cavell’s commemoration, including public, political, and royal responses to these events, are similarly skewed. In a newsreel depicting her funeral all levels of society are present at her funeral illustrating that war impacted all levels of society. Catriona Pennell’s discussion of the outbreak of war in Britain identifies that religious rhetoric was widely employed in public sermons to engender the support and service of Christians. Indeed, war quickly became likened to a ‘Holy

²² Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 196.

²³ T. Wilson, ‘Lord Bryce’s Investigation into Alleged German Atrocities in Belgium, 1914-1915’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14:3 (1979), 369-383.

²⁴ Horne and Kramer, 197-199.

²⁵ Gullace, “*The Blood of Our Sons*”, 27.

²⁶ Read, *Atrocity Propaganda*, 210-215.

²⁷ Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *Great War*, 113-159.

²⁸ K. Pickles, *Transnational Outrage: The Death and Commemoration of Edith Cavell* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 50.

²⁹ *PG*, 75847, 2354.16.

Crusade',³⁰ where the German Kaiser was represented as the Anti-Christ in clerical sermons in Britain.³¹ Christianity, civilisation, and humanity represented key ideals to not only the British public, but also its allies. Similarly, Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker's discussion of contemporary responses to the First World War identify that these three principles can be understood through multiple lenses, including patriotism, commemoration and 'masculine and feminine sensibilities.'³² Indeed, the intersections between defending Christianity and gender are demonstrated by the aforementioned example of Cavell's image symbolically being linked to Jesus through images of the crucifixion.



Figure 4. PG, 71709, 1858.43.

Newsreels were created to affirm existing currents within British society during the war. As it was younger and middle-aged generations that largely contributed to the war effort, images had to reflect and also incentivise their participation. This was demonstrated by depictions of young, physically attractive nurses (figure 5). Conversely, there were no images of 'older' nurses in newsreels. Indeed, this narrative was also reflected by the lack of depictions of older men re-entering the workforce despite that fact that many men left retirement to

³⁰ C. Pennell, *A King United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 62-63.

³¹ M. Snape, *God and the British Soldier: Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 115.

³² Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *Great War*, 45.

contribute to the war effort.³³ This use of younger women in newsreel material mirrored ageist contemporary depictions of Cavell. Even though Cavell was 49 when she was executed, contemporary commentators and propaganda alike described and depicted her as a ‘girl’ or ‘child’ when she was a grown woman.³⁴ Therefore, similar to depictions of a young Cavell, newsreels also omitted images of older people. This was due to images of younger people being more relatable to youthful audiences as they were near their age and also because messages contained with newsreel material was directed at them, and not older generations. Therefore, newsreels omitted images of older people as they were constructed to direct and reinforce narratives that were focused at younger generations.



Figure 5. TB, 265-2, 23-09-1916. Women making food for convalescent soldiers.

Recent historians have progressively challenged previous schools that championed the ‘positive’ or ‘watershed’ moment of the war for women. For instance, Arthur Marwick asserted that the First World War benefited women by exposing them to areas and practices in society that were traditionally socially and legally reserved to men.³⁵ In modern scholarship, however, this stance has been challenged and revised. Susan R. Grayzel questions the significance of the First World War as a watershed moment for women. Grayzel states that although there is tangible evidence of women in uniform in ‘male’ occupations, as soon as the war ended,

³³ Proctor, *Civilians, War*, 67.

³⁴ A.C. Hughes, ‘War, Gender and National Mourning: The Significance of the Death and Commemoration of Edith Cavell in Britain’, *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’Histoire*, 12:3 (2005), 428-433.

³⁵ Marwick, *Women at War*, 11-27. For a similar stance, see e.g. C. Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars, 1914-1940*, 2nd edn. (London: Methuen & Co., 1968), 170-175.

domesticity was reinforced again. While some women gained enfranchisement following the war, this did not extend or generalise to broader facets of life. For example, post-war employment largely depended on multiple social and economic considerations, such as class and age, and there is no explicit evidence that suggests the war explicitly benefited women overall. Similarly, social welfare policies and cultural perceptions remained stagnant.³⁶ Like Grayzel, Gail Braybon identifies the continued misconception that the First World War was a 'watershed' moment for women.³⁷ Claire Culleton's study of First World War British working-class female literary responses to the First World War further reveals that only some particular aspects of female life were improved, such as life expectancy, but social and economic stigmas remained during the inter-war period.³⁸ Such arguments against the positive aspects of the First World War were even displayed in 1919, with Beatrice Webb's *Report of the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry* providing detailed examples of how the government, 'acting through the Ministry of Munitions, has not fulfilled the pledges as to the payment for substituted women's labour' throughout the war'. Additionally, this report then adds that it breached the English Prime Minister's David Lloyd George's *Majority Report*, which stated "that if the women turn out the same quantity of work [as men] they will receive exactly the same pay".³⁹ Therefore, the watershed moment for women that previous historians imbued the First World War with was incorrect.

First World War and gender studies have shifted from this debate, now focusing on nuanced aspects of people's experiences. For example, Janet Watson's revisionist work on the subjective effects of gender and individuals' socio-economic status or class, provide a discussion of the dichotomy between 'work' and 'service'. Watson's examination of rhetoric illustrates that upper-class and middle-class women's war work was generally labelled as constituting service or duty. However, for the working class, war work was considered work, illustrating the difference in experience subjective to one's class.⁴⁰ Michael Roper's study on First World War British soldiers' emotional experiences on the Western Front identifies that soldier's vicarious exposure to domesticity actually boosted troop morale required for combat

³⁶ Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, 101-110.

³⁷ Braybon, 'Winners or Losers', 86-113.

³⁸ C.A. Culleton, *Working-Class Culture, Women and Britain, 1914-1921* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 16.

³⁹ *Report of the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry* (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1919) 135. Thank you to Mathew Lee for providing this report.

⁴⁰ J. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 105-146.

as it reinforced the masculinity of service.⁴¹ This emphasis on masculinity is further demonstrated by Joanna Burke's analysis of the effects of war on the male body. It demonstrates that those mutilated or wounded in war were not emasculated like their male civilian counterparts outside of combat because they had served their country.⁴² Indeed, this premise of soldiers remaining masculine following injury was depicted in newsreels, where convalescent soldiers were commonly depicted in stereotypically masculine contexts. The masculinity of injured and disabled soldiers was affirmed in newsreels by depictions of their ability to continue performing stereotypical masculine roles.

Men for War: Women for Work

First World War British newsreels' depictions of men and women convey both explicit and implicit stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. Indeed, newsreel images and their accompanying intertitles prescribe what is socially acceptable for both genders. They conveyed that men should go to the warfront, while women stay on the home front. Tammy Proctor argues that during the First World War, the British home front became heavily feminised, where the idea of a 'civilian man' [was] an oxymoron'.⁴³ Indeed, this was the case in newsreels. This saturated newsreels during the war period, where images of women in war work are prominent and men are rarely shown in work on the home front. The central images of women in work portrayed them in agricultural and horticultural roles with voluntary auxiliary and women's groups, and women involved in munitions positions to challenge contemporary criticisms of them in these positions.⁴⁴ Common to all these illustrations is the overt happiness of the women depicted (figure 6). However, while these depictions celebrate the entry of women into work, they also implicitly devalue their positions and perceived value within British society. The narrative of women in work and men going to war has never been examined through the lens of newsreels. Wartime newsreels provide a 'directed' image of the First World War that prescribed roles to its audience. Newsreels suggested that, as a result of the war, women were exposed to new employment opportunities related to their ability to support the

⁴¹ M. Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), 119-159.

⁴² Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, 39-43.

⁴³ T.M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World At War, 1914-1918* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 4.

⁴⁴ For a discussion of contemporary criticism, see e.g. A. Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend: Munitions Workers in the Great War* (London: University of California Press, 1994), 113-134.

national war effort. Before the war, women in paid employment numbered 4.93 million. This increased to 6.19 million following the war.⁴⁵ Therefore, newsreels provided an illusion that the war instigated the inception of women into work when this is not supported by statistical evidence.



Figure 6. WOOTB, 346-2, 13-4-1918. Smiling Women's Land Army members.

During the First World War, many British women were recruited into various organisations and voluntary groups to support the war effort on the home front. The aim of all these groups was to lift productivity to meet wartime requirements and compensate for men going to war. Rudimentary recruiting propaganda for a women's voluntary group is demonstrated in the following intertitles:

Women Farm Workers. Women Land Workers, who are replacing men on farm driving home and milking cows, feeding pigs and calves. More recruits are still wanted by the Women's Land Service Corps.⁴⁶

This newsreel depicted women happily chatting to each other while walking towards the camera. Following sequences portrayed women in various farm jobs, including feeding and

⁴⁵ G.J. DeGroot, *Blighty: British Society in the Era of the Great War* (London: Longman, 1996), 304.

⁴⁶ TB, 247-2, 20-05-1916.

herding animals. Common to these depictions is all the women are smiling. This demonstrated to contemporary audiences that patriotic work was enjoyable. The ‘Women’s Land Service Corps’ was formed by volunteers in 1916 as predecessor to the ‘Women’s Land Army’ (WLA). It was created to compensate for male agriculturalists that joined the army.⁴⁷ Bonnie White argues that doing farm work ‘in a bonnet-style hat and long-waisted coat’ allowed women to maintain their femininity and not be masculinised by the manual labour or name of the group.⁴⁸ This was evident in the aforementioned newsreel, where women were wearing ‘bonnet-style hats’ and coats (figure 7). This intertitle described women completing farm work and finished with an explicit call for more women to join auxiliary groups. Many intertitles before and after the TB’s takeover of newsreels celebrated the entrance of women into such work, while also calling for greater recruitment. Stating that women replaced men in various previously male-dominated occupations suggested to contemporary audiences that women had gained greater access to previously socially restricted roles. Neither newsreels’ visual sequence nor intertitle language suggested that this replacement employment was temporary or permanent, inferring that if women contribute to the war effort; this may lead to greater civil liberties. Todman identifies that images, containing images of ‘grinning women’ were manufactured by the British government to tempt women further into similar occupations.⁴⁹ Therefore, these images of working women were distributed to garner greater support from women who were not already supporting the war effort. The inferred promise of women gaining great social and economic opportunities was largely dispelled by many men returning to their past occupations. This reaffirms that newsreels were created with the intended purpose of immediate morale rather than for long-term social change.

⁴⁷ B. White, *The Women’s Land Army in First World War Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 9-29. This group was also known by contemporaries as the ‘Women’s National Land Service Corps, and was an early product of the later WLA. For further discussion of this topic see, e.g., White, *Women’s Land Army*, 19- 28. For other examples of the WLA in newsreels, see e.g. *PG*, 1922.12, 73353; *PG*, 1896.43, 7259; *PG*, 1942.31, 73934.

⁴⁸ White, 48.

⁴⁹ D. Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005), 180.



Figure 7. TB, 247-2, 20-05-1916.

Other examples of agricultural newsreels similarly depicted images of smiling women in war work. For example, a newsreel depicted many women turning turnips into animal food and also herding cows. The intertitles for it stated: ‘The Royal Cattle Farms. Miss Maxfield and the Misses Hobson who are working on the Royal Farm at Sandringham and taking the place of men in tending the King’s Cattle.’⁵⁰ Similar to the previous example, both newsreels highlighted the depleted workforce negatively impacted by war and the important civil liberty that women obtain by completing these services. These intertitles indicated the lack of male authority in farming situations, as previous to and even during the war, this occupation was still considered by most society as ‘man’s work.’⁵¹ However, these intertitles omit to mention that 8,000 women were already employed in agriculture before the war.⁵² This omission suggested that women were exposed to entirely new vocational opportunities when supporting the national war effort. Initially, however, many British farmers were hostile towards increasing women’s labour in farming because of the potential employment competition in post-war Britain with returning soldiers which might threaten existing skilled male workers

⁵⁰ TB, 274-1, 22-11-1916.

⁵¹ *Women’s Land Army L.A.A.S* (London: Women’s Branch, Food Production Department, Board of Agriculture, 1917), 5.

⁵² Board of Trade, *Report on the State of Employment in all Occupations in the United Kingdom in July 1918*, cited in M. Pugh, *Women and the Women’s Movement in Britain, 1914-1999*, 2nd edn. (London: Macmillan, 2000), 20.

and famers. While farmers had always used the labour of their families, this new labour force did not receive the same treatment.⁵³ Therefore, newsreels provided a disparate image to what was actually occurring on the British home front as men still outnumbered women in this farming setting.

Even before the British government's adoption of an official newsreel, women were widely celebrated for their participation in the war effort. For instance, intertitles to a 1916 newsreel read: 'Women winning the War. Women and boys working in munition factories replace men who are able to join the Colours.'⁵⁴ Women working as munition workers were a more socially accepted occupation during this period.⁵⁵ This newsreel presented a boy making munitions. The intertitle conveyed an implied comparison between adult woman and the juvenile boy, asserting that both parties are capable of the same war work. This implicitly devalued women's work output as being equivalent to that of a child's, however this implied comparison may also be due to the both groups being inexperienced in munition production. Even with this implied devaluation, it also still claimed that women were foundational to the war effort. The depiction of both women and children in war work conveyed the simplistic message that all ages can contribute to the war effort, affirming that newsreels were directive.

Just as newsreel visual material prescribed how contemporary British audiences perceived the war, intertitles language also described British women and men and their roles during the war. This was demonstrated by the gendering of terms such as 'soldier' to denote only a male. Indeed, throughout the corpus of 13, 851 words,⁵⁶ 'women' are never referred to as 'soldiers', even when many women became auxiliary troops in khaki uniforms.⁵⁷ This phenomenon reflected British social perceptions of what constituted a soldier as women who wore 'khaki' were socially frowned upon and caused agitation due to their perceived forfeiting of femininity.⁵⁸ Therefore, women in khaki were seen as transgressing gender and social demarcations.

⁵³ N. Verdon, 'Left out in the Cold: Village Women and Agricultural Labour in England and Wales during the First World War', *Twentieth Century British History*, 27:1 (2016), 1-8.

⁵⁴ *TB*, 241-1, 08-04-1916.

⁵⁵ T. Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War: Britain and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1986) 714-718. For a discussion of social tensions relating to female munition workers, see e.g. A. Woolcott, *On Her Their Lives Depend: Munitions Workers in the Great War* (London: University of California Press, 1994), 59-89.

⁵⁶ Gilmour, 'Appendix 2: Corpus', *Positive Images*.

⁵⁷ For an earlier observation on this point see J. Gould, 'Women's Military Services in First World War Britain', in M.R. Higonnet et al. (ed.), *Behind the Lines*, 114-126.

⁵⁸ S.R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the Great War* (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 193-195. For a similar discussion, see e.g.

When describing the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) new recruits, a newsreel equated these women with soldier status because of their clothing: '[t]hese splendid girls arrive in mufti and after a short period of training proceed overseas with the smartness and precision of veterans.'⁵⁹ This intertitle addressed the gendering of aesthetics by employing the word 'mufti' to describe citizens' clothes. However, it omitted noting explicitly what colour uniform the women will take on when they are overseas. Additionally, an explicit dichotomy is drawn between 'girls' as civilians and 'veterans' as a comparison to female auxiliaries.⁶⁰ It was implied that becoming an auxiliary empowers the individual as an adult woman, comparable to that of a soldier. The evidently staged newsreel depicted three women walking into a WAAC centre in civilian clothes, and then leaving in uniform. Upon exiting, many other women approach them, pointing at the centre to emphasise its importance and copy their peer's actions (figure 8).



Figure 8. *WOOTB*, 326-2, 24-11-1917. As the three women leave the WAAC recruiting centre two women approach them, asking them where they can also be of service and then walk into the recruiting centre.

The following sequence of the previously discussed newsreel revealed several smiling WAAC members greeting each other as they go to their different jobs, later revealed as agriculturalists, chefs and cleaners. These employment options reinforced women's

L. Noakes, "'Playing at Being Soldiers?': British Women and Military Uniform in the First World War", in J. Meyers (ed.), *British Popular Culture and the First World War* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 120-130.

⁵⁹ *WOOTB*, 326-2, 06-1918.

⁶⁰ For other examples of the use of 'girl' and 'women' in this context, see e.g. *WOOTB*, 350-1, 08-05-1918, *WOOTB*, 317-1, 19-09-1917.

domesticity as they reflected pre-war ‘feminine’ roles. This reel ended with the remaining WAAC members leaving on a train, waving at the camera, emulating similar proceedings of troops going to the war front (figure 9). The similarity of this image reinforces the equivalence of participation, but in separate roles for both men and women.



Figure 9. WOOTB, 326-2, 24-11-1917. This scene depicted women waving goodbye to their peers as they leave to work.

Just as similar images were used to depict men going to war, the same sequence was used to portray women going work. Returning to the intertitles’ absence of discussion about the use of colour, the difference in rhetoric illustrated the dichotomy between male and female war occupations and reaffirmed their ideal roles during the war. However, as the war progressed, growing numbers of women joined the forces despite social prejudices. Following the government’s institutionalisation of conscription, women in khaki became slightly more acceptable within British society. Even with the inception of the WAAC in 1917, later renamed as Queen Mary’s Army Auxiliary Corps, there was still obvious public discontent,⁶¹ but this is not presented in the compiled intertitles. The well-known war expression: ‘For Men must Fight and Women must Work’, depicting new WAAC recruits,⁶² represented the central theme of gendered language within newsreels. This aforementioned phrase insisted that man’s role was

⁶¹ Grayzel, *Women’s Identities at War*, 198.

⁶² WOOTB, 348-1, 24-4-1918.

on the warfront whilst the woman's role was to maintain domesticity on the home front. This widely held public sentiment was not supported as, statistically, men continued to outnumber females in the workplace during the war. There were 4,145,000 women in work, and 9,159,000 of men in home front work in July, 1918.⁶³ Following the war, the illusion that women dominated home front work was perpetuated by contemporary war images and popular narratives of service. These false narratives are perpetuated by works like Marwick's *Women at War*, which asserts that women's place in society was changed post-war. Conversely, during the war, men were rarely depicted in working situations at the home front even when many men still remained in the coal industry, ship-building, and even munitions, which was gendered by Britons as being a socially acceptable 'masculine' occupation. Dan Todman argues that '[c]ontrary to popular mythology, the war did not give women the opportunity to get jobs: millions of working-class women worked before the war as a necessity.' Therefore, many working-class women were already in paid work before the war. The image of women in work was popularised during the war period with frequent female images in farm work, munitions work, and nursing widely perpetuated in modern media and memory. With the end of the war there was a 'backlash against transgressions of traditional gender expectations and most women went, not necessarily unhappily, back to their pre-war roles.'⁶⁴ Examining D.I. Mackay's statistics of employment in industry following the war there was a clear exodus of women in the workplace following the war. The only occupations that remained the same or increased in the post-war context were women in textiles, dress and clothes making, and food-related occupations.⁶⁵ However, such occupations explicitly demonstrated gendered perceptions of what jobs are suitable for women. Therefore, newsreels reinforced the social construction that there was explicit demarcation between women and work; and men and service.

Watson argues that the dichotomy of women and work, and men and service is attributed to the creation of the post-war 'soldier's story', which propagated a 'separate sphere' ideology. Watson describes soldier's stories as containing themes of comradeship, contentment and disillusionment. This dominant narrative pictured men not as workers, but as soldiers, which was also reflected by newsreel footage. This resulted in an image that has become popularised in modern memory, where men were not at the home front, but at the war front.⁶⁶

⁶³ D.I. Mackay, *British Employment Statistics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), 76-81, cited in C.J. Wrigley, *A History of British Industrial Relations*, vol. 2 (London: The Harvester Press Limited, 1987), 62-63.

⁶⁴ Todman, *The Great War*, 179-180.

⁶⁵ Wrigley, *British Industrial Relations*, vol. 2, 62-63.

⁶⁶ Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, 13, 265.

Watson also argues that during this period, women interpreted patriotic duty differently. Indeed, many working-class women perceived patriotic duty as service, thereby not a chance for money or independence, whereas '[s]ocioeconomically privileged women' saw it as a 'job'.⁶⁷ Therefore, the image of women in work and men as soldiers formed one of the dominant beliefs of First World War Britain. While this image was popularised, this was not always the case, as demonstrated by the statistics of those remaining men on the home front.

British newsreels rarely depicted suffragist related material. However, when it was presented, it was conveyed in a relatively positive tone. An isolated newsreel example covering the creation of the potential Women's Parliamentary Party showed a female dominated crowd outside the Queen's Hall. The intertitle for the reel reads: "Will there be Women M.P.s? Mrs. Pankhurst, 'General' Drummond, Miss. Christabel Pankhurst and Miss. Kenny met with wild enthusiasm at the meeting held in Queens Hall to found a Women's Parliamentary Party."⁶⁸ June Purvis's discussion of this political party reveals that contemporary commentators usually spoke about this group in derogatory terms using mocking language even when it was 'given cursory coverage.'⁶⁹ Indeed, females in politics during the war period were largely seen by the British public as subversive to the national war cause, as they were entering a masculine arena.⁷⁰ Such sentiments predated the war period, where the 'women's place was not in a career, and certainly not in politics, but in the home.'⁷¹ Contrary to Purvis's argument, however, the Women's Parliamentary Party in this newsreel are actually presented positively. While they are not depicted interacting or near the crowds, there are multiple images verifying that this women's party has mass support, particularly from women. This reaffirms the positive narratives prescribed by newsreels on First World War Britain. Instead of denigrating the party, this newsreel presents the Women's Parliamentary Party as a genuine political possibility. That said, there is still an explicit dichotomy between how the Women's Parliamentary Party and Lloyd George are presented. Multiple images of Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister between 1916 and 1922, show him surrounded by applauding crowds (figure 10).⁷² Conversely, the Pankhursts, Kenny and Drummond are presented away from the crowds (figure 11). This

⁶⁷ Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, 134.

⁶⁸ *WOOTB*, 324-2, 12-11-1917.

⁶⁹ J. Purvis, 'The Women's Party of Great Britain (1917-1919): A Forgotten Episode in British Women's Political History', *Women's History Review*, 25:3 (2016), 638-651.

⁷⁰ Gould, 'Women's Military Services', 126-141.

⁷¹ Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War*, 716.

⁷² *TB*, 257-1, 26-07-1916; *PG*, 77024, 2450.35; *WOOTB*, 362-1, 29-07-1918.

explicit contrast in representation between male and female political figures reflects contemporary stereotypes of a political arena reserved almost completely for men.



Figure 10. WOOTB, 353-1, 27-05-1918.



Figure 11. WOOTB, 324-2, 12-11-1917.

Newsreels provide a novel medium to justify the British wartime narrative that men should go to the front, while women should stay at home. Images of women working in farming on the home front challenged potential criticisms from the public that they could not fulfil this role, when many were already working in this area before the war. Indeed, this false narrative was true of many other roles that portrayed female participation in war as leading to broader employment. Newsreels that used suffragist material conveyed that by supporting the war effort, women could be exposed to great opportunities. However, this material was also limiting

as it inherently denigrated women in politics as Lloyd George was shown amongst the public to demonstrate his public approval and legitimacy, while the women were not.

Class and Femininity

From the inception of the First World War, newsreel depictions of British women categorised different forms of war work by social class. Newsreels showed lower-class women as industrial, agricultural and domestic workers. Upper-class and royalty women were not depicted in such situations, but were shown creating their own forms of ‘war work’ by lifting public morale, engaging in social activities like visiting working-class and middle-class workers, attending weddings, and investiture ceremonies.⁷³ Even though all these women were from different social classes, equivalence was drawn between them. That is, all women were presented as feminine by their ability to stay on the home front and work. Indeed, a cross-class affinity was portrayed by the British women’s ability to work while their husbands were at war. Conversely, the ‘masculine’ man was portrayed as a soldier. This argument of precedent or a cross-class belief in war work is identified by Braybon, who argues that many contemporary newspapers and literature fuelled this ideal.⁷⁴ However, as will be discussed, the women’s class directly impacted on the forms of war work that they are depicted in. Therefore, the experience of British women was not homogenous as experiences were determined by social class.

During the official period of TB, WO documents reveal that Beaverbrook actively sought material that depicted politician’s wives that were largely middle and upper-class women, in work environments:

I am relying very largely on special students to pull this Budget. My realisations may be somewhat difficult, but here are a few things I would like to get;- The Prime Minister’s busy week-end [sic]... Cabinet Minister’s Wives in War Time [sic] (Starting

⁷³ Due to newsreels depicting women at work, it is tenuous to distinguish between middle-class and working-class women as uniforms cover up factors, such as civilian clothes, which were indicative of class. Therefore, this follows the lead of modern studies on women in war work that affirm that different classes entered different forms of work. For example, the Voluntary Aid Detachment was largely made up of ‘financially comfortable’ and upper-class women, see e.g. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, 7, 118, whereas the vast majority of munition’s working-class women, see e.g. Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend*, 12.

⁷⁴ G. Braybon, *Women Workers in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1981), 47-48.

of course with Mrs. Lloyd George). I am very keen on getting this because it would be of interest to women.⁷⁵

Beaverbrook's statement recognised two points: firstly, the film of Lloyd George working over the weekend potentially sets a precedent for the British public to also work extended hours. This mirrors previous content on female farm workers working every day. Secondly, depicting Cabinet Minister's wives engaged in war related work sets an example to all British women which conveyed the message of equivalence, where whilst the husbands complete 'important' political work, their wives are expected to also do their own part. These 'special stunts' were employed in newsreels material to increase publicity.⁷⁶ It was also evident that the 'stunts' were designed to proliferate the British government's propagandistic messages. For instance, another 'stunt' was: "Sir William Robertson on the duty of keeping fit. (See his last speech). Practical illustrations on 'How to do it'."⁷⁷ Robertson, the Chief of the Imperial General staff from 1916-1918, was used to highlight the importance of physical fitness, which was an important pre-requisite to soldiering. Beaverbrook's attempt to include this material demonstrated that newsreels were explicitly used to propagate and reinforce this precedent to British society. Whether it is women working in factories or men maintaining their fitness, newsreels are constructed to direct Britons on what was socially acceptable employment and lifestyles during the war. The use of minister's wives in promoting war charities was demonstrated in a WOOTB newsreel which depicted Mrs Margaret Lloyd George standing amongst children in national attire. In this example, Mrs Lloyd George was helping collect funds for Welsh charities for returning soldiers on Saint David's Day.⁷⁸ This newsreel emphasised Welsh and English bonds by conveying this imagery on a day that celebrates the Welsh patron saint, Saint David. In a further example, Mrs Lloyd George was also depicted opening a National Kitchen in London.⁷⁹

These images involving both working-class and middle-class women in different forms of war work were demonstrated in a newsreel presenting women marching with banners and flags through London. The intertitles for this reel stated: 'Women's march through London. A vast procession of women headed by Mrs Pankhurst, marching through London to show the

⁷⁵ PA, BBK/E/2/8: War Cinematograph Committee Report, 8/8/1917

⁷⁶ PA, BBK/E/2/8: War Cinematograph Committee Report, 8/8/1917.

⁷⁷ PA, BBK/E/2/8: War Cinematograph Committee Report, 6/8/1917.

⁷⁸ WOOTB, 341-1, 06-03-1916.

⁷⁹ PG, 2450.36, 77025.

Minister of Munitions their willingness to help in any war service.’⁸⁰ Given the mention of Pankhurst, this intertitle demonstrated an explicit positive connection with the Suffragist movement, inferring that women’s participation may led greater opportunities for women. Emmeline Pankhurst was a well-known suffragist leader in the Women’s Social and Political Union. Her role is highlighted to illustrate social and gender change. Before the First World War, suffragists’ campaigns engaged in both militant and peaceful protests against the government. Thus, by employing a well-known suffragist figure, TB’s intertitles were shifting public sentiments of wider suffragists to indicate support for the wartime government. This expression of positive change in women’s political action constituted propaganda as it applied pre-war and contemporary war concerns of women in the workplace as recruiting messages. A banner within the newsreel’s coverage of this event stated: ‘Mobilise Brains & Energy of Women’.⁸¹ Such an expression combined suffragist’s beliefs of women having greater potential than domestic carers with war rhetoric, thus elevating women’s social position within society. Furthermore, using the term ‘mobilize’ combined rhetoric of service with women’s war work to suggest that this was women’s form of ‘service’. By stating that a suffragist leader supported government action, all parties involved benefited from this newsreel material: suffragettes gain public support whilst also positively influencing those citizens of similar ideology to comply with government policy’s line; and the government continued to support war efforts by encouraging women into the workforce.

Unbeknownst to the audience, however, this highly publicized march was actually financed by the Munitions Minister, Lloyd George,⁸² so the WO actually sponsored this newsreel. However, this information is not alluded to in the newsreel. As this newsreel demonstrates, the demarcation between the British government’s acquisitions of an official newsreel is ambiguous as the government were already funding newsreels when the TB was privately owned. Neither McKernan nor Reeves address this issue in their analyses. Therefore, even before the WO’s takeover of the TFC, the British government was already using newsreels for their own agenda. This approach makes newsreel coverage appear innocent whilst it fulfils an underlying agenda, as it appears distanced from governmental auspices.⁸³ Additionally, by presenting this march both nationally and internationally in the TB, it increased the likelihood

⁸⁰ *TB*, 204-1, 21-07-1915.

⁸¹ *TB*, 204-1, 21-07-1915.

⁸² The Imperial War Museum lists this newsreel as being sponsored by the WO, see e.g.

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060005342>

⁸³ For a discussion of the War Office wanting to appear distant from TB newsreels, see pages 28-29.

of greater public exposure. Thus, the British government used the suffragist cause and wider similar sentiments to promote women's war work, where, similar to the Women's Political Party example, this movement's cause was conveyed as a genuine possibility. This affirmed the positive nature of newsreel material as it contrasted contemporary commentators and sentiments that perceived women in politics as antagonistic.

Just as newsreels celebrated and depicted the illusion of the entrance of women into war work, they also provided commentary on women's treatment in the workplace. One newsreel intertitle stated: 'Munition Workers Canteen. Women after working on munitions enjoying an excellent dinner served in the canteen at actual cost.'⁸⁴ During the war, shortages in Britain were initially localised, but as the war continued, these shortages became nationwide.⁸⁵ A decrease in food supply was the result of naval blockades restricting food importation, the loss of men and horses from farms, and the growing length of the war. Before the war, Britain was also highly dependent on food from international imports. The staples of working-class diets were grain, flour and wheat, 80% of which was imported.⁸⁶ Jay Winter identifies that even with rationing and government regulation of food during First World War Britain, civilian standards of health actually improved.⁸⁷ Therefore, providing women with cheap nutritious meals at work promoted the positive treatment of women in the workforce, thus incentivising other employers to make similar moves and give other women a reason to undertake war work beyond patriotic duty. Additionally, this combated contemporary anxiety of food hoarding as food supply was regulated, lessening the possibility of social agitation, and also reducing public concerns of queuing for food after working hours. However, payment of food can be interpreted in multiple ways. Therefore, this newsreel affirmed that women in patriotic work received fair treatment, which reinforced that newsreels prescribed a positive image of wartime experience.

With the creation of the WOOTB in May 1917, newsreel intertitles depicting female gender norms of work remained unchanged. Similar rhetoric to the independent TB newsreels was reflected and extended in WOOTB's intertitles. Similar to the unofficial period, women's increasing participation in war work was celebrated. Furthermore, the main purpose of royalty and upper-class women was to visit working-class women to maintain high morale levels

⁸⁴ *TB*, 242-1, 12-04-1916.

⁸⁵ Gregory, *Great War*, 196.

⁸⁶ I. Gazeley and A. Newell, 'The First World War and Working-Class Food Consumption in Britain', *European Review of Economic History*, 17:1 (2013), 73.

⁸⁷ J. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (London: Macmillan, 1985), 229.

continued. The WO's descriptions of these clips started to apply more emotive adjectives and adverbs to endorse this view: 'Magnificent reception of England's women war-workers as they march proudly in procession.'⁸⁸ This intertitle addressed working-class women workers and the public. Not only were the women 'proud' to be war-workers, but the crowds were also celebrating their participation in the war effort. Furthermore, public relations events were also demonstrated between royalty and working-class women: 'Queen and Munitionettes. The girl war workers of Coventry gave her Majesty a rousing welcome. She was deeply interested in all phases of their life.'⁸⁹ This newsreel depicted the Queen inspecting the work environment of female munition workers. Similarly, a further newsreel depicted the Queen and her daughter inspecting other areas of women's work. The intertitles read: 'Her Majesty who was accompanied by Princess Mary was much interested in the equipment stores and the women workers at Woolwich Dockyard.'⁹⁰ In both examples there was a clear division between working and royal women's experiences because of social class. Frank Prochaska argues the British queen and king commonly visited the British public in working environments to maintain public morale and legitimise their right to rule, which was questioned throughout the war due to their German family name. Therefore, by showing themselves amongst Britons they legitimated their roles as British rulers.⁹¹ As alluded to in the Queen and Princess visiting the Dockyard, there was a declared equivalence between royal and working women, because of gender. That is, all women are represented as doing their part for the war effort by engaging in work on the home front. Equivalence is conveyed between women of all social-classes as they all contribute to the war effort. Furthermore, newsreel footage simplistically demonstrated that women's work was valuable to the war effort.

Just as newsreels celebrated women's war work, they also rebutted potential criticisms from those who perceived that such employment was tokenism and inept: 'Able Girl Farmers. Farmer Critics were full of praise for the agriculture work done by the women at their effective test held at Maidstone.'⁹² This newsreel depicted a women's agriculture competition with the women completing a variety of tasks, such as planting, spraying trees and driving tractors, while being watched by convalescent soldiers. Similarly, a further newsreel depicted: 'Women

⁸⁸ *WOOTB*, 376-2, 07-11-1918.

⁸⁹ *WOOTB*, 317-2, 22-09-1917.

⁹⁰ *WOOTB*, 322-1, 25-10-1917.

⁹¹ F. Prochaska, *Royal Bounty: The Making of a Welfare Monarchy* (London: Yale University Press, 1995), 169-213.

⁹² *WOOTB*, 327-2, 01-12-1917.

as Woodmen. Girls of the Women's Land Army fell trees and cut pit props.⁹³ This newsreel depicted women involved in another physical demanding task, cutting down trees (figure 12). This, like the other newsreel, demonstrated women's ability to engage in more labour intensive work, thus challenging potential criticisms of females being too weak to perform these jobs.⁹⁴ The intertitles' implicit substitution of 'Women as Woodmen' affirms that females are not just taking on traditionally masculine roles, but also performing these roles competently enough to be classed as a 'man'.



Figure 12. *WOOTB*, 317-1, 19-09-1917.

Thus, both TB and the *WOOTB* newsreels illustrated the growing participation and competence of working-class women in various forms of war work. Royalty were depicted as 'interested' in these increasing opportunities for women, but not to the extent of the upper classes wanting direct participation.⁹⁵ The equivalence of war work for women affirms Braybon's argument that in contemporary Britain, there was a 'romantic idea, commonly held, that the classes came together through women's work'.⁹⁶ Contrary to this argument, however, depictions of females within newsreels illustrated differing expectations of women within their class divisions. This reaffirms Watson's assertion that 'women' as a category did not

⁹³ *WOOTB*, 317-1, 19-09-1917.

⁹⁴ For evidence of these criticisms, see e.g. Braybon, *Women Workers*, 154-172.

⁹⁵ For a discussion of middle-class women's workers rarely entering war work see e.g. Braybon, 49.

⁹⁶ Braybon, 47-48.

experience or understand war in the same way. Class was crucial to determining a woman's wartime experience.⁹⁷ Newsreels justify both arguments, as they depict women of both lower and upper classes engaged in war work, but in very different forms.

Wounded soldiers and Performative Masculinity

During the First World War, British soldiers were maimed, blinded, and wounded beyond the repair of contemporary medical technologies. A recurring theme of British newsreels was the treatment of convalescent soldiers by nurses, and their interactions with broader society. The proximity of convalescing soldiers to British life in home front hospitals made filming far more practicable than at the warfront. Nevertheless, convalescent soldiers also represented a key facet of contemporary perceptions of gender. Disabled veterans have received little attention in World War One scholarship in comparison to 'normal' soldiers. Indeed, '[t]hese men were, until recently, written out of the history of post-war reconstruction.'⁹⁸ Susan Burch and Michael Rembis comment that disability studies have remained overlooked, where 'archives, special collections, and other troves of valuable sources located around the world did not include disabled people or disability – related terms in their indexes'. Thus, as a result of this omission, disability studies remained underdeveloped.⁹⁹ Disability in pre-war Britain was perceived as effeminising. However, during the war, newsreels depicted disabled soldiers as remaining masculine by their ability to continue playing sport, work and flirt with women. This study adds to the previous limited historiography by analysing convalescent soldiers within the context of First World War British newsreels and constructs of masculinity and femininity.

TB and PG newsreels alike widely covered the treatment of convalescent soldiers and their interaction in multiple environments, including: being visited by the British King and Queen, dancing with nurses, carnivals, and their celebration of service by civilians. Just as being a soldier was considered the ideal role for working class men during First World War Britain, nursing was perceived as a female's 'natural' form of participation in the British

⁹⁷ Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, 128-134.

⁹⁸ Meyer, 'Wives of Disabled Veterans', 119.

⁹⁹ S. Burch and M. Rembis, 'Re-Membering the Past: Reflections on Disability Histories', in S. Burch and M. Rembis (ed.), *Disability Histories* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 1-14.

wartime culture.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, discussion of the interaction between these gender ideals: nurses and soldiers, highlights social constructions of masculinity and femininity, and how these notions affect the opposing sex. This section identifies the association between gender and convalescent soldiers and their depictions in sport, the sexualisation of nurses, aesthetics of clothing, and employment prospects. Furthermore, alongside Butler's discussion of 'gender performativity', it examines how masculinity in convalescent and disabled soldiers was depicted to domestic audiences to justify that such soldiers were 'normal', and therefore masculine.

The relationship between gender and convalescent soldiers during the First World War remains understudied.¹⁰¹ These studies adhere to Crenshaw's seminal discussion of intersectional forms of oppression, as in this case, both gender and disability are being discussed simultaneously. Joanna Bourke's analysis of wartime masculinity and disabled soldiers revealed that men dismembered by war were still viewed as masculine, unlike their disabled citizen counterparts. She discusses how the British government reconciled stigmas of emasculation and its association with disability by modifying images of the 'passive' and 'active' disabled male. The 'passive' disabled male refers to men seen as weak before the war and who were already disabled in some manner, relinquishing their capacity to serve. The 'active' disabled men are those soldiers who were dismembered by war. Bourke's study illustrates that the contemporary gendered norm of the man as the 'bread winner' needed to be changed as during and after the war, many men were no longer physically able to work and assume this role again.¹⁰² Bourke's analysis used disability and sport as separate elements of soldiers' masculinity. By contrast, this study aims to analyse these factors together, identifying how disabled soldiers were depicted in newsreels' sport material. Jeffrey Reznick's study of convalescent soldiers, meanwhile, analyses the 'culture of caregiving' and discusses British wartime treatment of such soldiers in rest huts, convalescent and rehabilitation hospitals. His work identifies gendered perceptions of blue hospital gowns. He argues that many damaged soldiers felt emasculated and institutionalised by its blue colour, which they perceived as contrasting the masculine connotations of a khaki uniform. Reznick highlights that even though institutions, such as the convalescent hospitals, were set up to aid soldiers in reclaiming their masculinity by helping them gain work readiness for after the war, very few disabled soldiers actually acquired fulltime employment due to wartime ailments. Reznick's examination of

¹⁰⁰ Proctor, *Civilians*, 165.

¹⁰¹ Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 1.

¹⁰² Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, 31-76.

hospital magazines of two hospitals, Eastern General and King George Hospital, illustrates that soldiers perceived hospitals as similar to the image of an effeminate workhouse or prison.¹⁰³

Parallel to the gendered discussion of convalescent soldiers is the feminine ideal of nurses. Christine Hallett argues that nurses' relationships remained purely platonic with soldiers, applying a 'familial relationship' with patients.¹⁰⁴ Conversely, Watson identifies that nurses commonly entered 'romantic relationships with soldiers in hospital wards during the war.'¹⁰⁵ Cynthia Enloe's examination of military nurses indicates that the nurses perpetuated soldiers' heterosexuality and masculinity by acting as an image of 'soldier patients' romantic fantasies'. Indeed, military nurses were perceived in contrasting stereotypes as both the 'hardened military prostitute and the loyal military wife'.¹⁰⁶ These beliefs fulfilled multiple functions that were prescribed to nurses by society and the government alike. Butler's seminal discussion on gender as a performance is highly applicable to the discussion of both convalescent soldiers and nurses as both represented the masculine and feminine ideal for men and women.¹⁰⁷

In correspondence between the Canadian Cinematographic department and Beaverbrook, it was revealed that the Canadian WO wanted to combine British and Canadian material on convalescent soldiers. Lieutenant J.W. Todd, on the Board of Pension Commissioners for Canada, stated to Beaverbrook that:

The military Hospitals Commission has just put together three or four different set of films, illustrating work in connection with the re-education of returned soldiers and their re-placement (sic) in civilian life... Although I have not anything to do with Military Hospitals Commission, I am interested in the matter because it was largely upon my initiative, while I was reporting to the Military Hospitals commission, that it undertook the obtaining and production of films.

¹⁰³ Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 99-137.

¹⁰⁴ C.E. Hallett, *Containing Trauma: Nursing Work in the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 9, 105, 155-178.

¹⁰⁵ Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, 101.

¹⁰⁶ C. Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarising Women's Lives* (London: University of California Press, 2000), 233-234.

¹⁰⁷ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 25-26.

Todd further indicates that it would be advantageous to screen British material on convalescent soldiers in Canada for diplomatic purposes.¹⁰⁸ However, Beaverbrook counters that the rights to presenting British films in Canada are already owned by another local producer. Therefore, by combining this material it would end these sales to a Canadian firm,¹⁰⁹ resulting in lost revenue, as demonstrated in earlier discussion impacted British film policy.¹¹⁰ Even though this agreement was never successful, it reveals that both the British and Canadian governments were specifically collecting material depicting the return of injured soldiers into ‘civilian life.’ Indeed, there are 60 images or 9.38% of all depictions of British soldiers that present convalescent or disabled soldiers being taught trades or being entertained in the newsreels, which can also be combined with injured/suffering soldiers with 75 depictions or 11.72% of home front material. Additionally, there are also 15 examples (2.38%) of rehabilitation methods for such soldiers. Therefore, aside from the secondary category: miscellaneous, which is still quantitatively less when combining the aforementioned secondary categories, injured and convalescent soldiers represented the most dominant image of British troops.¹¹¹ The prominence of these images demonstrates that newsreel producers actively included this material to demonstrate to British audiences that if soldiers were injured following service, they were celebrated for their service and re-educated into civil society.

Sport’s association with the First World War has been explored in depth. Scholarship on the relationship between masculinity and sport has also had high levels of research, where many theorists argue that sports inherently promotes gender perceptions of hyper-masculinity with males.¹¹² However, sport and gender, and its relationship to convalescent soldiers, remains untouched in the existing body of First World War British historiography. During the First World War sport was integrated into army training routines. Indeed, all sporting activity was viewed as encouraging greater comradeship and ‘officer-men relations’. Even before its official integration, soldiers unofficially participated in sporting competitions. Sports even transcended national barriers, where a football game was played between British and German soldiers

¹⁰⁸ PA, BBK/E/2/3: J.W. Todd to Beaverbrook, 30/10/1916.

¹⁰⁹ PA, BBK/E/2/3: Beaverbrook to J.W. Todd, 22/11/1916.

¹¹⁰ For a discussion of revenue impacting domestic film propaganda, see pages 16-30.

¹¹¹ Gilmour, ‘Appendices 1.2: Secondary Categories’, *Convalescent soldiers being entertained or taught skills; Rehabilitation Methods*.

¹¹² T. Mason and E. Riedi, *Sport and the Military: The British Armed Forces, 1880-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 72-73; D. Monger, ‘Sporting Journalism and the Maintenance of British Servicemen’s Ties to Civilian Life in First World War Propaganda’, *Sport in History*, 30:3 (2010), 374-401; J.M. Osborne, ‘Continuity in British Sport: The Experience of the First World War’, in G.K. Behlmer and F.M. Leventhal (ed.), *Singular Continuities: Traditions, Nostalgia, and National Identity in Modern British Culture* (California: Stanford California University press, 2000), 89-103.

during the 1914 Christmas Truce.¹¹³ As Monger comments, soldiers and civilians alike in First World War Britain continued to engage in sport as it engendered a sense of pre-war normality, voluntarism, positive morale and home life.¹¹⁴ J.G. Fuller states that army sport subconsciously reinforced social compliance, elevating stoicism and self-confidence. Furthermore, many British soldiers perceived sporting engagement as a uniquely British trait, associating it with their perceived superiority over Germany, who they associated as not playing sport.¹¹⁵ This multi-faceted view of the effect of sport in historiography on soldiers, however, does not extend to those soldiers injured in the war. Yet, newsreels depicted convalescent soldiers positively within sports events and contexts to illustrate to both soldiers and the British public that, even if soldiers had lost a limb or were physically disabled, they were still ‘masculine’. Engagement in sport, therefore, represented part of the re-integration process to return to the normality of civilian life,¹¹⁶ as well as the reinforcement of masculinity.

This reinforcement of injured soldiers retaining their masculinity was clearly illustrated in a tug-of-war contest newsreel. Throughout the footage, there were multiple images depicting men without limbs participating in this physically demanding sporting activity. Men with rudimentary prosthetic wooden arms or hooks were enthusiastically pulling the rope with their remaining hand. Behind them, the on-looking crowd cheer on their efforts of physical strength to beat the opposing side of similarly disabled soldiers (figure 13).¹¹⁷ This newsreel applied pre-war perceptions of masculinity, suggesting that soldiers can still be masculine by participating in sports, whilst also disregarding their war injuries. Furthermore, this attitude was reinforced by the wider public crowds cheering on the convalescent soldiers, as if they were unimpaired and, conversely, this was also the public acceptance of disability. In another PG newsreel, there were multiple images depicting convalescent hospitals, where various uniformed men were engaged in different sports. Two men with missing legs play golf, while other similarly disabled soldiers play quoits in the background. The newsreel concluded with a running race between amputee soldiers, where one man falls over, but remains smiling.¹¹⁸ Identical to the aforementioned newsreels, convalescent soldiers were always depicted as happy and smiling, and surrounded by crowds when participating in sports. These images

¹¹³ Mason and Riedi, *Sport and Military*, 80-109.

¹¹⁴ Monger, ‘Sporting Journalism’, 374-401.

¹¹⁵ J.G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 133-142.

¹¹⁶ Monger, 379.

¹¹⁷ PG, 73702, 1932.34.

¹¹⁸ PG, 71857, 1868.15.

validated disabled soldiers, reassuring them that there was a social acceptance of their continued masculinity. This newsreel content asserted and reinforced beliefs that disabled soldiers were no less masculine than their uninjured counterparts and that such soldiers can return to pre-service normality easily. Furthermore, images of disabled soldiers playing sport encouraged the British audience, including spouses and relatives, to be more accepting of men with disabilities upon their return into civilian life. Therefore, all these disabled soldier images were multi-faceted. Such images were directed at both soldiers and the wider British audience to maintain gender stereotyping. The underlying message was that disabled soldiers retained their masculinity despite their injuries or disabilities, hence their participation in sporting culture and therefore, other masculine occupations. The role of positive public support endorsed these beliefs and ideals.



Figure 13. PG, 1932.34, 73702. The man on the left has a rudimentary prosthetic wooden arm and the man on the right has a hook as a hand. The crowd can be seen in the background of the clip (right).

Similar to PG, TB also depicted convalescent soldiers in sporting contexts to reaffirm their masculinity. This was demonstrated in a public relations contest between soldiers and college students: ‘Blind Man’s Boat Races: Blind soldiers from St. Dunstan’s Hostel competing with the students from the Worcester College for Blind. The soldiers defeat their opponents in all the races.’¹¹⁹ The blind soldiers were shown as superior to the blind citizens through their

¹¹⁹ TB, 255-2, 15-07-1916.

achievements. This demonstrated the perceived social difference in civilians' perception of those who serve in the war with those who did not. Although both groups are blind, the soldiers are depicted as being superior to average citizens, implying that army service and training made the soldiers more efficient. This reaffirmed the archetypal image of the male soldier as superior to any civilian males.¹²⁰ A further clip depicted blind soldiers from 'Sightless soldier's recreation. After working at trades during the day, blind soldiers from St. Dunstan's Hostel enjoy rowing on Regent's Park Lake with a lady coxswain.'¹²¹ In both aforementioned examples, soldiers engaged in pre-war leisure sporting activities competently and successfully. Additionally, the latter example highlighted that the sightless soldiers were engaged in 'useful trades', affirming that these people can still work, even with a disability. This contrasted pre-war notions when blind labour was uncommon due to a competitive market and increasing employment. The British government did not involve itself in social welfare for the blind until 1917 when disability was largely related to service, not pre-war stigmas.¹²² This reinforced the positivity of wartime newsreels as all newsreels depict beneficial outcomes for soldiers disabled by war. Thus, convalescent soldiers were positively depicted in participating proficiently in a variety of sports activities to reinforce that they are still masculine.

The theme of men maintaining their masculinity following a physical disability is further extended by the depiction of disabled men learning trades. Such depictions combated underlying societal fears that men could no longer be the 'bread winner' of the household. Before the First World War, there was a clear demarcation in 'spheres' or arenas of influence for men and women. Men were dominant in the 'public sphere'; working and earning money for maintaining their family. Women stayed in the private sphere; caring for family, adhering to familial and maternal 'innate' instincts.¹²³ This rigid social stereotyping was challenged by suffragists before the First World War. A patriarchal view of a family prescribed that only males earned income. However, such beliefs were challenged during and after the war when many disabled veterans could no longer fulfil this expectation of employment, let alone care for themselves independently. Therefore, pre-war perceptions of masculinity were directly impacted and altered, as many disabled soldiers were not able to return to occupations usually fulfilled by men.¹²⁴ This shift in thinking was demonstrated in a novelist's writing in

¹²⁰ G. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 107-114.

¹²¹ *TB*, 247-2, 20-05-1916.

¹²² G. Phillips, *The Blind in British Society, Charity, State and Community* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 267.

¹²³ S.K. Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990* (New York: Routledge 1999), 270-271.

¹²⁴ Meyer, *Men of War*, 106-111.

convalescent hospitals. John Galsworthy, a famous novelist and orderly at convalescent hospitals during the First World War, writes that:

Men who are in hospital long enough and can come often have here a serious chance to get into the swing of a new calling, or to learn a language; but the main object is just occupation for the mind during the long blank time in hospital.¹²⁵

Therefore, arguably, the primary purpose of learning occupations in convalescent hospitals was not future employment following the war, but to occupy the minds and time of those who were disabled or wounded. This demonstrated that newsreels prescribed an image and atmosphere of positivity for convalescent soldiers that did not reflect the reality of post-war Britain.

Following the war, disabled veterans were publically ostracised and maltreated because of their inability to provide for themselves or the family. Jessica Meyer's discussion of physically and mentally disabled soldiers in post-war British literature and files created by the Ministry of Pensions illustrates that employment schemes created to hire disabled soldiers, 'although well intentioned, were not particularly successful in accessing paid or unpaid employment for veterans.'¹²⁶ Thus, even with the depicted promises presented in the newsreels, such dreams often never came to fruition. Analysing the responses of the disabled soldiers' wives following the First World War, Meyer highlights that many spouses viewed their husbands as different, related to their inability to provide family financial aid.¹²⁷ She notes that many disabled servicemen preferred to be self-reliant through their own work rather than receiving a pension, reflecting their own beliefs that they should be the family provider, not the government. Meyer further states that the 'frustration and humiliation felt by disabled pensioners forced to rely on family members grew out of a role reversal that challenged the ideal of the independent male.'¹²⁸ This also contradicted patriarchal norms of men earning money for the family as it now became the wives' role to be the 'bread winner', thereby adopting the masculine role. Therefore, images of convalescent soldiers in work promoted the

¹²⁵ J. Galsworthy, 'St. Dunstan's Hostel for Blinded Soldiers and Sailors', cited in J.S. Reznick (ed.), *John Galsworthy and Disabled Soldiers of the Great War: With an Illustrated selection of his Writings* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 125.

¹²⁶ Meyer, 'Wives of Disabled Veterans', 122.

¹²⁷ Meyer, 128-138.

¹²⁸ Meyer, *Men of War*, 104-108.

belief that men disabled by war would gain potential employment in post-war Britain. This conveyed an unrealistic vision of the future and was intended for temporary morale purposes, which was directed at already injured soldiers, those who may be worried about potential injury in combat and the British public's acceptance of these men more broadly. Thus, this facet of continued masculinity demonstrates the positive narratives depicted in British newsreels.

These positive images were largely echoed by contemporary newspapers, where convalescent and wounded soldiers were treated well. However, looking at one example, an article commented that 'the work is somewhat heavy [for convalescent and injured soldiers], and therefore not suitable for men who have been badly injured.'¹²⁹ However, this was an isolated example.

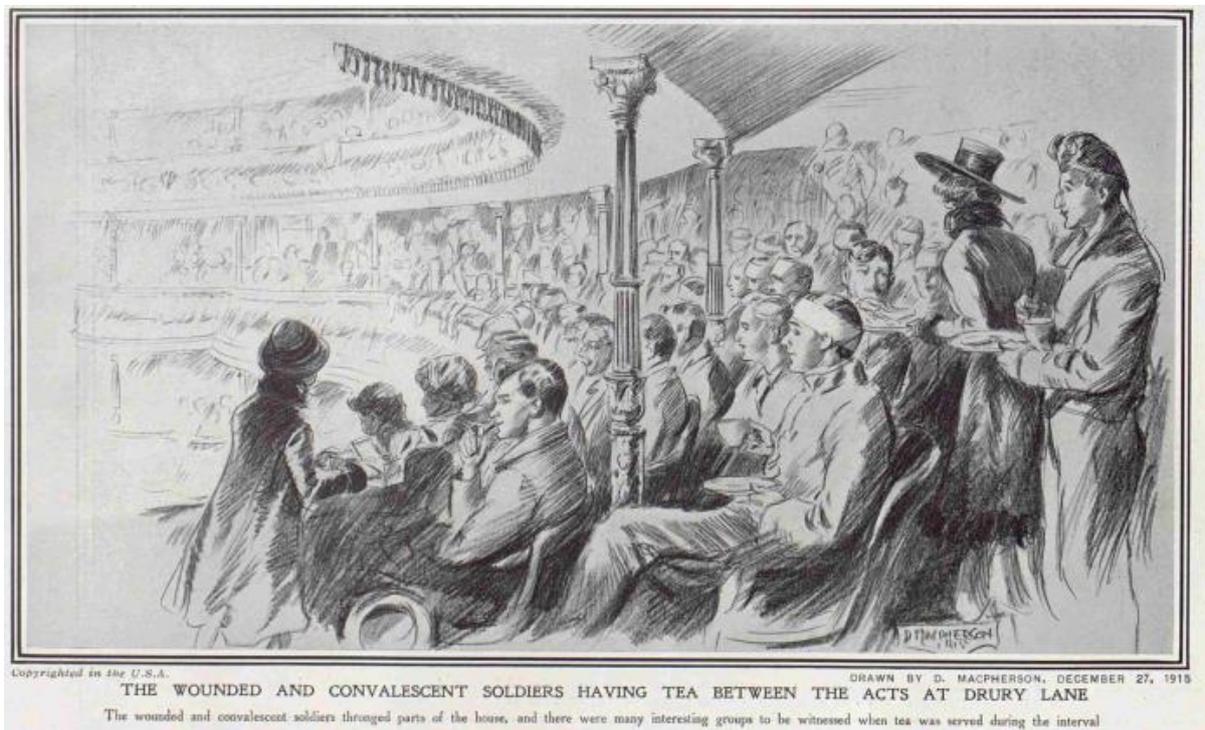


Figure 14. 'With the Soldiers at Drury Lane', *The Sphere*, 1 Jan. 1916, 7.

Dissimilar to the aforementioned article, most newspapers celebrated wounded and convalescent soldiers (figure 14). Indeed, this sketch of convalescent soldiers being offered cigarettes by the lady on the left and food by the two ladies behind them echoed sentiments depicted in newsreels.¹³⁰ In other examples, wounded soldiers are even venerated as offering

¹²⁹ 'Discharged Soldiers and Motor Work', *The Times*, 3 Sep. 1917, 10.

¹³⁰ See e.g. *TB*, 257-1, 26-07-1916.

entertainment for children.¹³¹ Thus, the positive narratives related to wounded and convalescent soldiers in newsreels were also represented in broader British society.



Figure 15. *TB*, 271-2, 04-11-1917.

The gender issue of disabled men's work is explicitly addressed in both *TB* and *PG* newsreels. Both producers provide coverage of returning wounded soldiers, their treatment in convalescent hospitals and their subsequent vocational training in various trades or professions that are still feasible with their current disability. Deborah Cohen states that many 'normal' soldiers looked forward to 'the hallmarks of masculine independence: a steady job: a home of their own, a wife, and perhaps even children.' However, such sentiments became largely unattainable for those who were disabled.¹³² Newsreels challenged the effeminising dependency of disability by delineating these soldiers in working environments. Similarly, *TB*'s intertitles stated: 'Working under difficulties. Blind Soldiers at St. Dunstan's are developing the sense of touch to replace their lost sight and are enabled thereby to make themselves efficient carpenters.'¹³³ This newsreel depicted multiple blind soldiers sawing, sanding and measuring wood. In another example, intertitles stated: 'St. Dunstan's. The hostel for blind soldiers where they are taught various trades. The dexterity the men show in repairing boots and making baskets is amazing.'¹³⁴ This newsreel opened with a blind, uniformed soldier

¹³¹ 'Wounded Soldiers as Christmas Entertainers: Singing at the Children's party at St. Georges Hospital', *Illustrated London News*, 1 Jan. 1916, 9.

¹³² D. Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and German, 1914-1939* (London: University of California Press, 2001), 105.

¹³³ *TB*, 274-1, 22-11-1916.

¹³⁴ *TB*, 271-2, 04-11-1916. For a similar example, see e.g. *TB*, 277-2, 12-12-1916.

making a boot alongside a sighted boot maker. The blind soldier showed that he was able to maintain the same work pace as his sighted counterpart (figure 15). Next, there were various sections depicting blind soldiers weaving baskets, typing and using a comptometer. In all of these examples the soldiers were deliberately uniformed, symbolising the maintenance of the masculine soldier image. A further newsreel depicted a soldier who explicitly moves in front of the camera to emphasise that even though he was a double amputee, he was not ashamed of his medical condition and was still capable of work. Conversely, this demonstrated his difference in physicality, but affirmed he could still work.¹³⁵ This newsreel narrative and other morale-boosting material showed the British audience that disabled soldiers challenged pre-war perceptions and experiences of disabilities as being debilitating to an individual's lifestyle choices. Similarly, another PG newsreel covered blind and amputee convalescents at Queen Mary's Workshop. This workshop was dedicated to teaching woodwork skills for potential employment. Additionally, this newsreel conveyed one-legged soldiers learning to ride motorbikes and men without legs being taught to be electricians.¹³⁶ Like previous clips, disabled soldiers were represented as equal to 'normal' functioning men. However, the reaffirmation of masculinity and normality of disabled soldiers was contradicted by their segregation from the average worker. Similar to PG and TB clips was the segregation of disabled men from able-bodied men, where the latter is very rarely depicted alongside the former. By segregating disabled soldiers in trades from the average worker illustrated the pre-war stigma that was directed at disabled persons remained.

By portraying disabled soldiers in working roles, newsreels challenged societal fears of returning disabled soldiers being unemployable. However, as Meyer's examination of post-war employment for disabled soldiers shows, albeit largely focusing on neurasthenia, those disabled by war were largely stigmatised in work, being relegated to inferior status by their employers. This predicament was exacerbated by the high level of able-bodied men in Britain following the war, where unemployment was between 1.1 and 1.75 million.¹³⁷ This meant employers were able to maintain their workforce because of the work market and also hired fewer people. Usually these employees were not disabled. This action detrimentally impacted the employment rate of the disabled. Cohen states that those women married to disabled soldiers were forced to take on both roles: the masculine bread winner and the feminine

¹³⁵ PG, 72219, 1878.50.

¹³⁶ PG, 9289, 3438.06. For similar examples, see e.g. PG, 71903, 1868.61; PG, 72247, 1880.12.

¹³⁷ Meyer, *Men of War*, 106-113.

domestic carer.¹³⁸ Those disabled men who found work were generally segregated from the ‘average’ person,¹³⁹ further reinforcing the perceived difference in ability and masculinity between men. Thus, by portraying disabled veterans in trades, contemporary British newsreels demonstrate that returning soldiers retained the potential to be the ‘bread winner’ of the household, reinforcing contemporary masculine patriarchal stereotypes. This demonstrates that the immediate purpose of newsreels was to maintain and build the morale of both the British public and soldiers that were returning injured whether this was true or not.

Alongside the narrative of convalescent soldiers remaining masculine in newsreels, masculinity was further reinforced by the disabled soldiers’ proximity to physically attractive nurses. Examining TB and PG’s clips jointly, convalescent soldiers were depicted alongside young, ‘beautiful’ nurses, not older carers. This nearness of physically appealing nurses to soldiers reflected contemporary perceptions of ‘khaki fever’. Khaki fever was a wartime phenomenon, where soldiers or officers in uniform were ‘proclaimed by the press and the public to be both an oracle of truth and a preserver of all those things upon which British life depended.’ A result of this public perception and personal adoration was that soldiers were objects of desire for young women.¹⁴⁰ Angela Woollacott’s discussion of khaki fever illustrates that in its original form, this phrase described women who demonstrated their patriotic duty by having intimate relationships with soldiers. Public issues relating to the spread of ‘venereal disease and [lack of] sexual morality’ meant khaki fever was short-lived. With the onset of women’s war work, participation in auxiliary groups and routines of war conditions, this ‘desire’ for khaki subsided as they now possessed an outlet for patriotic duty.¹⁴¹ This gendering of clothes and aesthetic attraction is contrasted against ‘convalescent blues’. In contrast to khaki fever, ‘convalescent blues’ was a term coined by soldiers in hospital. Many soldiers stated how they felt effeminate in hospital clothing, longing to return to their more masculine uniforms.¹⁴² As aforementioned, many convalescent soldiers in hospitals chose to continue wearing their army uniforms, not the blue patient gowns. This suggests that contemporary disabled soldiers actively wanted to distance themselves from such un-masculine and, therefore, feminine associations.¹⁴³ Thus, by being in ‘khaki’ and not ‘blue’, they believed that

¹³⁸ Cohen, *The War Come Home*, 104-115.

¹³⁹ Cohen, 114.

¹⁴⁰ Gullace, “*The Blood of Our Sons*”, 49.

¹⁴¹ A. Woollacott, “‘Khaki Fever’ and its Control: Gender, Class, Age and Sexual Morality in the British Homefront in the First World War”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 29:2 (1994), 331-332.

¹⁴² Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 99-116.

¹⁴³ N. Gullace, ‘White Feathers and Wounded Men: Female Patriotism and the Memory of the Great War’, *Journal of British Studies*, 36:2 (1997), 198-206.

they avoided possible public ridicule. This personal association to masculinity in khaki uniform influenced many injured soldier's attire choices in hospital and in society.

TB and PG newsreels both showed soldiers and nurses engaged in various activities together that went outside bedside care. This goes beyond Hallett's discussion of everyday nursing work, where nurses remained in 'familial relationships' with soldiers.¹⁴⁴ Newsreels suggested that these relationships stemmed from the proximity of convalescent and disabled soldiers to their nursing staff. Depictions of nurses with convalescent soldiers showed them displaying somewhat flirtatious and playful manners with their patients. This reflected contemporary propaganda images of nurses, portraying them in highly sexualised tones. Monger's analysis of British domestic propaganda during the First World War reveals that women were often depicted as a 'reward' for soldiers serving from the war.¹⁴⁵ Monger states that multiple domestic propaganda images were aimed at husbands and suitors alike, promising 'happy times ahead'.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, depictions of nurses and women as highly sexualised beings during this period were numerous, where they were presented as a reward for service and, conversely, victims of rape by the German army.¹⁴⁷ As the war progressed, women were also represented as needing to be defended and protected as an avenue to encourage greater levels of enlistment, personifications of countries and domesticity, and war loan-related propagandist images.¹⁴⁸ Fundamental to such depictions were intertwining both masculine and feminine messages, where both parties were addressed in similar images. Newsreel material integrated aspects of both masculinity and femininity as it advocated that convalescent soldiers remained appealing to nurses, particularly those nurses who were young and physically attractive.¹⁴⁹ Conversely this was further reinforced as a binary relationship as it implies that the nurses, in turn, were also attracted to these physically disabled soldiers.

Monger's discussion of domestic propaganda demonstrates that depictions of nurses in work suggested that although they were working, they were never too busy to be with men socially.¹⁵⁰ Not only was this situation supposedly attractive to women to serve a man who has served in the war and subsequently been injured, but it was also advertised that females viewed

¹⁴⁴ Hallett, *Containing Trauma*, 178.

¹⁴⁵ D. Monger, 'Nothing Special? Propaganda and Women's Roles in Late First World War Britain', *Women's History Review*, 23:4 (2014), 521.

¹⁴⁶ D. Monger, 'Soldiers, Propaganda and Ideas of Home and Community in First World War Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8:3 (2011), 342.

¹⁴⁷ Gullace, "The Blood of Our Sons", 35-53.

¹⁴⁸ Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, 7-22.

¹⁴⁹ See, e.g., *PG*, 72911, 1906.22; *PG*, 72911, 1660.31; *TB*, 249-2, 03-06-1916; *TB*, 254-2, 08-07-1916.

¹⁵⁰ Monger, 'Soldiers, Propaganda and Ideas of Home', 341-342.

these disabilities positively. Therefore, disabled veterans were represented as having no feelings of alienation, which was not the case with ‘passive’ disability. This continued perception of the desirability of injured soldiers is demonstrated in a range of newsreels from both producers, showing frequent images of convalescent soldiers interacting successfully in various scenarios with nursing staff and other females. For example, a TB newsreel depicted injured soldiers intimately waltzing with nurses (figure 16). The intertitles for this reel read: ‘The Blind Fiddler. Heroes who have lost their sight in the service of the Country, dance with nurses with a courage that defies affliction.’¹⁵¹ This intertitle celebrated the armed services by calling them heroes whilst also acknowledging their disabilities but intimating these afflictions can be overcome by a courageous attitude. Therefore, the newsreel showed the soldiers maintaining normality by their desire for fun as well as the nurses acknowledging reciprocity to oblige these needs. Similarly, a PG newsreel depicts injured soldiers and nurses in a snowball fight, finishing with both parties posing together. This clip is very playful in nature as all parties smile and laugh whilst playing in the snow.¹⁵² It also demonstrated that nurses did not always remain in ‘familial relationships’ at work, as Hallett states. This newsreel, though innocent and childlike in nature, implies that disabled soldiers can potentially form a ‘normal’ heterosexual relationship outside of the patient-carer procedures of hospital life.



Figure 16. TB, 248-2, 27-05-1916. This newsreel depicted injured soldiers dancing with nurses.

¹⁵¹ TB, 248-2, 27-05-1916.

¹⁵² PG, 72213, 1878.44.

Examining newsreels depicting convalescent soldiers with women, similar themes were evident. For example, a PG newsreel depicted disabled men being entertained by Lord Cheylesmore with women lighting their cigarettes and participating in combined sports competitions and leisure activities. Even the practice of smoking is perceived as a masculine activity. Before the 1920s, smoking was gendered as a ‘male only activity’.¹⁵³ The newsreel fragment depicts a woman lighting the cigarette of a soldier who is missing both arms. This connotes both female and the continuation of masculinity through the disabled soldier smoking. A similar example depicted a ‘light-the-cigarette’ completion, where nurses and convalescent soldiers formed pairs and competed in races (figure 17). As shown, the two nurses on the left are helping light the cigarettes of the convalescent soldiers. The couple on the right have finished this task and were holding hands and running towards the finishing line.¹⁵⁴



Figure 17. *TB*, 257-1, 26-07-1916.

This flirtatious material showing social interaction between convalescent soldiers and women was further reiterated in another newsreel with the intertitles: ‘Khaki Matinee. Miss Ellaline Terriss handing cigarettes to wounded soldiers as they arrive at the theatre. Over 2,000

¹⁵³ K. Hunt, M. Hannah and P. West, ‘Contextualising Smoking: Masculinity, femininity, and class differences in smoking in men and women from three generations in the West of Scotland’, *Health Education Research*, 19:3 (2004), 240; for a more comprehensive discussion of gendered images of smoking through the twentieth century, see e.g. R.E. Elliot, “‘Destructive but Sweet’: Cigarette Smoking among Women 1890-1990”, PhD, University of Glasgow, 2001, 45-53.

¹⁵⁴ *TB*, 257-1, 26-07-1916.

men from all parts of the Empire attended.¹⁵⁵ Similar to the aforementioned example, this well-known British actress was used to both reinforce the subordination of women to men's needs and demonstrate the appeal of soldiers to a female audience, and conversely to the soldiers that they are still attractive, and, therefore, masculine. Even though Terris was in her 40s, she was still perceived as a sexual icon throughout the war, performing in multiple shows for soldiers.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, newsreel images of convalescent soldiers interacting with ladies conveyed that attractive women were interested in the injured soldiers and that the men themselves were attractive. Another example of this narrative was demonstrated by the intertitle: 'Coatbridge Carnival. Wounded Scotch soldiers being well looked after by Scotch Lassies at the Carnival in aid of Limbless Soldiers and Sailors.'¹⁵⁷ The proximity of young women to disabled soldiers was emphasised to reinforce their attractiveness. The phrase 'well looked after', in relation to the colloquial use of the word 'lassie' can be interpreted as implying more than the soldiers being celebrated for service. The clip itself depicted wounded soldiers being served drinks and interacting playfully with young, attractive 'Lassies' or nurses. In all of these examples in the newsreels, both the disabled soldiers and the nurses were addressed as the soldier was consistently depicted as maintaining his masculinity by demonstrating the desire and ability to engage in flirtatious behaviour. Furthermore, the nurses fulfil their 'natural', domestic, feminine role of serving the men food. Therefore, Hallett's comment that nurses remained in familial relationships with soldiers is incongruent with newsreel content that suggested that wounded soldiers entered into flirtatious relationships with them. Wounded soldiers in convalescent hospitals challenged contemporary prejudices related to stigmas of disability, affirming that wounded men were no less masculine than 'normal' soldiers.

During the First World War, St. Dunstan's convalescent hospital sold a gift book that contains writings and artworks created by patients, visitors and popular figures. The book provided further context as to what contemporary audiences associated with convalescent soldiers and also what the patients thought about themselves. It opens with a small painting by Hugh Thomson, named 'The Blinded soldier'. The image depicted two physically attractive young women walking down the road. Another image called 'Fine Feathers' depicted these same women gazing adoringly at a blind soldier in the park. The disabled soldier's status is

¹⁵⁵ *TB*, 263-2, 09-09-1916.

¹⁵⁶ T. Postlewait, 'The London Stage, 1895-1918', B. Kershaw (ed.), *The Cambridge History of British Theatre: Since 1895*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 44; E. Terriss, *Ellaline Terriss By Herself and with Others* (London: Cassell, 1928), 60.

¹⁵⁷ *TB*, 265-2, 23-09-1916.

confirmed by his attire and closed eyes (figure 18). This material reaffirms the narrative of women finding disabled soldiers physically attractive. Images of other women are also depicted in this book.¹⁵⁸ These images mirror newsreel material that depicts convalescent and disabled soldiers surrounded by nurses and female civilians in a positive light. In all instances, the disabled soldier is portrayed as physically attractive with his ability to return to a heteronormative lifestyle after the war implied. Furthermore, these paintings and drawings also indicate that convalescent soldiers themselves were concerned and pre-occupied with potential relationships following their rehabilitation. As previously discussed, newsreel material challenged this focus on flirtation and adoration of soldiers by depicting disabled soldiers being surrounded by civilian females and nurses, conveying that they are still physically attractive to women.



Figure 18. C.E. Brock, 'Fine Feathers', in G. Goodchild (ed.), *The Blinded Soldiers*, 61.

The St. Dunstan's gift book contains multiple sections dedicated to blindness and its relationship with masculinity. Popular British novelist, George Goodchild's foreword to the

¹⁵⁸ H. Thomson, 'The Blinded Soldier', in G. Goodchild (ed.), *The Blinded Soldiers and Sailors Gift Book* (London: Jarrold & Sons, 1916), i, 28, 44, 157.

book states: ‘He must be taught to employ his strength and intelligence to some useful purpose, that he may thereby enjoy that state of material independence which is the aim and object of all self-respecting men.’¹⁵⁹ Such sentiments produce a paradox as while the debilitated men were portrayed as masculine by their ability to continue working and being an icon of affection for women, the book’s purpose was charity, thereby contradicting the former point of independence and masculinity. Similar to newsreels, the concept of associating the breadwinner and material independence as being masculine is conveyed by Goodchild. In this book, disabilities, such as blindness, are treated as less severe and are therefore more normalised for the public. For example, Charles Marriott comments that ‘I am inclined to say that only the blind can really see.’ He further affirms that blinded soldiers ‘have the freedom of the whole world that we, distracted by the pride of the eye, know nothing about.’ Following this, there are multiple images of blind soldiers competently completing activities in carpentry, weaving, boot repairing, woodwork and farming,¹⁶⁰ which mirrors newsreel content. Marriott comments that blind soldiers can actually see better than sighted people, thus implying that this disability actually improves living conditions and perceptions. This then justifies the blind soldier’s ability to keep working, which is portrayed as a ‘hallmark’ of masculinity. Similar to newsreels, with levels of exaltation implied, Marriott’s discussion does not treat blindness as a disability. Instead, he celebrates servicemen and demonstrates that these disabled soldiers will easily reintegrate into civil society. Both newsreels and the St. Dunstan’s gift book affirm that disabled and convalescent soldiers remain masculine after their injuries and easily re-enter civil society. However, soldier’s writings and drawings show a different picture; they indicate that convalescent and disabled soldiers were grappling with maintaining their masculinity and about how they would fit back into society.¹⁶¹

Conclusion

The depiction of gender within British First World War newsreels from TB and PG is an area that has previously seen no academic scholarship within the broad range of British First World War literature. Newsreels provide a novel resource to understanding how gender was

¹⁵⁹ G. Goodchild, ‘Foreword’, in G. Goodchild (ed.), *The Blinded Soldiers*, 8.

¹⁶⁰ C. Marriott, ‘The Kingdom of Blind’, in G. Goodchild (ed.), *The Blinded Soldiers*, 221-229.

¹⁶¹ Goodchild (ed.), *The Blinded Soldiers*.

portrayed to the British public and depicted within film during wartime. They provide socially accepted, as well as government censored, material of both the war and home fronts, where the audience was exposed to images of masculinity and femininity. For this reason, newsreels to some extent, revealed officially-sanctioned attitudes to the British public. The masculine British soldier and feminine female worker were depicted as the gendered ideals throughout the war. Newsreels depicted lower-class women in more physically demanding work environments, such as farms and munitions factories. Upper-class and royal women's war work appears less physically demanding as they only visited the above described work environments to demonstrate their passive support to these women. Furthermore, upper-class and royal women were depicted in public relations roles to build public morale and endorse those people in power. As demonstrated by the women's march supporting munitions work, the British government's influence of the TFC pre-dated their official takeover of this company. Common to depictions of convalescent and disabled soldiers, meanwhile, was the affirmation of their masculinity, even with significant limb or sensory loss. This was demonstrated by disabled soldiers' competent participation and engagement in sports and leisure activities, often equal to, or above, normal soldiers. Issues of employment and re-integration upon returning from war with disabilities were also addressed where these men were portrayed in multiple useful and skilful occupations. Implied with this narrative was that these disabled men can still be the breadwinner in a patriarchal family. Images of the close proximity of physically attractive females, many of which were nurses, to the disabled soldiers in informal settings endorsed the narrative of future potential 'normal' relationships. By depicting convalescents in these social situations, newsreels reinforced that soldiers retained their 'masculinity' following their injuries and remained physically appealing. The St. Dunstan's gift book contained an array of pictures and writings that discussed gender narratives and also indicate that patients were concerned with how their injuries would impact their masculinity and post-war life. The depiction of gender within First World War British newsreels conveyed a directed image of what constituted the ideal feminine and masculine individuals. Images contained within newsreels conveyed what was socially acceptable for both genders. Newsreels provided a directed and positive image of gender, where convalescent soldiers were conveyed as remaining masculine in all social contexts.

Chapter Three: Smiling Soldiers and Critical Voices

During the First World War, media provided extensive coverage of events both at the war and home fronts. The central images in British newsreels from TB and PG during this period were British soldiers and allied armies. Altogether, British soldiers were depicted 589 times,¹ and allied armies appeared 503 times.² Conversely, opposing belligerent nations, such as Germany, were only depicted 63 times.³ This research discusses the depiction of smiling British and German POWs within newsreels, illustrating that this medium deliberately avoided negative or controversial material as this may be conducive to negative public morale. The most dominant image of the British army was the portrayal of smiling soldiers. Throughout the war this image of happiness saturates the newsreel depictions of both British soldiers and German POWs. Whether this was the result of soldiers being filmed away from the warfront or the novelty of being filmed in itself, this indicated the overall function of British newsreels as conveying optimistic imagery during the First World War. This impression was created deliberately to maintain public morale. As the British soldier became the stereotypical image of males during the First World War, it is also essential to discuss how those men who actively opposed service - whether on ideological or marital grounds - were depicted in contrast to the idealistic image of the soldier. This opposition was demonstrated by depictions of the Irish Rebellion, which suggested that anti-English sentiment was a minority opinion. Newsreels portrayed critical voices differently. Pacifism was treated negatively, whereas married men opposing conscription were treated far more impartially. Therefore, this chapter argues that newsreels set an example to Britons, depicting how they should respond to different groups, while also reinforcing the positivity of war as demonstrated by smiling soldiers. This reaffirms both that newsreels were created with the purpose to 'educate', as elicited by WO documents,⁴ and maintain public morale.

¹ Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories', *British Soldiers and Nurses*. 589 is the sum of British soldiers within this Primary Category.

² Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories', *Foreign Countries, Troops and Civilians (Allied Nations)*, 344 is the sum of Allied armies within this Primary Category:

³ Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories', *Foreign Countries, Troops and Civilians (Opposing Nations)*. 63 is the sum of German Troops, Opposing Armies (Other), and Turkish and Ottoman Troops within this Primary Category.

⁴ PA, BBK/E/2/19: Report of the WOCC: MOI Cinema, 2/8/18.

Smiling British Troops and German Prisoners of War

From the war's inception, Britons were exposed to various visual depictions of domestic and international soldiers. These images formed a basis for the British people's perception of British soldiers and, therefore, their understanding of the war. Badsey affirms that the *Somme* film represents 'the absolutely essential starting place for any discussion of how the British people at home understood the Western Front during the war', and indeed, British soldiers generally.⁵ Before newsreels became the main outlet for material about both domestic and international soldiers, non-fiction feature-length films were the preferred medium of producers. This preference was also the result of the successful public acclaim of the *Somme*, where the British public believed they were vicariously experiencing the warfront from local cinemas.⁶ This emphasis on realism was reaffirmed by the *Somme's* self-aggrandising cinematographer, Geoffrey Malins, who published post-war memoirs stating that:

The Somme Film has proved a mighty instrument in the service of recruiting; the newspapers still talk of its astounding realism, and it is generally admitted that the great kinematograph picture has done much to help the people of the British Empire to realise the wonderful spirit of our men in the face of the almost insuperable difficulties; the splendid way in which our great citizen army has been organised; the vastness of the military machine we have created during the last two and a half years; and the immensity of the task which still faces us.⁷

Malins's discussion of the *Somme* film indicated what the British public were supposed to understand from the images: the spirit of servicemen in harsh conditions, the organisation of the citizen army and the British 'military machine' more broadly. Therefore, like newsreels, there was an intended narrative behind the production of feature films. In both cases, there were

⁵ Badsey, *The British Army*, 108.

⁶ N. Reeves, 'Through the Eye of the Camera', 786-792. For an example of this, see e.g. *Aberdeen Evening Press*, 'Famous Film Shown in City', 4 Sept. 1916.

⁷ G.H. Malins and L. Warren, *How I filmed the War: A record of the Extraordinary Experiences of the Man who filmed the Great Somme Battles* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1920 [1919]), 177.

explicit messages that were meant to be absorbed by the audience, further demonstrating both the educational and example-setting purposes of film during the war.

Despite more non-fiction feature-length films being released after 1917, the popularity of this extended medium started to fade. This resulted in a change in domestic film propaganda policy with newsreels becoming the central outlet for material about domestic and international soldiers during this period.⁸ Unlike the *Somme*, and other similar feature-length films, newsreels and their representation of the British soldiers has not been discussed in British historiography of the war.

Modern historians have focused on the changing image of soldiers within British public memory, emphasising that academic memory presents a different view. Public memory – the accepted public narrative of historical events – has gone through episodic changes, where different generations have emphasised different narratives, such as futility, during and following the war.⁹ Academic memory – the scholarly interpretation of events – mirrors many of the shifts present in public memory but, especially from the 1990s, it also challenged these narratives' validity. The discussion of memory and First World War British soldiers is demonstrated by Helen McCartney's account of how the image of the British soldier has progressively changed over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. McCartney argues that contemporary civilians and servicemen alike imbued the war with negativity because of images of soldier's deaths and returning physically maimed veterans. However, these narratives were silenced after the war when there was a time of mourning.¹⁰ In the 1920s, images of 'stupidity, futility and slaughter' become prominent in academic and public consciousness alike, where both the First World War and British soldiers were often described in 'purely negative terms'.¹¹ Recent revisionist historiography on the image of British soldiers challenges these views by affirming that such generalisations overlook the nuances of research. McCartney asserts that the image of the soldier as a 'victim of an incompetently led and pointless war' is reductive as it overshadows the entirety of a soldier's experience of the First World War, and therefore, the reception of its image to the public.¹² Similar to McCartney, Todman affirms that the British soldier image has been significantly influenced by subsequent generations and their respective

⁸ See pages 22-23.

⁹ Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, 185-194, 219-221.

¹⁰ H.B. McCartney, 'The First World War Soldier and his Contemporary Image in Britain', *International Affairs*, 90:2 (2014), 299-315. For discussion of on the image of British soldiers and how different generations and historical events impact this image, see e.g. Watson, 13, 188-192; Todman, *The Great War*, 221-226.

¹¹ Todman, 221-226.

¹² McCartney, 'The First World War Soldier', 314.

contexts.¹³ McCartney argues that the dominant post-war historiographical argument that propaganda and censorship made civilians ignorant of what soldiers experienced, led to a ‘glamorised, idealistic impression’ of war that caused ‘soldiers to become disillusioned with home.’ Revisionists now argue that soldiers actually conveyed genuine images of war to the home front, which contradicts the previous argument.¹⁴ Indeed, McCartney’s illustrates that following the war the popular image of the British soldiers as a ‘passive victim of the war in general and the military system in particular’ was created by a minority of literary veterans.¹⁵ Previous discussion about the image of British soldiers has not taken into account their happy representation within newsreels, however.

Newsreels challenged the potential negativity of service, depicting participation in the war effort as almost enjoyable. Disillusionment was not depicted in British newsreels as such material would be destructive to public morale. Instead, the newsreels provided a highly sanitised image of war, alongside the perceived happiness of British soldiers. Reeves argues that ‘the primary purpose... seems to [be to] provide positive images of happy, *smiling soldiers*, in the strongest possible contrast to some of the footage that had been included in the earlier Western front films’.¹⁶ Reeves makes no further comment on this topic. This section will build on Reeves’ initial assertion, arguing that smiling and positive images were created with the purpose of maintaining public morale during the war and conveying to Britons that service was a positive experience.

Images of smiling soldiers represented far more than a contrast to the footage of war’s destruction. Jean Chalaby argues that Lord Northcliffe, proprietor of the *Daily Mail* and *The Times*, was largely successful due to his ability to create appealing news with positive images.¹⁷ Indeed, in Northcliffe’s own words: ‘Smiling pictures make people smile’¹⁸ Indeed, smiling soldiers in newsreels served a similar function. Smiling was depicted to create feelings of happiness within Britons and demonstrate that service was pleasurable. Psychological discussion of smiling identifies that an audience is more disposed to reflect emotions conveyed to them. Millicent Abel and Rebecca Hester’s study of an audience being exposed to images

¹³ Todman, *The Great War*, 224-226.

¹⁴ H.B. McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers: The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 89.

¹⁵ McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers*, 2-8.

¹⁶ Reeves, *The Power of Film Propaganda*, 28. Emphasis added.

¹⁷ J.K. Chalaby, “‘Smiling Pictures make People Smile’: Northcliffe’s Journalism”, *Media History*, 6:1 (2000), 33-44.

¹⁸ Cited in S.J. Taylor, *The Reluctant Press Lord* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1998), 202.

of other smiling people reveals that respondents mirror emotions conveyed to them. Conversely, if frowning imagery is depicted, the respondent will echo such sentiments.¹⁹ Thus, if the British audience viewed someone smiling in newsreels, they were more disposed to smiling themselves. This reaffirms the positive nature of newsreels.

These recurring positive images in newsreels provide multiple meanings, different to both domestic and international audiences. For example, smiling British soldiers were commonly portrayed interacting with many other nations' armies to demonstrate the building of positive international relations. A staged newsreel conveyed many allied and British soldiers conversing, with the former handing out cigarettes as signs of respect and comradeship. The intertitles for this reel stated: 'The Armies of the Allies. An interesting group of nationalities fighting the Central Powers in the Balkans. British, French, Russian, Italian, Serbian, Indian, Cretan, Senegalese, Greek, and Anammite type of soldiers.'²⁰ While this newsreel promoted international relationships, the intertitles also implicitly listed the countries in a sliding scale of importance. British supremacy was demonstrated by the symbolic gesture of giving gifts to other armies' soldiers. These practices also metaphorically reinforced British superiority as they were directing the colonial troops throughout this newsreel. In discussion of British perception of Indian service, Christian Koller affirms that prejudices 'moved between racism and exoticism', where European soldiers commonly positioned colonised armies, such as African and Indian troops, as inferior.²¹ Therefore, newsreels that showed British officers in command reassured domestic audiences that the 'inferior' soldiers were receiving correct war conduct instruction from their 'superiors.' Thus, this newsreel reinforces existing British imperial colonial sentiments. The aforementioned sliding scale of importance of the nationalities of the soldiers was also reinforced by intertitles listings. The hierarchical lists showed the major powers and then the minor powers, such as Greece and India. Therefore, the positioning of national armies within this intertitle reaffirmed British beliefs about other nations' and confirms British supremacy. Nevertheless, the overt image depicted to the British audience was the happiness of their troops and their positive interactions with allied armies. Moreover, the images depicted to international audiences were that of a shared goal to defeat Germany as well as the importance of positive relationships with other allied nations. Reeves'

¹⁹ M.H. Abel and R. Hester, 'The Therapeutic Effects of Smiling', in M.H. Abel (ed.), *An Empirical Reflection on the Smile* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 217-255.

²⁰ *TB*, 272-2, 11-11-1917.

²¹ C. Koller, "'Representing Otherness: African, Indian and European soldiers' Letters and Memoirs", in S. Das (ed.), *Race, Empire and the First World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 132-134.

assertion that smiling soldiers provided a stark contrast to harsh images of the Western Front is under-developed as it lacks analysis of specific instances of its occurrence within newsreels and what it meant to accompanying footage, such as other foreign troops.



Figure 19. TB, 178-1, 20-01-1915.

Images of smiling soldiers saturated newsreels depictions of the British army. This positive image was used to normalise and detract from harsher, more hostile aspects of war, as identified by Reeves, and to also glamorise service to the public. Additionally, these images were created for immediate morale purposes as they demonstrated that British soldiers were happy on the warfront, and not melancholic from service. In multiple examples, British troops were smiling in various contexts, whether bayoneting a crude representation of ‘Brother Boche’ as a fighting dummy, training, digging trenches on the Western Front, during rifle inspection (figure 19), or interacting with troops.²² Therefore, such images assured families that their husbands and sons were well treated. An example of a genial soldier is demonstrated in a PG newsreel, depicting smiling volunteers holding up their army rations.²³ This image is replicated in the trenches on the Western Front, where British soldiers were shown eating stew from a can (figure 20). This newsreel finished with a close-up shot of multiple men eating, smiling and chatting with each other.²⁴ Another newsreel presented many smiling soldiers on the Western Front, sitting in a destroyed building around a fire, drinking tea and eating bread.²⁵

²² WOOTB, 313-1, 22-08-1917; PG, 74804, 2324.28,

²³ PG, 74959, 2332.5.

²⁴ PG, 73913, 1942.10.

²⁵ PG, 71829, 1866.46.

These images connoted domestic images of home, which was essential to British soldiers maintaining morale on the war front.²⁶ Indeed, such images conveyed normalcy to Britons, affirming the positive treatment of their troops. Images of soldiers showing negative emotions were non-existent. The juxtaposition between the smiling soldiers and the ruined surroundings showed the audience that their troops were not negatively impacted by service on the warfront. Additionally, this imagery of British soldiers eating and laughing reassured the audience that their soldiers were well treated.



Figure 20. PG, 1866.46, 71829.

Compared to *Somme*, the depiction of soldiers in newsreels were more pleasant. Indeed, the *Somme* contains multiple images of scared British troops following German shelling attacks. Conversely, newsreels consistently presented British troops as contented and happy in all circumstances. Indeed, in part three of *Somme*, there is a scene depicting a soldier saving another injured soldier by running from cover to bring him back for medical attention. Subsequent scenes showed his comrades looking despondent as the result of the death of the severely injured soldier.²⁷ Such scenes of desperation and misery were never conveyed in newsreel content. Additionally, the *Somme* film depicted multiple examples of dead bodies of British and German soldiers, which was largely avoided in contemporary newsreels. Compared to *Somme*, newsreels only contained eight examples of dead soldiers; seven appearing in PG

²⁶ Meyer, *Men of War*, 44-46.

²⁷ G. Malins, C. Urban, J.F. William and J.B. McDowell, *The Battle of the Somme*, Pt. 3 (London: British Topical Committee for War Films; TFC; WO [Sponsor], 1916). (accessed: 24 June 2018)
Accessed from: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060008206>

and one in TB.²⁸ This suggested that images of dead bodies were censored as this imagery might engender public discontent with the obvious loss of their soldiers. Therefore, when comparing images in *Somme* to newsreels during the same period, it is clear that newsreels incorporated a more positive, unrealistic war narrative. Newsreels avoided images of discontent or negativity. Parts four and five of *Somme* depicted injured soldiers who went to convalescent hospitals upon their return to the home front.²⁹ The film shows soldiers with missing limbs, head injuries and many men on crutches. *Somme* does not indicate how these wounded soldiers were treated upon their return to the home front. Conversely, and as previously identified by discussion of convalescent soldiers in chapter two,³⁰ wounded men were all represented positively, and their disabilities were not represented as limiting their ability to function within civil society. Therefore, *Somme*'s depiction of British soldiers presents them in images of hardship and happiness. Conversely, newsreel depictions of British soldiers only emphasised the 'positive' aspects of service.

Gregory's discussion of the army experience for working-class men shows that joining the army, even with all the associated hardships, 'could seem as an improvement on day-to-day civilian life' as eating meat and even being well fed were novel experiences to many working-class men.³¹ David Silbey affirms that many working-class men enlisted for practical, economic reasons. During the period before the war, Britain suffered economically as American and German industrialisation grew and surpassed Britain's output. The working class was most affected by this down turn. Therefore, many men saw service as a 'job', a means to earn money comparable to industrial work.³² Other images of smiling soldiers include British troops marching in Salonika,³³ and soldiers receiving letters and gifts from home.³⁴ Michael Roper asserts that letters provided 'vivid images' of home to British soldiers,³⁵ providing a return to normality and domesticity. Images of smiling soldiers exemplify the positives of soldierhood as being well fed and contented. By frequently depicting smiling soldiers to the domestic audience, newsreels juxtaposed war atrocities against happiness, creating a positive image. This sanitised public perception of war incentivises service as always being a 'happy'

²⁸ Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories', *Dead Bodies Entente; Dead Bodies Central Powers*.

²⁹ Malins, Urban, William and McDowell, *The Battle of the Somme*, Pts. 4 and 5.

³⁰ See pages 59-76.

³¹ Gregory, *Great War*, 282.

³² D. Silbey, *The British Working Class and Enthusiasm for War, 1914-1916* (London: Franc Cass, 2005), 82-105.

³³ TB, 251-1, 14-06-1916.

³⁴ PG, 74862, 2326.41.

³⁵ Roper, *The Secret Battle*, 49-50.

fulfilling experience whilst minimising the negative connotations and images associated with war.



Figure 21. WOOTB, 371-2, 03-10-1918. This reel depicted a mixture of smiling and frowning German POWs walking into captivity.

In comparison to the British army, German POWs were also depicted as smiling in newsreels (figure 21). These images were important for British propaganda and international public opinion. Such depictions also had ramifications for the potential maltreatment of British POWs, and the opinions of neutrals. To prevent too much public discussion on this topic, the government intervened in its publication into contemporary media by instigating censorship in the form of ‘D-notices’. D-notices were produced by the British government, and sent to media outlets, to prevent the publication of sensitive information that could impact on national security. This form of censorship was established in 1912, and developed throughout the First World War. It encompassed topics such as information on the treatment of German POWs and British army tactics.³⁶ D-notice 158, issued in early 1915, stated that the press should avoid publishing any material on repatriated British prisoners who had commented adversely on their

³⁶ For a discussion of D-notices in the First World War, see e.g. Wilkinson, *Secrecy and the Media*, 63-120.

treatment as this could lead to reprisals for the remaining interned soldiers in German camps.³⁷ This same D-notice subject was reinforced and reinstated a year later, following the repatriation of British soldiers from Cologne, when a private falsely recounted how one soldier was used as a human ‘shield above a German Trench’.³⁸ German POWs in British camps were also identified as a topic that should not be discussed in the media.³⁹ Thus, government censorship protected British POWs from possible adverse treatment, which could impact public morale negatively.

Images of German POWs do not show or connote images of violence in newsreels. Indeed, German prisoners were depicted as appearing happy within camp confines. This material challenged contemporary public connotations of atrocities associated with violence against prisoners. As already discussed, the British public believed that their troops were poorly treated in German camps, although this was untrue.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, British people elevated their own position as fighting for ‘civilisation’ by demonstrating how they treated their prisoners fairly. Images of German soldiers’ happiness also affirmed that not even the opposing troops supported their own government’s war agenda. The happiness of German POWs was also reinforced explicitly by an intertitle stating that: ‘Thousands of captured prisoners step lightly forward to their cages. Many are happy in their captivity.’⁴¹ This newsreel depicted many German soldiers walking freely across the road, past a Red Cross ambulance. There were no allied troops evident governing their march,⁴² which further affirmed the soldiers’ ‘happiness’ in captivity and indicated the trust bestowed upon them even in their status as POWs. Similarly, a PG newsreel depicted multiple German soldiers chatting behind barbed wire, whilst lying on the ground and smiling at each other.⁴³ Their positivity was demonstrated by their obvious access to food and cigarettes as many were smoking and even being given cigarettes by British soldiers.⁴⁴ Indeed, images of British soldiers providing small gifts to Germans POWs affirmed Britain’s innate hospitality to neutrals. The positive image of German POWs was reinforced by a seemingly endless line of smiling prisoners carrying bread and

³⁷ The National Archives: Public Record Office; Home Office/139/43; D158 (20 February 15). Thank you to David Monger for providing this material. For similar examples, see e.g. D231 (15 June 1915), cited in Wilkinson, ‘Appendices’, *Secrecy and the Media*, 489; TNA: PRO; HO/139/44; D417 (22 June 1916).

³⁸ D419 (26 June 1916), cited in Wilkinson, ‘Appendices’, *Secrecy and the Media*, 489.

³⁹ TNA: PRO; HO/139/43; D99 (19 November 1914); TNA: PRO; HO/139/43; D100 (20 November 1914).

⁴⁰ H. Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain, France and Germany, 1914-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 249.

⁴¹ *WOOTB*, Shot Sheet, 371-2, 29-9-18. For a similar example see: *WOOTB*, Shot Sheet, 364-2, 11-8-1918.

⁴² *WOOTB*, 371-2, 03-10-1918.

⁴³ *PG*, 71491, 1852.46.

⁴⁴ *PG*, 74842, 2326.21.

drinking out of canteens.⁴⁵ Another example relating to German POWs stated that: “‘German Debacle Begins’. Thousand [sic] of boy prisoners captured almost daily on the Western Front.”⁴⁶ This intertitle conveyed that Germany was forced to use under-age soldiers because their ‘manpower’ levels were low. Therefore, TB and PG newsreels distanced British public sentiments of atrocities away from German POWs, depicting them as all well treated. Conversely, the British public also believed that their troops in Germany were treated inhumanely.⁴⁷ This polarisation reaffirmed ideals of civilisation and barbarism. Atrocities and depictions of Germans throughout the newsreels were a minority. When either topic was depicted, it was in relation to the narrative of civilisation and barbarism or as a prisoner.

Depictions of smiling British and German soldiers conveyed separate messages through similar imagery to the British audience. Happy British soldiers affirmed to Britons that their troops were being well treated and that service was actually enjoyable. Such depictions masked the negatives aspects of war, where the audience only saw a positive portrayal of the conflict. These images were intended to boost and maintain public morale by conveying that British soldiers were dedicated to fighting for their country by their unwavering ability to remain positive through hardship. Images of smiling German soldiers conveyed that they were treated well as POWs, thereby lessening the chance of maltreatment against British POWs, as elucidated by D-notices. Therefore, images of smiling British soldiers and German POWs confirm that newsreels depicted a continuously positive image of war, which was created to maintain morale by overlooking negative aspects of war.

Critical Voices: The Irish Rebellion

During the First World War, many critical voices arose regarding British authority and service. This criticism of British rule was demonstrated by Irish nationalists, who were portrayed by newsreels as being anti-Civilisation and, therefore antagonistic to the war effort. The use of the idealised war narrative illustrated that Britain used these ideals to belittle all opposing populations, not just Germans. During the war, an explicit dichotomy was drawn

⁴⁵ *PG*, 72508, 1874.11.

⁴⁶ *WOOTB*, Shot Sheet, 373-2, 16-10-1918. The moving sequence does not exist for this newsreel. For a similar example, see e.g. *PG*, 71318, 1850.43.

⁴⁷ Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War*, 249.

between soldiers and the men who stayed behind before conscription.⁴⁸ Soldiers were represented as the archetype of the masculine British male. Conversely, dissent was represented as the antithesis of British values, and in many cases as being effeminate.⁴⁹ Therefore, just as the image of the British army was important to contemporary audiences, so was the contrasting image of those men who did not serve. A dichotomy was drawn between those men who served in the forces and those who do not. This divide can be seen as the result of soldiers' stories, which imagined men at the warfront, but not on the home front. Watson affirms that such narratives idealised all men as soldiers.⁵⁰ Similarly, Proctor asserts that men who avoided service were commonly imprisoned and publicly attacked due to their perceived lack of sacrifice for their country.⁵¹ This contrast was even drawn within domestic populations, where there was an explicit division between those who opposed war ideologically, and those who opposed service due to other cultural or religious factors.⁵²

Preceding the First World War, many Irish nationalists perceived English rule over Ireland as negative. Seeking independent Irish home rule led to obvious conflict with British authority before, and then during, the First World War. Newsreels used anti-war rhetoric when describing the Easter Rising in Ireland, demonstrating that Irish nationalists were detrimental to the British war effort. The first images of the Easter Rising depict destroyed buildings behind the untouched Nelson's Pillar. This geographical icon was perceived by the Irish public as a symbol of restrictive British hegemony. Siobhán Kilfeather asserts that ever since its erection in 1808, Irish nationalists were 'naturally' irritated that Dublin's largest monument celebrated an English hero.⁵³ These contrasting images reaffirmed to the British audience their continued authority over their Irish subjects. The intertitle for this reel stated: 'The Dublin Rebellion. Exclusive pictures of the scene of fighting in Dublin', and depicted multiple destroyed buildings juxtaposed against the pillar at the back of the street (figure 22).⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Gullace, "*The Blood of Our Sons*", 37.

⁴⁹ Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda*, 133.

⁵⁰ Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, 11.

⁵¹ Proctor, *Civilians*, 29; for a discussion of married men and enlistment, see e.g. I.R. Bet-El, *Conscripts: Lost Legions of the Great War* (London: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 12-13.

⁵² For a discussion of these factors, see e.g. D. Littlewood, *Military Service Tribunals and Boards in the Great War: Determining the Fate of Britain's and New Zealand's Conscripts* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 79-85.

⁵³ S. Kilfeather, *Dublin: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press 2005), 261.

⁵⁴ *TB*, 245-2, 06-05-1916. Nelson's Pillar is depicted on the left, at the back of the street.



Figure 22. *TB*, 245-2, 06-05-1916.

This internal dissent rhetoric was demonstrated by the intertitles: ‘Sinn Féin to be Suppressed. Misguided manhood which Allies need in the fight for freedom and civilisation.’⁵⁵ Sinn Féin later became a vocal point for Irish nationalism and independence against British rule,⁵⁶ but, contrary to this intertitle, it was not actually instrumental in the Easter Rising. Indeed, ‘Sinn Féin’ was applied as a generically derogatory term as many of the militant Irish volunteers who desired independence ‘resented the name’.⁵⁷ Therefore, this term denigrates the nationalists who loathed this title themselves. This intertitle celebrated English supremacy and rule, affirming that Irish nationalists have rebelled against ‘civilisation’. By stating that the Irish nationalists were not on the British side, this suggested that they were pro-German. Such a stance was reaffirmed by the nationalists’ use of German weaponry. This was confirmed by the same newsreel’s intertitles: ‘German Rifles. Rifles and Pikes used by the rebel in the riots. being [sic] brought in and stacked by the soldiers’, which depicted soldiers storing weapons.⁵⁸ This pro-German stance was reaffirmed by coverage of Roger Casement’s trial.⁵⁹ Casement was involved in a German arms delivery to support the nationalists.⁶⁰ The symbolism of the

⁵⁵ *TB*, 247-1, 17-05-1916.

⁵⁶ P. Adelman, *Great Britain and the Irish Question, 1800-1922* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996), 135.

⁵⁷ M. Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party, 1916-1923* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 68-70.

⁵⁸ *TB*, 247-1, 17-05-1916.

⁵⁹ *TB*, 247-1, 17-05-1916.

⁶⁰ F. McGarry, *The Rising: Ireland: Easter, 1916* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2010), 105.

word ‘pike’ alongside the mention of Germany, conjures parallel images of the ‘Rape of Belgium’, where propagandistic images depicted babies on the end of German pikes and bayonets. Horne and Kramer’s discussion of localised propaganda in Ireland illustrates that British propaganda commonly used national tragedies, such as the sinking of the *Lusitania*, to empathise with Irish sentiments of protecting kin, Catholicism and nationalism. Furthermore, this was illustrated by a recruitment poster that re-imagines Ireland as Belgium.⁶¹ However, propaganda in this newsreel reversed this imagery as it applied both anti-war and German symbolism to the description of Irish nationalists. The intertitle asserted that Irish nationalists have ‘[m]isguided manhood’ as they have chosen to take up arms against English authority, and not Germany. This phrasing of ‘manhood’ likened the nationalists to children to subdue them under British direction. This phrase also implied that Irish men were still capable of serving Britain and redeem themselves, but were led astray rather than being inherently disloyal to British rule. Such images informed the British audience that Irish nationalists were aligned with the German army, and, therefore, antagonistic to both the ‘civilised’ war cause and England. Such negative images were contrasted with subsequent reels depicting Mr Asquith, and Lady Wimborne inspecting ‘Irish volunteers’.⁶² These images demonstrated the appropriate way the Irish should act. Furthermore, it re-emphasised English political authority over Ireland, as the British Prime Minister and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland’s wife inspect submissive Irish volunteers. Thus, this newsreel implied that resistance against British rule was only the act of a minority, with the majority of Irishmen still sympathetic towards Britain. Such messages were reinforced by contrasting images of ‘rebels’ and volunteers for service.

The two newsreels discussing the Irish Rebellion were issued two weeks after the executions of the rebels in Ireland. Alan O’Day states that during the aftermath of the rebellion, the Irish public’s perception of the nationalist rebels was negative, where: ‘[j]eers and a hail of rotten fruit and vegetables from hostile crowds greeted the rebels as they were marched to captivity.’ However, following the execution of these nationalists, public sentiment started to shift as ‘sympathy began to flow in favour of the rebels’.⁶³ Thus, the Irish public were initially sympathetic towards British rule before the executions shifted public opinion against English authority, which was issued following these executions, it was clear that it was dealing with

⁶¹ Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 292-293.

⁶² *TB*, 247-1, 17-05-1916. This is one of the rare occasions where a newsreel is thematically similar throughout the addition. One of the other standout editions is Allenby’s entrance into Jerusalem. See *WOOTB*, 339-2, 21-02-1918.

⁶³ A. O’Day, *Irish Home Rule: 1867-1921* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), 269.

the aftermath of negativity amongst the Irish public. Additionally, these newsreels attempted to garner the support of the wider Irish nation by only including Casement's trial,⁶⁴ thereby omitting reference to the executions of their nationalist leaders. These newsreels attempted to garner the support of the Irish public majority by differentiating the rebels as a minority group, while also justifying British actions against nationalists during and after the rebellion.

Pacifism and Married Men

Pacifism and the rejection of service on the basis of marriage represented other forms of internal dissent addressed in newsreels. Overall, there were only eight examples of anti-war material, which equated to 1.00% of British home front material.⁶⁵ When pacifism was depicted, it was skewed negatively as being unpatriotic. However, when husbands were depicted protesting their conscription such material was not slanted. This demonstrated that in newsreels pacifism and the rejection of service were not conflated into the same negative anti-war stance. Before the First World War, pacifism was already in European consciousness from the Napoleonic wars.⁶⁶ At the beginning of the war, British pacifists proclaimed that belligerent nations could settle conflicts peacefully through diplomacy. With the inception of conscription in 1916, pacifists actively objected to the forced service of British men. Many men asserted that compulsory service undermined religious and humanitarian teachings.⁶⁷ Although pacifism was only represented four times in newsreels,⁶⁸ its appearance illustrates that the British government was not afraid of the concept of pacifism being in popular media; otherwise, it would have been completely censored. Brock Millman asserts that the British government allowed small examples of public dissent to demonstrate that Britain was still a liberal democracy. Indeed:

⁶⁴ *TB*, 247-1, 17-05-1916.

⁶⁵ Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories', *Pacifists or anti-war protestors*.

⁶⁶ S.E. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 1815-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 10.

⁶⁷ J. McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals, 1916-1918 'A very much abused body of men'* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2011), 36-61.

⁶⁸ Gilmour, 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Category', *Pacifists or anti-war protestors*. Out of the eight examples, four depicted pacifism and four depicted married men against conscription.

[j]ust enough material leaked out, by [pacifist] authors sufficiently well known, to establish the fact that in the UK tolerance for dissenting opinion remained, liberty was preserved and censorship was light.⁶⁹

If this information and news of pacifist meetings were completely censored this would have contradicted the liberty that Britain was fighting for. Thus, limited examples were still evident, but were skewed negatively towards the British audience.⁷⁰ This was demonstrated by the following intertitles: ‘Pacifists Routed at Brotherhood Church. A pacifist meeting held at Kingsland was broken up by the forces of loyalty and patriotism. The crowd breaking into the church.’⁷¹ This newsreel depicted both men and women breaking stained-glass windows in order to enter the church. As affirmed by the intertitles though, the British public’s pro-war stance makes the crowd’s destructive actions appear ‘patriotic’.⁷²

The damage to churches, such as the French Cathedral of Reims, was widely used by allied propaganda to condemn German army actions against physical manifestations civilised culture.⁷³ To include Britons destroying a local church to stop a pacifist meeting demonstrated that internal dissent was portrayed as even worse than the destruction of religious property and also conveyed self-serving hypocrisy for the war effort. Hence, this newsreel approvingly depicted Britons destroying stained glass windows as a patriotic action. Conversely, pacifists were represented as unpatriotic and therefore detrimental to British war efforts, and implied that they had defiled the religious grounds by holding their meeting there. As the First World War was a conflict to defend Christianity,⁷⁴ contradictorily, pacifists were fighting against those who were defending their religion. In nineteenth-century Wales, churches were also used for party politics, which demonstrated that this was hardly the first time religious buildings had been used for political ends. During this period, members of the public criticised Welsh preachers who influenced their congregations into voting for liberal candidates. The preachers compounded moralistic discussion with political beliefs, claiming that these decisions were a

⁶⁹ Millman, *Managing Domestic Dissent*, 78.

⁷⁰ Gilmour, ‘Appendix 1.2: Secondary Category’, *Pacifists or anti-war protestors*.

⁷¹ *WOOTB*, 310-1, 01-08-1917. Pathé also recorded this event, but at a different angle. See *PG*, 72011, 1872.32.

⁷² For a discussion of patriotic groups, see e.g. Gregory, *Great War*, 206-208.

⁷³ N. Lambourne, ‘Production versus Destruction: Art, World War I and Art History’, *Art History*, 22:3 (1999), 350-355. For a similar discussion on the destruction of buildings being used to condemn the German army, see e.g. Gregory, 51.

⁷⁴ For a discussion of the First World War as a ‘holy crusade’ and the defence of Christendom, see e.g. Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *Understanding the Great War*, 94-159.

choice between “‘good’ and ‘evil’”.⁷⁵ Therefore, the newsreel’s focus on churches as a negative outlet for pacifist sentiments echoes this belief. In both cases the church represents antagonistic beliefs, which legitimises the crowd’s actions.

Similarly, another TB newsreel showed crowds condemning pacifists. The intertitle stated: ‘Pacifist Fiasco in London. Attempted Meeting and Arrests at Finsbury Park.’⁷⁶ This newsreel depicted police arresting a male pacifist, who was being verbally abused by surrounding crowds. Common to both examples was the obvious colouring of the upcoming material as the audience’s expectation of the subsequent content was influenced by intertitle language that described the pacifists negatively. In the first example, prejudice was demonstrated by the polarisation of those with a pro-war stance and those with an anti-war stance. The public response to such demonstrations showed the British public censuring pacifist meetings. The second intertitle described the pacifist’s meeting as a ‘fiasco’, belittling its purpose and procedures and deeming its ideology a failure. Consequently, pacifists were explicitly condemned in newsreels for their anti-war philosophy. Their actions were described as unpatriotic and shown to provoke the British public’s resentment of such practices.⁷⁷ James McDermott and David Littlewood’s discussion of military tribunals and British public opinion during the First World War illustrates that in many cases Britons were actually sympathetic to conscientious objectors and pacifists, especially for those with religious reasons. Therefore, newsreels contrasted these sympathetic attitudes by conveying that Britons were actually staunchly against pacifism. This demonstrates the directive nature of newsreels as they are contrasting public opinion by presenting a pro-war government stance. Therefore, images of negative public reactions normalised resentment of pacifism, and aimed to show that such sentiments were detrimental to Britain and therefore, the war effort.

Married men against conscription, by contrast, were depicted in a slightly more positive manner. Tammy Proctor identifies that those who ‘resisted the call to arms or expressed reservations about the war could find themselves’ condemned by the British public.⁷⁸ Adam Hochschild’s discussion of conscientious objectors during 1916 when conscription was enacted

⁷⁵ M. Cragoe, *Culture, Politics, and National Identity in Wales, 1832-1886* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 181.

⁷⁶ *WOOTB*, 350-1, 08-05-1918. For a similar anti-pacifist example, see *PG*, 72101, 18744, which depicted Mr Havelock Wilson, A British MP, espousing speeches towards a cheering British crowd against pacifists. Wilson was also a ‘patriotic labour’ union leader who prevented labour politicians from attending a socialist conference in Stockholm, 1917. For discussion of this event, see e.g. Millman, *Managing Domestic Dissent*, 211-214. Other anti-pacifist material includes: *PG*, 71887, 1868.45.

⁷⁷ McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals*, 11-15; Littlewood, *Military Service Tribunal*, 79-85.

⁷⁸ Proctor, *Civilians*, 29.

demonstrates that 20,000 men refused on ideological grounds. Many men accepted labour as an alternative for service, whereas those who refused this, still considered work as war related participation.⁷⁹ James McDermott demonstrates that military tribunals were established to conduct examinations of men who did not want to go to war.⁸⁰ However, men who opposed service were not all conscientious objectors. Many were married, and were their families' 'bread winners', which made their departure for service detrimental. A clear dichotomy in British public opinion was presented in newsreels about these two groups. While conscientious objectors were censured, married men escaped this criticism as their stance was seen as not anti-war in itself, but pragmatic for economic reasons. There was an explicit difference between the treatment of pacifists and married men by the newsreels and intertitles; pacifism was wholeheartedly condemned whereas married men that avoided service were not. For example, the following intertitles do not criticise such service avoidance: 'London Husbands Protest. Passing resolution protest meeting of attested married men in Hyde Park.' This newsreel opened with a wide angled shot of multiple men's heads, and finished with many smiling and applauding men holding up their hands in protest of enlistment before single men (figure 23).⁸¹ Similarly, another intertitle stated: 'Married men Protest meeting. London attested married men hold a Single Men first protest meeting at Tower Hill. Mr W. Dyson speaking to the meeting, calling on the Government to fulfil the pledge.'⁸² Dyson was an Australian cartoonist for the *Daily Herald* and a well-known orator.⁸³ This pledge was to enlist single men before married men and, therefore, not a refusal for service.⁸⁴ Like the previous example, this newsreel depicted crowds of men protesting their conscription, asserting that single men should be first. Unlike the pacifism, there was no negative public opinion conveyed in newsreels towards taking this stance. Critical voices of service were not all generalised into a wholesale negative stance by newsreels during the First World War.

⁷⁹ A. Hochschild, *To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918* (New York: Mariner Books, 2011), 188.

⁸⁰ McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals*, 11-15.

⁸¹ *TB*, 239-1, 22-03-1916. For another example of married men detesting conscription see e.g. *PG*, 71313, 1850.39.

⁸² *TB*, 238-1, 15-03-1916. For a newsreel that depicted the departure of married men, see e.g. *PG*, 71231, 1848.18. This newsreel depicted women holding babies, and waving to their departing husbands.

⁸³ R. McMullin, 'Will Dyson: Australia's Forgotten Genius', *Sydney Papers*, 19:1 (2007), 14-27.

⁸⁴ For a discussion of married men rejecting service, see e.g. I. Beckett, 'The Nation in Arms, 1914-1918', in I. Beckett and K. Simpson (ed.), *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 12-13.



Figure 23. TB, 238-1, 15-03-1916. Married men raising their hands in protest of conscription.

The difference in depiction was related to the status of married men, compared to pacifists in society's perceptions. This reflects previous discussion on masculinity and its relationship to being a 'normal' soldier. Married men were not presented negatively like pacifists as they were taking on the responsibility of defending both their families and the nation. Monger states that 'protective rhetoric', which stressed civilian men should picture themselves as 'defenders' of women when they became soldiers, was commonly used throughout wartime Britain.⁸⁵ Conversely, pacifists were inherently conveyed as not masculine. Indeed, Monger states that domestic propaganda commonly described pacifists as effeminate.⁸⁶ The advocacy for sending single men to the war front first reinforces masculinity as it conveyed that married men should stay on the home front to provide for and protect their families. John Tosh's discussion of the intersections between industrialisation and masculinity demonstrates that before the First World War, the 'family wage' was synonymous to the male 'bread winner' while 'domestic duties' were closely aligned with females.⁸⁷ Therefore, depictions of married men indefinitely delaying service to provide for their family were not censured as these men were reinforcing patriarchal stereotypes by adhering to their

⁸⁵ D. Monger, 'Nothing Special?', 522-523.

⁸⁶ Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda*, 133.

⁸⁷ J. Tosh, 'Masculinities in an Industrialising Society: Britain, 1800-1914', *Journal of British Studies*, 44:2 (2005), 330-342.

responsibilities as providers. Conversely, these sentiments were also used to get single men to enlist.

Conclusion

The representation of both British and German armies' in British newsreel has not been covered in historiography. The British army were repeatedly presented as smiling, which reassured audiences that their soldiers were well treated and contented in service. This positive, repetitive image of soldiers' happiness demonstrated to the British audience that service was enjoyable. By comparison, images of smiling German POWs conveyed to Britons they were glad to be captured and that they did not support their own government's war agenda. As elucidated by D-notices, positive depictions of German prisoners theoretically insured the fair treatment of British POWs. Critical voices of war represented a minority in newsreel material but ensured ideals of democracy remained present in society. Irish nationalists were depicted as pro-German and therefore, anti-English. Material that covers Irish nationalists conveyed that the anti-English sentiments resonated from a fringe group. That is, Irish nationalism was portrayed as a minority example, and that the majority of Irish subjects were loyal. Indeed, the nationalists who were executed were portrayed as being pro-German to engender the wartime division of British against Germany, and affirm that this sentiment was an isolated example. Depictions of men who avoided service demonstrated a dichotomy between pacifists and married men that delayed service due to familial circumstances. Pacifists were censured by the British public, whereas married men were portrayed neutrally due to upholding contemporary standards of masculinity by demonstrating that they will eventually become a soldier. Therefore, the representation of smiling by both the British and German armies conveyed images that have intended narratives for different audiences. This directed image of belligerent armies illustrated that First World War British newsreels were not simply representing reality, but providing a censored and managed picture of the conflict. The depictions of armies demonstrated that First World War British newsreels conveyed a positive image of soldiers from both allied and opposing nations, which was used for diplomatic and public morale purposes. Indeed, smiling images made the audience disposed to also being happy,⁸⁸ which

⁸⁸ Abel and Hester, 'Smiling', 217-255.

reinforces the positivity of newsreels. Material of critical voices demonstrated how newsreels created a directed image of war, where Britons were conveyed how to deflect or downplay such criticisms.

Chapter Four: War on the home front

During First World War Britain, everyday life was immediately and overwhelming impacted by the totalisation of this conflict.¹ Indeed, the First World War represented the first modern ‘Total War’ that sought the participation and duty of all citizens. During this period, personal life was eclipsed by national duty, where even children became a mechanism of the national war effort. The most dominant British related depiction in First World War newsreels was the ‘Home Front’ (Britain), which was tagged 800 times (21.94%).² Therefore, this section discusses the home front’s representation within newsreels by examining how war narratives impacted everyday society. Depictions of children within the wartime narrative of equal participation demonstrate this premise, where they were both objects of propaganda, and espousers of propaganda themselves. A common theme in images of children was the reinforcement of the gender stereotypes prescribed to their adult counterparts throughout the war.³ Girls were depicted as Girl Guides, agriculturalists and munitions workers; boys were portrayed as Boys Scouts and engaging in ‘heavier’ physical labour activities. In both instances, children’s roles and activities reflected gender norms also prescribed to adults. Indeed, during pre-war British society, boys’ youth groups developed alongside ‘growing militarism’.⁴ Images of animals will also be discussed alongside children, demonstrating that in both cases the narrative of participation was portrayed. Before the First World War, sport became a central facet of British people’s leisure time activities. This movement continued to grow in popularity even with the start of war. Both domestic and international audiences perceived sport as developing the ‘fighting spirit’ necessary for engaging in war.⁵ However, sport participation also drew criticism for continuing during war. Critics argued that while men were dying on the war front, ‘fit’ men were playing sport on the home front.⁶ Therefore, this section on the British home front argues that newsreels reaffirmed existing ideologies, such as gender, while also

¹ R. Chickering, ‘World War I and the Theory of Total War: Reflections on the British and German Cases, 1914-1915’, in S. Förster and R. Chickering (ed.), *Great War, Total War, Combat and Mobilisation on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 35-53.

² Gilmour, ‘Appendix 1.2: Primary Category’, *Home Front (Britain)*.

³ Similar to chapter 2, this section differentiates between girl and woman, and boy and man. ‘Girl’ and ‘boy’ will be used to refer to the children. ‘Woman’ and ‘man’ will be used to refer to adults.

⁴ R.H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890-1918* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 178-184.

⁵ Mason and Riedi, *Sport and the Military*, 89-90.

⁶ Horrall, *Popular Culture*, 197-198.

threading narratives of war into everyday life to convey the message of shared participation for the national war effort through images that set a precedent.

The Mobilisation of Children

First World War British newsreels conveyed narratives of participation and self-sacrifice through depictions of all areas of society. Indeed, during this total war, all civilians were mobilised and expected to support the national war effort. Michael Billig argues that ‘banal nationalism’, which is the expression of nationalism through everyday habits and sentiments,⁷ is common in war periods as all aspects of society can be expressed through national service. Similarly, patriotism and participation during the First World War was expressed in everyday life, where seemingly banal aspects of civilian life were now patriotic. This mobilisation of civil society is demonstrated by the portrayal of children. Ariés’ seminal study on children in history provided the initial framework for understanding that children did not experience the war like adults.⁸ Since Ariés, scholarship on children in different historical contexts has developed. For example, First World War scholarship since the 1990s has increasingly focused on how children fitted into war narratives. Throughout the war, children were depicted as targets of propaganda and also as propaganda objects themselves. Propaganda presented a narrative of children engaged in work, illustrating their participation in the war effort. Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau asserts that during the war, ‘childhood was the target for intense propaganda [and was] designed to bring the youngest citizens whole-heartedly into the war. They too had to be *mobilised*.’⁹ Sonja Müller comments that during the war British children’s toys were created to integrate wartime narratives of patriotism, where even the war itself was presented as a ‘game’ to younger audiences.¹⁰ David Monger’s discussion of British wartime domestic propaganda campaigns asserts that children’s roles and participation had a growing influence on broader groups of society as parents who attended school productions were incentivised into war participation by adhering to their children’s positive example and

⁷ M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 1st edn. (London: Sage, 1995), 6.

⁸ Ariés, *Centuries of Childhood*.

⁹ S. Audoin-Rouzeau, ‘French Children as a Target for Propaganda’, in H. Cecil and P. Liddle (ed.), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), 767. Emphasis in original.

¹⁰ S. Müller, ‘Toys, Games and Juvenile Literature in Germany and Britain during the First World War. A Comparison’, in H. Jones, J. O’Brien and C. Schmidt-Supprian (ed.), *Untold War: New Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 238-240.

the result of peer pressure for households to be patriotic.¹¹ Similarly, Barry Blades' discussion of wartime schooling illustrates that children 'were encouraged' by various patriotic and humanitarian groups to create comfort items for British troops on the Western front, soldiers in convalescent homes, and POWs.¹² Rosie Kennedy affirms that children 'were mobilised for the war effort as a way of teaching them the value of participating in a national endeavour.' However, truancy levels also increased during the war as, from August 1914, many students left school so that they could be employed in jobs previously held by men who were in service or work in other employment created by the war, such as munitions.¹³ Similar to Monger, Manon Pignot's discussion of children in belligerent nations identifies that children represented both a figure of 'guilt' and 'protection' to parents throughout the war. Indeed, images of children were prolific on wartime 'conscription posters and posters advertising successive war bonds', which emphasised that this was a war to defend successive generations.¹⁴ Newsreels also contained both these images and themes.

Common to depictions of children was how the war impacted on their everyday lives. Children were used for international propaganda and diplomatic relations as demonstrated by the depiction of a British school. It opened with an outdoor classroom with the students writing letters to the Head of American food administration, Herbert Hoover. Before this position, Hoover was the British chairman of the Commission for the Relief of Belgium.¹⁵ This organisation was perceived by the British public positively as they saw it as their moral obligation to protect Belgium.¹⁶ The blackboard in the classroom stated: 'A letter to Mr Hoover expressing thanks for what America is doing.'¹⁷ This caption was followed by multiple scenes portraying the children cheering and waving both the Union Jack and American flags. Here the impact of war on education was explicitly demonstrated by the children learning writing skills by creating letters for American aid in war. This newsreel combined a prominent American icon, who was also well known to the British audience, to promote diplomatic relations. This narrative was reinforced by the final scene depicting a young woman holding both countries

¹¹ D. Monger, 'Tangible Patriotism during the First World War: Individuals and the Nation in British Propaganda', *War & Society*, (first view, 2018). DOI: [10.1080/07292473.2018.1496786](https://doi.org/10.1080/07292473.2018.1496786)

¹² Blades, *Roll of Honour*, 56-60.

¹³ Kennedy, *The Children's War*, 121-125.

¹⁴ Pignot, 'Children', 31-45.

¹⁵ C. Lloyd, *Aggressive Introvert: Herbert Hoover and Public Relations Management, 1912-1932* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1972), 37-45.

¹⁶ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, 33-35.

¹⁷ *WOOTB*, 357-2, 27-06-1918.

flags (Figure 24). The girl in-between the flags represented the metaphorical relationship between both nations.



Figure 24. WOOTB, 357-2, 27-07-1918. A young lady between American and British flags.

Depictions of children applied similar gender stereotypes to those applied to adults in the First World War. Newsreels commonly depicted youth groups alongside their adult ‘counterparts’ or children in activities that reflected those carried out by their adult equivalents. Pignot states that ‘girls and boys, however, were not equal in this exhortation to sacrifice. Far from abolishing social norms, the context of war greatly contributed to a reinforcement of them, particularly gender barriers.’ Gender stereotypes applied to adults were also applied to children. Boys were represented as ‘combatants-to-be’, and girls were conveyed in ‘domestic and maternal roles.’¹⁸ For example, a PG newsreel depicted young girls practicing various gathering practices. Conversely, boys were depicted holding watering cans.¹⁹ That is, boys were never depicted in strictly gathering roles, while girls were. This explicit dichotomy is further demonstrated in another PG newsreel that opened with both boys and girls holding various gardening tools. The girls were holding rakes and hoes, while the boys were holding shovels and pushing wheel barrows (figure 24), which affirmed the dichotomy of social roles. The girls were presented as gatherers, mirroring acceptable wartime roles that were indicative of being ‘feminine’, as these roles suggested ‘tending’, ‘maintaining’, and ‘smoothing’.

¹⁸ Pignot, ‘Children’, 34.

¹⁹ PG, 1866.15, 71798.

Furthermore, the children were depicted holding tools over their shoulders, which parallels soldiers holding rifles (figure 25).²⁰ This further reinforced the participation of all members of society, as gardening tools were the children's metaphorical rifles.



Figure 25. PG, 1866.15,71798. The girls are depicted holding rakes and the boys in the background are holding shovels.

Similar to PG newsreels, TB also perpetuated gender stereotypes of agricultural work. In a newsreel depicting children picking fruit, the intertitles stated: 'School Children Fruit Picking. Dr. Piggot of Hornsey Council School Organises a fruit picking party, [sic] girls and boys at work on a Suffolk fruit farm.'²¹ On a simplistic level, this newsreel depicted children happily contributing to the war effort. However, similar to the previous reel, there was an explicit dichotomy between the roles assigned to the genders. Again, boys were not depicted as dominant gatherers; this was the role of the girls. The reel opened with the girls picking fruit while the Boy Scouts watch holding baskets. This newsreel finished with all the children forming a line to hand in their baskets. Such content demonstrated that different kinds of agricultural work were socially acceptable for different genders, where girls were gatherers and boys were doing the heavy lifting. Therefore, gender stereotypes were applicable to all ages, where images of children reinforced socially acceptable wartime roles in Britain.

²⁰ For a similar example, see e.g. *WOOTB*, 371-2, 3-10-1918. This newsreel depicted WLA judging livestock, which inherently reaffirms their roles in agriculture; Similarly, *WOOTB*, 327-2, 01-12-1917.

²¹ *TB*, 258-2, 05-08-1916.

Children were depicted as playing a vital role in the war effort and were used to influence their parents and other adults into more active support of the war through setting a precedent or guilt. Newsreels demonstrated that everybody had an important role to play in the national war effort, illustrating, as alluded to by WO documents, that newsreels were intended to be ‘educational’.²² For example, a newsreel showed boys in war work: ‘British Boys at Play. Gathering in Flax during holidays in Lincolnshire.’²³ While this was an agricultural example, which was inherently gendered as a ‘feminine’ activity, this newsreel placed more emphasis on how much the schoolboys enjoyed war work, as elicited by the word ‘play’. Indeed, the boys were still depicted as masculine by the evidently labour intensive work of flax picking. The newsreel opened with the boys beginning the flax picking, and finished with them packing the flax together into bunches. A wide-angled shot demonstrated the level of work completed. As implied by the intertitles, the boys were giving up their holidays to engage in the war effort. Monger asserts that ‘self-sacrificial patriotism’ was a key theme of wartime propaganda, where self-sacrifice became a central narrative directed at ‘civilians as part of their patriotic duty’.²⁴ Indeed, alongside this facet of personal sacrifice, participation was a key component of depictions of children. The notion of sacrifice was exemplified by the boys’ happy commitment to relinquish their holidays to contribute to their country. Therefore, similar, to Monger’s previous assertion of children influencing wider society,²⁵ such images were depicted to demonstrate to all British society, like parents and peers, that national duty comes before personal leisure, where even children can use their holidays productively for the war effort. Monger argues that throughout the war, civilian sacrifice and its links to a soldier’s sacrifice was commonly espoused in domestic propaganda. Indeed, following the German offensive of March 1918, industrial workers who had worked through their Easter holidays were congratulated as being both patriotic and upholders of democracy by their ability to match the sacrifices of servicemen.²⁶ Therefore, depictions of children who were also working through their holidays were used to set a precedent to British society and shame adults who may not be contributing fully to the war effort.

²² PA, BBK/E/2/19: Report of the WOCC: MOI Cinema, 2/8/18.

²³ *WOOTB*, 369-1, 16-09-1918.

²⁴ For a discussion of ‘sacrificial patriotism’, see e.g. Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda*, 94, 171-180.

²⁵ Monger, ‘Tangible Patriotism’.

²⁶ Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda*, 176. For a further discussion on civilian sacrifice during the war, see e.g. J. Horne, “‘L’impôt du sang’: Republic Rhetoric and Industrial Warfare in France, 1914-1918”, *Social History*, 14:2 (1989), 201-223; Gregory, *Great War*, 112-152.



Figure 26. *PG*, 1918.18, 73308. The toddler on the left is holding a war loan.

The use of children in promoting war was explicitly demonstrated by their wholesale participation in selling war bonds. Another *PG* newsreel depicted a young boy and girl selling war bonds to two women and children.²⁷ This reel demonstrated the use of children to promote national service and patriotism, as the children were being used to incentivise bond sales by demonstrating to the buyer and the newsreel audience what war was protecting. Additionally, children selling war bonds reinforced that all ages of society should participate in supporting the war effort. This war narrative was further reinforced by the following newsreel material that depicts two child sellers surrounded by many other young children (Figure 26). When the sellers offered the sale of a war loan, all the group of children enthusiastically put their hands out as a gesture of goodwill, implying that they will also purchase loans to demonstrate their patriotism.²⁸ This material implied that children, who earned little compared to adults, still wanted to invest in war loans and also that adults with money to spare should follow their precedent. Such patriotic sentiments were echoed in contemporary British propaganda that emphasised messages about children investing their own savings in war loans.²⁹ Similar to previous material that integrated children into the war narratives of participation and self-

²⁷ *PG*, 1918.18, 73308. For other examples of children in war work, see e.g. *TB*, 246-1, 8-05-1916; *TB*, 247-1, 17-05-1916; *TB*, 259-2, 12-08-1916; *WOOTB*, 1-9-1917; *WOOTB*, Shot Sheet, 368-2, 8-9-1918.

²⁸ *PG*, 1918.18, 73308.

²⁹ For a discussion of 'tangible patriotism' and how propaganda conveyed messages that emphasised individuals must find any contributions to the war effort, see e.g. Monger, 'Tangible Patriotism'. For a discussion of 'financial patriotism', see e.g. D. Blaazer, 'Not Only Patriotism but Self-Interest': War, Money and Finance in British Public Discourse', *War & Society*, 23:1 (2005), 7-10.

sacrifice, they were also used to set an example to society to contribute more than just time, but also their personal savings to the war effort. Additionally, this material suggested that children were undertaking more work than some adults, which was therefore, used as a shaming device to increase war work participation. Similar messages appeared in America, where the U.S. Food Administration emphasised to children and mothers what was deemed ‘patriotic’ in regards to a wartime diet.³⁰

During the First World War, the lack of ‘manpower’ from men leaving to go to war was combated by the deployment of women and children to fill their vacated positions, and shifting of already employed persons.³¹ Trevor Wilson states that the war was ‘circumscribing the education of some children, who were being lured by big wages to work in munition factories.’³² Thus, similar to many women, who saw war work as a means of obtaining capital, and, therefore, financial independence, and not service,³³ it was likely that many older youths possessed similar sentiments. Children frequently occupied vacant adult job positions, becoming an important facet of the British war effort. In comparison to youth material, there were no depictions of the elderly in war work in both the TB and PG. Perhaps this was because images of children establish an emotive response from the audience. Depictions of children conveyed a similar message to depictions of women during the war; in both instances the narrative of protection was emphasised. This protective impulse was demonstrated before the war, with 1906-1908 Liberal reforms that focused on feeding and providing medicine for children.³⁴ Therefore, these images acted as a stimulus to women to enter into war work and men to enter service. Additionally, depictions of children in war work evoked greater public sentiment in ideals of equal participation in the war effort.

The narrative of participation was also applied to girls in a newsreel that depicted many standing outside a munitions factory. The intertitle stated: ‘Munition Workers Welfare. A special department of the Ministry of Munitions look after the health of the workers [sic] Mrs. Kent inspects the girl guides [sic] (munitions workers) who drill during their lunch hours.’³⁵ It opened with Mrs Kent, a representative of the Ministry of Munitions, with WAAC members

³⁰ R.N. Gross, “‘Lick a Stamp, Lick the Kaiser’: Sensing the Federal Government in Children’s Lives during World War I”, *Journal of Social History*, 46:4 (2013), 971-988.

³¹ DeGroot, *Blighty*, 219- 220.

³² Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War*, 815-818.

³³ Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, 106.

³⁴ M. Pugh, *State and Society: A Social and Political History of Britain since 1870*, 4th edn. (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 125-132.

³⁵ *TB*, 265-2, 23-09-1916. This research has not been able to locate ‘Mrs Kent’. However, it can be assumed that she is a WAAC member as she was depicted wearing their uniform.

and nurses in the background, inspecting young girls involved in first aid safety practices. Following the inspection, the girls also applied their skills on a collapsed fellow worker, taking her away on a stretcher. The reel finished with a smiling girl changing from civilian attire to her Girl Guide uniform then, to the munitions outfit (figure 27). This changing of uniforms reflected contemporary standards and roles for women during the war. Additionally, it also demonstrated performative aspects of femininity as the girls are changing between idealised feminine roles.³⁶ It demonstrated that women and girls could fulfil domestic necessities, as portrayed by civilian attire, auxiliary roles for government support in the Girl Guide uniform, and the creation of munitions for the war effort simultaneously.



Figure 27. TB, 265-2, 23-09-1916. Girl Guides changing into munitions outfits. In subsequent staged scenes, the same group of girls perform first-aid on an incapacitated girl guide.

This narrative was reinforced by members of the different groups watching this demonstration. During the war, there was public anxiety regarding the neglect of children due to excessive working hours for their mothers. This reel also reflected the transition from girlhood into adulthood with its added expectations. Grayzel asserts that on ‘the one hand, [governments] encouraged women’s patriotic participation in war work, and on the other, they felt compelled to safeguard motherhood’.³⁷ Indeed, in both France and Britain, there were

³⁶ See figure 27. For a discussion of ‘waged labour’ and its impact on feminine responsibilities, see e.g. S.R., Grayzel, ‘Women and Men’, in J. Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 267.

³⁷ Grayzel, *Women’s Identities at War*, 119.

debates over the exclusion of pregnant women and mothers of young children in munitions work due to the potentially adverse effect on babies.³⁸ Therefore, by portraying a young woman in these multiple activities, it showed that women can engage in all roles. The intertitle's first sentence highlighted a contemporary issue voiced by British female workers, who alleged that working conditions were unsafe.³⁹ Thus, children were used to dispel such rumours, as if the work conditions were child safe then they were more than appropriate for adults too.

Images of children in work potentially induced feelings of adult guilt to encourage them to do their patriotic duty. For example: 'Boy Munition Work. A capstan lathe at work which was producing part for the searchlight. This machine was controlled by a thirteen year old boy.'⁴⁰ This newsreel depicted the juvenile operating heavy commercial machinery to make munitions. In the background a man is also engaged in similar activities. The intertitle's emphasis on the technician's age and status demonstrated to the British audience that age does not exempt one from war work. Furthermore, this image counters possible beliefs that the use of such heavy machinery was too advanced for children. Thus, narratives of equal participation for the national war effort were conveyed by depictions of children.

This mirroring of roles from adults onto youth groups was conveyed in a newsreel that depicted the funeral service for the previous Deputy Controller in Chief of WAAC, Mrs Violet Long. It portrayed various women's war organisations such as the WAAC, WLA and Girl Guides forming a procession into church. The intertitle for this reel stated: 'Britain's Women War Workers. Memorial Service to their late chief, Mrs Long. Torpedoed on Hospital Ship Warilda.'⁴¹ In discussion of girls' youth groups, Richard Voeltz states that during the First World War, Girl 'Guides became part of the patriotic, civic or even religious displays',⁴² which demonstrated their pivotal support for the national war effort. Thus, the appearance of these groups in the public eye was in itself patriotic. This newsreel also demonstrated the explicit division between boys and girls. Indeed, this seemingly staged sequence only depicted girls and women entering the church, demonstrating the inherent association between youth and adult female groups, portraying them as a continuation from the young to old. As will be later discussed, just as boys' youth groups were used as tools to facilitate progression into adulthood

³⁸ DeGroot, *Blighty*, 213-224; Grayzel, *Women's Identities*, 109-112.

³⁹ Braybon, *Women Workers*, 114-117.

⁴⁰ *TB*, 246-1, 08-05-1916.

⁴¹ *WOOTB*, 369-1, 16-09-1918.

⁴² R.A. Voeltz, "'The Antidote to 'Khaki Fever'? The Expansion of the British Girls Guides during the First World War", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 27:3 (1992), 627-638.

groups or ‘combatants-to-be’, girls’ youth groups also promoted the ‘innate’ female domestic instinct. The intertitles’ reference to the sinking of a hospital ship reinforced public beliefs associated with war atrocities carried out by the German army against British innocents; like the killing of injured soldiers. Thus, children and youth were used within British newsreels to promote narratives of participation in work environments and to simultaneously encourage and guilt the public into greater national war efforts. Youth organisations were shown alongside their ‘adult’ counterparts to reinforce existing gender dichotomies of acceptable roles both in war and at the home front. Boy Scouts were shown alongside soldiers to reinforce the ideology of militarism and demonstrate their inherent roles soldier-citizens, as asserted by Pignot.⁴³ Similarly, girls’ groups were depicted alongside WAAC members to demonstrate their progression into adult positions of domesticity. Thus, newsreels provided a novel resource to justifying the logical progression from youth groups to their adult counterparts with associated gender roles.

During the First World War, boys and girls were mobilised through youth groups which stressed ideals of ‘self-discipline, obedience and self-sacrifice’. Indeed, such ideals were emphasised at all society levels, where these narratives of war were applied to the social groups and institutions. Kennedy asserts that ‘the most visible’ sign of children’s mobilisation was their aesthetic appearance and demonstrations of their leadership by soldiers in the case of boys, and auxiliaries in the case of girls. Youth groups were created in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries due to increasing British anxieties about the ‘the country’s capacity to defend its empire.’ With the outbreak of war, many youth groups quickly engaged themselves in activities that aided the war effort.⁴⁴ Newsreels covered their activities, but frequently differentiated between male and female youth groups. Additionally, these youth groups were depicted alongside their adult counterparts, reinforcing both groups simultaneously. The reflection of the children’s roles onto their parents was demonstrated by a newsreel that covered ‘Empire Day’. The intertitles stated: ‘Children of the Empire. Children attend a very impressive service at St. Paul’s Cathedral, held in connection with the League of

⁴³ Pignot, ‘Children’, 34.

⁴⁴ Kennedy, *The Children’s War*, 83-84, 91-96. For further discussion on Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, see M. Rosenthal, *The Character Factory – Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement* (London: Collins, 1986); A. Warren, ‘Popular Manliness: Baden-Powell, Scouting and the Development of Manly Character’, in J.A. Mangan and J. Walvin (ed.), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 52-75; R. Kerr and A. Liddell, *The Story of the Girl Guides, 1908-1938* (London: The Girl Guide Association, 1976); T.M. Proctor, ‘(Uni)Forming Youth: Girl Guides and Boy Scouts in Britain, 1908-39’, *History Workshop Journal*, 1998:45 (1998), 103-134.

Empire.⁴⁵ Blades argues that Empire Day was recognised as a national holiday until 1916, when it was then used to promote patriotism at home and solidarity with the imperial dominions.⁴⁶ Jim English argues that Empire Day celebrations emphasised that the war was an attack on British imperialism.⁴⁷ Furthermore, similar to Voeltz's discussion of Girl Guides,⁴⁸ the appearance of 'Children of Empire' in public was patriotic as they celebrated British nationalism and supremacy. This reaffirms this research's argument that one of the functions of newsreels was self-aggrandisement of Britain by presenting the war, and its related events in a positive tone at all times. Thus, children were depicted within narratives of empire and war to demonstrate to audiences that the wholly supported the war cause. While the aforementioned Empire Day newsreel used the collective noun 'children', only boys were represented. This implied that 'boys' or 'men' were the only gender capable of representing the 'Empire' effectively. Presenting youth groups alongside their adult counterparts conveyed images of duty with both genders in defending their country. The former defend the home front; the latter serve on the war front. Kennedy argues that the Boy Scouts movement was founded on the premise of becoming a 'soldier-citizen' through patriotic deeds.⁴⁹ As Empire Day was synonymous to celebrating being a Boy Scout, the filming of this topical event allowed a wider viewership to see national patriotism and imperialistic beliefs in a young audience.⁵⁰ Boys were depicted alongside servicemen to liken them to future soldiers for their country. This analogy demonstrated the teaching of militaristic ideology and the archetype of the ideal male.

Similar to the Empire Day newsreel, the association between boy's youth groups and soldiers was explicitly portrayed in a newsreel that depicted Private Robert Edward Cruikshank receiving a gold watch. The intertitles for this reel stated: 'Private Cruikshank [...] A former Boy Scout. Honoured by Major General Sir Robert Powell. Founder of Boy Scouts. [sic] Presents him with a Gold Watch in [Tottenham]'.⁵¹ The gold watch, a traditional retirement symbol, was gifted to Cruikshank from the Boy Scouts. As a past leader of this organisation, this linked

⁴⁵ *TB*, 249-1, 31-05-1916. For a discussion of the League of Empire and Children of the Empire, see e.g. M. Hendley, *Organised Patriotism and the Crucible of War: Popular Imperialism in Britain, 1914-1932* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 67-115. For a similar 'Empire Day' example, see e.g. *TB*, 248-2, 27-05-1916.

⁴⁶ Blades, *Roll of Honour*, 17.

⁴⁷ J. English, 'Empire Day in Britain, 1904-1958', *The Historical Journal*, 49:1 (2006), 246-276.

⁴⁸ Voeltz, 'The Expansion of British Girl Guides', 627.

⁴⁹ Kennedy, *The Children's War*, 91-96.

⁵⁰ For a discussion of cinema being used to promote imperialism and empire, see e.g. J.M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1984), 74-75.

⁵¹ *WOOTB*, Shot Sheet, 371-1, 30-09-1918. The end of this intertitle is cut off due to poor digitisation of newsreels in the Imperial War Museum Archive.

army service to Boy Scouts explicitly. This narrative was reinforced by the presence of Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the movement. Due to Baden-Powell's military background, many parents criticised the Boy Scout movement.⁵² However, newsreels depicting Boy Scouts in these positive situations combatted contemporary criticisms that such groups were too militaristic. Indeed, Boy Scout numbers increased from just over 100,000 in 1910, to 194,331 in 1919.⁵³ Indeed, as soldierhood was perceived as the stereotypical ideal, this association of boys with such practices counteracts negative public perceptions Boy Scouts' practices.

The focus on both Cruikshank's and Baden-Powell's involvement in the Boy Scouts and the army demonstrated an overlap or natural progression in organisations with their shared values. This newsreel associated the celebration of militarism with both organisations as they were combined together to demonstrate a common affinity towards militaristic conduct. Newsreels provided a novel avenue to justifying previous arguments on this stance, by demonstrating that the progression from youth groups into adult counterparts was positive. While such groups 'defined themselves as staunchly non-militaristic', they still engaged themselves in militaristic activities, such as bayonet training, throughout the war. Additionally, this association was confirmed by uniformed soldiers acting as leaders to scout groups.⁵⁴ Therefore, such depictions of Boy Scouts alongside their adult counterparts as soldiers demonstrated the narrative of militarism, where the British audience perceived boys as the next generation of soldiers. Additionally, just as the soldier became the archetypal image of adult males, Boy Scouts were the archetypal positive role of boys during the war.

The Mobilisation of Animals

This narrative of participation and the utility of all beings was reinforced by depictions of animals involved in the war effort. There were multiple newsreels by both PG and TB that depicted animals engaging in war work on the home front. Similar to images of children involved in war work, animals were also used to demonstrate that all levels of society participated in the war effort.⁵⁵ Historiography of the First World War and its intersections with

⁵² Proctor, '(Uni)forming Youth', 117-118.

⁵³ T.M. Proctor, 'On my Honour – Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 38:4 (2002), 16, 35.

⁵⁴ Pignot, 'Children', 34; Kennedy, *The Children's War*, 91-96.

⁵⁵ PG, 1918.37, 73327, PG, 1852.42, 714877.

animals is currently underdeveloped because human-animal studies is a recent phenomenon in humanities.⁵⁶ Existing animal studies literature on the British war experience focuses on aspects of commemoration and their omission from post-war narratives. Both Steven Johnston and Hilda Kean assert that while animals were used extensively in the global war effort, this topic has remained overlooked in modern First World War narratives. They contend this is demonstrated by the lack of commemorative statues and low levels of public awareness in modern society.⁵⁷ Throughout the war, animals were depicted on the war and home fronts, helping in various ways.⁵⁸

The narrative of collective participation was integrated into depictions of animals, which mirrored images of children. Indeed, animals were depicted as equivalent to humans, where they were shown engaging in war work. This was evident in the intertitle that stated: ‘Serving Their Country. The horse which was wounded in the Battle of Loos, still doing his bit for the Country, helping the women working on an Essex farm.’⁵⁹ This newsreel depicted a woman engaged in various agriculture practices, such as scything grass and hoeing fields with the aid of a horse. In this example, the wounded horse represented an equivalent to returning wounded servicemen as it still contributed to the national effort, helping in this agrarian task. This narrative echoed depictions of children who were unable to bear arms, but could contribute by farming and selling war bonds. Similar to previous discussion on convalescent soldiers maintaining their productivity despite their disabilities,⁶⁰ this material conveyed that those wounded by war were still useful. It affirmed that disabled servicemen, like the wounded horse, can successfully reintegrate into civilian life. The Battle of Loos, with 50,000 casualties,⁶¹ represented the first major British offensive on the Western Front. While this battle happened over a year before this newsreel’s publication, it addressed on-going anxieties surrounding the influx of returning injured and disabled soldiers. This newsreel reinforced the illusion of successful reintegration of wounded soldiers which, in reality, was very difficult in post-war Britain.⁶²

⁵⁶ P. Armstrong and L. Simmons, ‘Bestiary: An Introduction’, in P. Armstrong and L. Simmons (ed.), *Knowing Animals* (Boston: Leiden, 2007), 1.

⁵⁷ S. Johnston, ‘Animals in War: Commemoration, Patriotism, Death’, *Political Research Quarterly*, 65:2 (2012), 359-371; H. Kean, ‘Traces and Representations: Animal Pasts in London’s Present’, *The London Journal*, 36:1 (2011), 54-71.

⁵⁸ *WOOTB*, 336-2, 2-2-1918; *TB*, 275-2, 02-12-1916; *TB*, 276-2, 09-12-1916; *PG*, 1942.12, 73916.

⁵⁹ *TB*, 256-1, 19-07-1916.

⁶⁰ See pages 59-76.

⁶¹ J.P. Harris, *Douglas Haig and the First World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 176-177.

⁶² Meyer, *Men of War*, 97.

Other examples of animals in war work include elephants ploughing fields with a young female worker, lifting hay into a truck and pumping water.⁶³ Images of elephants doing patriotic work continued the narrative of wholesale participation in patriotic work and the inappropriateness of leisure activities during the war.⁶⁴ Elephants were also used as a spectacle to promote the sale of liberty bonds in America. A newsreel depicted several elephants parading in the New York streets, bearing banners that stated: 'Buy Liberty Bonds'. It finished with sailors physically spelling out 'Invest in Bonds'.⁶⁵ Such material contained basic propaganda elements as the elephants were exploited as an 'exotic' spectacle to attract contemporary audiences, and then encourage the crowds into purchasing the war bonds. All these depictions of animals in First World War British newsreels affirmed the wartime narrative of participation. There were many parallels between the depictions of children and animals as both demonstrated that no matter one's status, or condition, all levels of society contributed towards national service. Such sentiments also affirmed the reintegration of returning wounded soldiers. There was an element of condescension as both animals and children were depicted without agency. Indeed, the majority of depictions of children and animals were evidently staged in evidently set up sequences. For example, a newsreel that depicted an elephant pumping water and lifting hay into a truck serves only as a precedent setter to broader British society as such sequences did not occur naturally.⁶⁶ Similarly, as identified in the previous example of children selling war loans, this material was used to demonstrate to adults that they should invest their money in loans as children did not possess the required funds themselves.⁶⁷ In both instances newsreels asserted that everybody played a different, but important, role in the war effort.

The Militarisation of Sport in Civilian Society

Just as children and animals became integral parts of the war narrative, so did everyday activities. Before the First World War, sport was a common leisure activity in all levels of British society. During the second half of the nineteenth century, sport's popularity grew rapidly in civilian society, becoming a key part of British leisure.⁶⁸ As demonstrated by

⁶³ *PG*, 1864.25, 717.25. For a similar example, see e.g. *PG*, 1938.26. 81066.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of leisure and war, see e.g. Rürger, 'Entertainments', 105-143.

⁶⁵ *PG*, 2456.05, 77087.

⁶⁶ *PG*, 1864.25, 717.25

⁶⁷ *PG*, 1918.18, 73308

⁶⁸ Mason and Riedi, *Sport and the Military*, 12-13.

previous discussion on sport and convalescent soldiers, sport was also an important part of military training and leisure time pursuits during this period, reflecting its increasing popularity in civil society.⁶⁹ The influence of war on civilian life was demonstrated by its impact on contemporary leisure activities, such as sport. Similar to children, which demonstrated their progression into adult roles, sport was also represented as a progression into service.

The impact of the war on sport was overtly demonstrated by a staged PG newsreel that applied a football-style commentary to describe British shipbuilding. Even though a physical football match was not shown, this newsreel acted as parallel to the real world competition between British shipbuilders and German submarine builders. The opening intertitle for this reel stated: ‘In the Good Old Days. The Cup Tie Final. The Association Challenge Cup is at Stake.’ This was followed by scenes of British workers constructing ships (figure 28).⁷⁰ This material was simultaneously directed, and appealed to both tradespeople and sports fans.



Figure 28. PG, 2448.04,76979. This reel depicted British ship builders at work. This was accompanied by the intertitles: ‘The Game in our Shipyard’.

This appeal indicated governments understanding of their importance in newsreels providing positive war narratives to the public. Actions to deliberately attract tradespeople were demonstrated by King George V abstaining from drinking throughout the war period. His abstinence was to ‘set an example to the nation’ and also to counter ‘the disruptive effect of

⁶⁹ See pages 62-65.

⁷⁰ PG, 2448.04, 76979.

heavy drinking by factory workers, particularly armament and shipbuilding construction.⁷¹ This shows ship-builders, like many sectors on the home front, were directly impacted by war. This was exemplified by a newsreel that paralleled war to sport. The newsreel opened with the intertitle stating: ‘The Great Game’, an explicit analogy to the ‘The Great War’.⁷² This phrase also referred to imperialism during the nineteenth century, where the British and Russian Empires feuded over Middle-Eastern and Central Asian territories.⁷³ Even though this newsreel depicted a metaphorical ‘match’ between Germany and Britain, the intertitle applied this aforementioned rhetoric of imperialist antagonism that was actually between Russia and Britain. Thus, the newsreel applied pre-war imperial antagonism to the war between Britain and Germany to convey to the audience that there was a similar conflict for colonial claims during First World War. Indeed, the entirety of this content was parallel to the Great War. The next intertitle stated: ‘A Sterner Game. The World’s Final. The Freedom of Humanity is at stake.’⁷⁴ The use of the word ‘Sterner’ acts as a form of antagonism appealing to masculine perceptions by affirming that war was more important than sport. The origins of this phrase were derived from the ‘Khaki Cup’ final in 1915,⁷⁵ a football match between Sheffield United and Chelsea. Its timing drew criticism due to attendees and players being physically ‘fit’, but not in the army. Previously, sport events had avoided criticism ‘by sponsoring recruiting rallies and allowing troops to drill in their stadiums’.⁷⁶ However, public outcry came to a head with this match and censure was unavoidable.⁷⁷ During the award ceremony, Lord Derby, stated that:

You have seen the Cup played for and it is now the duty of everyone to join with each other and play a sterner game for England. [Derby] felt sure he would not appeal in vain; we had a duty before us, and every man must face and do his best.⁷⁸

⁷¹ K. Rose, *King George V* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983), 178.

⁷² *PG*, 2448.04, 76979.

⁷³ C.M. Wyatt, *Afghanistan and the Defence of Empire: Diplomacy and Strategy during the Great Game* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 25-86.

⁷⁴ *PG*, 2448.04, 76979.

⁷⁵ This match was called ‘Khaki Cup’ due to the significant presence of men in military uniforms. For discussion of this event, see e.g. J. Lambie, *The Story of your Life: A History of the Sporting Life Newspaper (1859-1998)* (London: Troubador Publishing, 2010), 314.

⁷⁶ A. Horrall, “‘Keep-A-Fighting! Play the Game!’ Baseball and the Canadian Forces during the First World War”, *Canadian Military History*, 10:2, 3 (2001), 29.

⁷⁷ For a discussion of sport and public censure, see e.g. Osborne, ‘Continuity in British Sport’, 89-103.

⁷⁸ ‘Lord Derby’s Appeal’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 26 April 1915.

Derby's post-match speech was an explicit 'call-to-arms', as he addressed an audience of both servicemen and sport fans. His speech used this match to reinforce that the war was a national sport that would be won by England. The allusion to this speech in the PG newsreel echoed Derby's original sentiments. Additionally, both the original speech and its use in the newsreel explicitly drew a direct line of continuation from sport to war. For example, 'duty' was highlighted as the natural progression from sporting participation. Indeed, the newsreel's allusion to Derby's speech represented an explicit example of propaganda as such material influenced sportsmen towards home defence roles.

In the aforementioned PG newsreel, explicit comparisons were also drawn between this match and the idealisation of war. Indeed, like other descriptions of war, the term 'Freedom' was applied to demonstrate that Britain was explicitly on the side of liberty and civilisation. Conversely, this meant the German team was fighting against freedom. 'The Hun Team' was represented as images of slouching and glaring sailors (figure 29), however, when a German officer approaches them, they snap to attention.⁷⁹



Figure 29. PG, 2448.04, 76969. *The Hun Team.*

This change in posture on the appearance of authority reinforced contemporary beliefs of German militarism, where many British people believed militarism was ingrained into

⁷⁹ PG, 2448.04, 76979. This imagery is staged and contrasted happy images of German POWs.

Prussian culture.⁸⁰ Conversely, ‘The British Team’ was depicted as standing upright in clean uniforms, all holding hammers.⁸¹ This comical comparison portrayed the Germans negatively in order to show contemporary audiences that the German army had similar attributes of laziness to the ‘Hun Team’. Conversely, the British team were portrayed as proficient and effective. This was evident in the actions in the following reel that portrayed ships being built. The intertitles stated: ‘The Game in our ship yards.’ Again, both war and sport were conveyed as a ‘game’, appealing to sentiments of British popular culture. This was followed by multiple reels of British workers building ships. Such appeal to naval power and supremacy with the repeated images echoed British sentiments before and during the war. Preceding the war, British people identified with ocean supremacy, advocating that potential rivalry was a direct threat to their own hegemony.⁸² These public sentiments appealed to all of society as, if ‘Britain lost command of the sea for any length of time, its economy would collapse and it would suffer starvation.’⁸³ Instead of these starker warnings, sporting analogies were used to encourage competitive behaviour without risking a detrimental impact on morale by an explicit threat. Thus, this newsreel was created to appeal to wider groups within British society that understood the importance of national naval power and pride via images of sport.

Examples of sport being described alongside the war were demonstrated from both newsreel producers. Sports were not depicted in isolation, but alongside the war as charity events to receive legitimacy as being patriotic. The intertitles for a TB newsreel read: ‘Football Season Opens. The Football match at the Naval and Military Carnival, promoted by the 1st Batt. City of London Regiment.’⁸⁴ Similar to sport events before 1915, sports were able to circumvent criticism by assertions that such events benefited those in service.⁸⁵ Additionally, matches valorised soldiers by associating the masculine physicality of sport with service, another important facet of manhood. Another TB newsreel followed a similar thematic structure where sport was intertwined with the military. The intertitle stated: ‘Essex v. Army. Sir J. Bethell M.P. kicks off at the football match [sic] the proceeds of which will be spent on

⁸⁰ J. Ramsden, *Don't Mention the War: The British and the Germans since 1890* (London: Abacas, 2007), 56-91.

⁸¹ *PG*, 2448.04, 76979.

⁸² J. Rüger, *The Great Naval Game: Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 210-215.

⁸³ Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War*, 17, 76-77.

⁸⁴ *TB*, 262-1, 30-08-1916.

⁸⁵ For a discussion on how British sport avoided public criticism, see e.g. T. Collins, ‘English Rugby Union and the First World War’, *The Historical Journal*, 45:4 (2002), 797-817. As the war continued, restrictions on leisure activities, such as sport, lessened as authorities realised that such events were essential for maintaining ties between soldiers and civilians, and maintaining public morale, see e.g. Monger, ‘Sporting Journalism’, 385-393.

Xmas [sic] parcels for men at the front.’⁸⁶ This newsreel opened with Bethell, a Liberal politician and banker,⁸⁷ shaking player’s hands. Sport segments of the game followed, where the Essex locals played an army team. Similar to previous examples, sports continued because of their apparent endorsement of service through a soldier’s charity, which legitimated it as war-related activity. Furthermore, the continuation of sport represented an indicator of normality, where servicemen could maintain their ties with civilians.⁸⁸ Donors to this event demonstrated their tangible monetary support for their country, while also enjoying the sport spectacle. This practice of linking sport and war was reflected in practices of civilians purchasing war loans. In both instances, citizens affirmed their support through financial aid. Therefore, depictions of sport conveyed similar narratives prescribed to children and animals: participation and patriotism. In all cases, parties were encouraged into increased participation in the national war effort. In sporting examples, service was portrayed alongside sport to demonstrate that soldierhood was a natural continuation from sports participation.

Conclusion

First World War British society was significantly impacted by the First World War. Newsreels depicted this impact on all society, portraying how different societal groups and demographics responded to this conflict. Everyday home front events were combined with wartime narratives and interwoven into all aspects of civilian life. Indeed, the totality of war was exemplified by its influence on children, animals and sports. Children were depicted in newsreels to demonstrate that all of society can participate in the national war effort. This message was reaffirmed by images of animals also engaged in war work. Images of children in war work demonstrated a dichotomy in what roles were socially acceptable for both boys and girls. Boys were depicted as Boy Scouts and alongside soldiers, demonstrating shared ideals of militarism and progression from one to the other. Girls, with their explicit uniform changes, demonstrated gender stereotypes and social expectations applied to women. They were commonly represented in gatherer roles, echoing ‘acceptable’ work prescribed to women.

⁸⁶ *TB*, 275-2, 02-12-1916. For similar examples that show the association between war and sport, see e.g. *WOOTB*, 305-2, 27-6-1917. Shot Sheet; *WOOTB*, 315-1, 5-9-1917; *TB*, 235-2, 26-02-1916.

⁸⁷ M. Stenton and S. Lees, *Who’s Who of British Members of Parliament: A Biographical Dictionary of the House of Commons 1919-1945*, vol. 3 (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979), 30.

⁸⁸ For a further discussion of these ties, see e.g. Monger, ‘Sporting Journalism’, 374-401.

These transformations demonstrated the performative aspects of femininity during the war, as the girls were changing between idealised feminine roles. Similar to children, animals were also depicted aiding the war effort by engaging in farming work. All images conveyed the simple, inherent message that everyone and everything must participate in the war effort. Depictions of sport portrayed war as a form of sport itself. Sport was commonly associated with war to incentivise 'fit' men from leisure activities into the service. This idea of progression reflected gender stereotypes applied to children. Parallel to examples of children and animals, participation was also stressed in sports. Common to PG, TB, and WOOTB newsreels was their stitching of war narratives into everyday civilian life. Indeed, home front life was expressed through patriotic duty, where the British government realised that even the banal was important for obtaining public consent and disseminating wartime narratives. Newsreels performed this function on the home front through disseminating positive messages that emphasised participation.

Conclusion

First World War British newsreels depicted and directed continuous positive images of war that were created to set an example and boost public morale throughout the conflict. Following the First World War, newsreels continued to display images of topical events to international audiences. This concluded with control of TFC being handed back to the previous administration. In February 1919, Pictorial News (Official), the later adapted name of WOOTB, was changed back to TB as the government no longer had any utility for newsreels. The TFC was later purchased by Edward Hulton and continued producing newsreels until March, 1931.¹

Following the war, PG also continued producing newsreels and other feature-length productions internationally. With the advent of sound, this producer, unlike TB, capitalised upon this novelty and, therefore, increased dramatically in popularity. In 1970, PG aired its final edition of *Pathé News*, an improved version of the previously discussed newsreels.²

Throughout the First World War, newsreels provided a directed and positive image of the war to Britons. British newsreels developed because of a waning public interest in feature-length films and an increased fascination in shorter features that provided briefer factual content. Additionally, domestic propaganda policy mirrored this change, as both financial and propagandistic aims led to changes in British film policy, where newsreels became the main outlet for actuality footage of the war after May 1917.

The depiction of gender in First World War British newsreels represents a gap in historiography. Newsreels reinforced contemporary gender norms of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' by conveying that men became soldiers and women became workers. Images of the ideal 'feminine' woman portrayed her as a war worker or nurse. Depictions of convalescent soldiers affirmed that these men retained their masculinity despite their injuries. This concurs with Butler's theory of 'gender performativity'. Indeed, injured British soldiers were represented as remaining masculine by their ability to continue working, engage in 'masculine' activities and attract the opposite sex. This reaffirms the positive and directed purpose of newsreels, especially in relation to convalescent and injured soldiers.

¹ McKernan, *Topical Budget*, 64-141.

² Aldgate, *British Newsreels*, 23-53; R. Ward, 'Carving The Rooster: The Last Years of the Pathé Exchange', *Media History*, 15:2 (2009), 167-184.

Studies of the British army's image during the First World War previously focused on narratives of 'futility' and their depiction within feature-length productions like *Somme*. Unlike this film, newsreels repeatedly presented British soldier's happiness, even when confronted with obvious hardship. Images of smiling British soldiers saturated newsreel material to contrast negative connotations of war, and affirm to the British audience that their troops were well treated and enjoyed the experience of service. Directed positive images like this were created with the intended effect of building public morale. Conversely, images of smiling German POWs conveyed their humane treatment, thereby lessening the potential for maltreatment of British soldiers in prisoner of war camps. These depictions reinforced the positive nature of newsreel's content. Newsreels portrayed three critical voices of war: Irish nationalists, pacifists and men that opposed conscription on a marital basis. Irish nationalists were presented as a fringe group that were anti-civilisation, and therefore anti-British. Pacifists were conveyed alongside images of the British public censuring this ideological stance, while men who opposed conscription escaped censure as they were portrayed as not actually opposed to service. These depictions reaffirmed existing wartime beliefs in British society, where newsreels reaffirmed that some ideologies, such as pacifism, were detrimental to the war effort. Newsreel content also justified the British public's actions of actively stopping pacifist meetings.

Images of the British home front demonstrated that war narratives impacted all levels of society, so that even the banal was associated with patriotism and the war. Depictions of children exemplified everyone's potential to aid the national effort through their exertions. Gender roles applied to adults were also conveyed through images of children. Boy Scouts were commonly depicted alongside soldiers to demonstrate their affinity in ideology. The participation narrative was reinforced by different animal images at work. The impact of war on popular culture was evident by sports matches that were validated and directly related to, or even used overtly as a metaphor to the war and imperialism.

First World War British newsreels provided an on-going positive image of war that reaffirmed existing ideologies and narratives within British society. Newsreels were explicitly created with the intention of building and sustaining public morale. They offer a unique insight into popular news-media presented on a bi-weekly basis during the war to many of the British public. They remain an underutilised resource, which are now more readily available with digital archives and wider research into film. Because newsreels were brief and attached to commercial features and productions, Britons actively paid to view them. Newsreels provided

the framework to function as a medium for positive messages relating to the war. They represented an important facet of both British propaganda and film media during the war. Newsreels provided a directed and positive image of the war that was created with the intended purpose of educating its audience, building public morale whilst also reinforcing existing social structures with society. Throughout the First World War, Britons were exposed to multiple hardships that impacted nearly every facet of their lives. Newsreels provided a contrast to this negatively, depicting a positive image of war on both the home and war fronts that created to maintain morale.

Appendix

Due to the size and space required to integrate both appendixes into this research, they cannot be included within this thesis's body. Instead, they are accessible via *Figshare*, which is an online open data digital repository.³ As *Figshare*'s repository illustrates excel data out of format and un-graphed, it is suggested that 'Appendix 1: Newsreel Data' be downloaded. Conversely, 'Appendix 2: Corpus' does not to be downloaded as they are word files.

Appendix 1:

Appendix 1 contains the quantitative data that is used within this research. 'Appendix 1.0: Newsreel Data' illustrates the individual newsreels and tags, 'Appendix 1.1: Primary Categories' contains a breakdown of the primary categories, and 'Appendix 1.2: Secondary Categories' is a table containing the number of tags and percentages for secondary categories.

DOI: [10.6084/m9.figshare.7398503](https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.7398503)

URL: <https://figshare.com/s/f0bb006f199de698bf35>

Appendix 2:

Appendix 2 contains intertitles from both TB and WOOTB. Newsreels from these producers that contained no intertitles have been listed as 'n/a' in the text file. Each text file lists the producers name, edition and publication date.

Topical Budget (intertitles):

DOI: [10.6084/m9.figshare.7384139](https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.7384139)

URL: <https://figshare.com/s/709eb28dfd6dca9298c8>

War Office Official Topical Budget (intertitles):

DOI: [10.6084/m9.figshare.7385150](https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.7385150)

URL: <https://figshare.com/s/372e253b3fcd7c3bc6cb>

³ Accessed from: <https://figshare.com/> (accessed: 22 Nov. 2018)

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Imperial War Museum

Imperial War Museum 6th Annual Report (3rd Report of the Board of Trustees) 1922-1923,
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