CULTURAL HISTORY OF MODERN WAR

Linda Maynard

BROTHERS IN THE GREAT WAR

SIBLINGS, MASCULINITY AND EMOTIONS

Brothers in the Great War

Cultural History of Modern War

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Brothers in the Great War

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In memory of my father, mother, and brother, Aubrey Rex Maynard (1931–1999), Margaret Eleanor Maynard (1937–2006) and Keith Alan Maynard (1958–2013)

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Abbreviations

FANY	First Aid Nursing Yeomanry
FLWE	Family Life and Work Experience
HC	House of Commons
IWM	Imperial War Museum
LGB	Local Government Board
Liddle	Liddle Collection
OTC	Officer Training Corps
RAMC	Royal Army Medical Corps
TNA	The National Archives
VAD	Voluntary Aid Detachment
WAAC	Women's Army Auxiliary Corps
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

Introduction

For me the war means Percy.[1]

When war broke out in August 1914, William ‘Percy’ Campbell volunteered immediately. Commissioned in the Wiltshire Regiment, he joined the 7th Division, fighting in the First Battle of Ypres. Killed in action on 24 October 1914, aged just twenty years, he had been on active service a mere seventeen days. His body was never recovered. Almost sixty years later, his younger brother Pat wrote a short fraternal memorial to his dead sibling. At the outset, he summarised the loss experienced by the war generation:

> Everyone in Britain was in mourning. I myself lost many friends whom I loved and admired, but Percy stands for them all. For me the war means Percy. His was the courage and gaiety that was extinguished, his is the face I see whenever the war is mentioned.

In this simple statement, Pat entwined his memory of the Great War with the role his older sibling played in the conflict, affirming the relational infrastructure of this generation. To outsiders, Second Lieutenant Campbell epitomised the spirit of the patriotic volunteer, his life tragically cut short. Pat’s sibling’s-eye view presented his soldier-brother’s character traits with balanced clarity, recording his own and his family’s emotional responses to Percy’s departure to the front, and the news of his death. Many others made similar efforts to record their siblings’ war experiences, both of those who survived and of those who perished. Like them, Pat wanted his brother to be ‘remembered for as long as I am’. This compulsion to give a voice to the individual war stories and personalities of dead brothers, to ensure they are not forgotten, forms a significant body of sibling memorialisation.

Typically, when fraternal relations are mentioned in the context of war, the image conjured up is one of intermasculine bonding, embedded in the

ideal of *esprit de corps*. The privileging of comradeship through the overarching trope of the 'brotherhood of the trenches' has overshadowed the presence and significance of real sibling bonds.[2] Brother–brother bonds have largely been ignored as a subject of historical and professional analysis. Often perceived as lesser than other sibling ties, brothers remain 'an absent presence'.[3] Considerations of siblinghood in wartime have focused on sister–sister or brother–sister bonds, exposing a different family dynamic.[4] In particular, there has been little attention paid to liking or love in adult fraternal relationships. Looking at how brothers wrote to and about each other, and the myriad ways they 'brothered' or 'loved' one another, addresses this contracted viewpoint. Fraternal stories are embedded in First World War narratives, informing our understanding of the network of domestic ties sustaining men and of the performance of martial masculinities. Vital signifiers of fraternal affection are shown in the breadth and depth of the support, comfort and protection provided to both combatant and non-combatant siblings. If, as Michael Roper argues, men's domestic and military lives were 'structurally connected and interdependent', we lose a vital part of this network through the omission of sibling relations.[5] Siblings shared an experience of war that differed from that of their parents. Presenting a cultural history of siblinghood in wartime, *Brothers in the Great War* addresses this significant gap in the historiography of the First World War.

The war generation

Siblings present an invaluable subject for research. These relationships are not only the longest standing over an individual's lifetime but also the most pervasive. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the 'long family' (sizeable families with a wide dispersal of ages) was the dominant model.[6] Falling fertility levels from the 1870s onwards meant that by the Edwardian era this model was in decline.[7] The average family size between 1900 and 1909 was 3.37 children, and continued to decrease steadily during the first decades of the twentieth century (to 2.90 in the period 1910–14 and 2.53 in the period 1915–19).[8] One stated consequence of the emergence of the nuclear family is the gradual edging out of siblings from their traditional roles by quasi-kin – close friends and workmates.[9] Notwithstanding the

overall demographic trend towards the nuclear family, most children reaching adulthood in the 1910s experienced growing up with siblings within the far-reaching kin networks of earlier generations.[10] Focusing on siblinghood at the beginning of the twentieth century, *Brothers in the Great War* demonstrates the continuing significance of these ties for the war generation.

Sibling groups considered in this study range from the intense sister–brother bond epitomised by Naomi and Jack Haldane, to examples of the 'long family' such as the seven brothers and three sisters of the Baines family.[11] In 1914, Willie Baines, the eldest, was thirty-six years old; the youngest, Arthur, was seventeen. Six of the seven Baines brothers served in the war, three were killed in action, two were wounded and only one escaped physically unscathed. Two of the Baines sisters undertook pensions war work. Alongside their 'war' stories, their correspondence recorded their 'family' stories, including two marriages, one engagement and the death of Willie's daughter after a prolonged illness. While no family can be singled out as representative – class, religion and place all influencing familial dynamics – the Baineses' experience is certainly not atypical.

The prevailing 'vertical' focus on the mother–child relationship in particular has narrowed histories of the family and masculinities. This bias has drawn attention away from those family relationships such as siblinghood, 'less prone to change, less prone to state interference, and less prone to generate advice and prescriptive literature solely targeted at them'.[12] A key finding emerging from the small body of sibling studies is the interaction between societal and familial norms.[13] Shaped by external emotional codes, sibling interactions powerfully reflect the values and identity of individual families. Family life is not monolithic. Some sibling groupings, such as the four Hosegoods, Ralph, Gilbert, Arnold and Ellen, formed an 'inner circle' within the familial household.[14] A lateral focus on familial relationships shows the agency of siblings in planning, resisting or initiating change.[15] The cushioning effect of family culture at times of upheaval has obscured the role played by lateral ties, particularly the extent to which siblings influenced shifts in emotional norms both within and outside the domestic realm.[16] Importantly, C. Dallett Hemphill highlights the crucial role of sibling cohorts as 'shock absorbers' during times of accelerated change. Generational solidarity enabled brothers and sisters to mediate transitions in social, political and economic life in mutually

supportive ways.[17] Consideration of the degree to which this mediating trait held in the context of twentieth-century siblinghood casts a fresh perspective on evolving emotional cultures in the post-war years.

Growing up together, brothers and sisters learn about, experience and change the world they have inherited.[18] During the twentieth century this 'inherited' world included global conflict. Sibling ties, forged through shared childhoods, family practices, commitments and interests, were tested during long separations, trauma and bereavement. The concept of generations is inextricably linked with the First World War. Apart from the 'lost generation' of young men who sacrificed their lives, the myth of an alienated group of survivors is seared into our cultural memory. Building on Karl Mannheim's formulation of generations as agents of social change, June Edmunds and Brian Turner consider how the specificity of external traumas such as war generates 'an age cohort that comes to have social significance', uniquely cutting off a generation from its past and separating it from its future.[19] Initially bonded by shared experiences, these groupings are further cemented by the institutionalisation of those experiences via rituals such as commemoration.[20] Focusing on emotional interactions between brothers during the First World War and its aftermath, *Brothers in the Great War* explores how this cohort of siblings shaped the social and emotional lives of contemporary and future generations.

The 'myth' of a lost generation of elites is unsupported by the statistical evidence. In the post-war years, David Cannadine observes, the myth 'took on a life of its own', cementing its cultural significance.[21] Generations are, by nature, a capacious category. The 'war generation' embraced men and women, combatants and non-combatants, men too old and too young to fight. These were not static categories; as the war progressed, men reached conscription age, or became eligible as the age parameters for combatants expanded. Each stratum presented its own experiences of war. Laura Ugolini has cast a welcome light on the experiences of middle-class 'civvies', one component of the 50 per cent of men of fighting age who did not fight.[22] Others sought to explain their exclusion from dominant narratives of the war. One member of the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) declared it was 'our war too'.[23] A ten-year age gap distanced Stanley Bailey from his older brother, Frederick, killed in the war. Some fighting men experienced the war years as a period of stagnation, an 'everlasting no-ending sort of life', with no end in view.[24] Soldier-brothers felt left behind,

compared to siblings at home undergoing the more usual rites of passage into adult life. Jack Haldane had mixed feelings towards the domestic life of his younger sister, Naomi. Despite approving heartily of her relationship with his close friend, Dick Mitchison, for Jack their nuptials and the birth of their first child aroused conflicting thoughts. Writing in the third year of his service with the Royal Highland Regiment, he confessed his envy of his sibling's domesticity.[25] Inevitably, he found this disruption to the 'natural order' disturbing. Soldiering had placed his life on hold.

'Demographic uncertainty' intensified during wartime.[26] Siblings' roles shifted with the departure of men. Some men felt supplanted when younger siblings went out to the front before them. Thinking of his brother daily, Douglas Heaton found it 'simply maddening' not to have made it to the firing line, especially as the two brothers should have been serving together from the beginning. All he could do was wish his brother luck and promise to write as often as possible.[27] Married men missed their children growing up, especially when comparing their circumstances with those of siblings remaining on the home front. Serving as a private with the Queens Own Yorkshire Dragoons, Friend Hammerton regularly wrote to his older brother, Richard. A colour blender in a worsted-spinning mill, Richard was exempted from service.[28] Both siblings were married with young children. Their correspondence demonstrates how the brothers negotiated the apparent unfairness in their respective positions. Before his departure, Friend accepted the 'just decision to do my little bit for my country'. At the same time, he voiced the 'painful' tension between leaving his 'dear ones at home' and fulfilling his duty.[29]

A lateral view of generational experience and loss is inevitably bounded by networks of brothers, cousins, fellow students, friends and relatives. This was amplified by the naming of 'gangs' of peers such as the 'Three Musketeers' or 'The Coterie'. Such monikers embodied traits of exclusivity and loyalty.[30] This relational micro-view, when coupled with a eulogistic tendency to extol the sacrifice of their peers, ensured that their loss was presented to the world on a macro-level. The sense of self-identification with the war generation was exacerbated by the sense that they alone, in the words of Vera Brittain, shared an 'instinctive and entire' understanding[31] – one that separated the contemporaries of this generation from their parents and children. Jack Foxell, writing to his brother after their sibling Edward's death, was thankful for their mutual sharing of loss:

> At first it seemed as if I were very much alone … But now I feel that it is *our* grief, not merely *mine*; and, though that does not lessen the grief, there is yet comfort in the thought.[32] [Emphasis in original]

Familial communities of mourning extended beyond the boundaries of individual households, to those 'quasi-brothers and sisters' acquired vicariously via the friendships and romances made by siblings. Writing to his brother's sweetheart, Frank Cocker expressed the hope that she would always regard him as a 'brother willing and ready to help her at all times'.[33] Despite this, siblings of both sexes experienced the loneliness of mourning, one shaped by the accumulated deaths of their peers – an emotional solitude that was undiminished by the passage of time. Rather, growing older in the absence of loved ones added poignancy to life events such as marriage and birth, when familial happiness mingled with grief, guilt and anger. Brittain regretted that those she held dearest at the time of writing *Testament of Youth* (1933), her husband and children, 'did not know even by name a single contemporary who counted for me in the life before 1918'. Initially experiencing a sense of forlorn bitterness, she eventually grew hardened 'to revisiting that past world, alone'.[34] In her consideration of Ruth Holland's *The Lost Generation* (1932) and May Wedderburn Cannan's *The Lonely Generation* (1934), Sharon Ouditt observes how the grief of female protagonists became problematic for later generations focused on reconstruction and forgetting.[35] This gendered perspective is repeated by Tammy Clewell, who sees Virginia Woolf's textual practice of mourning as a 'gendered rebellion against the act of closure', presenting her grief as an ongoing, anti-consolatory process.[36] What renders such analyses problematic is their failure to widen the scope to consider how men's writings about grief and unresolved mourning fit into wider patterns of bereavement in the post-war years.

Siblings in wartime

Exploring sibling relations during wartime offers a prism through which to analyse both martial and familial emotions: how did fighting men maintain these bonds, and how did their experiences affect and shape these relationships? War provides an atypical backdrop against which to examine fraternal ties. Approximately two-thirds of fighting men in the Great War

were single. This, combined with their relative youth, meant that sibling ties were an important source of emotional and practical support.[37] Brothers and sisters represented continuity and stability in disruptive times. As the mounting casualties seeped into the everyday reality of millions of families, sibling grief was overlooked, often subsumed by that of their mothers. Efforts exerted by surviving siblings to preserve the *particular* war stories of soldier-brothers are testimony to the longevity and depth of their bonds.

Accounts by siblings provide a near-peer-level perspective on the effect of war on family members. Adopting a chronological and thematic approach, *Brothers in the Great War* examines siblings' experiences at key transitional moments, such as departing for war, experiencing technological combat or undertaking war work alongside each other. In contrast to their soldier-brothers, the accounts of non-combatant siblings are grounded in the experiences of the home front. Although the myth of the 'rush to colours' by eager volunteers has been challenged, studies perpetuate the gendered expectation that 'real' men fight wars. Susan Grayzel and Tammy Proctor suggest that this led to men embracing their duty, with many viewing the experience as a great adventure.[38] While the familiar tropes of war fever and patriotic duty appear in the accounts considered in this study, the sibling's-eye view of brothers and sisters demonstrates the underlying trepidation that accompanied departures for war. Battle-hardened siblings were quick to caution brothers to 'keep out' of it if possible, or at least to avoid the worse arenas of battle. Retrospective accounts show siblings' remorse over their earlier war fever. Omissions are indicative of sibling guilt. In her memoir, Vera Brittain notably excised her initial war enthusiasm and active support for Edward's war service against stiff paternal opposition. She recorded this in her diary as a generational battle. Their father failed to understand the codes of honour instilled in his son – the first in the family to attend public school. Faced with paternal disregard for her brother's honour or courage, it was left to the siblings 'to live up to our name of "Brittain"'.[39]

Evidence from experiential narratives, press reports and the military service tribunals demonstrates the complex weighting of sibling and family duty versus service to nation. Pressure was exerted on siblings to alleviate the war stress of families, especially mothers. Mancunian Tom Povey directed his sister Alice, a domestic servant, 'to come home & help … for Ma cannot manage as it is'. He also advised his brother to 'stick to home & do his best for Ma' as he would willingly do 'if I could get out of this'.[40]

Reacting to the view that the family badly wanted 'someone' at home, following the deaths of John and Joseph Baines in July 1917, Dodo suggested that Tom, the second-eldest, should obtain a home appointment. As 'someone' acted here as a euphemism for one of the remaining soldier-brothers, the fraternal wisdom determined that it was Tom's 'place' to soothe familial anxieties by removing himself from the dangers of front-line action. In Dodo's view, the totality of war service of the seven siblings should merit such a move.[41] This matter took on greater urgency following Dodo's death in June 1917.[42] Believing that by 'offering all they can', smaller families stood to lose all, Tom discounted this argument. Somewhat optimistically, Tom believed it unlikely that all six brothers would be 'bowled out.'[43]

Service kinship created a nexus for the organisation and recruitment of the British armed forces.[44] The familial ideal was an integral part of army organisation, displacing attachments to home with an emotional bond to the regimental family.[45] As Hugh Childers, the army reformer tasked with 'humanising' the Victorian army, spelt out in 1884, recruits should feel a sense of belonging to their regiment, that it was 'their family'.[46] Significant numbers of brothers enlisted and served together in the Pals and the Territorial units, exhibiting the strength of real blood ties. Three of the Tattersall brothers, Albert, Norman and John (soon to be Privates 17232, 17233 and 17234), joined the Manchester Pals.[47] Partially inspired by Edwardian civic pride, the Pals movement took root in the industrial towns of the north of England.[48] Men wanted to serve with their friends, neighbours and workmates, rather than with strangers.[49] Five sets of brothers are among the 221 names recorded in the *Preston Herald*'s Roll of Honour of Preston Pals departing for training on 8 September 1914.[50] Alongside the local and occupational spheres of masculine association forming the core of the Pals battalions, we must add familial and fraternal identities. Despite frequent references in men's personal narratives, this component of Kitchener's army is largely absent from the historiography. The predominant focus on comradeship mutes fraternal war stories. What makes this more surprising is the long-established army principle that an older serving brother could 'claim' a younger sibling to serve alongside him.[51] This could be deployed as a protective measure. When Thomas C. volunteered in 1915, he was surprised when informed by the War Office that he was to serve in the 2nd West Lancashires. Reacting to their mother's

concerns that Thomas would join an ‘infantry mob’, his brother had exercised his fraternal privilege to claim his under-sized brother as a trumpeter.[52]

Accounts suggest that brothers derived strength from serving ‘side by side’ or in close proximity. These fraternal affiliations surpassed the fictive brotherhood of the trenches by bolstering resilience. Reservist Robert Hill was swiftly dispatched to France, joining the 1st Battalion Kings Liverpool, where he unexpectedly found his ‘own big brother’.[53] Sharing confidences, news and parcels from home gave soldier-brothers a much-welcomed respite. Close contact with brothers eased pre- or post-battle anxieties. In turn, men could reassure family members at home of their sibling’s wellbeing. Such domestic comfort came at a price. Combatants witnessed the woundings and deaths of brothers and waited anxiously for news when siblings failed to return after an offensive. The solidarity shared by combatant brothers is compared to sisters undertaking war work together and those families where one or more brothers fought, and one or more chose to exercise their conscientious objection to war under the Military Service Act 1916.[54] Engrained family values meant that affectionate relations were maintained, regardless of opposing stances to the war. Private Phil Brocklesby, writing home to his mother on the eve of the Somme battle, said he was ‘right proud’ of his brother Bert, recently imprisoned for his absolutist stand. When Bert was arrested, their lay preacher father had declared he would rather see his son shot than abandon his beliefs.[55] Although Phil volunteered, familial unity ensured that the fraternal bond remained intact. Given the public disparaging of ‘shirkers’ and ‘slackers’ during wartime, this proffers significant insight into the emotional effort invested in sibling ties.[56]

Brotherhood

The monument designed to commemorate the ill-fated British Antarctic Expedition, ‘Pro Patria’, depicts a figurative allegory of Courage sustained by Patriotism, spurning Fear, Despair and Death.[57] Designed by Albert Hodge, it illustrates the elements of manly heroism and sacrifice that captured the public’s imagination, prompting scenes of mass mourning for the failed venture.[58] Inscribed below Hodge’s figures are the words ‘For

King', 'For Country', 'For Knowledge' and, notably, 'For Brotherly Love'. On the eve of the First World War, brotherly love in the form of stoic comradeship received a very public endorsement.[59]

Fraternal relationships have long figured as an idealised 'brotherhood' – traditionally emphasising loyalty, mutual dependence and equality.[60] The language of brotherhood and, less frequently, sisterhood designated the strength and intimacy of particularly close friendships. Organisations such as the Freemasons, trade unions, friendly societies and the Co-operative movement drew upon kinship terminology to explain and define their underpinning ideology.[61] Framing standards in this way enabled hierarchical organisations to be seen as 'quintessentially egalitarian', further embedding fraternal relations in the cultural imagination.[62] Similar efforts institutionalised and structured these private and personal bonds within the Edwardian education system.[63] In his 1908 poem *Clifton Chapel*, the 'poet-spokesman for the public schools', Henry Newbolt, referenced the imperialist brotherhood 'that binds the brave of the earth'.[64] Drawing a similar comparison, Henry Montagu Butler, headmaster of Harrow, stated it was 'public school brotherhood' that sustained their alumni fighting in the South African war during days 'of trial, of danger and of suffering'.[65]

Esprit de corps, or male bonding, became one of the enduring tropes of the Great War, with the figure of the bereaved male friend becoming its representative par excellence.[66] Recognition of the pivotal nature of this allegiance among fighting men informed military training.[67] During wartime, the phrase 'brothers in arms' denoted a sharing of traumatic experiences. Countering the regular soldier's apparent rejection of organised religion on the front line, Anglican chaplains held up the military's 'strong sense of brotherhood' as proof of the inherent Christianity of the Tommy.[68] Anxious to repudiate the poor image of soldiers and army life, the Church of England highlighted the moral spirituality of soldiering as the 'beautiful brotherhood of the trenches'.[69] Such brotherhood extended to the enemy, with semi-ironic references to 'Brother Bosch' or 'Brother Fritz'.[70] The British Legion later drew on this soldierly brotherhood in its rhetoric and insignia.[71] Many conscientious objectors used the concepts of universal brotherhood or fellowship to justify their pacifist or socialist stand against the war.[72] Propagandists grasped the appeal of inserting siblinghood within the discourse of patriotic war work. Hall Caine coined the term 'Tommy's Sister' for the 'army' of women workers at the Woolwich

Arsenal.[73] Women's service organisations, wishing to match the loyalty of soldierly fraternity, established a legend of sisterhood.[74]

Pitched against idealised standards of brotherhood are examples of real sibling bonds emerging from men's experiential accounts. These present a more complex picture. The parameters of what constitutes brotherly love and duty in the domestic sphere are hard for men to pin down, complicated as they are by the uniqueness of sibling relations, with their inherent characteristics of sameness and difference.[75] Familial circumstances, allegiances and responsibilities alter over time. When sibling bonds are strong, they provide a 'sustaining link' to brothers and sisters throughout their life course.[76] Santanu Das makes the important point that while the individual bonds of 'comradeship', 'friendship' and trench 'brotherhood' each had its own particular nuance and value, they all fed into the continuum of male relationships under extreme conditions.[77] What emerges is an informal 'taxonomy of friendship', including 'marital friendship and friendship within families, friendship between equals, and friendship across boundaries of age, of sex and of social class.'[78] This is seen in the labels applied to men and women in particular circumstances. Cultural expectations informed depictions of men as sons, brothers or comrades and women as mothers, sisters, workers and widows, reinforcing stereotypes circulating in wartime discourses of patriotism, sacrifice, service and grief. Men's articulation of male bonds shows the continuum of brotherhood and friendship. Billie T. was not only a brother to his younger sibling but also a 'good friend', taking his part in everything.[79] Combatants' narratives include many portrayals of intense friendship bonds. After three 'good mates' were killed on 22 September 1917, Harry Patch outlined his terrible loss:

> It was like losing part of my life. I'd taken an absolute liking to the men in the team – you could say almost love. I mean, those boys were with you night and day: you shared everything with them and you talked about everything. You were one of them, we belonged to each other.[80]

In his expanded definition of comradeship, Patch referenced traits mentioned by brothers: his sense of intimate knowledge and belonging forged by the soldierly practices of the front line, rather than the sibling practices of the family home. The particularity of this Great War friendship was underscored by the fact that, like many veterans, Patch was uninterested in meeting former comrades after the war.[81] Sisters experienced

a different continuum, from brotherly friendship to romantic entanglement. Bevil Quiller-Couch was amused to overhear his future fiancée, May Cannon, refer to him as 'a kind of brother'. Sixteen-year-old Naomi Haldane's youth and inexperience contributed to her difficulty in adjusting to a more physically intimate bond with her fiancé. Apart from unwanted 'words and touches', it had been 'something of a shock' to find that her relationship with someone she had considered 'as a brother … had suddenly turned into something else'. This adjustment might have been easier had it been possible to take things at a slower tempo, but, Haldane explained, 'there was a war on and nothing could wait'.[82]

Sibling practices

Sibling roles and dynamics lack definition, dependent as they are on a range of factors including age, family size, birth order, personality and shared interests. Within the same family, ties between brothers and sisters varied. One woman interviewed as part of Paul Thompson's FLWE study summarised the difficulty of pinning down these relationships, explaining how they played out in the specificity of her own sibling group:

> Well – in a family – there's what you might term brotherly love, and that can cover an awful lot. You see. Both ways, love, hate, love, hate, love, hate. Now, my brother Jack, I don't think – ever – said a cross word to me in the whole of his life … Whatever I did he would make an excuse for it … But my sister, well he'd box her ears. You see, you never know in a family.[83]

Although birth order was often the key factor determining responsibilities, both older and younger children understood the subtlety of intra-familial power relationships, wielding an element of policing to ensure that expectations and resources were met and shared. Some sibling groups drifted into 'little power units'.[84] Older siblings acted as an intermediate generation between parents and younger children in long families.[85] Parental influence held greater sway for older children, overlapping with their parents in adulthood.[86] Complexity was added within 'blended' families. In the later decades of the nineteenth century, marriages were most likely to be terminated by death. Thirteen per cent of unions in the 1880s were ended by a death within ten years, rising to 47 per cent after twenty-five years.[87] Remarriages created their own groupings or 'mixed litters'.[88] Robert Graves was the third child of Alfred Graves' second marriage to

Amelie 'Amy' von Ranke in 1891. Alfred's first wife, Jane Cooper, had borne him five children.

Brothers were expected to fulfil many roles within the immediate family: as head of household after a father's death; as breadwinners; as protectors and as carers for younger siblings. Born in 1900, James B. worked as a bandolier inspector in the East End before joining the army in 1918. Practically and emotionally, James assisted his siblings, stating, 'I used to love 'em. I couldn't do enough for 'em. If I could help 'em – oh yes, I always helped me brothers and sisters.'[89] In his absence, one sister, the 'mother' of the family in childhood, stepped back into this matriarchal role. Sometimes the adopting of roles led to resentment. When Thomas B.'s brother, the elder by two years, 'took charge' after their father's death in 1913, his assumption of responsibility rankled, especially his tendency to 'order' his younger sibling about.[90] John E., the self-proclaimed 'kingpin' of his sibling group, explained that even though the seven younger ones sometimes rebelled, a combination of obedience to one's elders and the knowledge that they could rely on him kept them in line.[91]

Observational studies of children have shown the influence of older siblings when they act as teachers or role models.[92] When family configurations or circumstances make older brothers more 'visible' than fathers, sociologist Rae Connell argues, they exert greater influence in developing masculinity.[93] The eldest of six brothers and one sister, Arthur S. afforded essential practical and financial support to his siblings. They 'seemed to look up to me' he explained, ''cause I was the eldest'.[94] Stanley R. got 'good' direction from his brothers, both for guidance and as manly templates.[95] Ability cemented roles. Smartness and capability made the eldest sister of one man the best source of advice.[96] By expanding our conception of 'brothering' and 'sistering', *Brothers in the Great War* provides a missing link to changes in twentieth-century parenting practices that an over-reliance on expert and popular discourses cannot fully explain.[97]

Shifts in familial duties and roles occasioned by wartime service became permanent upon the severe wounding or deaths of brothers, disrupting familial responsibilities and obligations.[98] Filial devotion inspired these attempts to lift the burden from grieving parents. After his older brother's death, Ralph Hosegood 'surprised' his father by offering to take his brother's place in the family corn merchants business. Ralph, a qualified

solicitor, was an active participant in Bristol's legal community. His offer represented a significant shift in his post-war expectations. Ralph also shouldered the difficult task of going to his youngest brother's school to inform him of their loss.[99]

Representing the double loss of both a stable family figure and a close companion, the emotional and practical impact of a sibling's death on their surviving brothers and sisters has been largely overlooked.[100] Improved mortality rates in the late nineteenth century increased the longevity of sibling bonds. Individuals born in 1900 could expect that 60 per cent of their siblings would still be alive when they reached the age of fifty.[101] Commentators have noted the effect of wartime deaths on parents who, due to falling mortality rates, expected their children to outlive them. However, there has been little scrutiny of how these losses affected siblings who would have expected to grow old alongside their brothers.

Siblings, familiar with their placing in the family order, suddenly assumed different roles. For titled families, the laws of primogeniture made the death of a childless male heir particularly significant. An analysis of the timing of life-cycle events such as births, marriages and deaths in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries bears this out. A child born as late as 1891 would be aged about thirty-seven when their father died.[102] Based on the age at which children might expect to receive any inheritance, this was also when elder siblings of both sexes might shoulder some or all parental or 'head of family' roles. Wartime casualties forced these upon them at a much earlier age. Tamara Hareven considers the centrality of timing in the scheduling of family events and the transition of individuals into different family roles. Life-cycle stages such as leaving school, marriage and the birth of children resulted in divergences and convergences within sibling groups as the focal attention of their lives shifted accordingly. Rich in detail about life on the home front, a central focus of the wartime diaries of Ella Lethem and Gwyn Wells are their sweethearts and marriage preparations.[103]

Accompanying these stages was a widening of friendships within their peer relationships and kin networks as siblings gained in-laws and nephews and nieces. Shortly after the birth of Maurice Foxell's first child, the unexpected arrival of a 'booted and spurred' Edward Foxell, ten days before his departure to the front, meant he was the first uncle to see the 'sweet baby'.[104] Sometimes boundaries between friendships and kinship

bonds became blurred or unsettled post marriage or engagement. Waiting to find out if her fiancé had obtained leave, Ella Lethem was disconcerted when a letter from him arrived for her brother Tom, as it 'seemed quite funny' for anyone else to get a letter from Douglas.[105] The previous year, Douglas, a good friend of Ella's older brothers, had stood in for Tom as best man at John Lethem's marriage to Gladys Caxton. Tom, then serving as a private, had been delayed returning on leave, causing him to miss the service.[106] After Peggy Hamilton's brother Oliver married her close friend Ursula Carr, she spent her leave at their marital cottage at Orford, not far from Oliver's base. 'It was so lovely' being with them, she wrote in a letter home, 'that I didn't leave the next day, or indeed the one after that.'[107]

When siblings left home for education, for work or to establish households, they maintained relationships and interactions by visits and correspondence – patterns of behaviour that continued during wartime. Evidence from social surveys of urban life conducted by Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree in the 1900s shows that after leaving the family home, siblings often lived in the same or neighbouring streets.[108] Fraternal networks remained strong throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Young and Willmott's study of family and kinship in Bethnal Green found that over a quarter of the 755 brothers surveyed had visited a brother in the previous week, a finding replicated by Rosser and Harris's (1965) analysis of families in Swansea.[109] Affectionate bonds persisted into old age, with some sibling groups in daily or weekly touch. This explains why accounts of front-line brotherly visits feature so heavily in wartime narratives. These could be chance encounters, but some men went to great lengths to track down and spend time with their soldier-brothers.

Serving with the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC), Gilbert Baines traced down his brother Arnold with difficulty after hearing his brother's regiment was in Ypres. Arnold's transfer to another regiment complicated his task, delaying his arrival in the vicinity. Gilbert's joy at their eventual meeting was expressed by his emphatic declaration, 'At last. *I have seen Arnold*.'[110] When leave was scarce, meeting up provided an immediate connection to men's domestic lives.[111] Although sisters serving on or near the firing line in the VAD, First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY) or Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) potentially had the opportunity to meet up with their brothers, accounts of such meetings are rare. More often, it was periods of leave that allowed brothers and sisters to catch up

with each other. This reflects the bias in the source material which privileges the experience of women on the home front. Siblings of both sexes eagerly anticipated meeting up, repeating patterns of leisure established before the war: eating out; visiting friends and family; going to the theatre or cinema or enjoying long walks. When Alf Wells arrived home for his eagerly anticipated leave in April 1918, he enjoyed a full day of activities with his sister Gwen. After lunching at the Strand Corner House, they saw the musical comedy *The Boy*. Hearing of their plans, their younger sister, Peggy, accused Gwen of selfishness. Gwen, a civil servant, had the forthcoming Monday off to spend more time with their brother.[112] Their sororal spat revealed the emotional import of leave for siblings at home.

Sibling love

Deep affection for brothers is commonplace in siblings' narratives. We see it in their descriptions of their bonds, in their practical, emotional and economic acts of caring, in their anxiety over loved ones and in their anger, grief and guilt over their deaths in combat. *Brothers in the Great War* complements the growing scholarship on fatherhood and romantic love in the twentieth century by drawing attention to this neglected aspect of men's emotional development.[113] Clinical focus on sibling rivalry has obscured the dimension of sibling love. Valued relationships in their own right, sibling bonds are diminished when brothers and sisters are reduced to being competitors for parental love.[114] We must not equate the absence of an explicit verbal language of love to represent affectionate sibling ties with an absence of profound feelings.[115] To fall short of describing them as loving relationships is to diminish their emotional significance. Adopting the term love in its fullest sense as defining bonds that are characterised by deep affection or fondness, or a strong emotional attachment based on mutual affinity and manifesting itself via concern for the other's welfare or pleasure in their company, it becomes clear that many brothers and sisters were articulating loving relationships with their siblings.[116]

More scholarly attention has been paid to the sister–brother bond in wartime. Our knowledge of these relationships is largely shaped by an influential group of middle-class women writers.[117] In Angela Woollacott's memorable phrase, serving men 'loomed as the dominant planets' in their

sister's lives.[118] Scholars have argued that brother–sister and sister–sister bonds assumed an emotional salience during the Victorian period.[119] Middle-class sisters grew up in a hot-house of expectation and ambition, with boys 'destined to achieve' – a sororal perspective that doubtless fed into the myth of a lost generation.[120] Accounts show how fraternal relationships expanded the social and educational horizons of young women's highly chaperoned lives. Overcoming a five-year age difference, Jack and Naomi Haldane shared many interests, from reading poetry to playing literary word games, walking and going to 'flea-pittish' cinemas and the theatre. For Naomi, who, like Vera Brittain, found her daily life constrained by conventional attitudes to young women, these were welcome injections of liberty. No wonder she described it as a 'deeply exciting' relationship.[121] Indicative of their intellectual focus on the separation of public and private spheres in middle-class households, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall believed that, of all familial relationships in this period, sisters were the closest. Sisterly bonds, cemented in the domestic realm, were largely undisrupted by the periods of educational and occupational absence that were almost inevitable for their brothers. This inference privileges physical proximity as a contributory factor in establishing affectionate middle-class sibling relations.

There has been less of a focus on working-class sister–brother and sister–sister bonds. Evidence from Paul Thompson and Trevor Lummis' qualitative survey of Edwardian family and working life (FLWE) points to similar patterns of sibling behaviours forging close emotional ties.[122] Henry T. was a 'particular pal' of his second-eldest sister until his death in the war.[123] Some ties did not depend on physical presence. Elizabeth E. remained close friends with her sister all their lives, weathering the absences occasioned by her sibling's domestic service.[124] The two eldest sisters of one Staffordshire family were especially close, 'doing everything together'. They carved out time from their hectic household of seven, sending the younger ones off to bed and sharing a cup of cocoa.[125] One mill worker recalled her eldest brother taking her out a lot before his marriage. Sharing an interest in music, they attended concerts at Albert Hall in Bolton and productions by local amateur operatic societies.[126] Extreme poverty and employment opportunities were cited as the cause of breaches in working-class sibling ties. The continuing bond between one pair of sisters as domestic servants was reliant on their respective employers agreeing that

they could take the same day off, a level of mistrust making this a rare occurrence. One later reflected on the 'terrible sacrifice' imposed by their employment, which resulted in the sisters losing touch.[127] Working-class sisters also formed friendships through fraternal connections at school and the workplace. Working long hours in the family laundry business, Gladys C. had limited opportunities to forge friendships with either sex. During the war, she regularly wrote to two male friends whom she had met when her brother brought them home.[128]

FLWE respondents rarely used the words love or loving in relation to familial relationships, including those between parent and child.[129] The inherent complexity of siblinghood made it hard for siblings to define their bonds, to understand what behaviours and emotions signified 'real' brother- or sisterhood. Close relationships, as defined by psychologist Harold Kelley, are characterised by 'strong, frequent, and diverse interdependence' between two people, lasting a considerable period.[130] Markers of harmonious sibling relationships were framed in terms of happiness, unity or friendship, one man describing his fraternal bond as 'a long friendship that we retained all our life',[131] an inherited orientation of family values and siblinghood that provided lifelong sustenance. References to unity are particularly pertinent. Family happiness, suggests Sara Ahmed, involves 'a way of being aligned with others, of facing the right way'. The family becomes happy through the work that must be done to keep it together.[132] Clannish families, rallying practical, financial and emotional support, were more likely to thrive. Consequently, parents encouraged children to respect one another, to be tolerant or kind, and exhorted them not to quarrel or fight. Instilled from an early age, this deep sense of bonding not only explains men's urge to enlist and serve alongside each other but also why siblings' domestic responsibilities remained intertwined even after they left home.

Brothers were reluctant to publicise broken relationships, being mindful of familial sensitivities; adherence to the cultural taboo against 'speaking ill of the dead' combined with a desire to eulogise siblings. Emma Griffin makes the cogent argument that 'darker aspects' of working-class intimate life must not be obscured by a focus on affectionate bonds, especially where emotional experiences of parental neglect or abuse may be absent from autobiographical accounts.[133] 'Bad' siblinghood is harder to categorise. Brothers and sisters may experience a negative relationship with only one

member of their sibling group. Examples of ‘bad’ brothers must be distinguished from the perhaps inevitably distant relationships resulting from age gaps or intra-family groupings. For example, Mr Keble was in his mid-twenties when the youngest of his ten siblings was born. There was no discord between the children. The older ones were simply ‘out of touch’ with their younger brothers and sisters because of the familial age span. Explicitly unfavourable accounts were often justified or explained by a breach in societal or family values: a failure to perform fraternal or masculine obligations. The end result is an unavoidable bias towards loving or affectionate fraternal relationships in the source material examined within *Brothers in the Great War*.

War itself disrupted fraternal ties. These ‘distances’ and ‘disruptions’ do not necessarily equate to negative relationships but, rather, correlated with a lack of emotional closeness during distinct, often transitory periods of the fraternal life course. Where men led separate lives or experienced a rupture in relations, this was likely coupled by a corresponding breakdown in correspondence or contact. When Clifford Allen fell out with his brother Godfrey over their divergent views on the war, he was unable to get over the loss of ‘the last vestige of ordinary home life’. Later he expanded on the pain resulting from their estrangement. Able to bear a separation borne of marriage, it was ‘very hard’ to lose his brother’s friendship and feel ‘more of a stranger with him than with many a political acquaintance’.[134] The rift between the Allen brothers was short lived. Godfrey later joined Clifford in southern France, where he was convalescing, his ill health being a consequence of his imprisonment. Snapshots of ill-feeling can be misleading; siblings united in times of need, or reconciled their differences with the passing of time.

Domestic ties

Historians have examined the strong pull of familial ties, and combatants’ use of domestic metaphors to sustain ties to the landscapes of home.[135] Such bonds played a vital role in building up resilience, helping men to endure and survive the traumas of war. Reliance on the indisputable fact that mothers were the main recipients of letters sent home by soldiers on the front has had a reductive effect on interpretations of the range of support

offered by brothers and sisters.[136] By focusing on this strand of familial support, *Brothers in the Great War* adds to the growing body of evidence demonstrating the primacy of domestic ties for fighting men.[137] Collections of sustained fraternal correspondence testify to the distinctiveness of these relationships within the family unit. Young men transcended the liminal experiences of war by turning to a wistful substitute for their former lives, easily accessible through exchanges about the home, school and leisure activities of younger siblings. Fraternal support included the routine activities of sending letters, reading materials and practical masculine items. Brothers and sisters also received confidences, harrowing tales of life on the front line and expressions of anxiety, loneliness and grief.

Certain details were explicitly to be withheld from parents. In this important way, brothers and sisters supplemented the maternal support given to combatants, while sharing the filial burden of shielding mothers from the full horrors of war. Hospitalised with bronchitis, a vexed Dodo Baines wrote to his brother. Despite his giving Ralph's name as next of kin, the War Office had wired their mother, frustrating their 'arrangement'. Four months later, when Dodo was seriously wounded, Arthur Baines determined to spare their mother, initially reassuring her that Dodo was 'well on the way to recovery'. Over the following five days, Arthur punctiliously monitored his brother. When Dodo's condition deteriorated after an operation to amputate his leg, Arthur finally informed his family. Later that same day, Dodo died.[138] These acts of filial collusion served a double purpose. By protecting their mothers, siblings managed familial levels of anxiety at a distance, while simultaneously reducing the strain of managing their own and familial unease over the wellbeing of loved ones.

Siblings strove to maintain pre-existing familial caring and economic relationships during periods of enforced separation – sustaining brothering and sistering at a distance.[139] Prominent among the factors forging sibling bonds – power, affection, duty, obligation and reciprocity – are acts of caring.[140] Separating the *acts* comprising caring from the *emotions* underlying them narrows our understanding of these interactions.[141] David Morgan's concept of family practices shows how people 'do' relationships in their regular, everyday activities.[142] The overall familiarity of domestic life, and intimate knowledge of familial idiosyncrasies, defined these emotional relationships.[143] Sibling relations foster a sense of identity through everyday interaction and emulation, reinforced by engagement in

'sibling practices' – regular chores, mealtimes, bedtimes, playing, walking to school and sharing clothes.[144]

Such routines have a spatial and bodily aspect: the cramped conditions of communal sleeping; familiarity with naked or semi-clad bodies; wearing hand-me-downs; and the restatement of sibling hierarchies by the allocation of set places at mealtimes. The associated physicality of such everyday ritual cut through the 'cerebral and bloodless' nature of late-Victorian and Edwardian manliness. Enmeshed in all aspects of daily life, siblings gained a 'fundamental' understanding of each other.[145] Growing up together bred a familiarity that rendered sibling relationships unremarkable, men and women often switching from the individual to the plural 'we' or 'us' in their accounts of childhood. A key benefit of Morgan's approach is that it encompasses *all* family interactions. Shifting patterns of family relationships can be examined outside of familiar settings and activities.[146] The sense of belonging, grounded in early childhood experiences, remained with siblings into adulthood, infiltrating *all* areas of their lives.[147] Interactions forged in childhood practices were translated into sibling support during wartime.

Mass recruitment, as John Bourne observed, created a British army that was overwhelmingly working class and urban, creating a bedrock of social cohesion and community that was heavily influenced by working-class family values.[148] *Brothers in the Great War*'s call for a reassessment of wartime masculinities is founded on important evidence that gendered expectations of caring were not as polarised as previously depicted. A common assumption is that these responsibilities were carefully choreographed, with individual family members having clearly assigned roles. While recognising the existence of a gender bias in the assignment of caring duties, men's accounts affirm that 'mucking in' – the participation of all siblings in household chores, dependent on what was required – was a more accurate reflection of the household routines of many sprawling working-class families. Julie-Marie Strange draws on Daniel Miller's work to recast men's routine acts of providing for families as ones of love or devotion, circumventing the gender-based labelling of caring and breadwinning roles.[149] A focus on similar mundane interactions between brothers will reveal the emotional underpinning of each fraternal bond growing out of these workaday tasks. Family bonds may be more tender or intense because economic relations are critical to mutual survival.[150]

Roper acknowledges that the roots of the 'rough, protective care' provided to each other by serving men lay in pre-war friendships and relationships with brothers and sisters. He challenges its categorisation by some historians as 'paternal', preferring instead to call this behaviour 'mothering'.[151] Such gendered labelling of these roles diminishes the distinctiveness of siblinghood: acts of brothering differ from those of mothering and fathering. Men invested fraternal acts of caring and protecting with affective significance, akin to that observed by the children of breadwinners.[152] Routine caring by and for working-class brothers offers up a positive counterpoint to the dominant stereotype of young working-class men as one of 'youth in trouble' or 'youth as trouble'.[153] Depending on the make-up of individual families, brothers watched over their younger siblings. Such responsibilities should not be dismissed as 'light' duties; childhoods could be blighted by familial duties.[154] As the second-eldest of five, Frank B. resented having to take care of his younger siblings, explaining, 'I used to be put on.'[155] For some, bearing the 'brunt edge' of caring for younger siblings marred their sibling relations; for others, caring or being cared for formed the essential bedrock of their bond.

Annette Atkins' definition of 'family culture', the rules, values, expectations and standards by which families measure themselves and each other, is 'powerful enough to offset the values, rules, and expectations in the larger culture, especially about gender'.[156] This latter point is a material consideration when looking at siblings' nurturing roles. Paternal and caring roles performed by brothers played a significant role in forging and deepening brotherly affection. Gratitude aroused by fraternal protectiveness recognised that such acts of devotion went above and beyond the usual acts of brotherly behaviours. Growing up in a working-class family in St John's Wood, Eddie T.'s only brother Bill was 'more than a brother' to him. Bill was also a 'great friend' and 'champion' who 'took [Eddie's] part in everything'. This protection extended into Eddie's adolescence, which his brother supported him through 'with all the care and love of a boy'.[157] While this statement implicitly acknowledges the gendering of caring roles in families, Eddie conveys the diligent tenderness exhibited by his brother. A desire to maintain 'face' led to Gordon S.'s refusal to escort his sister to a friend's party. His protective role was easily fulfilled by watching her safe arrival from a window. Never one to show his emotions, according to his sister, Gordon found other ways of displaying his affection: always giving

her the ‘best bite of the apple’.[158] These small acts of solicitude undercut Gordon’s emotional reticence, fostering an affectionate bond between brother and sister.

Siblings adopted the role of protectors from an early age, frequently citing physical frailty or weakness as the reason why a brother might require additional protection. This was a deep-rooted expectation. John E. expressed relief that ‘we didn’t have a weakling in the family’, having seen his friends’ freedom curtailed by their ‘attachment’ to frail siblings.[159] One of eight siblings, Elsie J. assumed most of the daily care of her brother, who was left severely disabled after a childhood attack of meningitis. Being tied down left her feeling bitter at times, especially when forced to miss out on leisure activities. Two of her brothers were ‘undomesticated’, unable or unwilling to help with routine chores or nursing. In contrast, Arthur, the youngest, would take over the full care of his sibling during his leave from the navy, his act of fraternal devotion giving his sister some much-needed respite.[160]

Janet Watson makes an admittedly generalised, class-based categorisation of wartime effort: whereas elites and the middle classes regarded it as ‘service’, the working classes viewed it as ‘work’. A key difference between voluntary and auxiliary nurses and soldiers was the former’s social obligation to consider their families’ needs. Many middle-class families called on ‘daughters at home’ to prioritise familial duty, relinquishing their wartime duties if required or demanded to do so.[161] Fraternal correspondence and appeals before the military service tribunals suggest that this expectation extended to ‘sons at home’. When Private Joe Miller heard that his brother was anxious to join the Army Service Corps, he told him not to be silly, reminding him that it was his ‘job’ to look after their mother.[162] In turn, tribunals expected siblings to pool business and familial responsibilities, performing intricate negotiations so that one or more might be free to serve. The wishes of ‘sibling units’ were often overridden by the need to maintain a steady flow of manpower to the front line. Nonetheless, the persistence and prevalence of these claims are indicative of the measured balancing of conflicting duties to family and nation.

Non-combatant and surviving brothers provided continuing support to the widows and children of brothers killed in action. Hints of the depth of feeling provoked by this fraternal duty are seen in the debate surrounding the call to amend the marriage laws to allow men to marry the widow of a

brother killed in the war.[163] Hard-line opponents argued that, as marriage created a 'real' brotherhood and sisterhood among in-laws, such marriages would be incestuous under canonical law.[164] Proponents countered that the measure would legitimise the position of a significant number of widows living in 'irregular union' with their husband's brother.[165] In March 1920, Viscountess Astor drew attention to the 'urgent need' to legalise such marriages to accommodate men eager to marry their brother's widow and care for her children.[166] She received between 200 and 300 letters on this emotive subject.[167] A 'conservative' estimate by *The Woman's Leader* put the number affected at approximately 2 per cent of the 240,000 women widowed in the United Kingdom.[168] Widows writing in support cast themselves as 'victims' or 'sufferers'. Parliamentary debates concentrated on the loss of a breadwinner and the resulting fraternal desire 'to mitigate the privation and suffering' of the bereaved family, refocusing the discussion on the official recognition of gendered blood ties and responsibilities.[169]

Reading wartime emotions

Transcribing his wartime diaries in 1921, Arthur Wrench reflected on his journey to the Western Front, marking

> [t]he beginning of those days of a thousand moods, flitting before our filmy visions like a phantasmagoria of hopes, fear, despair and passions, ugly shapes and beautiful ones calling on us, even voluntarily at times to join that vast army of souls who had already paid the supreme sacrifice, and then finally bidding us to 'keep smiling and carry on'.[170]

Wrench captures the uneasy juxtaposition of turbulent emotions masked by stoical behaviour. Even for emotionally articulate writers such as Wrench – a Scottish artist – capturing the full experience of trench warfare was difficult.[171] Entering the world of wartime experiences is to encounter a maelstrom of heightened emotions. Mechanised conflict, combined with the relentless discomforts of trench warfare, imposed a heavy mental and physical burden on fighting men. Combatants experienced fear, anxiety, horror, dread, anger and grief. They bore the cumulative strain of enduring the 'constant traumatic witnessing' of comrades' deaths.[172] Stresses invaded the domestic sphere, with family members bearing the protracted strain of anticipatory grief that was fuelled by the casualty lists filling the columns of

local and national newspapers. Writing to her mother in May 1915, VAD Phyllis Puckle stated that the 'war gets more depressing every day'. Commenting that every casualty list seemed to have someone they knew on it, she wondered 'if there has ever been so much sorrow in the world before?'[173] The absence of a body or grave heralded a period of hope mixed with dread. Over 200,000 bodies were never recovered. Families waited anxiously after receiving the stark notification, 'Regret – No Trace' – a state of limbo that brothers of the missing strove to rectify.[174] An ambulance driver during the war, Joyce Hoskyns had 'been anxious to the verge of frenzy' for the four years following her younger brother's enlistment. On the date of his wounding in March 1918 she was out dancing when her partner asked her of his whereabouts. Despite her belief in 'the goodness of God', Joyce felt a premonition in the form of an 'icy hand on my heart'.[175] The inescapable anxiety culminated in her bodily reaction to a long-anticipated death.

Emotions play a central role in historical research, particularly in studies delving into the intricacies of personal life. The identification of an 'emotional turn' has seen active engagement with the intellectual frameworks that we can employ to better understand the emotional lives of our subjects.[176] Roper advocates using psychoanalytical tools to animate historical research, viewing it as a relational process in which the historian's subjectivity is inevitably engaged. By drawing on unconscious resources, as opposed to a discourse-focused approach, he argues that historians are better placed 'to imaginatively connect with the subjectivities of people in the past'.[177] While acknowledging the necessity of a critical reading of personal testimony that seeks meanings below the surface, this study eschews the explicit use of psychoanalytical theories in favour of a wider, multidisciplinary approach. A 'peculiarly interdisciplinary' area, the history of emotions encompasses literary and religious studies, psychiatry, psychology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy and neuroscience.[178] Our task is to negotiate the extremes between the universalism of theories and the specificity of family life and relationships. In his discussion of material culture, Daniel Miller observes that the less we are aware of everyday objects, 'the more powerfully they can determine our expectations, by setting the scene and ensuring appropriate behaviour, without being open to challenge'.[179] A useful analogy can be made with emotional norms. Naomi Mitchison spoke of being 'netted by invisible rules' regarding ladylike

behaviour. She was not 'taught' rules of behaviour, which she should have 'known by instinct'.[180] Children learn what is expected of them in multifarious ways.

When examining wartime emotions, we must pay heed to the 'crude binary distinction' between self-control and self-expression.[181] Although emotional life is far more complex than these polar opposites suggest, the dominance of masculine self-restraint in Edwardian public discourse is undeniable, shaping political and working-class sensibilities of masculine 'good character' and respectability.[182] This code of manliness was taken seriously not only by pundits and preachers but also by young men. Conforming was an affirmation of their religious convictions and social aspirations.[183] Self-control was deeply embedded in the ethos of 'Muscular Christianity' adopted by British public schools and cross-fertilised among working-class adolescents through sibling relationships and the 'character factories' of youth movements such as the Boys' Brigades, the Lads' Drill Association and Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts.[184] Remnants of Victorian street culture, with its mindset of 'hard manliness' and emotional control, survived into adulthood.[185] But, as has been observed in grief studies, working-class reticence and stoicism effectively disguise emotions, and we must seek out other expressive rituals and actions so as to fully understand the emotional experiences of war.[186]

Juxtaposed against this standard of manliness, as Stephanie Olsen convincingly shows, is the 'emotional consensus' instilled in boys and young men through informal moral education. Kindness and tolerance were valued sibling behaviours endorsed by Edwardian parents. The children of a Liverpudlian dairyman were brought up to be kind to their siblings. This mark of character defined the family ideology, summarised by the parental expectation that they be 'just a family'.[187] Sympathy, caring and love in domestic life formed part of boys' 'emotional toolbox' in becoming a man. While not dismissing the power of normative expectations, we too often underestimate the cultural weight of 'felt' values instilled by familial culture.[188] These quieter values, embedded in the warp and weave of everyday life, were part of the transition from boyhood to manly citizenship. Men caring for or cared for by brothers, brothers protecting or looking out for each other, boys and young men contributing to the household coffers, all understood and adhered to a wider code of domestic masculinity.

Parental strictures echo the guidance on manliness appearing in the periodical press and moral instruction books in the late Victorian and Edwardian era. Sibling love and sacrifice was idealised by moral tracts, becoming a 'measuring stick' for virtue.[189] Moral instruction continued at school via daily biblical lessons and was further reinforced through Sunday school attendance and membership of the burgeoning mass youth organisations. Children's attendance at Sunday school remained high during the pre-war years, despite the decline in church-going among adults.[190] There was some class disparity. A 1911 study suggested that only a fifth of working-class children in south London attended Sunday school.[191] Entry to employment was a factor; the Sunday School Union estimated that 80 per cent of scholars were 'lost' to the church on attaining the 'working' age of fourteen or fifteen.[192]

Concerns about the spiritual education of this age group catalysed the growth of the 'brigade movements' aimed at attracting what the founder of the Boys' Brigade, Sir William Alexander Smith, termed the 'boy mind' to Christian manliness. One estimate suggests that 40 per cent of men born between 1901 and 1920 belonged to one of these organisations at some point in their lives.[193] The interdenominational Boys' Brigade, set up in 1883, promoted the habits of reverence, discipline, self-respect and obedience – a masculine template replicated by its rival, the Anglican Church Lads' Brigade, established by Walter Mallock Gee in 1891. The founding principles of these brigades in turn influenced Lord Baden-Powell's Scouting movement in 1908.[194] Undoubtedly militaristic in outlook – a vital part of their appeal for working-class boys and young men – the movements' foundations were incontrovertibly moral and religious.[195]

Understanding how children and young people made sense of these diverse and sometimes contradictory emotional expectations, based on fragmentary glimpses into their life stories, requires a theoretical framework. Responding to the adult-focused underpinnings of histories of emotions, Karen Vallgårda, Kristine Alexander and Stephanie Olsen propose the concept of 'emotional formation'.[196] This is both a pattern of emotional structures and a reiterated process cultivating codes of feeling through informal education and repeated daily experiences and practices. This approach stresses the contingency of feelings but does not explicitly acknowledge the role of siblings and lateral bonds in helping children and

young people to mediate emotional norms as they are applied in differing situations.

Influenced by his critical reading of cognitive psychology and neuroscience research, William Reddy developed the concept of emotional regimes to explain how emotions can act as agents of historical change. Regimes comprise both the complex set of practices establishing emotional norms and the sanctions for those who break them.[197] This penalising authority lends regimes their social and political power. In the distinctive climate of world conflict, this concept has some attraction as a model against which to view codes of feeling, values and behaviours, assisting our appreciation of how the Great War marked a watershed moment in the evolution of a culture of emotional repression. A patriotic discourse bolstered acquiescence with state management of military and civilian emotions. Exceptional times made compliance essential to the functioning of wartime society.[198] Observance of the codes underpinning the suppression of prescribed feelings required great effort by individuals. Self-restraint was lauded in both military and civilian life. Societal attitudes valorised stoicism and patriotic loyalty over the expression of personal emotions, especially grief. In August 1914, the archbishop of Canterbury called for 'natural' emotions to be held in check, stressing that steadfast self-control was not merely desirable but 'sacredly imperative'.[199] Vera Brittain hinted at the effort behind such containment in the run-up to the Battle of Loos in September 1915. An 'anxious stillness' descended on the country, 'making everyone taut and breathless'.[200] Yet, of all the 'templates of emotional control' playing a formative role in developing a culture of self-restraint, the armed services presented the most familiar standard. Soldiers' repression of emotions in the most harrowing of circumstances was widely admired. Mentions in despatches recorded in the *Edinburgh* and *London Gazettes* contain frequent references to coolness and 'cool leadership', the antithesis of heated, uncontrolled passions.[201] As more subscribed to the logic of this emotional norm, wartime behaviours entered into a feedback loop. When regimes reach a coherent structure, conforming becomes defining for the individual. This 'cultural exaltation' of particular forms of masculinity, such as the soldier-hero, becomes problematic when the 'pressure of conformity' pushes out alternative narratives such as male or sibling grief.[202] Florence Lockwood, grieving for her nephews, experienced a disenfranchisement of her grief. Among the mass

bereavement, her auntly bond with them was deemed insufficiently close in the hierarchy of mourning.[203]

Barbara Rosenwein claims that Reddy's highly regimented model sits uncomfortably with the complexities of modern society.[204] Her concept of emotional communities, encompassing *inter alia* families and neighbourhoods, adopts the device of 'not entirely concentric circles' to explain how individuals move easily between emotional communities, provided that the underlying norms are not radically different.[205] Individuals' emotional styles are dependent on context, altering within families, among friends, at the workplace or in the army. This fluidity facilitates the mediation of the dominant wartime regime of patriotic sacrifice by familial values and priorities.[206] Sara Ahmed's consideration of 'influence' is a useful addition to this framework. Within the family and other emotional communities, it is often easier to see the prohibitions rather than the affirmations of behaviour. Seeking out these 'invisible' points of pressure informs our understanding of the cultivation of familial and societal norms.[207]

Neither Reddy nor Rosenwein fully addresses what happens at the emotional intersections of regime, emotional community and individual feeling when respect for familial or communal bonds takes precedence over the state management of emotion.[208] Familial codes infiltrated the front line and other areas of wartime life. Despite the differences engendered by class, religion and place, there was a remarkable commonality in these norms.[209] Focusing on sibling and familial values and practices helps us to understand the wartime patriotism of a combatant like Sapper Frank Day, who served with the Royal Engineers in Egypt and Palestine. Like many serving men, he supported conscription, believing an influx of single men of fighting age would end the war sooner. He disparaged conscientious objectors and the 'slackers' on the docks near his training camp.[210] Yet, Day hoped that his younger brother would not experience combat, advising his parents to 'tell John he *must not* join until he is old enough'. When it was confirmed that his sibling had secured a continuing exemption due to his munitions work, he was 'very glad', telling his brother to 'keep out of the army as long as ever you can'.[211] Day upheld two contradictory positions regarding the service of young single men, both with their own consistent logic. Patriotic acceptance informed his acceptance of the necessity of military service. His experience of military training and combat informed his desire that his

younger brother be spared. By focusing on such individual moments of transgression or conflict, we can appreciate the elasticity of emotional norms at regime, community, family and sibling level.

Not all lapses of wartime emotional codes were met by draconian responses. Experiential evidence strongly suggests that it is the compassionate policing of regimes that cements adherence, through a dual process of rewarding emotional effort and recognising emotional fragility in times of extreme stress. Vera Brittain provides a rare autobiographical account of a reprimand. One of her friends scolded her 'difficult' demeanour following the death of Roland Leighton.[212] Many instances of emotional 'breaches' appear without condemnation in men's narratives. Tolerance of 'deviant' behaviour, argues Helen Smith, was largely based on the appropriate demonstration of manly conduct or good character in the workplace and home.[213] Adherence to societal codes and values garners individuals respect from superiors and peers. Such respect grants limited freedom of expression, especially when that expression speaks to an accepted cultural or emotional convention in a particular community. This premise of compassionate enforcement builds on Reddy's 'emotional refuges' – a space, understanding or ritual providing safe release from prevailing norms – by unpicking the conditions under which such 'understandings' are made.[214] The community and the individual traverse these instances of heightened emotional states in a way that supports both the regime and its members.

Within the emotional regime of the fighting unit, individual reputations rested both on men's past actions and on conformity to emotional norms.[215] Unfettered emotions were dangerous. Quiet strength, discipline and courage were vital masculine traits enabling men to remain functional in the midst of fear.[216] Mastery depended on effort and control, instilled by practice.[217] Officers, in positions of authority, retained the locus of control, part of the acceptance of military authority by rankers. Consequently, young officers feared breaking down in front of their men. Focus on the officer classes has marginalised the routine restraint practised by subordinates.[218] The end result was a shared ethic of endurance.[219] This code was underpinned by quieter, empathetic values, one war memoir alone recording eleven examples of kindness.[220] The comrades of Fred Cearns ascribed his popularity not to the 'false bluster of a bully' but to his sympathetic and kind demeanour and actions.[221] The cultural respect for fraternal ties is

apparent in the consideration offered to anxious or grieving brothers. When nineteen-year-old Gilbert Hosegood learned of his brother Arnold's death via an announcement in *The Times*, he was 'sustained by the kindness of his friends'.[222] This cut across class, with kind solicitude being proffered by rankers and officers alike. Missing the companionship of his brother Dodo, Tom Baines praised the thoughtfulness of his 'rough men' who demonstrated practical support by their efforts to lighten his load by carrying out some of his duties.[223] Deaths of brothers seem to have transcended the anonymity of mass casualties, affecting not only surviving siblings but also combatants witnessing the trauma resulting from fraternal mortalities. Rarely were men castigated for post-battle displays of emotion. Informing this reaction was knowledge of wartime conditions and the resulting loss of privacy – a loss remarked upon by Vera Brittain, attempting to shield her tear-stained face during a routine inspection of her VAD quarters.[224]

Men's awareness of the need for control in combat led them to seek private spaces to vent emotions, a behavioural pattern likely to garner respect from their peers.[225] Tears are a sign of complex emotions, expressed on a spectrum of intensity and control.[226] Against the turbulence of battlefield emotions, abstract distinctions such as the romantic view that the most profound grief is tearless did not match the daily realities of trench warfare.[227] The opening up of vulnerability, combined with the viscerality of weeping or sobbing, made it a discomforting experience for observers. Seventeen months after Arnold's death, Gilbert Hosegood received the devastating news that his other brother had been killed in action. He left his billet 'blinded by tears and in silence', his close friend respecting his desire for solitude.[228] A code of silence preserved the privacy of such 'sacrosanct' outpourings. Soldiers on leave sought refuge in the privacy of the theatre or cinema, where tears could be shed in relative privacy.[229] Paying greater attention to these moments and spaces of grief challenges the presumption of wartime stoicism and invites the historian to seek them out. It begs the question of how we can fully understand the adoption of the stiff upper lip across class and gender without a full exploration of these nuanced negotiations of public and private behavioural codes.[230]

Brotherly loss

Grief permeates many of the narratives examined in this study. Like the working-class autobiographies studied by David Vincent, 'bereavement is everywhere'.[231] The scale of casualties during the First World War, amounting to approximately three-quarters of a million British servicemen, created a seismic shift in attitudes to death and mourning, breaking the liminal nature of communal mourning in times of tragedy.[232] Uniformity of grief and the experience of trench warfare led to a narrowing of experience across classes and regions.[233] Veterans and civilians alike struggled with balancing the desire to forget and to resume their lives with the recognition that such experiences should not be forgotten.[234] Rightly affirming the deep and lasting effect of sibling separations and deaths on surviving siblings, Leonore Davidoff's claim that the resulting emotional deprivation increased with the advent of the nuclear family contradicts her earlier finding regarding the particular closeness of sibling groupings in larger families. Her consideration of fraternal grief is focused on historian E. P. Thompson's portraying the death of his brother, Frank, in the Second World War as a 'defining' influence. This insight is fundamentally weakened by a failure to analyse sibling loss from the perspective of surviving brothers in the Great War, compounded by Davidoff's close examination of the often cataclysmic consequences of brotherly loss on surviving sisters.[235] This imbalance restricts our appreciation of the significance of sibling relationships in wartime and how experiences of sibling loss fed into shifting patterns of grief and mourning throughout the twentieth century.

The focus on public commemoration after the First World War meant that the war dead remained a collective presence in people's lives. Post 1918, a culture of forgetting and silence overlaid emotional responses to death. Growing up in the Calder Valley in the aftermath of the Great War, the poet Ted Hughes recalled how the whole country was 'traumatised'.[236] Many families preferred not to talk about the war. Yet this blanket of silence was unsuccessful in masking underlying pain. Bodily scars or missing limbs were physical reminders of the war's legacy. Photographs and shrines to loved ones, artefacts including medals and service papers, and trench art became assimilated into households. The fallen were known individuals in their local communities – at household, street, neighbourhood and parish level. Particular locations held emotional significance. One of two survivors of his cohort of eight scholars, Harold Macmillan could not face returning to Oxford. It would simply be too much to return to this 'city of ghosts'.[237]

The author Henry Yorke, writing under the pseudonym Henry Green, cautioned that his generation might have exaggerated the feeling of death being 'all about us'; a belief that was reinforced by the act of 'going over and over it' after the war ended. Nonetheless, the actual experience of death, such as that of his brother Philip, 'brought death close enough' to those, like him, too young to fight.[238]

Influential studies of death and mourning by Geoffrey Gorer and Phillipe Ariès propagated the belief that the post-war years saw the bereaved 'hiding' their emotions, a response to the growing social expectation that grief should be contained.[239] This trend became entrenched as the twentieth century progressed, bolstered by the medicalisation of death and incremental adoption of cremation. Tracing the emergence of a culture of emotional repression, Pat Jalland pinpoints the Second World War, and the mass experience of the Blitz, as marking 'a profound break with the past'.[240] By the end of the Second World War, Gorer proclaimed, death had replaced sex as the new social taboo.[241] Documenting experiences about which people do not speak is always testing, but even during this period of 'disallowed' mourning, Gorer and other researchers recorded individual accounts of emotional loss.[242] A question mark must surely be raised over our full appreciation of this chronology of grief when male and sibling grief is consistently overlooked.

Memory keeping

Public memories of the Great War drown out private, more intimate memories. The scale of Great War casualties is almost unimaginable to comprehend. Bodies of dead soldiers became 'official' property, buried alongside their comrades in military cemeteries. Individual names became subsumed in the mass of losses. This anonymisation of the dead explains siblings' compulsion to mark the *particular* war stories and sacrifice of brothers, salvaging individual stories from the incomprehension of mass slaughter. The cultural focus on the war dead has obscured the experiences of men returning home from the front. Sibling memoirs provide a medium where the stories of both converge to present a fuller picture of men's wartime service and its aftermath.

Sixty years after John Campbell wrote a six-page account of Percy's death, Pat retraced his father's steps when writing his own fraternal memorial. The youngest of three, Pat was seventeen when war broke out, three years younger than Percy. His memoir is a multilayered narrative of public and private memories and commemoration, filtered through a lens of fraternal love and grief. Having fought in and survived the war, married, brought up three children (naming the eldest after Percy) and enjoyed a successful career, Pat was reflecting on a lifetime of absence when he embarked on his act of fraternal memory keeping. His perspective is that of an older man looking back at his younger self.[243]

His act of memorial writing formed part of a more extensive effort by Pat to record his wartime experiences. After his retirement as master of Westminster Under School,[244] perhaps prompted by the 1960s memory boom and the desire of ageing veterans to record their experiences, he went on to write three books in the 1970s and 1980s. The first two covered his war experiences. His final book, published in 1986, the same year as his death at the age of 88, was his autobiography 'of an ordinary man'.[245] Before embarking on this series of life-storying, he 'had two debts to pay'.[246] The first was to tell the story of his brother Percy, and the second to do the same on behalf of a family friend, [George] Leonard Cheesman, who had been killed in action at Gallipoli in August 1915. Notably, Pat ring-fenced these intimate memories, omitting them from his published autobiographical works. His placing of both in public archives suggests his belief that these were vested with historical value and should be preserved, in Percy's case, as part of a more official record of the war. This was not the only memorial to Percy Campbell. As a prime example of the layering of memory within communities of mourning holding significance to the fallen, Percy's name appeared on the memorials at Dragon School; Hertford College, where he studied medicine; St Ebbe's church, Oxford, where he taught Sunday school; and the Menin Gate, Ypres monument to the missing.

Safekeeping the memory of brothers and their sacrifice is a recurring motif in many memoirs, a final act of devotion. In the process, they perform a valuable function of war writing: that of revealing and recording love.[247] Examining the interplay of fraternal relationships as related in men's memoirs facilitates the mapping of fluctuations in emotional expression over time. Recent studies of post-traumatic stress have revealed the persistence and force of some emotions. The durability of these felt

reactions, their management by the state and the adopted 'choice' to forget combine to create a complex palette of memory, experience and brotherly interactions. Within men's narratives we see a subversion of codes of silence. Adherence to codes of manly behaviour, and their desire for emotional privacy, meant that strong and unsettling emotions often remained hidden from public view. But sometimes grief proved too strong to be contained successfully. Men and women wrote publicly about the depth of their loss in successive months, years and decades. Winter adopts the notion of 'communicative silence' to explain the transmission, within families, of messages about distressing or traumatic events which everyone knows about but never speaks. While such tacit communications can bond families, Winter highlights the importance of 'silence-breakers' who communicate these messages outside family boundaries to apprise later generations of the personal ravages of war.[248] *Brothers in the Great War* shows how fraternal acts of memory keeping deliberately sought to place intimate loss in the public sphere.

Sources

Brothers in the Great War draws on a wide range of contemporary and retrospective sources. Letters between brothers in the early twentieth century have not been used before as the primary focus of study, and are supplemented by diaries, oral interviews, published and unpublished memoirs, poetry and prose, and local and national newspapers. Personal narratives have been selected when they include writings between or about brothers and sisters from the same family. Archives of personal papers held by the Imperial War Museum and the Liddle Collection at the University of Leeds hold collections of familial correspondence from all classes and regions. Setting these apart from other collections is the intermingling of correspondence with war-specific items such as photographs of uniformed brothers, service records and medals, letters on Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) headed paper, field postcards and green envelopes.[249] Inescapably, we are examining lives through a wartime filter. Feminist historians have argued that the attention focused on fighting men effectively excludes the private, unofficial stories of women from the collective memory.[250] The same charge may be levelled against the 'silencing' of non-

combatant men – those too young or too old to fight, or those exempted from service. Inhabiting the worlds of both home and fighting fronts, sibling narratives present a lateral perspective of the lived experiences of the war generation.

Encompassing a diverse range of sources counters the inherent bias of particular genres of texts, such as letters of condolence, and the relative scarcity of some source material. The gendered bias of wartime correspondence means that there are fewer extant letters between male family members in the archive.[251] While acknowledging the maternal role of family gatekeeper, considerations of the emotional sustenance garnered from specific familial bonds during wartime must take account of the archival bias against young men of serving age. Writing and preserving letters was difficult for combatants. Men more commonly kept letters from sweethearts and wives. Retention is not the sole marker of worth; unpreserved letters were still highly valued.[252] The absence of working-class voices is partially redressed by the inclusion of oral interviews and the spate of published accounts that appeared towards the end of the twentieth century. Official records provide useful testimony; 'coerced' narratives can, argues Carolyn Steedman, offer a distinct form of life stories.[253] Lastly, the range of sources reflects the book's structure. Oral interviews flesh out the childhoods of the war generation; contemporary letters and diaries reveal patterns of familial and emotional wartime behaviours; and retrospective memoirs expand the temporal boundaries of the war years, essential when exploring sibling grief and memory keeping.

People living through the war years were aware that they were engaged in the act of making history.[254] In August 1917, Willie Baines seeded the idea of commencing a history of the war as it affected the Baines family, believing that it would be of 'absorbing interest'.[255] Even contemporary recorders such as letter writers and diarists, ostensibly writing for themselves or to family members, wrote with an eye to informing future generations.[256] Boots the Chemists appealed to this predilection. Advertisements for its 6d pocket diary were headlined, 'Keep a Diary of the Historic Year, 1915'. They were sized to slip easily into a rucksack; combatants could jot down 'priceless notes' of their adventures, producing a record to 'value all [their] life'.[257] The artist and suffragist Florence Lockwood maintained a detailed diary throughout the war years; her chosen title, *Sign of the Times*, was a nod to the momentous events she recorded.

An amalgam of diary entries and newspaper clippings, it was an active document, dotted with approving or disapproving comments, the dates of key events and a list of the service records of her cousins and nephews. She regularly annotated the latter with dates of woundings and deaths.[258] The year 1917 saw Captain Ernest Hewish languishing on the home front, based at Herne Bay. Ready to abandon his diary keeping, he recommenced when a number of incidents convinced him that he would have no trouble finding 'copy'. This optimism proved short lived as Hewish expressed his frustration at merely providing a 'chronological record of the big events' rather than his 'personal feelings & experiences'.[259] Hewish felt diminished by his geographical and emotional distance from front-line fighting.

Inevitably, highly literate personal narratives dominate personal histories of war. Working-class narratives should not be dismissed for lack of erudition. Progress initiated by the 1870 Education Act, together with the work done in elementary and Sunday schools created a remarkably literate working class by the turn of the century. In 1871 an amendment to the Revised Code governing the school curriculum included the composition of short letters, ensuring that, by 1914, the majority of fighting men possessed rudimentary letter-writing skills. The burgeoning mass market in popular fiction, coupled with greater accessibility of books through cheap editions and lending libraries, meant that the vocabulary of many working-class people was richer than is often appreciated.[260] Rather than disparaging the clichéd, we should acknowledge its normative value as a tool of reassurance for both sender and recipient. Glimpses of writing skills emerge from letters sent by much younger siblings to their soldier-brothers. Eight-year-old Anthony Wilkinson, born the son of a coal miner in County Durham, sent his brother a letter which shows some comprehension of letter-writing conventions:

> Hoping you are well. What are you wanting the chronicle [sic] for. I want it to learn a poetry out of. It is a very windy day to-day … I wish you would come home.[261]

This missive, complete with a drawing of a 'brave soldier' wielding a gun and ending with eleven kisses, contains unexpectedly rich information about the circulation of discourses on heroic sacrifice, requests for reading materials, the conventions of asking after the health of the recipient and a plaintive expression of sibling separation.

Some men were self-critical of their literacy. ‘I am the poorest letter writer among mankind,’ declared Ray Turner, a former hairdresser, to his sister Grace. Even mundane correspondence reveals fraternal affection and shifts in tone, marking anxiety, fear or relief. At the end of a letter informing Grace of a planned operation to remove two pieces of shrapnel from his leg, Ray closed with a reassuring touch of humour, using his ‘French name’ Raymonde.[262] The middle and upper classes highly valued letter-writing skills. Cecil Falk upbraided his youngest brother, Eric, threatening to ignore future letters if his ‘disgraceful’ handwriting did not improve.[263] When this went unheeded, Cecil, determined to ensure his brother met the standards of ‘a public school man’, warned Eric that ‘you really must improve or have lessons … & I shall write & tell Father so too’.[264]

Contemporary sources

The emphasis on the present, the events of a single day or days, distinguishes letters and diaries from other narrative sources.[265] This immediacy confers an innocence of what the future holds, ensuring that they are untainted by hindsight.[266] Although they are ‘private’ texts, both of these narrative forms follow public conventions of expression. This attribute, according to Stephen Stowe, imbues them as spaces where people could ‘embrace and resist the time and place in which they lived’.[267] As such, they furnish invaluable insight into the negotiation of conflicting emotional codes by serving and non-combatant men. Letters and diary entries, especially those with emotional significance, could be the result of careful craftwork, belying their supposed immediacy. Alan Bishop, editing Vera Brittain’s diaries, noted that she drafted the poignant entry detailing her receipt of the news of Roland’s death several days later.[268] Such acts of composure are usually hidden from view.

Both letters and diaries are frequently reproduced within war memoirs, purportedly representing a ‘truthful’ account of events. The writer and the reader gain access to two voices: one belonging to the individual living through the experience and the one belonging to his or her reflective older self.[269] Vera Brittain believed her ‘crude and ingenuous’ contemporary opinions to be as important a record of her wartime experiences as her

knowledge-laden retrospective reflections.[270] Arthur Wrench declared that his war diary was neither a story nor a history of the war. Instead, it represented something 'essentially personal'.[271] A further example of the cross-pollination of source material is found in the 1915 diary kept by Alf Arnold. Falling into the category of diary writers who kept minimal, factual records, Arnold assiduously recorded letters received from, and sent to, his brothers.[272] Such actions were a means of imposing order over troubling emotions.[273] Similarly, the thirst for information led to siblings demanding and supplying detailed accounts of daily routines and environments, almost turning letters into quasi-diaries.[274]

Jessica Meyer suggests that a key difference between letters and diaries is the rarity with which home appears in the latter.[275] Offsetting this viewpoint are journal entries recording the receipt of family correspondence, and key dates such as birthdays and anniversaries. Thoughts of home and siblings crept into the most factual of diaries. The war diaries of Edith Appleton focus predominantly on her experiences as a nursing sister in northern France. She meticulously began the entries falling on her siblings' birthdays by wishing them 'many happies'.[276] A different pen indicates that Signaller Henry Allot marked up his sibling birthdays in advance, ensuring that he did not forget to send a celebratory letter or card.[277]

Absences in archival and edited collections may be the result of familial sensitivities or a view that domestic matters did not fit into a war narrative of perceived wider public interest. Other omissions are less clear cut. The extensive familial correspondence of William Stoddart includes letters sent and received by his parents and cousins. Despite his writing to his mother, father and sister Bertha 'in turn', the letters to Bertha are missing, indicating that these were preserved, or perhaps disposed of, separately.[278] Without any context, we are left to surmise why there are gaps or omissions in collections. The preservation or archiving of the single 'last letter home' of a soldier-brother is understandable, comparable, perhaps, to the Imperial War Museum's project to collect and display photographs of the fallen.[279] Some families retained originals, while sharing individual stories with a wider audience. Edited collections deny us the object's materiality, omitting vital signs that are of interest to historians of the emotions and the family – not only intimate family matters but also paratexts indicating emotional states such as lapses in routines, abrupt changes of subjects, slips of the pen, crossings-out, underlinings, postscripts, doodles, changes in handwriting

and sign-offs and multiple kisses.[280] The materiality of letters offers clues as to their meaningfulness to recipients. These physical artefacts, Martha Hanna asserts, fostered intimacy by evoking the palpable presence of the writer.[281] Deep creases are poignant indicators of how letters were poured over to extract precious information about loved ones. John Skellern wrote a brief, one-page letter to his wounded brother Isaac.[282] The deep scores along the fold lines indicate that this was much read by Isaac, who remained in hospital until his medical discharge just under a year later.

Preserving and editing letters were acts of emotional labour and memory keeping. Joe Miller undertook the task of transcribing and annotating the thirty-one letters sent home by his brother William, as an avuncular act of memory-keeping for his nephews, perpetuating his brother's war story.[283] Relational bias was created not only by authorship but also by choice of content. When writing his memoir of the 'rich and strenuous' life of his son Paul, Harry Jones, editor of the *Weekly Sun*, included over eighty edited letters written by Paul. Eight of these were addressed to Paul's younger brother, Harry Victor, who, like Paul before him, was a pupil at Dulwich.[284] Jones senior wove this correspondence into his patriotic narrative of the war's influence on the mind of a public-school boy. The volume starts and ends with a letter sent to Harry Victor. Through this authorial device, the ultimate sacrifice made by Paul is seen to exert an inspirational pull on his younger sibling.

Personal papers and narratives offer information about material and commemorative objects that is otherwise hidden from the historical record. VAD Olive Dent recorded the subjects of the three photographs that fell out of a patient's paybook: his parents in their Sunday best; his 'girl', a munitions worker; and an elder brother, a gunner.[285] Sibling letters record the exchange of souvenirs, postcards and photographs between siblings. Images provoked emotional reactions. Thanking his younger brother, Ged, for sending him a portrait of himself in uniform, Reginald Harvey added his fervent wish that 'this murderous business' be over before Ged reached the age of nineteen, thence becoming eligible for overseas service.[286] Pictorial representations took on a poignancy when used to record the graves of dead siblings. Uncertain, Douglas Heaton verified that the cross on the photograph sent to him by his mother appeared to mark his brother's grave.[287]

A letter from home, stated Private Tom Povey, ‘is as good as a parcel’. Wanting to ensure a regular supply, Povey asked his working-class siblings to stagger their letter writing so that he received mail on separate days.[288] Soldiers were avid letter writers, an activity facilitated by the immense postal infrastructure. Previous conflicts highlighted the role of letter writing in maintaining morale.[289] The Army Post Office Corps, a special reserve unit of the Royal Engineers, was mobilised within days of the outbreak of war in August 1914.[290] Over 12.5 million letters a week were sent home, and ‘for practically every letter sent to the front a letter came home’. The level of parcels sent out to the front was prodigious, peaking in the four weeks prior to Christmas 1916 with 4,600,000 dispatched to the British Expeditionary Force alone.[291] Standard multi-choice field postcards offered time-pressed, wounded or illiterate men the opportunity to disclose essential news about their wellbeing. Millions were sent, particularly after battle. Men often went into perilous situations with one prepared in advance.[292] Commentators have dismissed these forms as prosaic, providing little information apart from ‘signs of life’, and have overlooked their emotional value for recipients which is suggested by their ubiquitous presence in the archives.[293]

Censorship rules prohibiting information about logistics and details of military action bound those serving in the ranks. In practice, the administration of censorship was patchy at best. Officers, trusted to censor themselves, frequently abused this privilege. Families drew up ‘codes’ to signpost the whereabouts of fighting men. Scrutiny wavered under the sheer volume of post and the uneven exercise of subjective judgement. Consequently, letters home contained candid reports about combatants’ experiences.[294] More impactful than official censorship were emotional conventions bounding the extent to which combatants shared or concealed the realities of warfare.[295]

While not specifically banned as a practice by army regulations, serving men were prohibited from keeping any information on them that might assist the enemy if they were captured. Combatants like Private Arthur Wrench, determined to capture their experiences, resorted to writing clandestinely and using abbreviations intelligible only to themselves. Portable and inconspicuous pocket diaries are prevalent in the archives, a practical solution for many wanting to keep their kit-bag’s weight to a minimum. Established in 1896, Charles Letts the stationers were quick to

capitalise on this new market. In 1914 they introduced a new addition to their range for 1915. The Soldier's Own Diary came complete with an English–French phrasebook, for the cost of one shilling. Two years later the company collaborated with the British Red Cross to produce a diary aimed at nurses and VADs.[296] The compressed form of these diaries in turn shaped diary entries. The condensing information into the small space allocated to each day lent itself to concision and the repetition of information such as the weather.

Writing letters is a relational act, a vital means of articulating and maintaining relationships at a distance.[297] Comprehending the essence of these ties requires attention to be paid to the writer's age, gender, his or her place and role within the home and the intended recipient and wider readership. Often seeing only one side of the conversation, we can surmise the questions or concerns prompting specific responses. Family members poured over letters, alive to shifts in tone. Sustained correspondence took place between brothers and these letters were greatly appreciated. Jack Tavernor wrote at least every three to four days to his brother Will. Even when circumstances made this difficult, he strove to write at 'every possible chance'.[298] Letters were private spaces where brothers exchanged confidences. As will be seen in Chapter 3, they provided a space where brothers shared their emotional response to their wartime experiences. Regular correspondence did not alleviate the wearing anxiety experienced on both fronts. Speaking of the average four-day delay in the receipt of letters from the Western Front, Vera Brittain, the chronicler of sibling grief and anxiety, observed that this was ample time for loved ones to die 'over and over again'.[299]

Conditions of military service were often unconducive to letter writing. Occasionally correspondence was interrupted by a shortage of writing material. Kit-bags could not accommodate non-essential supplies. Men resorted to writing on scraps or borrowed sheets of paper.[300] More frequently, communications were disrupted by periods of active combat. Sam Goodman constantly reassured his older brother Abe that the absence of letters did not signify bad news but reflected the 'utter impossibility' of writing home. In December 1916 he cautioned his brother not to be anxious. It was almost impossible to get letters through his part of the line, formed of 'shell-holes linked together'.[301] John Pearce appreciated that news reports of fighting would arouse anxiety. He was swift to scribble a

note to confirm that he was ‘safe and well’ despite things being ‘all upside down’ after the Germans launched their spring offensive in 1918.[302] Communicating by letter, with sometimes unpredictable delays, led to sibling misunderstandings. The thirty-seven letters and postcards sent home by Sapper Jim Sams to his sister Maud in Hackney represented a weekly ritual; both had a set day for writing. Any disruptions caused ‘upset’ to Jim, reliant as he was on this link to home. After one three-week gap, he wrote apologising, troubled that his sister was annoyed by his request that she should write to their brother, Tom,

> Is there anything wrong at home if so please let me know. I hope you have not got offended … if so please put it on one side and forget it, I almost wish that I had never wrote it has it seem [sic] if he has forgotten me for I have not heard from him for a month.[303]

The routine of correspondence, the writing down of the experiences of trench combat, could be onerous for serving men. After six months’ active service, Bertram Evers was ‘in no mood for letter writing’. It was not that he was depressed, he assured his brother, rather that ‘letter writing is one of those acts of peace & quiet not of jumble & strife’.[304] Appreciating the weight of this expectation, brothers alleviated this, telling siblings that they were not obliged to write or reply to letters. In this respect, this study disagrees with Jenny Hartley’s assertion that such statements show the low expectations of men as letter writers.[305] Rather, it was an appreciation of the difficulties of maintaining regular patterns of correspondence in the midst of battle or placing an additional burden on combatants during periods of respite. Quiescence, Annette Atkins observes, was characteristic of sibling relationships, with intimacy readily restored when contact was resumed.[306] When family information was being relayed by other family members, it was harder to find newsworthy items to fill letters.[307] As one of the functions of wartime letter writing was to dispel the anxieties of loved ones waiting for news at home, by obviating the need to respond brothers lifted this particular wartime duty.

Sibling confidences

Reading letters was widely understood to be a communal practice.[308] In the absence of reciprocal voices within the correspondence, practices of sharing offer valuable insight into the emotional reach of missives. The personal

papers of Edwin and Tom Alcock shows the seriousness with which this was undertaken. Annotations mark the letters read by Edwin's twin brother, Harold, and a list of extended recipients recorded on each envelope, ensuring that any disruptions to their efficient circulation were noted.[309] Siblings addressed sections of letters to specific family members or explicitly asked for certain news to be disseminated or withheld. About to be sent over to France, Tom Povey asked his sister to withhold this information from Ma.[310] Reviewing patterns of self-censorship in the familial community of emotion reveals the elaborate interplay of intra-familial support and protection. Significantly, we see how the epistolary 'self' presented to the communal family differed from that appearing in letters addressed to specific correspondents. Martha Hanna states that combatants endured the miseries of trench warfare precisely because they wanted to protect their womenfolk, especially mothers, from its full brutality.[311] Siblings were more likely to receive 'uncensored' correspondence. Withholding distressing information from parents was a practice rooted in childhood. When Jack Haldane's arm was broken during a bullying incident at Eton, his sister contrived with him to conceal the circumstances of his injury. Under the cover of manly behaviour, siblings of both sexes assimilated an emotional code of restraint and deception.[312]

The view that sisters were the most common recipients of graphic accounts of combat fails to specifically address the content of letters sent to brothers, reinforcing the inherent gender bias of archival material mentioned earlier.[313] Analysis of brother–brother correspondence demonstrates that letters served as an outlet for frank portrayals of trench warfare. After his promotion to sergeant, Alec Mudie wrote a postcard to his younger brother, the manager of a public house in London. His vivid account of conditions is unsparing in its brevity:

> The weather out here is awful snow hail rain & *MUD*. In the trenches we get smothered from head to foot with wet or frozen mud. At one lot I had 18 inches of water with 1½ inches of ice on top … I was hit on the head with a small piece of shell but it only raised a big bump and gave me a headache.[314]

Comparing this to a letter sent by a fellow Londoner, Arthur Hubbard, to his sisters, we see a similar approach to relaying the grim realities of trench life:

> I shall imagine I am in heaven when I get home, what a treat it will be to feel nice and clean, at present it is up to your neck in mud which all helps to make you feel miserable.

Apologising for his frankness, Hubbard is disinclined to tell his siblings 'a pack of lies', believing that if the truth were told more often the war would be over sooner.[315]

Mothers were singled out as requiring particular protection from more gruesome details of modern warfare and the imminence of combat. Trench warfare, Major Sidney Baker told his brother, is 'one long degradation'. Unsparing in his account of assisting casualties, he added that 'this is hardly a letter to show mother. I think she is worrying more this time than before.'[316] Brothers reinforced this convention. In September 1916, Harold Round informed his mother of his part in 'a colossal push' the next day.[317] His older brother, Murray, rebuked him for this 'unwise' missive. Returning home on leave he found 'everybody in a nervous & worried state'. Murray stepped in to provide guidance, advising his brother that it was preferable 'to mention these things after you have finished the show'.[318] Siblings did not share sensibilities over the conveyance of war news. Charles Gee was annoyed over his brother's 'lurid' descriptions of his experiences on the Somme. In his view, these letters drove their ailing mother 'off her rocker'; 'I mean one oughtn't to write them', he added.[319] With reports of offensives appearing in the national and regional press and circulated via informal networks, the effectiveness of such strictures was limited. At times of high familial anxiety over men's wellbeing, the frequency of correspondence intensified amid efforts to sate the desire for 'hard news' concerning loved ones. The obligation of shielding selected family members burdened both combatant and non-combatant brothers. Many felt obliged to write what Kennard Bliss termed 'some sort of "cheer O!" stuff', whereas in reality, as he confided to his brother, 'I tremble at the knees "from morn to dewy eve"'.[320] Siblings became co-conspirators in these acts of concealment, highlighting the need to look beyond the binary of recipient and sender, to explore the wider relational acts of duty and obligation threaded through these communications.

Brothers and sisters took care to protect shared confidences. In May 1917, Tom King informed his brother, Alf, that he had not heard from his girlfriend, Flossie, 'for ages'. If he failed to return, Alf should preserve his privacy by destroying Flossie's letters to him.[321] The Falk brothers kept secrets from their parents, one letter hinting at franker communications

unsuitable for wider dissemination. Losing track of Geoff's school holidays, Cecil had sent one 'unreadable' letter. Apologising for his thoughtlessness, Cecil promised to 'bear in mind your point i.e. careful letters in holidays & say what I like in term'.[322] Nurse Kate Luard expected her letters to be circulated among her ten surviving adult siblings, elderly widowed father, neighbourhood friends and wider family. Her sisters Daisy and Nettie spent hours happily reading, copying and sending out her letters and cards. Hence, Luard carefully earmarked those intended for the 'inner circle' of her most trusted sisters.[323] Even within this tight-knit grouping, there was a layering of confidences. One letter, in which Kate spoke of an RAMC major, 'the love of her life', was preserved for the eyes of her sister Georgina only.[324] Such markings demonstrate a level of familial trust; Luard's distant requests for privacy were respected within the family household.

Where direct correspondence between brothers proved difficult, siblings demonstrated the closeness of their brotherly ties by frequent references to brothers in family letters. For those conscientious objectors sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour for refusing to submit to army regulations, letters home were heavily censored and restricted to one per month.[325] Despite this, and the length restrictions imposed by the regulation format, men endeavoured to express fraternal concern. Percy Wall, writing from Wormwood Scrubs, posed a number of questions that he was 'longing' to ask, all relating to his younger brother Dick, serving as a sergeant in the 8th Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry.[326] Percy's hunger for news was more than polite convention. The Wall brothers adopted differing attitudes to military service. Percy's objection to the war was in line with the pacifist views of his parents. Dick determined to follow the example of his peers when the time came for him to be conscripted. Regardless of this fundamental divergence in attitudes towards the war, Percy continued to demonstrate his ongoing concern for his sibling. The few surviving letters from Dick to Percy show how brotherly ties transcended barriers of language and divergent political views. Recovering in a rest camp after a 'pretty bad' fever, Dick signed off 'your ever affectionate brother', with ten kisses scrawled at the bottom of the page.[327] Even in these most trying of circumstances, brothers strove to demonstrate affection for each other.

Memoirs and memorials

Sibling memoirs and written memorials assume many forms: memorial books; published and unpublished memoirs; dedicated sections in autobiographical and semi-autobiographical works; and poetry. War memoirs often present the war as a discontinuity in the author's life – a trait compounded by the temporal framing of the war years and consequent omission of early family or post-war life. This device enabled veterans to ring-fence an episode over which they had little or no control. Another distancing tendency led some siblings to turn to autobiographical fiction rather than a factual narrative.[328] Not all memoirs can be categorised as reflective works. Many appeared during the war or shortly after its end, falling outside of the 'old self looking back' model.[329] Fraternal memoirs form a significant sub-genre of these works, the lives under reflection being grounded in childhood and youth.[330] Intrinsic to the writing of such works was the knowledge that the 'first volume' of their brothers' lives would never have a second or third.[331]

Jens Brockmeier adopts the term 'thick description' to explain the 'mishmash of experiences – past, present, possible, and anticipated' that must be navigated during the autobiographical process.[332] This process of remembering – the ordering of images, stories and emotions, and their placement within narratives – is shaped and extended by a network of meanings including the familial, the cultural, the economic, the social and the historical.[333] The memoirs considered here were all written in the twentieth century, which, as Meyer observes, represents a relatively short time-span within which to consider shifts in masculinity. Retrospective accounts enabled men to draw on the 'common threads of cultural understanding' of both warfare and masculinity to define both their brothers' and their own identities as soldiers, as brothers and as men.[334] Alongside the valorisation of the soldier and the masculine norms of dutiful sons and breadwinning husbands, fraternal narratives allow us to add a further masculine discourse built around the loved and loving.

The reflective quality of life-writing, argues Strange, enabled adult children to impose affective frameworks on mundane features of their past, renegotiating the dynamics of relationships.[335] Sibling memoirs reinterpret childhood practices when framing bonds with brothers and sisters. Within these fragmented discourses of grief, we see snapshots of a short-lived life,

enlivened by particular episodes plucked from everyday life. Wartime deaths located the life of one of the sibling unit within the temporal boundary of the Great War and the preceding years. The element of traumatic remembering occasioned by wartime deaths complicated this task as siblings passed life milestones and anniversaries overshadowed by the absence of a loved one. Anger, guilt and grief influenced their choices when recording their own and their siblings' life stories. As discussed in Chapter 7, clues can be found in the structure of memoirs, in dedications and footnotes and in the naming of chapters. Some memoirs follow the chronology of a life, some the chronology of the war, and in some the two merge, with a wartime death ending the life being told.[336]

The inclusion of the trivial forces the reader into the role of eavesdropper on matters 'too personal to witness'.[337] Yet sibling memorial-keeping inevitably inhabits this terrain, vesting trivial matters with greater emotional intensity as fragments of a brief life are desperately captured before they fade into the recesses of memory. The routine nature of sibling practice vested the traits and behaviours that stood out with especial meaning. Staking their claims to intimate knowledge of their subjects, siblings' interpretive labour was an active form of memory keeping. Their 'interlocutory' role was similar to that of the soldier-poets, inhabiting the no man's land between the combatant dead and the mourning communities of the living.[338] The absence of close friends able to flesh out details of men's personalities and daily lives increased the difficulty of capturing memories for surviving siblings. This dilemma influenced Virginia Woolf's generational critique of Edward Marsh's 1918 memoir of Rupert Brooke. With so many of Brooke's contemporaries killed in combat, the picture produced by the older Marsh was 'inevitably incomplete'.[339]

Memorial books or 'memoirs to the dead' were ubiquitous during the war years.[340] This was not, as Victoria Stewart believes, a form of 'controlled forgetting'. The amateur status of authors, combined with the semi-public nature of these works, often privately published and circulated within an intimate circle of family and friends, has consigned them to a genre of minor interest. Bette London advocates their significance as sources for understanding both the culture of remembrance and the emotional lives of individuals.[341] People often turn intuitively to writing as a way of confronting and surviving trauma.[342] Wartime experiences stirred the Welsh author and nationalist Kate Roberts to write. 'Death,' she explained, 'pulls

the scales off one's eyes.'[343] Roberts's trajectory fits into Sharon Ouditt's argument that the war created an enabling space for women 'to work, think and practise as artists'.[344] London's suggestion that memorial books provided women with a means of entering the public war discourse is more problematic, given the visible presence of women in commemorations. There is a stronger case to be made that grieving men were excluded from this discourse. Untold or borderline stories are better understood by a focus on how and why personal stories are recalled and told.[345] Ouditt's 'othering' of the VADs or munionettes could equally be the 'other' of the male non-combatant or the grieving soldier-brother.

There were two spikes in the publication of memoirs written by former combatants. The first raft of 'disillusionment memoirs' appeared in the years 1928–31. In the 1960s, when approximately two million veterans were still alive, fiftieth-anniversary commemorations generated renewed interest in the Great War, spurring a further boom of publications and initiatives to preserve the voices of surviving veterans.[346] As a consequence, the memories of a broad range of wartime experiences have appeared in publication.[347] The perception that memoirs are unrepresentative, biased towards the 'exceptional' or the elite, is challenged by the democratisation of memoir publishing. An undiminished fascination with the war, combined with a burgeoning appetite for family history and the lived experience of war, led to men and women of all classes (and their families) regarding their war experience as exceptional and worth recording.[348] This time-frame encompasses two 'memory booms'. The first followed the Armistice and was symbolised by a wave of war memorials and services.[349] The Imperial War Museum records over 80,000 memorials in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, transforming urban landscapes into a 'testimonial tract' and imposing a 'culture of remembrance' on urban and rural populations.[350] The second 'boom' originated in the 1990s with the cultural and intellectual investigation of trauma in communities and individuals affected by the Second World War and later conflicts.[351] From the Great War's fiftieth anniversary in the 1960s onwards, each decade of the twentieth century marked the anniversary of battles of national significance, the war's commencement and the Armistice. Accompanying this was renewed public reverence for the surviving veterans and acknowledgement that their numbers were dwindling each year,

culminating in the death of Harry Patch, known as 'The Last Fighting Tommy', on 25 July 2009.[352]

Winter emphasises the importance of the demographic for the transmission of memories; the 1960s and 1970s also marked the age when many surviving veterans and their younger siblings became grandparents. This link between the old and their young grandchildren 'is so central to the concept of memory that its significance may have simply passed us by' and contributed to family war stories and myths becoming embedded in the collective memory by their inclusion in histories, fiction, exhibitions and museums.[353] It is useful to widen our definition of 'generations' to include nephews and nieces, a category of family relationships frequently overlooked, yet carrying fraternal responsibilities for surviving brothers. *My Dear Ralph* (1994), the edited collection of the wartime letters of the Baines family, was initially undertaken by the daughter of Keenie Baines, who inherited Ralph's exercise books. Together with the surviving Baines siblings and her cousins, Diana Swarbrick re-edited Ralph's original 'painstaking' act of familial curation. After Diana's death, her brother saw the project through to completion.[354]

Fred Lloyd, the youngest in a family of sixteen, joined the army with his brothers Tom and Bill. Reflecting on their 'terrible' wartime deaths, it was his brother Bill, just one year older, whom he missed the most. 'We grew up together. We played together and went to school together. Everything we did, we did together.'[355] Grief for his lost sibling and their anticipated future growing old together replaced his childhood companion. Such fraternal stories and acts of memory keeping are embedded in letters, diaries, memoirs, interviews and fictionalised accounts. Vital signifiers of sibling 'love', they illustrate the range of support, comfort and protection provided to combatants by their brothers and sisters.

Notes

1 Memoir, William Percy Campbell, IWM 73/37/1.

2 The privileging of the emotional bonds between soldiers in the literature has sidelined men's significant bonds with the home front. See, A. Gregory, *The Last Great War. British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 134.

3 V. H. Bedford, 'Sibling Research in Historical Perspective: The Discovery of a Forgotten Relationship', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 33:1 (1989), pp. 6–18; L. Davidoff, *Thicker than Water. Siblings and Their Relations 1780–1920* (Oxford, 2012), p. 1; A. Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations in Georgian England. Share and Share Alike* (Manchester, 2012), p. 56; D. P.

Irish, 'Sibling Interaction: A Neglected Area of Family Life Research', *Social Forces*, 42:3 (1964), pp. 279–288; R. Sanders, *Sibling Relationships: Theory and Issues for Practice* (Basingstoke, 2004), p. 1.

4 V. Sanders, *The Brother–Sister Culture in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (London, 2002); J. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars. Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge, 2004); A. Woollacott, 'Sisters and Brothers in Arms: Family, Class, and Gendering in World War I Britain', in M. Cooke and A. Woollacott (eds), *Gendering War Talk* (Princeton, 1993).

5 M. Roper, *The Secret Battle. Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester, 2009), p. 6.

6 Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, pp. 79–85.

7 M. Anderson, 'The Social Implications of Demographic Change', in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750–1950* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 39.

8 P. Cox, *Demography* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 355; P. Dewey, *War and Progress. Britain 1914–1945* (London, 1997), pp. 52–53.

9 Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, pp. 336–337.

10 As late as 1950, older people (aged eighty and over) had around eight ever-born siblings on average. The larger figures for average siblingship size compared to average family size can be explained by a number of reasons: a distortion caused by the relatively high proportion of childless households; calculations weighted towards larger families; and the fact that the number of living siblings was much smaller than the number of ever-born siblings. M. Murphy, 'Changes in Family and Kinship Networks Consequent on the Demographic Transitions in England and Wales', *Continuity and Change*, 25:1 (2010), pp. 125–126; Ibid., 'Long-Term Effects of the Demographic Transition on Family and Kinship Networks in Britain', *Population and Development Review*, 37:Supp (2011), p. 67.

11 N. Mitchison, *All Change Here. Girlhood and Marriage* (London, 1975); Ibid., *You May Well Ask. A Memoir 1920–1940* (London, 1986, 1979); D. Scarisbrick (ed.), *My Dear Ralph. Letters of a Family at War, 1914–1918* (London, 1994).

12 Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations in Georgian England*, p. 5.

13 Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*; A. Atkins, *We Grew Up Together. Brothers and Sisters in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago, 2001); Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations in Georgian England*; C. D. Hemphill, *Siblings. Brothers and Sisters in American History* (Oxford, 2011).

14 A. Harrison, *Three Brothers* (London, 1919), p. 70.

15 T. K. Hareven, 'The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change', *American Historical Review*, 96:1 (1991), pp. 95–124.

16 Three studies have focused on the role of siblings as agents of intergeneration change: Atkins, *We Grew Up Together*; Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations in Georgian England*; Hemphill, *Siblings*.

17 Ibid., pp. 8, 108–109.

18 Ibid., p. 4.

19 Pierre Bourdieu believes that the incorporation of a watershed traumatic event into everyday practice marks a particular generation as a significant social force. K. Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 57:3 (1963), p. 7; P. Bourdieu, '"Youth" Is Just a Word', in P. Bourdieu (ed.), *Sociology in Question* (London, 1980, 1993), pp. 94–102.

20 J. Edmunds and B. S. Turner, *Generations, Culture and Society* (Buckingham, 2002), p. 10.

21 D. Cannadine, 'War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain', in J. Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality* (London, 1981), pp. 199–201; J. Winter, 'Britain's "Lost Generation" of the First World War', *Population Studies*, 31:3 (1977), p. 465.

22 L. Ugolini, *Civvies. Middle-Class Men on the English Home Front, 1914–18* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 4–5.

M. W. Cannan, *Grey Ghosts and Voices* (Kineton, 1976), p. 75. The VAD, run under the
23 auspices of the Red Cross or the Order of St John of Jerusalem, was established in 1909 to provide volunteer support to the wounded in time of war.
24 Letter, 23 May 1916, A. E. Bendall, IWM 01/36/1.
25 J. Calder, *The Nine Lives of Naomi Mitchison* (London, 1997), p. 52.
26 A clear demarcation of the time of life when individuals might expect these stages to occur settled into a set pattern only in the 1960s and 1970s. M. Anderson, 'The Emergence of the Modern Life Cycle in Britain', *Social History*, 10:1 (1985), pp. 85–86; T. K. Hareven, 'Family Time and Historical Time', *Daedalus*, 106 (1977), pp. 60–62.
27 Letter, 20 February 1915, E. Heaton, IWM 03/29/1.
28 On 29 November 1915 the list of reserved occupations was extended to include 'bleaching, dyeing, calico printing and textile finishing trades'. *The Times*, 20 December 1915.
29 Postcard, n.d., 1915, F. Hammerton, IWM 08/95/1.
30 Friends Roland Leighton, Edmund Brittain and Victor Richardson were branded the 'Three Musketeers' by Roland's mother; the offspring of the aristocratic friendship group 'the Souls' called themselves 'The Corrupt Coterie'. V. Brittain, *Testament of Youth. An Autobiographical Story of the Years 1900–1925* (London, 1933, 1978), p. 231; A. Powell, *Bim. A Tribute to the Honourable Edward Wyndhamtennant, Lieutenant, 4th Battalion Grenadier Guards 1897–1916* (Salisbury, 1990), p. 20; A. Lambert, *Unquiet Souls: The Indian Summer of the British Aristocracy, 1880–1918* (London, 1984).
31 Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, p. 445.
32 The emphasis in this, and all other direct quotes throughout, is as in the original, unless otherwise stated. Letter, 26 June 1917, M. F. Foxell, IWM 11936.
33 Letter, 15 October 1916, F. Cocker, IWM 82/11/1.
34 Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, p. 495.
35 S. Ouditt, *Fighting Forces, Writing Women. Identity and Ideology in the First World War* (London, 1994), pp. 120–121; R. Holland, *The Lost Generation* (London, 1932); M. W. Cannan, *The Lonely Generation* (London, 1934).
36 T. Clewell, 'Consolation Refused: Virginia Woolf, the Great War, and Modernist Mourning', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 50 (2004), pp. 198–199.
37 Approximately 70 per cent of men in the British army were under thirty years old and 40 per cent were under twenty-four. Additionally, Richard van Emden has drawn attention to the significant number of underage volunteers. Roper, *The Secret Battle*, p. 5; J. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (Basingstoke, 1985), pp. 82–83; R. van Emden, *Boy Soldiers of the Great War* (London, 2005), pp. 367–374.
38 S. Grayzel and T. Proctor (eds), *Gender and the Great War* (Oxford, 2017), p. 5.
39 Diary entries 7 August 1914 and 2 September 1914, V. Brittain, *Chronicle of Youth. Great War Diary, 1913–1917*, ed. A. Bishop (London, 2002), pp. 89–90, 101.
40 Letter, n.d., T. Povey, IWM 08/147/1.
41 Letters, 4 January 1917 and 8 February 1917, in Scarisbrick, *My Dear Ralph*, pp. 75, 83.
42 Letters, 16 June 1917, 27 August 1917, in Ibid., pp. 110, 122–123.
43 Letter, 9 January 1916, in Ibid., p. 26.
44 Anthropologists have observed how initiation rites promoted traits of 'intense comradeship and egalitarianism' among neophytes. V. Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York, 1969), p. 95.
45 U. Frevert, *A Nation in Barracks. Conscription, Military Service and Civil Society in Modern Germany* (Oxford, 2004); L. Davidoff, 'The Family in Britain', in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750–1950* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 71–130.
46 Childers to Sir Frederick Roberts, cited by D. French, *Military Identities. The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People c.1870–2000* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 76–78.

47 A. Tattersall, IWM 07/40/1.
48 Lord Derby, a former mayor of Liverpool, was eager for the city to be among the first to raise one of the new volunteer battalions. Appealing for men to come forward, he coined the phrase a 'battalion of Pals', firmly cementing the association between service and comradeship within the public discourse. P. Simkins, *Kitchener's Army. The Raising of the New Armies 1914–1916* (Manchester, 1988), pp. 82–84, 100; *Liverpool Echo*, 27 August 1914, 29 August 1914.
49 Simkins, *Kitchener's Army*, pp. 138–146.
50 *Preston Herald*, 9 September 1914.
51 Paragraph 333(iv) of the King's Regulations contained a provision enabling young brothers to ask permission to be transferred subject to the agreement of both siblings. If permission was initially refused, an appeal could be made to the General Officer Commanding in Chief, who had authority to transfer either the elder or younger brother to the other's unit. War Office, *The King's Regulations and Orders for the Army. 1912; Reprinted with Amendments Published in Army Orders up to 1st August, 1914* (London, 1916), p. 60.
52 Family Life and Work Experience survey (FLWE) 2000/098. Paul Thompson and Trevor Lummis' FLWE, a qualitative survey of Edwardian family and working life in England, Wales and Scotland, was conducted in the 1970s on a cross-national sample of 222 men and 231 women born between 1870 and 1908. The study asked specific questions about the number and ages of siblings, sibling-related chores and shared spaces, how parents expected siblings to behave towards each other, and whether a close relationship was enjoyed with one sibling in particular. Respondent details have been anonymised throughout.
53 Interview, R. Hill, IWM 10770.
54 Section 2(1) made provision for men to claim exemptions on the following grounds: engagement in work of national interest; serious hardship due to exceptional financial, domestic or business obligations; ill health or infirmity; and conscience. Military Service Act 1916.
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56 For a discussion of public attitudes to conscientious objectors, see: L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales about Men. Conceptions of Conscientious Objectors to Military Service During the First World War* (Manchester, 2009), pp. 89, 98–111; N. F. Gullace, *'The Blood of Our Sons'. Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War* (London, 2002), pp. 181–183.
57 M. Jones, *The Last Great Quest. Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 146–149.
58 The 'vast crowds' attending the national memorial service at St Pauls on 15 February 1913 mirrored those at services held throughout the country, matching those following the *Titanic* disaster on 14 April 1912: *Manchester Guardian*, 15 February 1913; Jones, *The Last Great Quest*, pp. 6, 103.
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60 K. Barclay, 'Review Article: The History of the Family: Structures, Power and Emotion', *Women's History Network Magazine*, 72 (2013), pp. 33–34; B. Caine (ed.), *Friendship: A History* (London, 2009), p. 223; Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, pp. 37–38.
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62 Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, p. 38.

63 S. Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship and the First World War* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 77, 31–33.
64 S. H. Newbolt, *Clifton Chapel, and Other School Poems* (London, 1908), pp. 5–7; J. Stallworthy (ed.), *The New Oxford Book of War Poetry* (Oxford, 2014), pp. xxvi–xxvii.
65 P. Donaldson, *Remembering the South African War. Britain and the Memory of the Anglo-Boer War, from 1899 to the Present* (Liverpool, 2013), pp. 96–97.
66 Accepted in British and Australian scholarship, Winter and Prost observe a different experience among Russian, German and Italian troops. D. Winter, *Death's Men. Soldiers of the Great War* (London, 1978), p. 45; B. Gammage, *The Broken Years. Australian Soldiers in the Great War* (Canberra, 1974), pp. 101–103; J. Winter and A. Prost, *The Great War in History. Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2014), pp. 94–96.
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68 E. Madigan, *Faith under Fire. Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War* (London, 2011); Michael Snape presents a counter-argument to this perspective: M. Snape, *God and the British Soldier. Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars* (Abingdon, 2005).
69 A. Marrin, *The Last Crusade. The Church of England in the First World War* (Durham, NC, 1974), pp. 184–186.
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72 Barbara Caine provides an overview of the use of brotherhood as a troop in the socialist movement. H. Caine, *Our Girls: Their Work for the War* (London, 1916), p. 255; T. C. Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience. A History of the No-Conscription Fellowship* (Arkansas, 1981), pp. 44, 231.
73 Caine, *Our Girls*.
74 J. Lee, 'Sisterhood at the Front: Friendship, Comradeship, and the Feminine Appropriation of Military Heroism among World War I First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY)', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 31 (2008), p. 24; D. Condell and J. Liddiard, *Working for Victory? Images of Women in the First World War, 1914–1918* (London, 1987), p. 49.
75 Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, p. 35.
76 Hemphill, *Siblings*, p. 6.
77 S. Das, *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 111.
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82 Mitchison, *All Change Here*, p. 106.
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84 Interview, J. Maxwell-Wedderburn, IWM 9146.

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86 Hareven, 'Family Time and Historical Time', p. 62.
87 Anderson, 'The Social Implications of Demographic Change', pp. 29–32.
88 C. Graves, *The Bad Old Days* (London, 1951), p. 12.
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90 FLWE 2000/077.
91 FLWE 2000/427.
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96 FLWE 2000/134.
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98 Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations in Georgian England*, p. 38.
99 Harrison, *Three Brothers*, p. 41.
100 D. Kempson, 'Memory Keepers: A Narrative Study of Siblings Never Known', *Death Studies*, 34:8 (2010), p. 739.
101 Murphy, 'Changes in Family and Kinship Networks', p. 125.
102 Those born in 1921 attained the age of forty-one before their father died, whereas those born in 1946 would be 56 before both parents died. Anderson, 'The Emergence of the Modern Life Cycle in Britain', p. 76.
103 Ella Lethem, Liddle WW1/DF/074; G. Wells, Cadbury MS 117.
104 Diary, 2 July 1916, Foxell, IWM 11936.
105 Diary, 31 May 1917, Lethem, Liddle WW1/DF/074.
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107 P. Hamilton, *Three Years or the Duration. The Memoirs of a Munition Worker, 1914–1918* (London, 1978), pp. 109–111.
108 C. Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London* (London, 1902–1903); B. S. Rowntree, *Poverty. A Study of Town Life* (London, 1902); cited by, J. Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit. A Social History of Britain, 1870–1914* (Oxford, 1993), p. 65.
109 M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London, 1957), p. 77; C. Rosser and C. Harris, *The Family and Social Change. A Study of Family and Kinship in a South Wales Town* (London, 1965, 1983), pp. 164–165; A follow-up study to Rosser and Harris found that sibling proximity and contact had declined in the latter half of the twentieth century: N. Charles et al., 'The Family and Social Change Revisited', in R. Edwards (ed.), *Researching Families and Communities. Social and Generational Change* (London, 2008), p. 124; P. Townsend, *The Family Life of Old People: An Inquiry in East London* (London, 1957), pp. 104–105.
110 Harrison, *Three Brothers*, p. 77.
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113 King, *Family Men*; C. Langhamer, *The English in Love. The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution* (Oxford, 2013).
114 M. Rustin, 'Taking Account of Siblings – a View from Child Psychotherapy', *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 33:1 (2007), pp. 23, 34.
115 J-M. Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class, 1865–1914* (Cambridge, 2015), 15–16.
116 *OED Online*, date accessed: 5 December 2017.
117 For observations about the intensity of sister–brother wartime bonds in writings by female authors, see: K. Kennedy, '"A Tribute to My Brother": Women's Literature and Its Post-War Ghosts', *Journal of War & Culture Studies*, 8:1 (2015), pp. 7–23; Woollacott, 'Sisters and Brothers in Arms'; Sanders, *The Brother–Sister Culture*.
118 Woollacott, 'Sisters and Brothers in Arms', p. 131.
119 L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes. Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780–1850* (London, 1987), p. 350; Sanders, *The Brother–Sister Culture*, pp. 11–12.
120 Calder, *The Nine Lives of Naomi Mitchison*, p. 15.
121 Vera Brittain compared the hills around Buxton to the walls of a prison. Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, p. 56; Mitchison, *All Change Here*, pp. 42–49, 69.
122 For details of the FLWE see note 52.
123 FLWE 2000/105.
124 FLWE 2000/038.
125 FLWE 2000/030.
126 FLWE 2000/078.
127 FLWE 2000/283.
128 FLWE 2000/187.
129 An analysis undertaken by the author of over 460 interviews found that 66 per cent of respondents stated that they had a positive relationship with all their siblings, with only 5 per cent specifying a negative sibling bond. Some caution is necessary. As Irwin and Winterton observe, the secondary analysis of existing data sets requires the consideration of the wider context, including which questions were asked and how they were asked. S. Irwin and M. Winterton, *Qualitative Secondary Analysis. A Guide to Practice* (Leeds, 2012), p. 15; Ibid., *Debates in Qualitative Secondary Analysis. Critical Reflections* (Leeds, 2011), pp. 9–10.
130 H. Kelley, *Close Relationships* (New York, 1983), p. 38.
131 FLWE 2000/025.
132 S. Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham, NC, 2010), pp. 45–46.
133 E. Griffin, 'The Emotions of Motherhood: Love, Culture and Poverty in Victorian England', *American Historical Review*, 123 (2018), p. 74.
134 Diary, 12 December 1918, M. Gilbert, *Plough My Own Furrow: The Story of Lord Allen of Huntwood as Told through His Writings and Correspondence* (London, 1965), p. 127.
135 Bet-El, *Conscripts*, pp. 131, 143; Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 21; J. Meyer, *Men of War. Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (Basingstoke, 2009), p. 15; Roper, *The Secret Battle*, p. 6; Ibid., 'Nostalgia as an Emotional Experience in the Great War', *The Historical Journal*, 54:2 (2011), pp. 421–451.
136 Roper's analysis of 5,000 letters found that almost half (47.5 per cent) were addressed to the mother. Joy Damousi and Jenny Hartley observed a similar weighting. Roper, *The Secret Battle*, pp. 59–60; J. Damousi, *The Labour of Loss. Mourning, Memory, and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 61; J. Hartley, '"Letters Are *Everything* These Days": Mothers and Letters in the Second World War', in R. Earle (ed.), *Epistolary Selves* (Abingdon, 1999), pp. 183–195.
137 Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*; Meyer *Men of War*; Roper, *The Secret Battle*.

Letters, 21 January 1917, 31 May 1917, 2 June 1917, 4 June 1917, in Scarisbrick, *My Dear*
138 *Ralph*, pp. 77–79, 98–99.
139 This phrase is adapted from Roper's concept of 'mothering at a distance', Roper, *The Secret Battle*, p. 51.
140 Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, p. 116; J. Finch, *Familial Obligations and Social Change* (London, 1989), pp. 13–56; J. Fink, 'Care. Meanings, Identity and Morality', in J. Finch (ed.), *Care* (London, 2004), p. 117.
141 H. Graham, 'Caring: A Labour of Love', in J. Finch and D. Groves (eds), *A Labour of Love: Women, Work and Caring* (London, 1983), pp. 16–17.
142 J. Finch, 'Kinship as "Family"' in Contemporary Britain', in F. Ebtehaj et al. (eds), *Kinship Matters* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 293–306; J. Mitchell and J. Goody, 'Family or Familiarity?', in A. Bainham et al. (eds), *What Is a Parent?* (Oxford, 1999), p. 113; D. Morgan, *Family Connections. An Introduction to Family Studies* (London, 1996); Ibid., *Rethinking Family Practices* (Basingstoke, 2011); Monique Scheer also adopts a 'practice'-based approach in her discussion of how to historicise emotions. M. Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion', *History and Theory*, 51 (2012), pp. 199–200.
143 Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, p. 47.
144 Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, p. 110; P. Thompson and T. Lummis, *Family Life and Work Experience before 1918* (Colchester, 2009).
145 Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, p. 44.
146 D. Morgan, 'Locating "Family Practices"', *Sociological Research Online*, 16:4 (2011), p. 14; Carol Smart's complementary conceptualisation of 'personal life' overcomes the distinction between public and private spheres, which has traditionally regarded family life as separate from other social spaces. C. Smart, *Personal Life. New Directions in Sociological Thinking* (London, 2007), pp. 28–30.
147 H. Ross and J. Milgrim, 'Important Variables in Adult Sibling Relationships: A Qualitative Study', in M. E. Lamb and B. Sutton-Smith (eds), *Sibling Relationships* (Hillsdale, NJ, 1982), pp. 225, 228.
148 Bourne, 'The British Working Man in Arms', pp. 336, 341. The working class is not a homogeneous category, with place, in particular providing a key differential. S. Todd, *The People. The Rise and Fall of the Working Class, 1910–2010* (London, 2014), p. 12.
149 J-M. Strange, 'Fatherhood, Providing, and Attachment in Late Victorian and Edwardian Working-Class Families', *Historical Journal*, 55:4 (2012), pp. 18–20; D. Miller, *A Theory of Shopping* (London, 1998), pp. 73–110.
150 Cited by, H. Medick and D. W. Sabean, 'Interest and Emotion in Family and Kinship Studies: A Critique of Social History and Anthropology', in H. Medick and D. W. Sabean (eds), *Interest and Emotion* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 27.
151 Roper, *The Secret Battle*, pp. 164–165, 183.
152 Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class*, pp. 1007–1027.
153 L. Davidoff et al., *The Family Story. Blood, Contract and Intimacy, 1830–1960* (London, 1999), p. 5; Davidoff is referring to a subset of historical studies focusing on Victorian youth gangs: S. Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth 1889–1939* (Oxford, 1981); G. Pearson, *Hooligan. A History of Respectable Fears* (London, 1983); A. Davies, 'Youth Gangs, Masculinity and Violence in Late Victorian Manchester and Salford', *Journal of Social History*, 32:2 (1998), pp. 349–369; Ibid., 'Youth Gangs and Late Victorian Society', in B. Goldson (ed.), *Youth in Crisis? 'Gangs', Territoriality and Violence* (London, 2011), pp. 38–54.
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156 Atkins, *We Grew Up Together*, p. 14.
157 FLWE 2000/396.
158 FLWE 2000/123.
159 FLWE 2000/427.
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173 Letter, 15 May 1915, P. Puckle, Liddle WWI/WO/097.
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207 Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, p. 48.
208 Vallgårda et al. propose ‘emotional frontiers’ as a concept for exploring the competing or contradictory influences on children. Vallgårda et al., ‘Emotions’, pp. 21–25.
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218 Cook, ‘From Controlling Emotion to Expressing Feelings’, p. 9.
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240 P. Jalland, *Death in War and Peace. A History of Loss and Grief in England, 1914–1970* (Oxford, 2010), p. 124.
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248 J. Winter, *War beyond Words. Languages of Remembrance from the Great War to the Present* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 201–202.
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253 C. Steedman, ‘Enforced Narratives. Stories of Another Self’, in T. Cosslett et al. (eds), *Feminism and Autobiography* (London, 2000), pp. 21–38.
254 L. Noakes, *War and the British. Gender, Memory and National Identity* (London, 1998), p. 35.
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258 Lockwood, WYAS KC329.

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262 Letters, R. H. Turner, IWM 22208.
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1

Brothering

To celebrate his eighteenth birthday, Geoff Falk planned to visit relatives in Liverpool. Clouding his anticipated enjoyment was his 'unhappiness' that his older brother, Cecil, could not share the day with him. Cecil, an officer serving on the Balkan front, reassured his sibling that there was no need to rein in his pleasure. Such gestures were unnecessary, given his confidence in the enduring strength of their bond. 'You & I miss one another very much,' he wrote, 'we have always been equals & always shall be.'[1] Other accounts too attest not only to the depth of brotherly bonds but also to their significance as loving relationships. Given the relative youth of serving men in the Great War, established ties to siblings held greater emotional salience. Close relationships among adult siblings can be traced back to their childhood experiences.[2] Patterns established in childhood and adolescence extended into wartime behaviours.[3] Brotherly relationships appear to have been significant, providing emotional and practical sustenance. By examining the personal narratives of men who had a close, affectionate bond with at least one male sibling, this chapter explores how men experienced and expressed brotherly love and brothering. Comparing pre-war childhood and wartime accounts of brotherly 'love' enables us to trace how emotional practices and values instilled at an early age continued into adulthood.

Not only a brother but a good friend

Accounts of close fraternal relationships often suffer from a double absence: the absence of appropriate language to describe these bonds and their relative rarity in autobiographical accounts. Some parents actively

discouraged children from wearing their hearts on their sleeves. When relating these non-romantic relationships, men rarely expressed their feelings explicitly in terms of love, struggling to find adequate words to demonstrate their affection. Sisters experienced a similar restraint, Naomi Haldane professing that her older brother Jack was 'the person I loved best – though I never formulated this'.[4] Absorption of family values did not make the expression of fraternal closeness less problematic for men and women. With a nod to respectability, the working-class parents of Sidney M. encouraged him to behave in a 'gentlemanly way' towards his four brothers and three sisters. Reviewing these bonds from the emotional landscape of the late 1960s, Sidney tentatively broached their emotional tenor. The siblings, he explained, had to 'sort of love each other'.[5] Claire Langhamer ably shows how the central years of the twentieth century were essential in fashioning the 'primacy of love' in romantic relationships.[6] Even after this language entered the discourse of intimacy, Sidney M. found it difficult to apply, without qualification, to his siblings. The 'stickiness' of values assimilated during childhood held fast when he reflected on familial bonds.

Despite these restraints, many men wrote openly about the closeness of their fraternal relationships. Regarding 'love' as the preserve of romantic or paternal relations, or simply as an alien or unmanly way to express their feelings, men typically used terms such as closeness, affection or friendship when describing fraternal ties.[7] James Naylor and his brother were 'very, very close'. Arthur Stapleton wrote of the 'deep bond of affection' between himself and his older brother.[8] Siblings of a similar age more often bonded through physical proximity and shared activities. Tom Denning, the future Master of the Rolls, and his brother Gordon, a mere twenty months his senior, 'did everything together'.[9] Friendship proved a natural motif to explain the essence of brotherly bonds. The nine-year age gap between Frank Lindley and his older brother Harry did not prevent them from becoming inseparable 'pals' who used 'to go all over together' when Harry was home on leave.[10] Other brothers expressed their closeness through their solidarity as a unit or a tight-knit group. The six brothers of one working-class household were 'all for each other'.[11]

Within large families, closeness sometimes appeared as a sub-grouping within the sibling hierarchy. Adverse living conditions forged bonds. The scourge of living with a drunk father who beat his children brought about a

particularly close bond between Herbert and Alice B., who laughed and cried together. This created a distinct familial split, as Alice believed that the three younger children never suffered the same abusive treatment.[12] Perspectives on these dynamics depended on men and women's place in the birth order. John E. disagreed with his sister's belief that the three eldest of their family of seven shared the closest bond. Rather, the experiences of war created an artificial division, only the older siblings knowing a childhood before wartime shortages and rationing.[13] The durability of particular sibling relationships provided further testimony as to their strength. A building labourer and his second-eldest brother sustained their 'long friendship' all their lives.[14] The strong bond of togetherness shaped by parental expectation supported Emily Y. and her elder sister throughout distinct life stages. They remained the 'best of friends' through their respective courtships and marriages, and the births of their children.[15] Expectations that sibling relationships would endure throughout individuals' lives were thus cemented in childhood, helping to explain the special nature of fraternal loss explored in Chapters 5 and 6.

Occasionally, fraternal affection was expressed with unexpected openness. After spending a 'delightful' day in London with his brother on 24 May 1914, Bruce Cummings (writing under the nom de plume W. N. P. Barbellion) was expansive in his description of the 'unassailable love' he held for his brother:

> He is the most delightful creature and I love him more than anyone else in the whole world. There is an almost feminine tenderness in my love … it's like the law of gravity, you cannot dispute it, it underlies our existence, it is the air we breathe.[16]

Cummings acknowledges manly codes of affection within this description, placing it on the boundary of masculine/feminine expressions of emotion. He balances this by emphasising the innate naturalness of their love. Outsiders, not privy to the intricacies of this specific bond, might not appreciate their mutual affection, as the brothers enjoyed testing each other to the point where it appeared they were quarrelling bitterly. The juxtaposition between the 'almost feminine' interior feelings Cummings held for his brother, as compared with their public verbal jousting, shows the complexity of understanding intimate fraternal bonds.

Affection for siblings tipped over into hero worship. Growing up in Harrogate, the siblings of Ronald W. regarded him 'as something

wonderful'. As the eldest of five, he performed his role as 'Big Brother' by doling out pocket money to his much younger siblings.[17] The distance of age and employment conferred a quality of wonder that closer proximity in age often dissolved. Suzie F. drew a correlation between the provision of family treats and her fondness for her younger brother Sammy. When Sammy came home on leave, he was their 'hero', not for his war service but for his largesse in giving his siblings 'pennies to spend' and buying fruit and chestnuts to roast on the fire.[18] The sibling 'heroism' on display in these accounts is far removed from the typical masculine role models of military heroism or familial breadwinning. Providing treats, an injection of fun into family life, out of fairly meagre wages elevated these acts into particular acts of fraternal devotion.[19]

Parental counsel to children to get on, not to quarrel and to be friends was an essential part of establishing a 'happy' family life.[20] Parental disapproval of squabbling and fighting fed into men's understanding and description of fraternal relationships and may have contributed to the relative lack of negative accounts in men's narratives. As the son of one Yorkshire coal miner stated, there was 'no falling out' among the siblings.[21] Rather, a differentiation was made between run-of-the-mill tiffs and squabbles and prohibited 'fallings out'. Having each other's backs formed the core of sibling cohesion. Close ties were defined indirectly in terms of an absence of conflict or friction. For some, fighting was part of the rough and tumble of daily life. Arthur Stapleton would fight 'with all the fury of deadly antagonist' with his brother, but could not recall 'ever having any unkind or bitter thoughts' against him.[22] Joe Ackerley recalled his older brother Peter being 'fond and proud of me'. Their compatibility illustrated by the fact that they 'never quarrelled over anything'.[23] Such behaviours did not dilute the intellectual cut and thrust enjoyed by brothers and sisters. After his sibling's death, it was a sad 'comfort' to Gilbert Chesterton to remember that although perpetually arguing, the brothers 'never quarrelled'.[24]

There were limits to the acceptance of rough play as part and parcel of family life. Outright bullying was regarded as a breach of familial values and quoted as a reason for sibling rifts.[25] John K. presented a rare example of a sibling frankly admitting to bullying a younger brother. Going 'against all the rules', he was unfriendly and 'nasty' to his younger brother at prep and public school. It is unclear what 'rules' John is referring to. Although familial and official school norms would not have condoned such

behaviour, at this intersection with the community of his educational peers John may have felt obliged to display different character traits so as to distinguish himself from a 'weaker' sibling. One plausible catalyst was John's embarrassment at his sibling's visible distress at the station when leaving for school, compounding his fear that any association with similar displays of 'blubbing' might cause him further humiliation.[26] While the chivalric ethos of public schools emphasised fair play and team spirit, many memoirs attest to the misery of schooldays. Cheek-by-jowl living incubated bullying. Teachers turned a blind eye believing it to be part of boys' character building.[27] John not only contravened his family's values by acting in this way but also disregarded the fraternal model of his eldest brother, who had acted in a 'fatherly' way towards him at school.[28]

Siblings extended welcome security. Peter Ackerley protected his brother at Rossall School, determined to spare his sibling from his own experience of being held down, being spat at and having ink poured into his mouth.[29] Charles Gee experienced the old-fashioned bullying practices of 'roasting' and 'ragging' at Durham School. Later, he believed a combination of the war and his elder brother's influence as head of house, along with others of his peer group, helped to put an end to this 'real Tom Brown's schooldays stuff'.[30] The house or 'domus' of school life played an integral role in the 'hardening' of young boys.[31] As head of house, Gee's brother had the potential to shape what was deemed acceptable behaviour. Regardless of whether his claim can be substantiated, Gee places his brother among the generation of adolescents and young men decrying the sham of the public-school spirit and its fictional depiction in schoolboy literature. In 1917, Alec Waugh, older brother of the novelist Evelyn, published *The Loom of Youth*.[32] Based on his experiences at Sherborne, the book exposed the homosexuality, cheating and bullying that were rife in so many public schools.[33] Waugh was partially inspired by an earlier book by Arnold Lunn, advertised by its publisher as 'the most truthful book about school life ever published'. Lunn presented a similarly unsentimental view of life at Harrow, based on his school diaries.[34] A reformist mindset questioning the militaristic 'character factories' of the public schools was developing among their alumni in the early twentieth century.

Contraventions of familial or societal codes regarding good siblinghood resulted in negative expressions of fraternal relations. Drunkenness, with its long-standing correlation with 'unmanly' disreputability, was a disruptive

and abusive force within households. One son of a widowed farmer was regarded as the 'good boy' of the family as compared to his older brother, who drank.[35] Drinking not only depleted household income but potentially exposed other members to acts of aggression or abuse. Parental interventions were taken against lesser breaches of family codes. Believing his 'harum-scarum' son was a bad influence on his two younger brothers, an engineer father arranged an apprenticeship for him as a midshipman.[36] The removal of a malignant fraternal influence reinforced parental values. This seemingly draconian measure may have been prompted by the four-year engineering apprenticeships introduced by the reforming Selborne Scheme in 1902. Placing his wayward son in a disciplined environment where he would receive a guaranteed technical education would have seemed to be a pragmatic solution.

'I copied him in many ways'

Siblings were sometimes a more visible presence in the lives of brothers and sisters, able to promulgate parental and personal standards. Older siblings were helpful in mediating the norms of communities less familiar to their parents. This generational influence may explain the consistent assimilation of parental values across all classes, contributing to the commonalities among fighting men that have been observed by Roper.[37] Men from middle- and upper-class families more often equated these explicitly under the category of 'gentlemanly' behaviour.[38] The son of a Chester stockbroker recalled the values espoused by his parents as coming under the umbrella of courtesy, comprising 'cleanliness, honesty, decent manners, kindness'.[39] He attested to the positive influence of older brothers as role models and reinforcers of familial codes, stating, 'I think I learnt more from my older brothers about my behaviour as a boy'. Similarly, Peter E. described his elder brother when at Charterhouse as embodying the conforming characteristics of a 'perfect young English schoolboy', exemplified by athleticism, character and decorum.[40] Older brothers from all classes shouldered the responsibility of embodying correct values. In turn, young brothers sought to emulate the example set by their older siblings. Graham L. got on 'wonderfully well' with his older brother, who assisted him with his schoolwork and the labour examination he needed to

pass to leave school aged twelve. Consequently, Graham 'thought a good deal' of his brother and 'copied him in many ways'.[41] Brothers reciprocated the consideration shown by their male siblings by replicating their behaviours.

Ever conscious of their brotherly duty to enforce family values, some older brothers were meticulous in carrying them out. Whether this was done in a friendly or authoritarian manner depended on personality and the quirks of each brotherly bond. Apart from instilling standards in his younger brother, Cecil wanted Eric, his youngest brother, to obtain a scholarship to Repton public school, a achievement that would serve the dual purpose of showcasing academic prowess and alleviating the financial burden which the brothers' education placed on their father. To further this aim, Cecil meted out praise as well as rebukes. When Eric won two prizes at Heath Mount School, Cecil congratulated him on his 'excellent undertaking'. Regardless of this success, Cecil refused to let his sibling rest on his laurels, urging Eric to match the exacting standards achieved by his elder brothers. He concluded his letter, 'mind you become head of school before you leave'.[42] This carrot-and-stick approach to brothering illustrates the attention that fighting men attached to family values, finances and ambitions. The middle Falk brother, Geoff, ordinarily wrote affectionately to Eric. This did not prevent him from admonishing his sibling for irregular correspondence. Geoff expressed his irritation through his demands for a detailed response:

> I asked you a lot of questions in my last letter, but you have not answered them. Apparently Dr Stocks is not teaching you. Why is this? How many music teachers are there this term? & what is the organisation – group lessons or what? Do let me know.[43]

Apart from his inherent interest in his brother's activities, Geoff displayed his continued investment in school life. For some middle-class men with a more positive experience of their schooldays than those mentioned earlier, shared memories created a strong nostalgic bond with their younger brothers. Exchanges concerning former schoolmasters, houses, friends and sporting activities permeate their letters. Schools were active in promoting and sustaining these ties through newsletters, creating a thriving virtual community with their soldier-alumni.[44]

Parents relied on their combatant-sons to continue to perform their roles as advisors or reinforcers of parental values at a distance. Arthur Sadd

wrote a fourteen-page letter to his younger sister, Gladys, after she returned home, homesick, from a position in domestic service. Sharing his mother's and elder sister's dismay, Arthur does his utmost to convince Gladys to 'stick it out'. This was the second time Gladys had returned home. On this occasion Arthur reacted strongly after his mother forwarded a number of Gladys's letters, leveraging his own experience to reassure his sibling that the first month is the worst. Gradually, as he did, she would come to feel at 'Home'. Second, he appealed to her sense of duty, reminding Gladys that he had no choice but to '"stick it" & "stick it" again'. At length, Sadd compared Gladys's circumstances in a decent family with his own life, living and sleeping in wet trenches or cold billets, unable to dry his clothes and eating poor food:

> What would you think of being away from home under such conditions! Why kiddie you're in clover & bedside you'll often be able to get home when you want to as I did … Still if you still feels you must go home at xmas [sic] go by all means you may not be made of such tough stuff as I am.[45]

In his final retort, Arthur threw down a gauntlet to his sister, using his brotherly knowledge to pick away at her resistance to returning to her situation. The effort that Arthur makes to convince his sister of her obligation to persevere is considerable, even to the extent of using one of his 'precious green envelopes' to underline how seriously he took his fraternal responsibilities. Arthur utilises fraternal confidences as a means of displaying his emotional cognition of his younger sister's position and engendering her trust. Drawing on his own struggles, he tries to guide his sibling through a troublesome rite of passage.

Physical closeness

Ever since he could remember, Percy Cearns had shared the same room with his brother Fred.[46] They grew up in a family of thirteen in Plaistow, East London, and the potency of joint intimacy remained into their adult lives, giving them emotional sustenance during wartime. Percy described one companionable night which the siblings spent behind the front line. 'One groundsheet and Fred's overcoat and the hard ground' made a poor substitute for their bed in the cosiness of their East London home. Being so close to his brother, an embodied reminder of home life, brought tears to his

eyes. The shielding presence of his brother soothed Percy's restlessness: 'When I found his arm thrown round me as if protecting, imagine my feelings—I cannot describe them.'[47] Percy depicts what Das calls the 'transmission of the wonderful assurance of being alive' via the medium of touch.[48] Although the hand has been singled out as the most conscious point of contact between the individual and the surrounding world, the special intimacy of body-to-body contact cannot be overstated.[49] On their initial meeting, the Cearns brothers greeted each other with a hearty handshake. In slumber, they reverted to a remembered childhood embrace.

Sleeping spaces helped to form and reinforce fraternal bonds, proximity cementing a fundamental bodily familiarity.[50] Significantly, bodily contact is also a primary means of fostering loyalty, trust and unity within army units.[51] This motif was replicated in accounts of sisterhood, with women sharing beds until separated by work or marriage.[52] The family practice of sharing beds outlived childhood and became an engrained part of family memories. Growing up in the Rhondda Valley, Cadoc L. felt closest to Telor, his second-eldest brother. Integral to this was the physical intimacy of bed sharing, as he tried to explain:

> I used to think that [Telor] was my ideal … and I used to look up to him so much you know. And he used to care for me for a lot too … He would look after me you know … and he would – take care of me you see … And we slept together. Oh yes, we did. Oh indeed. That's right, yes, yes. That's right. Perhaps that was the reason.[53]

Cadoc's hesitations indicate the difficulty of expressing fraternal love. Sibling practices provided him with a shorthand for his sibling bond. Similarly, when explaining her closeness to her eldest sister, one domestic servant condensed it into their sharing a double bed.[54] Bed sharing was not restricted to infants and children. Roderick L. slept in the same bed as his older brother while they were still 'quite big lads', stopping only when his brother volunteered in 1914.[55]

Shared bedrooms and beds were domestic spaces where brothers and sisters slept, talked, read and played. Sharing was prevalent across all classes in the pre-war years.[56] Within rural and urban lower-middle- and working-class dwellings, overcrowding was an ineluctable feature of family living.[57] The habitual nature of sleeping with siblings made this an unremarkable feature of childhood. From the 1850s onwards, advice manuals exerted 'moral pressure' upon middle-class mothers to place the

correct amount of distance between themselves and their children.[58] As a result, the nursery and bedrooms became distinct spaces in upper- and middle-class households. The companionship and affinity between Irene Rathbone's semi-autobiographical siblings in *We That Were Young* is flagged up at the start of the novel. Jimmy Seddon still treated the former nursery, now his elder sister's sitting room, as though equally his.[59] Similarly, the war artist Paul Nash remembered the nurseries at the top of the family's Kensington house as being the happiest part of the household.[60] The private space of the bedroom fostered intimacy, and the routine of sharing bedtime stories and secrets carried on into adulthood. When Do Dodsworth returned home after an absence, she shared her sister Eve's bedroom for almost three weeks before returning to her own room, leaving her sister 'lonely again'.[61] Percy Cearns lay in bed at night, exchanging 'little confidences' with his brother, right up to the time Fred left for the battlefield.[62] Their room formed a retreat where they spent 'many hours alone'.[63] Empty beds and bedrooms later became a poignant reminder of brotherly loss. When Arthur Stapleton returned home, the 'joyous occasion' was tinged with grief. Moved to find his bedroom 'neat and tidy', Arthur was saddened that his brother would never share it with him again.[64]

Fraternal protection

Bodily weakness aroused brothers' protective instincts. Percy Cearns was a bit of a 'lame dog' as a youngster. The elder by only twenty-one months, his brother Fred referred to him as 'Young Percy' and kept a 'paternal eye' on him.[65] Fred's sympathy and caring manifested when he 'sheltered' Percy with his coat on the way to school when winter winds made Percy 'gasp for breath'. This attentiveness was mirrored on the front line when the two brothers met on a severely cold day. On taking leave, repeating well-rehearsed fraternal behaviours, Fred took great care in checking that Percy was 'warmly clad'.[66] During wartime, brothers took efforts to protect their siblings from a distance. Will Cearns, the second-eldest brother of the family of thirteen, sent Percy a body shield.[67] These 'life-saving waistcoats' were not universal issue.[68] Playing on familial anxieties, headlines for the Dayfield Body Shield manufactured by Whitfield Manufacturing Ltd claimed 'You Can Save His Life'. Stating that 25 per cent of casualties

would have been prevented by wearing the shield, one advert continued with the emotive strap-line: ‘The Life of Your Husband, Father, Brother, Son, or Friend is Worth 22/6’[69] (Figure 1). Similar adverts appeared almost weekly in the national press throughout 1915 and 1916.

It is unclear why Will purchased a shield for only one of his brothers. Possibly, Will felt greater concern for Percy, a habit developed in response to his younger sibling’s childhood frailties. Cost may have been a factor. Another major brand, the Chemico Body Shield, was marketed at £3 15s.[70] The average minimum wage was 16s 9d for a fifty-eight-hour week in 1914 (rising to 30s 6d for a fifty-two-hour basic working week in 1918), placing these ‘life-savers’ beyond the means of many families.[71] Will established a construction company in 1913, initially specialising in iron buildings, which suggests that affordability was less likely to have been a factor. Regardless of Will’s motives, Percy showed no compunction in following the tradition of hand-me-downs by passing this protective armour along to the brother who, in his eyes, was most in need of it. Percy later discovered that Fred had found it cumbersome and, breaking his promise to always use the shield, had passed it on to a friend.[72]

Figure 1 Advertisement for the Dayfield Body Shield.

Sibling solidarity protected men and women, sustaining the war effort by ensuring that they were fit and able to carry out their work. Working in munitions at the Park Royal TNT factory, Neasden, Kathleen Gilbert and her sister suffered the common side-effects of working with hazardous chemicals. Like other ‘canary girls’, jaundice turned their skin ‘yellow as a guinea’, and they suffered periods of ill-health. Long shifts, unventilated factories and noxious substances created an unhealthy environment for

munionettes.[73] A study of 1,326 women workers found around 34 per cent complaining of slight fatigue and 8 per cent of severe fatigue.[74] Despite precautions taken in the 'danger rooms', such as the donning of non-inflammable clothing, provision of disinfectant and monitoring by medical staff, concerns about toxic poisonings and deaths increased from 1916 onwards.[75] An investigation conducted by two female medical officers, categorising the ailments suffered by women workers into toxic and irritative conditions, failed to consider the women's own experiences of ill-health.[76] Unable to afford a doctor, the Gilberts took it in turns to nurse each other through unspecified illnesses. An eleven-week bout of muscular rheumatism left Kathleen crying and unable to move. Her sister nursed her throughout, tending her with regular soda baths and wrapping her swollen joints with strips torn from a sheet.[77] Shortly after her recovery, the sisters joined the Land Army, working on a farm near Bicester.

After their father threw them out of the family home in January 1912, John and Denis Lucy enlisted with the Royal Irish Rifles. During their basic training, having missed his breakfast drink of hot coffee, John fainted when running 'on the double'. From then on, Denis made sure that his older sibling got his morning beverage.[78] Denis's fraternal care facilitated his brother's ability to survive the exertions of training. Denis, the larger of the two, was 'a tiger for fighting'. The hot-blooded siblings presented a formidable front to outsiders, backing each other up

> to such an extent that the soldiers found it uncomfortable to interfere with either of us. Anyone quarrelling with one of us had to take on both, and the man who knocked me out got a bad beating afterwards from my brother.[79]

Their comrades left the brothers alone; no one wanted to 'fight a family'. This behaviour echoes another common fraternal bond expressed by men: that of brothers defending each other against other boys at school or in the neighbourhood. Although fighting was heavily discouraged inside the household unit, outside the home boys were expected to stand their ground among their peers – an obligation that was eased for those with elder brothers able to come to their aid in playground or street fights. Eddie T.'s parents encouraged him to 'go back and hit' anyone who hit him on the street. Often carrying out 'retributions' with his brother Bill, the siblings 'could take care of [them]selves'.[80] Boys valued brothers who presented a

united front with them in masculine street cultures, public schools or the homo-socio hierarchy of military life.

Concern over the physical wellbeing of siblings provoked angry reactions. Suffering from a weak heart, VAD Kit Dodsworth found a disorganised journey from No. 5 General Hospital, Rouen to Boulogne particularly gruelling, involving an absence of provisions and a lengthy wait at a railway station on a cold December night. Arriving at the Red Cross headquarters, Eve Dodsworth, 'worried to death' about her sister, launched a tirade at Commandant Isabel Crowdy.[81] Less bellicose than the Lucy brothers, Eve's sisterly concern overrode any natural deference that her middle-class upbringing and VAD training would have conditioned her to display towards an authority figure. Perhaps fortunately for the sisters' prospects in the service, Miss Crowdy was sympathetic to her complaint.

Caring for male siblings continued long into adulthood, surviving divergences in men's lives. The exchanges between the Keary brothers have an easy familiarity suggestive of a lifelong relationship. Fifty-eight-year-old Lieutenant General Sir Henry Keary was in command of the 20th Garhwal Brigade, mobilised for service in France. He regularly wrote to his younger brother, Captain Frank Keary, who did not see active service, remaining at home with his wife and children. Writing in April 1915, Henry was 'indeed sorry' to learn that Frank had been 'seized with that fiend the "flu"'. His recommended remedy harked back to a shared leisure pursuit: 'try & get a bit of fishing it is worth 10£ to get out into the open & have a change of occupation'. He further cautioned his brother to take it easy and call on his sons for support with gardening and other physical chores. He ended his letter with the affectionate sign-off, 'Bye bye old dear & get well & fish.'[82] When a recurrence of the flu struck Frank, Henry revealed the anxiety underlying his light tone. Commenting on the unexceptional nature of 'chills', he advised his brother to look after himself, reminding him that 'this was what killed poor old Father'.[83]

Practical experience of warfare conferred the requisite authority to dispense brotherly advice. Readying his younger brother for life in the front line, Cecil Falk advised Geoff on the kit that he deemed essential.[84] Phrased as providing 'one or two tips', Cecil specified which items to purchase and the best place to buy them:

> Get all your tunics, breeches etc. at a tailor as they fit so much better & ordnance are only ready-made – also get Sam Browne & boots at shops. But things like greatcoat, gum boots

> (especially these – they are so cheap at [Army] ordnance – only 15/- as opposed to 37/6 what I pay at my boot shop) shirts, collars & all kinds of under-clothing & equipment – water bottle, haversack, revolver get at ordnance. You can also get good field glasses there, but not compasses. Also when buying kit make sure to get a good waterproof or trenchcoat also a pair of stocking puttees, an air cushion & an electric torch. These are vital necessities for comfort. Also do not buy full camp kit only bucket, valise & waterproof sheet. You can use all my stuff e.g. bed, bath, washbasin, chair etc.[85]

Returning to the subject a month later, Cecil shows his ongoing concern through his insistence on obtaining value for money. Cecil disapproved of the quality of the Sam Browne belts found at ordnance, opining that it was worth paying more 'to get a decent coloured belt & good leather'. Cecil's dual status as elder brother and experienced combatant rings loudly in his tone. Another worry lay behind his advice. Officers' uniforms were a visible signifier of class difference.[86] His German-Jewish roots made Cecil overly conscious of the need to maintain the correct appearance of an 'English' gentleman. Inducting his brother into the homosocial environment of military life on the front, Cecil was mindful of the impact of first impressions. In earlier correspondence he fretted about the fragility of their friendship network if their background became common knowledge. Cecil had first-hand knowledge of casual anti-Semitism, writing of 'quite the nicest' officer in his company who 'hated' Jews.[87] Knowledge of the precariousness of their social standing prompted Cecil's efforts to ensure that nothing about his younger brother would cause him to stick out for the 'wrong' reasons.

Easing a sibling's transition into adulthood required tact and a delicate negotiation of familial expectations. Following his father and older brother, John Day planned to work at Doncaster railways, training as an engineer. When the works were diverted into munitions, manufacturing machinery and shells, John continued to revise for his examinations. Frank, a draughtsman with the Royal Engineers, advised him on the standard textbooks to purchase, discussing their relative merits and noting which ones he would find useful on his return. Prompting this discussion was a letter from John's parents querying an outlay of £4 4s, an expense that John had planned to incur without consulting his parents. Deflecting their concerns regarding 'the cheeky young hound', Frank sidestepped his parents' criticism of his sibling with the comment, 'well he knows best'. By confining his advice within a separate letter to his brother, he acknowledged his brother's greater, and more current, awareness of the examination's

requirements, reaffirming that John had ‘done right’ to obtain the texts promptly.[88]

Brotherly advice extended to ‘manly’ matters such as tobacco and smoking. From the 1880s onwards, the affordability and availability of machine-made cigarettes, such as Woodbines, spread their popularity among working-class boys and young men. A docker’s son recalled that all his friends starting to smoke around the age of eight or nine.[89] As a result, smoking became part of ‘the initiation into manhood, a potent symbol of male adulthood’.[90] Smoking took on greater significance during the Great War. Politicians and medical experts alike recognised its role in alleviating stress. Benedict Crowell, US Assistant Secretary of War, noted that for front-line soldiers enduring hardship, ‘tobacco fulfils a need nothing else can satisfy’.[91] A temperate boy before the war, eschewing both drink and tobacco, Rifleman Frank Buggs started smoking on the firing line, a habit that his sister somewhat innocently ascribed to boredom.[92] Wanting to know if they should include cigarettes in their parcel, the mother and sister of Alf Page asked if he had taken up the habit, as local boys home on leave said that ‘everyone smoked’.[93] In October 1914, the *Lancet* acknowledged the ‘solace and joy’ that cigarettes brought to soldiers engaged in a ‘nerve-racking’ campaign. Smoking was so universal; tobacco products were almost part of the soldier’s kit.[94] Cigarettes were an emotional prop: soothing anxieties and relieving boredom. At the right time, a comforting cigarette ‘worked wonders’.[95]

Smoking became a shared interest, a link to the normalcy of men’s pre-war lives. As an emotional salve, the provision of cigarettes was a practical means of providing support or caring at a distance. John Pearce expounded on the realities of service life to his brother. He had relinquished the leisurely pleasure of his pipe, it being ‘so much easier to whip out [a fag] & have a few puffs’ during parade rests. As the job of soldiering was incompatible with the sedate enjoyment of pipe-smoking, John would ‘be awfully pleased’ if his sibling could send ‘a few “Wills” now & again’.[96] After unexpectedly meeting up, Donald Price spent an evening with his older brother, serving in the army service corps. Their reunion occurred shortly after Donald’s participation in the attack on High Wood in July 1916, an experience leaving him confused and fatigued. In a fraternal gesture, his brother gave him some cigarettes and two or three shillings on parting.[97] We might surmise that Donald’s brother presented his battle-worn

sibling with the few practical items he had to hand, all he could spare in order to offer some small means of comfort.

Apart from being an essential component of the fighting man's kit, cigarettes defined class and status. Manufacturers had to cater for a market divided by region, class and individual preferences and tastes. A proliferating cigarette advertising industry drew on successful pipe brand names and key themes such as the Empire, the military and the monarchy in the pre-war years. Competition between brands for soldiers' custom increased, with one brand, Woodbines, emerging as the 'Tommy's favourite fag'.[98] Against this background, Geoffrey Falk sought advice as to the best mild tobacco to smoke, prompting the following knowledgeable reply from Cecil: 'Well Fryers original cut is very good but expensive, ditto John Cotton. Country Life is also good but Fryers is the best of the bunch.'[99] Cecil was cost conscious when giving his opinion, which, in his inimitable style, he proffered with fraternal authority. His reply evidenced the array of choice facing soldier-smokers. Later, Cecil congratulated Geoffrey on his receipt of a Mappin & Webb cigarette case, commenting that 'it must indeed be a beauty'. He showed his continuing interest in the minutiae of his brother's life by following up with the question, 'What kind of cigarettes are you smoking now? Virginia or Turkish?'[100]

Gendered notions of respectability meant that women of all classes declined to indulge in the habit publicly. Led by the 'new woman' movement, manufacturers produced brands and accessories directed at women from the 1890s onwards. The First World War saw a shift in attitudes, prompting a moral panic, as the consumption of cigarettes by women accompanied their increasing visibility in the workforce. Manchester-based manufacturer R. J. Lea capitalised on this trend through a series of advertising rhymes. In one example, the company made a clear link between the war effort of uniformed sisters on the home front and their fighting brothers:

> With Wrafs and Penguins, Wrens and Waacs,
> The girls are on their brothers' tracks.
> They test the aeroplanes and guns,
> And fix the bombs that scare the Huns;
> They drive the cars behind the line,
> And take the Generals out to dine.
> 'Tis said they like to drive the Tanks
> For soldier's pay and smaller thanks.
> But soldierlike, when duty bores them,

> A CHAIRMAN cigarette restores them.[101]

Placing uniformed women in a firmly supportive role, hard work earns them a 'masculine' reward, not as a calming restorative but as a way of easing routine boredom. Despite this commercial encouragement, the antipathy towards women smokers remained strong. Sisters Maud and Adelaide Goodall were fined for permitting disorderly conduct at their Strand tea rooms. Among the behaviour causing concern was the sight of waitresses smoking cigarettes and waltzing with uniformed men. The Provost-Marshal charged with investigating their establishment, while noting that no indecency occurred, damningly concluded that there was 'a grave tendency' in that direction.[102] Stamping out such immoral tendencies formed part of the policing of women's behaviour in public.[103] Even in the last year of the war, public flouting of deeply rooted considerations of respectability led to smoking remaining a reclusive habit among women.

Brothering at a distance

Sending letters and parcels was a means of brothering or sistering at a distance, often supplementing the phenomenal emotional labour undertaken by mothers. An array of food items, toiletries, reading and writing materials, articles of clothing and family photographs were sent out to sustain fighting men and provide them with a comforting link to home. Care pervaded such acts, from the sourcing of items to ensuring their safe arrival. Frank Buggs commended the care that his sister took in wrapping up parcels, a practical necessity to ensure that contents arrived with minimal damage.[104] Her sister also praised her thoughtfulness in packing and tying up the weekly parcel sent from the family. Brothers' responses to the receipt of parcels formed a core component of sibling correspondence, giving a flavour of the range of items sent. Thanking his brother, Alf Arnold wrote,

> The biscuits, though good, are perhaps a trifle stale (thought I had better let you know). I hope to read the 'Sinews of War' shortly & will also let you know whether the insect powder makes an impression. The parcel was well packed & all the contents including atlas, papers &c were very acceptable.[105]

Fighting men detailed trench conditions to clarify their pressing need for items, such as warm clothing, from home. Experiencing the harshness of his

first winter in the quagmire of the Western Front, Alec Mudie thanked his brother for sending him a pair of much-needed gloves, before requesting a 'thick, close fitting, arctic cap' to shield him against the bitter weather.[106]

Brothers and sisters either contributed to communal packages or sent their own. Fighting men worried about the pressure this placed on incomes. The Day brothers shared a mutual interest in aeroplanes. Frank asked his brother to send him a copy of *Flight* every week, providing 'you will let *me* pay for it'. He stated a preference for his own copy, as living conditions prevented him from keeping back issues, something his brother could do.[107] When asked what he would like for his birthday, Raymond Turner, a former hairdresser, advised his sister, Grace, not to 'rob' herself of anything and that a pair of socks would be most acceptable. Later, he forcefully gave his reasons for returning the stamps she had sent in contravention of his wishes. Admitting that it was 'very good' of Grace, he stressed his objection: 'I cannot have you wasting money on me because I know your money is not so great & every penny tells.' He ended his reprimand emphatically, 'I will not allow you to send them to me.'[108] The older by five years, Raymond made clear his discomfiture at having his younger sister lend him any financial support. Grace, a shop worker, wanted to do her utmost for her brother. Disobeying Raymond's direct wishes overstepped the boundaries of their relationship, undermining his sibling authority. Such negotiations depended on the tenor of the sibling bond. Responding to similar fraternal concerns about the expense of items, Violet Page, a domestic servant, retorted, 'it is the only thing I can do for you so don't stop me'. Besides sending her own parcel, she added items to her mother's, such as the two pairs of socks which she affectionately hoped would make her brother's 'tootsies' warmer.[109]

Although fraternal visits will be revisited in later chapters, it is necessary to contextualise their emotional import to serving men at the outset of *Brothers in the Great War*. Paradoxically, regular correspondence and opportunities to meet up brought some siblings closer during the war years. A significant age gap precluded an especially close relationship between Alice F. and her brothers. The sibling duty of letter writing made her 'nearer I think to them than I had been when I was a child'.[110] Alfred Brookes saw more of his brother Rupert during the war, as the siblings ensured that they always lunched or dined together when they were in London.[111] Equally,

near misses or knowledge that siblings were tantalisingly close resulted in feelings of frustration.[112]

Face-to-face meetings fulfilled many functions: the opportunity to relax and talk to a trusted confidante; to provide emotional sustenance via a living, breathing link to home and to the nostalgic recollections of childhood; and to support the wider emotional community of the family by providing eye-witness reports of the wellbeing of a son, brother or husband. Such meetings brought home to siblings the effect of war on men's emotional states. With few working-class families able to afford to visit wounded relatives, the opportunity to relay news to loved ones at home had greater emotional currency.[113] Meetings represented a continuum of visits home during school, university or work holidays. A meeting with his brother, Bob Moore told his mother, had left him 'the cheerfulest lad in France'.[114] This feeling of pleasure overcame diverse stances to the war, as recounted in a meeting 'full of joy' between the Methodist John Brocklesby, a conscientious objector, and his two officer brothers.[115] Similarly, Charles Carrington believed that the 'happiest times' for his eldest brother, Philip, a theology student who adopted a pacifist stance, was when he met up with his three younger serving brothers on leave from France.[116] As well as acting out of sibling affection, in these meetings men, and occasionally women, acted as proxies for family members at home.

Shortly after arriving in Wimereux, James Burns, a theatre technician serving with the RAMC, was pleased to receive a visit from his chaplain brother. The siblings enjoyed a talk in a café over poached eggs and chips. Seventeen days later Joseph Burns was killed by shell fire, leaving behind a widow and two young daughters.[117] At the time, James recorded the loss of his 'beloved brother' in a typically brief entry in his pocket diary, 'Jos died of wounds'.[118] Alongside this bald statement is an example of the medical jottings Burns commonly made, a reference to a medical article in the *Daily Mail* – a sign that until he received the news, this had been a 'normal' day. In his retrospective account, Burns provided an understated juxtaposition of the mundane pleasure of a shared meal with the stark news of his brother's death. Both narrative forms display signs of the shock of his brotherly loss.

Meetings could be spur-of-the-moment events. Matthew Wilkinson met his younger brother, Tom, three times during their service in France. On the last occasion, just before Christmas 1917, he was taken aback to find that one of the horseback riders approaching him on a road near the

Passchendaele ridge was his sibling. After ‘a good talk’, Tom invited his brother to tea the following day.[119] The brevity of the descriptions of meetings undermines the significance of such encounters, replete as they were with emotion. Francis Buckley recorded that his brother looked ‘worn out and depressed’, and was not surprised when he was hospitalised shortly afterwards with influenza.[120] Other men went to great lengths to track down and visit their brothers. Access to transport was a key factor in facilitating these visits. Frank Holding’s older brother, Percy, was among the first Territorials to be called up when war broke out. That August bank holiday, Frank took a tram from Eccles to Walton, followed by a train from Walton to Bolton. Finally, he walked along the Tunmore Road until he reached the training camp just outside Bolton where Percy was based. The brothers spent a few ‘lovely’ hours before Frank made the return trip home.[121] Percy Cearns, a dispatch rider, seized every chance to visit his brother Fred, recounting nine visits between July 1916 and August 1917. These varied considerably in length, one lasting thirty hours. Simply taking pleasure in each other’s company, the brothers would either walk somewhere privately or ‘sit and talk and smoke until dark’.[122] Nostalgic sentiments were central to these conversations. The siblings talked ‘almost incessantly’ of home.

Brothers greatly valued and anticipated these fraternal visits, at times unable to contain their excitement. On hearing that his brother Ben’s regiment was coming to relieve them, Arthur Stapleton, ignoring any repercussions for himself, ‘broke ranks and sped along to each platoon. Running along the side, I asked them whether they were the 58th, and when they affirmed they were, I called out, Ben! Ben! Ben Stapleton! Ben Stapleton!’[123] On returning to his section, Arthur was warned by an angry corporal that he would be shot if he broke ranks again. Later, Arthur learned that the 58th were based nearby at Achiet-le-Grand. Risking the very real danger of being caught by the military police and court-martialled, Arthur set out to find his sibling, roaming camp after camp before finding him. Boyish prankishness came to the fore when, on spying his brother’s ‘familiar fat bottom’ disappearing into a bivouac, Arthur gave it a ‘good shove’ with his foot. Arthur’s defiance of army discipline and his persistent search for his sibling highlights the deep meaning this meeting held for him, his use of slapstick humour being a non-verbal way of defusing this. As he recognised his brother, Ben’s initial anger ‘dissolved’ into the broad grin ‘so

beloved by us all'. The Stapletons gave each other 'a brotherly hug' before spending the rest of the day together.

Although they were comfortable in embracing each other, Arthur takes care to differentiate this as an appropriately manly, non-sexual embrace. Fraternal accounts provide useful evidence of physical expressions of closeness between adult siblings. The male handshake could signal emotional working-class restraint. One man, the sixth of eight children, classed his family as unemotional, with limited physical contact. There was no kissing within the family, and even when his brother departed for war, 'we'd shake hands and say "good-bye"'. Visits on leave witnessed similar stoical acceptance, with 'no falling on each other's necks, or anything of that sort'.[124]

Hospitalised due to a septic heel, Fred Cearns missed the 'big push' of 1 July 1916. After establishing Fred's whereabouts a fortnight later, Percy set off immediately to trace him. Recording their initial greeting, Percy movingly captured their pent-up emotions:

> What handshaking there was. Recollect it was 21 months since last I saw him and never before had we been apart more than a few weeks. Then think of all he had endured. I confess to a lump in the throat and even tears of happiness in my eyes. Try as he would, even strong Fred could not quite control his feelings. That grip of the hand meant much and I could feel the emotion in his voice as he spoke those first few words of pleasurable greetings.[125]

This evocative account gives a sense that soldierly stoicism wavered when faced with a loved brotherly presence. The fraternal handshake described here, rather than an antiseptic formality, is laden with feeling. Percy's description of their joint relief and affection emphasised the force of the siblings' emotions. Writing about the changing norms of masculine tactile contact in the First World War, Santanu Das argues that the intimacy of trench warfare opened up a new world of tactile gentleness among serving men. Yet, his insightful analysis, with its focus on comradeship, excludes the significance of touch in fraternal relationships, built as they are on pre-existing bonds and behaviours, and shaped by familial and societal emotional codes. Blood ties had an emotive resonance in the public discourse, as was borne out by the images of brothers used in official photographs and news reports to highlight the presence and strength of fraternal bonds among the broader comradeship of the trenches.

There is a significant absence of the brotherly kiss in these narratives. Brothers' bodily contact on meeting was usually handshaking or hugging.

Das's analysis of the 'dying' or 'mothers' kiss suggests that 'friendly' male-to-male kisses saw a revival in the trenches, a reversal of the 'normal tactile codes' which restricted the 'friendly kiss' to ladies. Horace Nicholls, appointed the first full-time Official Photographer of Great Britain in July 1917, captured striking images of a soldier and sailor brother kissing (Figures 2 and 3). These formed part of Nicholls' series of soldiers on leave, perhaps reflecting his aim to 'build up a "story"' around his subjects.[126] The two photographs show that, like many of Nicholls' images, this 'meeting' was carefully posed and looks staged. The story that the image imparts is one of brotherly love and affection. Clearly, the trope of loving brotherhood was one that the official photographer of the home front wanted to propagate.

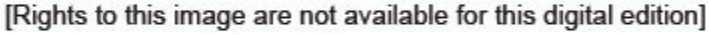

Figure 2 Soldier and sailor brothers greeting each other upon their arrival on leave at their parents' house.

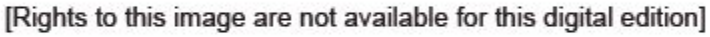

Figure 3 Soldier and sailor brothers greeting each other upon their arrival on leave at their parents' house.

Men's accounts of fraternal meetings testify to the role of physical contact in allaying brotherly fears. Seeing the corpses of men from his regiment after the battle of Le Cateau on 26 August 1914 provoked anger in John Lucy. Anxiety quickly replaced this emotion, resulting in him scrutinising the bodies to ensure that his sibling was not among them before seeking Denis out. In his 1938 memoir John recalled how his sibling's face lit up at the sight of him. Unable to articulate their joint relief at surviving the action intact, the brothers 'did a silly thing', giving each other nearly all they had in their respective haversacks. Realising what they had done, they then grinned and punched each other. The release of mutual anxiety is palpable, albeit deflected via a manly cuff rather than a hug or embrace. Wanting the language to express their feelings, the men showered their affection on each other by sharing all the possessions they had to hand.[127]

Conclusion

Growing up, men and women relied upon the values instilled by parents and moral instructors when defining their sibling ties.[128] In the absence of an emotional vocabulary to articulate affectionate siblinghood, these norms, especially those quieter, temperate values that were obscured by the privileging of military masculinity, provided a structure within which brothers and sisters could describe the substance of their relationships. According to Roper, families resort to emotional role models during wartime as 'a means of conveying deep and authentic feelings', making the absence of sibling stereotypes significant.[129] Without similar abstract ideals of siblinghood to draw upon, men's accounts of fraternal relationships are inevitably more piecemeal than those devoted to their mothers and fathers. Men showed both the strength of brotherly bonds and the 'fundamental' knowledge that siblings can develop of each other through actions and words falling just short of explicit expressions of love.[130] We see a remarkable similarity in the emotional framing of brother–brother, sister–sister and sister–brother bonds across classes. Friendship and togetherness proved a key motif of these ties. Seamstress Florence A. loved all her brothers, but the greatest affection she held for the brother killed in the war sprung from their inseparability.[131] Siblings were 'great friends',

‘playmates’ and ‘good pals’, mirroring their descriptions of their families as clannish and ‘all happy together’.

The demarcation between the harmonious domestic sphere and the external ‘rules’ of the street or playground where working-class parents often encouraged their offspring to stick up for themselves is clear, underscoring the importance placed on household unity. Separated from the household, elite siblings offered protection in the alien brutality of public-school machismo. The testing experience of encountering and assimilating new and oftentimes conflicting emotional norms was eased by sibling support and encouragement. Shared sleeping spaces and nurseries created diurnal routines and a particular bodily intimacy, enabling the sharing of confidences. Brotherly roles learned and performed in childhood or young adulthood continued during wartime, with brothers dispensing advice and protecting and caring for each other. For young men and women whose closest ties were still with their family of origin, the underpinning dynamics of familial support held strong in wartime.

Notwithstanding the constraints of modern technological warfare, brothers endeavoured to maintain their relationships by correspondence or, preferably, when possible, in person. The imposition of new routines of meeting and letter writing reinforced or reignited these ties. The phenomenal efforts made by mothers have overshadowed the unstinting efforts made by brothers and sisters to provide support at a distance. A lateral perspective provides a more accurate picture of the ebb and flow of familial support, with siblings assisting parental efforts to sustain their serving offspring.

Accounts of brotherly meetings show the emotional solace that siblings derived from each other’s company. The efforts extended to facilitate such events, and physical responses to these meetings, speak loudly as to their emotional import. Occasionally, these took on a domestic flavour, with cake sharing, teas and dinners. Masculine embraces and hearty handshakes were the greetings of brothers who often had not seen each other for months. Brothers’ eye-witness accounts provide first-hand reports of the extreme toll of battle on men’s bodies and minds. Those on the firing line felt equally the constant anxiety of waiting for news of loved ones. Face-to-face meetings alleviated anxiety and war stress, providing a tangible connection to home.

Notes

1 Letter, 19 January 1917, Falk, IWM 06/74/1.
2 J. S. Bossard and E. Boll, 'Ritual in Family Living', *American Sociological Review*, 14:4 (1949), pp. 463–469; Cicirelli, 'Sibling Influence; Ross and Milgrim, 'Important Variables'.
3 As Pascal Eitler et al. observe, the terms childhood, adolescence and young adulthood are historically imprecise terms, often used interchangeably. The use of the term 'adolescence' to define the transitional phase between childhood and adulthood emerged in the late nineteenth century. This study uses 'adolescence' to refer to the years between 14 and 18. This is a shorter time-frame than that used by Hall (1904) but takes into account the age at which young men were eligible for military service. G. S. Hall, *Adolescence. Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education* (New York, 1904), pp. 51, 164; J. Springhall, *Coming of Age. Adolescence in Britain, 1860–1960* (Dublin, 1986); P. Eitler et al., 'Introduction', in U. Frevert (ed.), *Learning How to Feel* (Oxford, 2014), p. 4.
4 Mitchison, *All Change Here*, p. 69.
5 The respondent was interviewed in September 1969. FLWE 2000/074.
6 Langhamer, *The English in Love*, pp. 8–11.
7 The most common explanation for a lack of closeness was distance arising from age gaps, often resulting in a geographical distance as siblings left home for education, work or war.
8 Interview, J. W. Naylor, IWM 729; A. Stapleton, IWM 17245.
9 A. T. Denning, *The Family Story* (London, 1981), p. 56.
10 Interview, F. Lindley, IWM 26873.
11 FLWE 2000/238.
12 FLWE 2000/237.
13 FLWE 2000/427.
14 FLWE 2000/025.
15 FLWE 2000/132.
16 W. N. P. Barbellion, *The Journal of a Disappointed Man* (London, 1919), pp. 121–122.
17 FLWE 2000/142.
18 FLWE 2000/386.
19 A helpful analogy is given by Tosh's analysis of Victorian fathers as present-givers. J. Tosh, *A Man's Place. Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven, 1999), pp. 82–83.
20 FLWE 2000/342.
21 FLWE 2000/150.
22 Stapleton, IWM 17245.
23 J. R. Ackerley, *My Father and Myself* (London, 1968), p. 52.
24 C. E. Chesterton, *A History of the United States. With an Introduction by G. K. Chesterton* (London, 1919), p. vii.
25 See, for example, Graves, *The Bad Old Days*; G. Grigson, *The Crest on the Silver. An Autobiography* (London, 1950).
26 Blubbing was derided as unmanly, an attitude that persisted into the 1960s, see, Dixon, *Weeping Britannia*, pp. 202–203.
27 A. Seldon and D. Walsh, *Public Schools and the Great War. The Generation Lost* (Barnsley, 2013), pp. 94–95.
28 FLWE 5404/040.
29 Ackerley, *My Father and Myself*, p. 54.
30 Interview, Gee, IWM 13717.
31 P. Joyce, *The State of Freedom. A Social History of the British State since 1800* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 286–289.

32 A. Waugh, *The Loom of Youth* (London, 1917).
33 J. Gathorne-Hardy, *The Old School Tie. The Phenomenon of the English Public School* (New York, 1978), pp. 305–309; Seldon and Walsh, *Public Schools and the Great War*, pp. 98–100.
34 A. Lunn, *The Harrovians* (London, 1913).
35 FLWE 2000/084.
36 Possibly, this was one of the engineering apprenticeships established by the Selborne Scheme of 1902 to ensure that the service maintained vital technical expertise. FLWE 2000/218.
37 Historians have emphasised the need to recognise regional differences within working-class families, culture and community: Smith, *Masculinity*, pp. 10–15; P. Thompson, *The Edwardians. The Remaking of British Society* (London, 1975), pp. 48, 288; Roper, *The Secret Battle*, p. 30.
38 The follow-up FLWE study comprising 62 interviews of men and women from middle- and upper-class families was conducted in the 1970s to provide 'a more reliable basis' for earlier findings.
39 FLWE 5404/009.
40 FLWE 5404/050.
41 FLWE 2000/424.
42 Letter, 23 January 1918, Falk, IWM 06/74/1.
43 Letter, 12 January 1917, Falk, IWM 06/74/1.
44 Anthony Seldon and David Walsh argue that the Great War was the making of the school magazine. Seldon and Walsh, *Public Schools and the Great War*, pp. 129, 131.
45 Letter, 10 November 1915, Sadd, IWM 96/57/1.
46 Cearns, *The Love of a Brother*, p. 18.
47 Ibid., p. 58.
48 Das, *Touch and Intimacy*, p. 118.
49 G. Beer, 'Four Bodies on the Beagle: Touch, Sight, and Writing in a Darwin Letter', in G. Beer (ed.), *Open Fields* (Oxford, 1999), p. 14.
50 This supports Jane Hamlett's observation that the spatial structures of homes created intimacies within families. J. Hamlett, *Material Relations. Domestic Interiors and Middle-Class Families in England, 1850–1910* (Manchester, 2010), p. 62.
51 Das, *Touch and Intimacy*, p. 118.
52 FLWE 2000/193.
53 FLWE 2000/342.
54 FLWE 2000/003.
55 FLWE 2000/422.
56 J. Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815–1985* (London, 1986); Hamlett, *Material Relations*, pp. 111, 130.
57 Burnett, *A Social History of Housing*, pp. 127, 132; Hamlett, *Material Relations*, pp. 50, 130; A. S. Wohl (ed.), *The Victorian Family. Structure and Stresses* (London, 1978), p. 204.
58 Hamlett, *Material Relations*, pp. 112–114.
59 I. Rathbone, *We That Were Young* (London, 1932), p. 7.
60 P. Nash, *Outline. An Autobiography and Other Writings* (London, 1949), pp. 26–27.
61 Diary entries, 19 January 1915, 8 February 1915, C. and E. Dodsworth, IWM 82/12/1.
62 Cearns, *The Love of a Brother*, p. 18.
63 Ibid., p. 185.
64 Stapleton, IWM 17245.
65 Cearns, *The Love of a Brother*, p. 16.
66 Ibid., p. 47.
67 Ibid., p. 20.
68 At least eighteen commercial models were available for private purchase. A. Saunders, *Dominating the Enemy. War in the Trenches 1914–1918* (Stroud, 2000), p. 26.

69 *The Times*, 8 October 1915.
70 Saunders, *Dominating the Enemy*, p. 29. *The Times*, 10 August 1916.
71 B. R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 163.
72 Cearns, *The Love of a Brother*, 22.
73 The plight of the munionettes is covered extensively by D. Thom, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls. Women Workers in World War I* (London, 1998), pp. 122–143; A. Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend. Munitions Workers in the Great War* (Berkeley, CA, 1994), pp. 59–61.
74 'Health of Munitions Workers', *British Medical Journal*, 2 (1917), p. 13.
75 A. K. Foxell, *Munition Lasses. Six Months as Principal Overlooker in Danger Buildings* (London, 1917), pp. 96–99; *Regulations of the Ammunitions Factories under The Ministry of Munitions not including the Royal Factories (1915)*, The National Archives (hereafter TNA) MUN 5/92/346/33; J. Roberts, 'A Biography of the Trousered Munitions Women's Uniform of World War 1', *Apparence(s)*, 7 (2017), pp. 1–17.
76 A. Livingstone-Learmouth and B. Martin Cunningham, 'Observations on the Effects of Tri-Nitro-Toluene on Women', *The Lancet*, 188 (1916), pp. 261–263.
77 Kathleen Gilbert, IWM 9105.
78 J. F. Lucy, *There's a Devil in the Drum* (Uckfield, 1938), p. 30.
79 Ibid., p. 44.
80 FLWE 2000/396.
81 War Experiences of a VAD, C. and E. Dodsworth, IWM 82/12/1.
82 Letter, 23 April 1915, Sir H. D. Keary, IWM 2610.
83 Letter, 1 January 1916, Keary, IWM 2610.
84 Officers were expected to purchase the following items of uniform and camp kit from a military outfitter: service dress jacket, breeches, boots, greatcoat, cap, sword, scabbard, revolver, Sam Browne belt, clasp knife, haversack, compass, wristwatch, whistle, field glasses, and water bottle. Optional items included a camp bed, kettle, washstand and vase. The total weight of the kit to be carried by unit transport was not to exceed 35lb. Simkins, *Kitchener's Army*, p. 266.
85 Letter, 10 November 1917, Falk, IWM 06/74/1.
86 J. Tynan, *British Army Uniform and the First World War. Men in Khaki* (London, 2013), pp. 105–129.
87 Letters, 30 January 1917, 28 February 1917, Falk, IWM 06/74/1.
88 Day, Liddle WW1/EP/015.
89 FLWE 2000/374.
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92 E. Wild, *Memories of a Young Brother Killed in the Great War, 1916* (West Drayton, 1943), pp. 8, 20.
93 Letters, 18 and 29 November 1915, A. W. Page, IWM 98/28/1.
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104 Wild, *Memories of a Young Brother*, pp. 67–68.
105 Letter, 28 August 1915, Arnold, IWM 06/54/1.
106 Letter, 6 December 1914, Mudie, IWM 1197.
107 Letter, 11 March 1916, Day, Liddle WW1/EP/015.
108 Letter, 21 March 1916, Turner, IWM 22208.
109 Letter, 6 March 1916, Page, IWM 98/28/1.
110 FLWE 2000/072.
111 Letter, n.d., *Papers related to Rupert Brooke*, IWM 12456.
112 Diary, 17 December 1918, Cowen, *A Nurse at the Front*, p. 281.
113 A. Carden-Coyne, *The Politics of Wounds. Military Patients and Medical Power in the First World War* (Oxford, 2014), p. 201.
114 Letter, n.d., R. Moore, IWM 95/1/1.
115 Interview, J. H. Brocklesby, IWM 10122.
116 C. Carrington, *Soldier from the Wars Returning* (Barnsley, 1965), p. 222.
117 Autobiographical account, James Burns, Liddle WW1/GS/0241, pp. 41–42.
118 Diary, 7 June 1918, Burns, Liddle WW1/GS/0241.
119 Memoir, Wilkinson, IWM 09/47/1, pp. 12, 17.
120 Buckley, *Q.6.A and Other Places*.
121 Interview, F. Holding, IWM 10922.
122 Cearns, *The Love of a Brother*, pp. 57–58.
123 Stapleton, IWM 17245.
124 FLWE 2000/012.
125 Cearns, *The Love of a Brother*, p. 39.
126 J. Carmichael, *First World War Photographers* (London, 1989), p. 131.
127 Lucy, *There's a Devil in the Drum*, p. 147.
128 As Annette Atkins notes, it is important to be mindful of the difficulty of establishing family 'periods' which span several decades when taking into account the time-span of the parental marriage, and the dates when their children were born and died: Atkins, *We Grew Up Together*, p. 36.
129 Roper, *The Secret Battle*, p. 23.
130 Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, p. 44.
131 FLWE 2000/153.

2

Emotional partings

Bidding farewell to his older brother as he embarked on the first stage of his journey to the Western Front was, according to Pat Campbell, 'the unhappiest parting I have ever experienced'. Only on the cusp of leave-taking did Pat appreciate the enormity of what his brother faced. Nearly sixty years later, the sight of a departing train still had the power to disturb him.[1] Trauma experts Charles Figley and William Nash assert that deployment to the war zone is a 'transformative process' for everyone involved.[2] Even the familiar terrain of the railway platform took on a heightened intensity amid the whirlwind of mobilisation. Strangers joined with intimates to see off loved ones. Such moments can be seen as theatre or spectacle, belying their emotional import as testified by their prevalence in sibling narratives.[3] Caught up in the initial novelty, siblings experienced and recorded a range of emotional responses. As the war progressed, the cumulative effects of saying goodbye took their toll on those left at home.

Sibling narratives reveal varied responses to appeals to serve their country, supplementing existing evidence challenging the myth of war enthusiasm.[4] Bewilderment and dread were common emotions, in stark contrast to the jingoism that greeted the Boer War.[5] Nicola Martin challenges the chronology of the reconceptualisation of heroic masculinity, arguing that this underwent a sea-change long before the Armistice.[6] Fraternal narratives offer up an even earlier starting point. From the outset, men's fears for their brothers' and their families' wellbeing and economic prosperity present a more nuanced picture of masculinity. Many saw no shame in not fighting. Siblings felt anxiety as their brothers enlisted, were conscripted or faced losing exemptions from service. Some brothers mitigated these emotions through acts of enlisting with, or serving alongside, their siblings.

Departing for war

Even when men willingly volunteered, combat was a daunting prospect. After he volunteered in August 1914, Percy Campbell's underlying anxieties were apparent to his brother, casting a shadow across their last family holiday. Pat recorded the diurnal pattern of Percy's tension:

> I noticed that Percy was reading the paper more than usual, the war news, and that he did not go down to the beach until the post had come in. When it had come, and had brought no official envelope for him, then he seemed his old self again for the rest of the day.[7]

With enlistment imminent, any news of war had particular pertinence for Percy. Uncertainty over the timing of his departure piqued his anxiety. In response, he braced himself in isolation. Writing in 1972, a reworking of the landscape of childhood memories coloured Pat's recollections of that holiday.[8] A shift in emotional norms registered in his memory. The siblings were, by that summer, well versed in the separations occasioned by attendance at public school and university. Traditionally, their annual break would have been a time to reforge familial ties. Unable to place that summer's events within this familiar context, Pat retrospectively ascribed meaning to the feelings of puzzlement experienced in August 1914.

Many partings took place at railway stations, 'the closest point of contact' between London (and other points of departure) and the war.[9] At this interface, Gregory writes, traditional social and familial roles could be shed.[10] But, as these narratives show, relationships were also reaffirmed at these transitional places. Bruce Cummings went to Waterloo station to see his brother Arthur depart 'en route for Armageddon'. Gallows humour was not restricted to the front line; those waiting at home took comfort in its ability to make fears about the prospect of death more manageable.[11] The ironic tone infusing Cummings' account dissolves in his account of their parting. Arthur held his brother's hand, briefly giving him 'a queer little nervous look'. The brothers' 'perfect' understanding rendered the need for words redundant. Bruce encapsulated his feelings in two short sentences. 'It is horrible. I love him tenderly.'[12] Bringing the delicate quality of tenderness to his definition of fraternal love, Bruce captured his desire to protect his brother against the terrors ahead. The contrast between this and his earlier insouciance towards those same terrors underscores the tentative gentleness of this brotherly parting.

Journalist Cecil Hewitt recalled the ‘indelibly, distressing’ day when his older brother Harold left for the front line. Sixteen-years old, Cecil was ‘severely shaken’ to see his distraught father embrace Harold in tears, ‘as though they were both foreigners’. Such a public exhibition contradicted Cecil’s understanding of appropriate masculine behaviour. Repressing tears was a mark of character embedded in the English ‘stiff upper lip’ tradition.[13] His father, Frederick Hewitt, a City of London police inspector, was ‘a carefully respectable’ man. Orphaned at ten, Frederick completed his education at the Royal Military Asylum for the sons of regular army officers. Throughout their childhood, he showed his children a nuanced awareness of lower-middle-class Christian values. Certainly, his profession and upbringing suggest a usually phlegmatic demeanour.[14] Harold’s embarkation occurred after the Third Battle of Ypres and the concomitant casualty lists. Fear of his son’s chances of survival contributed to Frederick’s discomposure. Shedding of tears, after all, does not simply indicate a symptom or sign of sadness but encompasses a spectrum of emotions.[15] Unlike filial characterisations of overwhelming paternal grief as manifesting ‘diminished masculinity’, emotional collapses by fathers or brothers are recounted by many siblings with sympathetic neutrality.[16] His father’s breakdown amplified Cecil’s status as a bystander, observing the ‘strangeness’ of the heightened passion on display. Witnessing this emotional farewell jolted Cecil into the realisation that he might never see his brother again.[17]

Departures for war could be the source of emotional distress for much younger brothers. Not only did they experience the pain of separation themselves but they witnessed the disquietude that these departures caused to close family relatives. The poet Geoffrey Grigson, the youngest of seven brothers, bemoaned his elderly father’s misfortune in having ‘war ripe’ children; five of his brothers died in the First and Second World Wars.[18] There are no official statistics on sets of brothers who died in the Great War, but research places the Grigsons among those families experiencing the greatest losses.[19] In his 1950 autobiography, Grigson remembered the day his brother Lionel left for France. The tenor of Grigson’s response suggests that he had absorbed the mood of anxiety and sorrow circulating in the wider household. When Lionel found Grigson in a state of misery, ‘blubbering and heaving and afraid’, he pulled him into a comforting embrace. Geoffrey remembered feeling ‘the bucket and sinners of [Lionel’s]

Sam Browne [belt]'. This tactile memory signified a barrier between the siblings, marking Lionel's transformation into his army identity. Both brothers experienced this as an emotionally charged separation. Betraying his attempts at reassurance, Lionel's eyes filled with 'large tears'. Writing nearly thirty-five years later, Grigson could not 'remember a much intenser agony'.[20]

Other family send-offs attest to the novelty of the experience. When the Dodsworth sisters set off on the first stage of their journey to the No. 12 General Hospital, Rouen, the family group included their stepmother, brother, sister-in-law, sister and family friends. Among the group, only their sister Do was visibly upset, despite doing her utmost to control her emotions.[21] Leaving for Egypt for their second stint of overseas service, Kit Dodsworth recalled the 'sorrow and fear' permeating the railway platform at Victoria, 'cloaked by smiles and jests'. The heart-breaking attempts of the surrounding people to hide their emotions transformed the terminus into a 'sacred place' infused with sadness.[22] Joined by circumstance, strangers, friends and family members were gathered into an ad hoc emotional community, one that gained piquancy from the shared knowledge of risks facing the departing, the grief of those who had already suffered loss and the value vested in the effort of self-restraint by those witnessing acts of emotional labour.[23]

The turbulence of familial leave-taking could prove trying for combatants, a fact recognised by their siblings. Percy Cearns recalled the gendered tactility of his family's goodbyes when seeing Fred off at Victoria station. His sisters hugged and kissed their brother, while the male family members exchanged a handshake. The latter was not an emotionally dry act; Percy conveyed the underlying emotion through his emphasis, '*how* we shook hands'. Turning away, Fred betrayed his taut emotional control through a clenching of his teeth.[24] Naomi Mitchison recalled going 'as a family' to Southampton to see her brother off. Her dread that this might be a final goodbye, combined with the 'putting on' of a brave face by her parents, must, she later reflected, have been 'very trying' for Jack.[25] These gradations of emotional restraint signal the effort involved in hiding emotions and their partial failure. The 'pretence' of the brave face, combined with an intimate knowledge of the feelings being repressed, added to the stress of departing combatants.

Superstitiously, Naomi relinquished swimming for the war's duration. In late 1914 the family holidayed on the Perth coast and the siblings swam in the North Sea. Forsaking this pastime was an 'irrational' sacrifice to avert the 'wrath of war' from someone 'out there'. Naomi's offering up of a pleasurable activity, one she enjoyed with her sibling, has religious overtones of an attempt to assuage an unknown higher authority. A loss of rational action by some siblings accompanied the war's progress. Unlike the fetishist behaviours of combatants, the superstitions of civilians remain relatively unexamined.[26] Vera Brittain, burdened with the loss of her fiancé and close friends, abandoned the practice of seeing her brother off at the station. Her feelings of grief and guilt became coalesced into the belief that her mere presence influenced the fate of her much-loved brother.[27] Possibly, she was partially relieved to be spared the emotional wrench of parting, but this may also be an early indication of the psychic breakdown Brittain suffered towards the war's end.

Young men and boys below conscription age were, at times, bemused by the reactions of older brothers. Pat Campbell, convinced of his sibling's fearlessness, could not comprehend why Percy showed 'no elation' at the prospect of becoming a soldier. Like others of his class, Percy was prepared for soldiering, having attained the rank of sergeant at Clifton College's Officer Training Corps (OTC). For sixteen-year-old Pat and his friends, war provoked 'patriotic excitement'; his more reflective older brother associated it with horror. A partial explanation for this attitudinal disparity is found in the four-year age gap between the brothers. Pat revelled in the glory rather than in the likely reality of war. Percy attempted to temper Pat's war enthusiasm through his repeated warnings that 'I may be killed, you know'.[28] Edward Madigan identifies fatalism as a 'coping mechanism', a means by which serving men could restore a feeling of calm amid the chaos of impending warfare.[29] Naomi Mitchison recalled the 'immense conscientiousness' that young men developed as a shield once the reality of what they faced sank in.[30] By vocalising their fears, brothers dampened the febrile emotions of those close to them, restoring a more temperate emotional state. Saying goodbye, Percy reaffirmed his conviction that this was their final parting, fuelling the emotion-laden farewell recounted at the beginning of this chapter.

Older sisters sounded a word of caution. In Irene Rathbone's novel *We That We Young*, Joan Seddon related a meeting with her younger brother

Jack and his friends before they marched off to war. With a nostalgic nod to the 'golden years' experienced by the pre-war generation, Joan reminisced about a party, 'What good times they were! Will they ever come again? Shall we ever dance again?' While she intentionally tried to maintain a light tone, her 'morbid' thoughts aroused a scolding from Jack. Joan pondered her sibling's careless attitude to the potential dangers ahead; her brother seemed to be going off to war in the 'same sort of spirit' in which he had once played Indians with her in the garden.[31] Rathbone developed her theme of lost innocence and a generation blighted by war throughout her novel, calibrating our understanding of the 'war generation' composed of both older and younger siblings and peers. The protagonist of Welsh novelist Kate Robert's semi-autobiographical wartime novel, *One Bright Morning* (1967), is furious when her underaged brother volunteers. Ann Owen's realisation that Bobi's act is propelled by boredom and a desire to see the world dissipates her anger at her brother's disregard for their parents' hurt.[32] Visiting home for Christmas, Ann derives some comfort that her older brother shares her misgivings. Confronting Bobi, she asks him not to volunteer for overseas service. Bobi adopts a generational stance in his response. Parental age and anxieties should not prevent him from 'enjoying' himself. Roberts portrays a further shift in familial roles. At the evening eisteddfod, a seasonal activity enjoyed by the siblings, Ann is shocked at the realisation that Bobi is no longer a boy in breeches. The emotional distance between the two is mirrored by their physical separation when Ann loses her young brother in the crowds.[33]

Vera Brittain's war diaries brim with family discord surrounding the wartime ambitions of herself and her brother Edward. Arthur Brittain, anxious about his son's safety and the future of the family business, vehemently opposed his son's war service. When Edward stated that no one could prevent him from serving his country, Vera declared herself happy to bear the dreariness of life at home without him. Edward reciprocated this sibling solidarity when Vera determined to leave Oxford's 'soft' environs to take up nursing. Once again, her father remained unreconciled to his dependants' service, a stance that riled Vera into stating, 'I do not agree that my place is at home doing nothing or practically nothing, for I consider that the place now of anyone who is young and strong and capable is where the work that is needed is to be done.'[34] In contrast, Edward 'approved very much' of her plans. The siblings' war enthusiasm was not mere

susceptibility to wartime propaganda.[35] Generational adherence to ideals of public-school honour and masculinity toughened their stance. Both united to condemn the 'unmanliness' of staying safe at home, demonstrating the underlying patriotism of their position. There is an implicit condescension towards their father's adherence to his values and his incomprehension of the principles instilled in his son, the first generation of the family to attend public school. Vera holds little sympathy for her father, who is in turn rageful, anxious and mournful about the fate of his son.[36] When Arthur Brittain reluctantly overcame his aversion, he communicated this indirectly, informing his wife that he would no longer stand in Edward's way. Notably, Vera excised evidence of her war fever from her *Testament of Youth*.[37] Her later pacifist views, a feeling of guilt over her brother's death and her lack of compassionate understanding for her father must have made her earlier enthusiasm too painful to put down in print.

Parental patriotism provoked anger. The post-war years saw a backlash against maternal veneration, led by writers such as Robert Graves and Robert Aldington. The hostility of these literary veterans directed at out-of-touch mothers does not seem to have been matched by a similar antagonism towards siblings.[38] This restraint speaks to sibling solidarity; a different judgement being made against the older generation and the 'patriotic motherhood' utilised so effectively as a propaganda tool. Robert Graves scornfully dismissed the 'newspaper language' of an open letter written by the 'Little Mother' of a killed only son.[39] Published in 1916, this highly emotive missive, extolling unflinching maternal sacrifice in wartime, struck a chord with readers. Reprinted as a pamphlet, it sold 75,000 copies in the first week alone. Graves' inclusion of praise for the letter's emotional eloquence on behalf of wives and mothers in *Goodbye to All That* highlights the dislocation faced by returning soldiers, for whom unfettered patriotism seemed a 'foreign language'. Graves' focus may have been sharpened by the war service of his older sister Rosaleen, his childhood 'best friend'.[40] This feeling was reciprocated. Writing to Robert in 1973, Rosaleen proclaimed that he was the person she had loved the most throughout her youth and childhood.[41] Overcoming their middle-class parents' adherence to traditional gendered expectations of daughters, Rosaleen served as a VAD at the 4th London General and the 54th General Hospital, Wimereux. Her nursing experience is apparent in her poem, 'The Smells of Home', published in *The Spectator* in November 1918.[42]

References to the ‘reek of wounds’ and persistent flies which she compares to ‘mourners dressed in black’ exhibited an appreciation of the horrors wrought on men’s bodies that her mother and father did not share.

Testamentary actions were used to show fraternal devotion, a practical way of demonstrating that siblings’ welfare remained at the forefront of combatant’s thoughts. Service pay books contained short ‘informal’ will forms and servicemen were ‘advised to use [them]’.[43] Military circumspection anticipated the real dangers faced by men about to face combat. Putting one’s affairs in order served multiple purposes. For many young soldiers, it was a rite of passage, a means of marking transition to adulthood. Such acts diverted men from the jitteriness of pre-action nerves, signalling to both men and their families the dangers they faced. Since the early twentieth century, military psychiatrists have recognised that anxieties peaked during this period, the ‘stop and wait’ periods of warfare being the most ‘unbearable’ of all.[44] Shortly before his death, Michael Lennon reassured his brother that placing his affairs ‘in perfect order’ made his mind ‘easy’.[45] Such actions fell into the range of ritualistic behaviours, serving as a salve to combat ‘windiness’.[46]

Apart from dealing with financial practicalities, wills afforded an opportunity for a potentially final expression of affection. The night before the Somme, Ernest Polack told his family how his belongings should be distributed in the event of his death. He ended with a postscript:

> To you – Mother and Father I owe all. The thought of you two – and of my brothers – will inspire me to the end. I often wish Albert [his younger brother] was with me and miss him dreadfully.[47]

Men’s ‘affairs’ encompassed planning for the future support of their families. Before leaving for the front in October 1914, Alfred Parker informed his older brother, Evelyn, that he had lodged his will at a firm of solicitors. Alfred was married, and father to a baby daughter. Without wishing to impose on his brother, and couching his request deferentially, he explained why he had not named Evelyn as executor: ‘I felt you had enough to do with the rest of the family – & you have been so kind always in doing other things for me.’ Alfred shows his trust in his older sibling by adding, ‘if it were necessary, & you were willing to help them in any way, I should be very grateful’. Alfred sidesteps direct talk of death. His negotiation of the niceties of his sibling relationship allows him to avoid placing an

unnecessary obligation on Evelyn while believing he will step in if needed. Although Alfred's stoical politeness might suggest an emotionally distant fraternal bond, his trust was well placed. Following his brother's death, Evelyn took over the administration of the will from Alfred's widow and became his niece's guardian. Barrister Jack Harley took similar steps. On the eve of 'something big', he regretted not being able to say a proper goodbye. In the event of his not returning, he asked his sister to do everything possible for his poor wife, as he hated to think of her 'bereaved & sad'.[48] His fears proved prescient; the following day he was killed in the Third Battle of Krithia. Knowing that siblings would offer emotional and practical support to spouses and children partially assuaged the anxieties facing fighting men.

'We've got a brother soldiering'

Expressions of fatalism may have counterbalanced the strong pull that war held on boys' imaginations. Whipped up by patriotic fervour and the allure of combat, expressions of excitement and glory by those too young to fight often accompanied the outbreak of war. War was an adventure, a game enlivened by images from the 'pleasure-culture' of comic books and tales of heroes, unassociated with any of the foreboding experienced by parents and older siblings.[49] Len Whitehead was seven years old when his brother joined the Essex Pals. The view that some Pals regiments were less socially prestigious did not distract from his or his family's pride: 'we didn't care, we'd got a brother soldiering'. Intoxicated by excitement, 'nobody gave it a second thought that [he] might never come back'.[50] Ronald Horton recalled his 'boyish reaction': 'I was excited, elated, now things will liven up – life will be interesting.' Guilt shadowed this memory, for Horton added, 'May I be forgiven, for I was only eleven years old.'[51] Mill apprentice Raynor Taylor was 'always afraid' that the war would end before he could take part, a feeling that fired up as his older brothers left for war.[52] A naval officer sharply rebuked Grace MacDougall for expressing a similar sentiment, when he overheard her thanking God she was still young enough to participate.[53] Sixteen-year-old Naomi Mitchison referenced the 'glory' of war, noting her 'upset' at being 'out of the fun'. Fear for her brother, an officer in the Black Watch, began only with the first casualty lists and the

dawning realisation that, contrary to popular belief, the conflict would not be over by Christmas 1914.[54] Youth and inexperience infuse these accounts. Esther Wild was aggrieved when her brother Frank wrote 'lightly' about gunfire, and ascribed it to his transitional 'soldier-like and boy-like' status.[55]

Familial pride is a common thread running through many accounts of fraternal enlistment or volunteering. Enthusiasm for war in some families and communities lingered long into 1915. Raynor Taylor was 'proud, very, very proud' that his brother Albert was one of the first from their close-knit mill community to volunteer. Taylor gave an evocative account of the 'sensation' occasioned by Albert's unexpected return home on leave. This sparked 'euphoria' among his immediate family and aroused widespread curiosity. According to Raynor, 'everyone' from the locality came to inspect Albert as if he were a 'museum piece'.[56] People even stopped work to view the first living specimen of a battle-worn Tommy to appear on their doorstep. Laden down with kit and bearing his rifle – the sacra of combat – Albert was transformed into a source of wonder and a visual representation of his peers.

Lack of fraternal communication about conditions at the front contributed to young men's rush to volunteer. Ignorance of the dangers of warfare, along with hero-worship of siblings, fuelled this eagerness. Wishing to emulate his older brothers, seventeen-year-old volunteer Reginald Kiernan lied about his age. A shocked Kiernan later reflected on how his brothers had sheltered him from the 'hard' realities of army life:

> Have my brothers been through this? Have they really lived among the same surroundings, and under the same influences, day after day, month after month? I never thought it, looking at them, listening to them, when they came home on leave. They were just as usual.[57]

Seemingly, war had not marked his brothers – a demonstration of men's success in drawing an emotional barrier around their wartime experiences, even to those closest to them.

Nobody, according to the truism, returns from war still a boy.[58] Battle experience conferred manhood on soldier-brothers, swift to mark the relative immaturity of underage siblings who were yet to experience trench warfare. A judgement of foolhardiness marks the frustration shown by elder siblings towards the martial enthusiasm of younger brothers. Walter Shewry recalled how 'real worship of our Heroes' led his adolescent self to follow his older brother's example and volunteer for the Post Office Rifles, much

to the dismay of his family at home. Walter's fervour was not matched by his sibling, who greeted his arrival on the front line with the words, 'You bloody fool'. Rather than brave or heroic, his exasperated older brother saw Walter's actions as a sign of naivety. Walter frankly described his fear after seeing the 'seething nightmare' of battle. Overwhelmed, he succumbed to trench fever. Leonard dutifully visited him, but their regular meetings offered little comfort to either brother. Stifled by thoughts of unmanning himself, Walter was unable to divulge his feelings:

> They were not happy visits – we just could not communicate – I just could not bring myself to tell him of my great misery and suffering nor of my fear and horror and he on his part could do nothing about his worry for me.[59]

Brotherly concern could not soothe away the terrors evoked by modern warfare. Rendered helpless by the brothers' inability to confide in each other, Leonard turned to an external resource, instructing their mother to inform the War Office of Walter's underaged status. As a result, Walter was refused permission to return to the firing line. The protective stretch of brotherly ties stymied Walter's desire to overcome his fears and fulfil his masculine duty. For Leonard, his brother's safety was more pressing than obeying the nation's call to arms.

Second Lieutenant Ernest Routley was infuriated when his younger brother, 'like a fool', disregarded his repeated warnings and volunteered for overseas service. Having survived his first big offensive and received a Military Cross, Ernest fully expected his number to be up soon. In a highly emotive letter he spelt out the dangers awaiting his sibling, who, lacking specialist skills, would be an ordinary Tommy – mere cannon fodder. Professing himself willing to relinquish his commission, his medal and all that he owned in order to come home, Ernest made a direct appeal based on Frank's familial obligations:

> Haven't you got the sense to see that Mother is nearly breaking her heart about me, because she realises one's life is not worth 2d out here, and yet in spite of this you volunteer and just double her grief. I don't know what will happen to her – I know her heart isn't strong and the shock of this may finish her. If so, I hold you responsible.[60]

Ernest brushed off suggestions that staying at home exposed Frank to accusations of unmanliness, asking if it was preferable to have strangers call him a slacker than for his siblings and father to hold him responsible for his mother's death. Only at the end of his letter does his tone soften,

with a recognition that Frank's motivations for joining up were the same as his own.

Brothers responded to concerns raised by parents. Hawtin Mundy determined to act when his mother informed him that his underage brother had enlisted and was currently at home on embarkation leave. Initially thinking, 'What's the silly young fool want to join for?', Hawtin made repeated requests for leave so he could deal with the matter in person, even promising to volunteer for the next draft if granted this concession. The urgency of the situation was pressed by a further wire from his mother, who clearly believed that her younger son would heed his older brother. On his leave requests being turned down, Hawtin resolved to go anyway, and forged a pass purporting to be signed by his Commanding Officer. His efforts were unsuccessful. The forgery was discovered, Hawtin was court-martialled, reduced in rank and sent to the front.[61] His readiness to risk both his status and, potentially, his life to safeguard his 'foolhardy' younger sibling speaks to the value that Hawtin placed on his familial responsibilities.

Sisters' war work

The service of brothers motivated sisters to 'do their bit'. The pioneering homoeopathic practitioner, Margaret Tyler, instigated a nationwide appeal for sandbags following a letter from her brother, Lieutenant Colonel James Tyler, pointing out the vital necessity for this equipment. Throughout March and April 1915, Margaret fired off a series of letters to the national and regional press, outlining the urgent need for sandbags and containing detailed instructions on how to make them.[62] Some reports copied the direct plea made by her brother, framed to appeal to womenfolk at home and asking if 'the kind people' who had sent 'warm knitted things' over the winter months could now turn their hands to sandbag making for the troops' protection. The appeal sparked an immediate interest, capturing the public imagination. 'Sandbag parties' replaced the craze for knitting parties in some areas of the country. Coordinating the logistics of receiving and dispatching the items from her Highgate home, Margaret's active response to her brother's request resulted in the dispatch of over two million

sandbags in the first year alone. By acting in tandem, the Tyler siblings met a pressing and life-saving need for fighting men.

When sisters took up war work, brothers signalled fraternal approval. Joining the numbers of middle-class women eager to establish their commitment to the national defence, Phyllis Puckle undertook VAD training, part of the War Office's initiative to prepare for war. The Puckle siblings later served at Cynfield Hospital, Shrewsbury: Phyllis as a nurse and her sister Mollie as a cook.[63] Their brother George praised their hard work, recognising Phyllis's satisfaction at 'really doing something now'.[64] Personal narratives provide rare incidents of brothers providing practical help in support of their sisters' war efforts. When Grace McDougall was attempting to organise the first FANY motor ambulance, her favourite brother, Bill, was on hand with timely assistance. First, he supported her in her efforts to obtain funds to purchase a suitable vehicle; later, by temporarily arranging a transfer from his regiment, he joined his sister for the initial months of her first overseas posting, remaining there as a driver before taking up his commission in January 1916. Bill's role was one of active championship, along with providing vital ancillary support to his sister's endeavour.

Other sisters felt guilt at their comparative passivity. Once Oliver Hamilton had volunteered, his younger sister, Peggy, thought she ought to do 'something useful'.[65] Dithering over the options available to her, Peggy remained at home. In early 1916 she was discussing her options over tea, when her brother turned up unexpectedly on leave. Provoked by this drawing-room indolence, Oliver resorted to ungentlemanly frankness, asking his sibling why she didn't follow the example of a close family friend, 'sweating her guts out' at Woolwich Arsenal. For Oliver, the physical exertions displayed by their friend on the factory floor matched the sacrifice made by troops on the firing line. The very next day a shamed Peggy signed on at the local Labour Exchange. Countering the myth that munitions work was unsuitable for 'girls of gentle birth', she extolled the benefits of work war: overcoming her lack of confidence, satisfaction in her work and pride in earning money, as opposed to receiving an allowance from her parents. Women munitions workers were utterly implicated in war 'making', states Angela Woollacott.[66] This induced a 'terrible dilemma' for Peggy: how to reconcile praying for loved ones' safety when working twelve hours a day to further the destruction of others. Such deliberations

were turned on their head by the novelist and propagandist Hall Caine, who declared that 'girls' making cartridges at Woolwich did so conscientiously, mindful that any defects might result in the cartridge failing to fire correctly whereas 'the soldier who may fall at the next instant under the enemy's more certain weapon may be her own brother or sweetheart'.[67]

In some families the war effort of one sister was made at the 'sacrifice' of the 'devoted daughter' at home. Mollie Puckle faced great difficulties when attempting to join the Land Army in 1916. With Phyllis serving overseas as an ambulance driver, their parents strongly believed that Mollie ought to stay at home.[68] Women faced not just parental hostility. Opposition to women fighting perpetuated a rhetoric of femininity that equated motherhood with soldiering. Sisters of fighting men, one advice columnist advised, must be kept away from battle so they might replace a decimated nation.[69] Bluestocking daughters, who had achieved academic freedom, faced obstacles to war service. At Oxford University, depleted by students and dons departing for war service, the female colleges made several proclamations bidding students to stay put. When Winifred Holtby interrupted her undergraduate studies to serve with the WAAC in Huchenneville, France, following a year of 'anguished indecision', the college principal, Emily Penrose, declared it an 'inconvenience' and made a Sunday-night announcement reminding her female students of the duty of remaining in college.[70] Penrose had ministerial support for her views. In February 1917 the President of the Board of Education, H. A. L. Fisher, stated that, in his view, it was the duty of women university students to stay put unless called up by a branch of the National Service Department. His belief, disseminated in *The Times*, was that it would be detrimental to the national interest to rob the future of a highly trained teaching profession.[71]

Keep out of it

Men hardened by war showed no compunction in warning their brothers to stay put. The wounded brother of a thirty-seven-year-old plumber, father to seven children under the age of seventeen, advised him to 'Keep out of it – if you can'.[72] 'Keeping out' became a convenient shorthand for expressing fraternal concern, an indirect means of breaching the silence that masked men's experience. Awareness that their brothers might be placed in danger

animated men's concerns. As Alf Pollard explained in his post-war memoir, 'It is one thing to be a fire-eater oneself, enjoying the thrill of risking one's life. It is quite another to know that one's flesh and blood is in danger and that one can do nothing to help.'[73] Mindful of the interiority of combatants' emotional responses, Roper advises caution against reading such pronouncements at face value. He cites a letter written by Arthur Hubbard, arguing that while ostensibly expressing relief that his younger brothers are at home, far removed from the fighting, Arthur simultaneously obliges his family to imagine them at the front, and projects his distress by placing the perils which he himself faces firmly in their minds.[74] The ambivalence felt by fighting men when communicating to loved ones is an important undercurrent in fraternal correspondence between combatants and non-combatants. In considering the multilayered subjective responses of fighting men, we should not downplay the protectiveness that they felt towards their brothers as substantive evidence of fraternal affection.

Knowledge of the relative safety of brothers brought emotional relief. It was a 'great comfort' to Jack Tavernor, serving with the Coldstream Guards, to think of his brother Will at home. 'I think you see plainly now why it was your place to stay,' he stated. Jack reinforced his message by explaining his 'wretchedness' if both siblings were 'in the same plight'.[75] Fretting over brothers' safety was an added anxiety for fighting men. A month later, Jack expanded on this theme, influenced by the killing of two brothers whom he had trained alongside. Observing that many believed they would be spared the 'hardest fighting', he added, 'I can't help thinking sometimes when you were mad on enlisting you thought the same, but be glad & thankful you did not do so for the sake of those left behind'.[76] Safeguarding his brother lessened the burden of war for Jack and his working-class family. Placing Will's duty to his family on an equal footing with his duty to the nation sustained Jack's morale and efficacy as a soldier.

Exemplifying men's ambivalence towards the opposing demands of patriotic duty and fraternal wellbeing is the wartime correspondence between the Falk brothers, displaying Cecil's ardent desire to keep Geoff well away from the war. With the lowering of the conscription age to eighteen in May 1916, Cecil's concerns appeared more frequently. He fervently hoped for the war's end before Geoff reached this milestone.[77] When it became apparent that his brother would be sent to the front, Cecil adopted a new stratagem, focusing his efforts on keeping Geoff away from

the worse danger zones to serve his country from the comparative safety of the Balkan Front, where he himself was serving.[78] This last arose from statistical evidence. The risk of death or wounding was higher by far on the Western Front: five casualties for every nine men sent out, as compared with one for every twelve in Salonika.[79] To achieve this, Cecil utilised the long-established army principle that an older serving brother could 'claim' a younger sibling. He detailed with great care the steps Geoff must take to join his own regiment, providing explicit instructions on filling out the enlistment forms. Cecil's persistence and strategising ensured that Geoff's application was ultimately successful. Before this occurred, Cecil endured a further bout of anxiety on learning that Geoff might be diverted to the Western Front. This news, coupled with 'an absolutely sickening' absence of mail. prompted a flurry of letters from the increasingly worried Cecil.[80] Thankfully for Cecil, this proved not to be the case. Geoff eventually joined him in Salonika in June 1918.

Cecil's attitudes demonstrate the inconsistencies between external displays of manly duty and internal fears for a beloved brother. Preserving their 'discrete cell' required dedicated effort.[81] Cecil's plotting, discussed openly in the sanctity of sibling correspondence, reveals how he identified and resolved problems. Their successful resolution partially depended on Geoffrey's acceptance of Cecil's greater knowledge of military affairs and trust in his judgement. Outwardly, Cecil, a recipient of the Military Cross, represented the ideal of soldierly heroism. Openly espousing the public-school ethos of his class, he saw no contradiction in evading the worse consequences of fulfilling his duty while still 'playing the game'. By such means, serving men adjudicated between the duties they owed to state and to family. Some combatants regarded refusal to serve as an abrogation of duty, but saw no shame in protecting themselves or their brothers against the worse ravages of war.

Brothers in blood and in arms

Cecil and Geoff Falk were among the many brothers who enlisted or ended up serving together. An article in *The Graphic*, a weekly illustrated magazine, drew attention to this phenomenon, noting that 'soldiering undoubtedly runs in families', with the consequence that 'brothers by blood

are constantly found as brothers in arms' (Figure 4). Similarly, the official history of the WAAC stated that the display of 'courage and nerve' by members showed their 'eagerness to help their brothers'.[82] While the appeal was to a metaphorical rather than blood siblinghood, the trope of sibling bonds as a motivation for war service is striking.

Moreover, *The Graphic* article referred to soldiering as 'essentially infectious, just like any other kind of enthusiasm'.[83] Fraternal enlistment narratives attest to the frequency with which brothers volunteered or served side by side.[84] Yorkshire coal miner Oswald Burgess and his two older brothers all worked down the pit. When one brother stated that he was going to enlist, the others determined to do the same: 'We all three went … we all three went together at night.'[85] One sibling was rejected due to poor eyesight, but the other two were placed in the same company, the 14th York and Lancaster Regiment. Their urge to act in unison is a prime example of enlistment contagion among sibling groups. There was a darker side to the impetus placed on manly heroism. In July 1916 the *Hull Daily Mail* recorded the suicide of Frederick Hall Hughes. His father told the inquest that his seventeen-year-old son, having been refused by the army, had been greatly upset at being unable to join his brothers on active service.[86]

Miners' engineering skills and physical strength were especially valued in the trenches. George Clayton was working at the local colliery in Stanley when a notice was put up at the pit 'urgently' requiring miners. Interviewed in 1987, Clayton explained that he had joined the army to follow his brother, having 'always been attached to him'. However, his narrative revealed a more complex picture. George had made a pact with a friend that if either was rejected the other would refuse to serve. When his friend failed the medical, George initially intended to abide by this promise. What changed his mind was the sight of his brother, passed fit to serve, marching away. According to George, 'something came over him' at that moment, something 'he never expected or anticipated', seeing his brother 'go and march away and for me not to be marched away. It took a hold and I said, "Well I'll have to go".'[87] The image of his brother transitioning into a fighting soldier exerted a fraternal pull and sparked an emotional reaction in George. He felt impelled to follow his sibling into war.

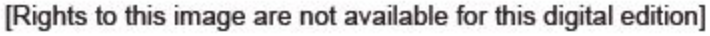

Figure 4 ‘Brothers by blood and in arms’, *The Graphic*, 5 June 1915.

The Pals battalions sprung out of a recognition that many men responding to Lord Kitchener’s appeal to enlist in the New Army wanted to serve alongside friends, relatives or neighbours. Sharing the experience with brothers informed men’s decision making; volunteering became a rite of fraternal unity. There was a strong desire not to be left behind not merely physically, but in terms of life experience. Fifteen-year-old George Pocock packed up his farming job to volunteer with his three older brothers. Strong, and looking older than his years, his reasoning was clear: ‘me being a big boy I’m not let them go without me’. George was determined not to miss out simply by accident of age. Dismissed from the army after his mother informed the War Office of his true age, George ‘didn’t like’ leaving his brothers behind. The fraternal cell had been broken.[88] Having reached one milestone of manhood by becoming a breadwinner, George was loath to miss out on the adventure of war, but his youth proved an insurmountable handicap.

Ted Francis and his elder brother Harry joined the Birmingham Pals in 1914. According to Ted, the brothers saw a lot of each other, ‘more so in France than in England’, deriving strength from being together and sharing the experiences of army life. Ted summarised the benefits as follows: ‘To have a brother always by you and to sleep with him and to go up the trenches with him.’ Combatants expressed doubts about the wisdom of having blood brothers serve alongside each other, possibly disrupting the military *esprit de corps*. Ted Francis was told it was ‘silly’ or ‘foolish’, as the siblings would be ‘bound to worry about each other’.[89] As will be seen in Chapter 4, this concern was prevalent among fighting men.

Although the infection of enlistment did not directly affect young women in the same way as their male counterparts, some sisters undertook war work together. The theme of sisterly unity underpinned Kit Dodsworth's representation of her war work. When her sister Eve was assigned night duties, the kindness of her fellow VADs could not dissipate Kit's feelings of loneliness during their temporary separation. Until then, the sisters 'had always done everything together'. When her service in Egypt was placed in jeopardy due to her weak heart, Kit begged the Medical Officer to reconsider so as to ensure that Eve did not go without her. Finally, after her marriage to Lieutenant Pip Vaughan-Phillips, she spoke of her regret at leaving Eve behind in Alexandria. The conjugal bond eventually broke the sororal companionship that bolstered the sisters' resilience and spirits.[90]

Notions of good clinical care fostered fictive familial bonding between nursing staff and their patients. The wounded were encouraged to look upon their carers as mothers or sisters.[91] For VADs with serving brothers, blood ties flavoured their nursing practice with a distinct emotional intensity. When rumours spread that a general hospital was being mobilised to accompany the 47th Division to Russia, Edith Appleton hoped to go with them. The only tempting alternative would be to move somewhere close to her brother Taff. Her sibling bond quelled her thirst for adventure and new experiences. Vera Brittain became a VAD so as to share the hardships endured by her fiancé, Roland Leighton. After Roland's death in December 1915, she contrived to serve overseas to be nearer to her brother Edward: 'all I have, all there is to fall back upon, all that is worthwhile'.[92] Her aspiration to be with him 'for the duration of our wartime lives' was thwarted when Edward's battalion was ordered to the Italian front. Relieved that her sibling had left the Ypres Salient, Vera was nonetheless left despondent and war-weary by their separation.[93]

Conclusion

The liminal moment of departing for war presents an insight into attitudes towards the war and patriotic service. Underpinning these enlistment narratives are a complex web of familial bonds supporting and frustrating siblings' wartime ambitions. Men's narratives affirm the relationality of anxious feelings, often recording their fears and concerns for the safety and

wellbeing of brothers and other family members. War fever infected siblings of both sexes. The prosecution of the war was wrapped in the rhetoric of patriotic masculinity. Within this emotional economy, the act of enlistment, as Nicolette Gullace notes, became an inceptive act of citizenship.[94] For men and women of all classes, adventure and military glamour masked the brutal carnage of trench warfare, offering an opportunity to escape the dreariness of domestic and work routines. Retrospective reflections of this war fever provoked feelings of guilt and shame.

From the early months of the war, trepidation flavoured men's thoughts of the war. Even those young men prepared for war under the auspices of the OTC approached their departures with foreboding. Observing the anxieties of older brothers leaving for war troubled their younger siblings. Despite efforts to keep emotions in check, they registered as noteworthy on the boys and men witnessing them. A retreat behind the stoicism of the 'stiff upper lip' protected men's families from the horrors of modern warfare. Yet, for some underaged men, fraternal restraint exposed them to the deadly allure of an imagined war. The maturity bestowed by birth order and war experience ignited impassioned warnings from older brothers to their younger siblings to keep away from the conflict.

Men on the threshold of service used fatalism to signal their concerns, seeking emotional expression through the language of death. It is through their siblings' reportage that we see the fear and anxiety accompanying their 'heroic' acts of enlistment. Sisters, wearied by the repetition of seeing their brothers, cousins and friends depart, some never to return, developed superstitions around these departures. A focus on 'threshold' moments illustrates how men's anxieties at particular stages of war centred on family concerns. They provide a further dimension to the dynamics of volunteering and enlistment and the emotional limits which men placed on their patriotic duties. Brothers often adopted a pragmatic view of conscription and military service, and the strong ethos of fraternal protection saw otherwise dutiful men welcome any opportunities offered to their brothers to escape the traumas of war. There is an element of self-protection in these measures: fighting men found it easier to endure the unimaginable terrors of war without the burden of worrying about either their brothers' safety or the financial and emotional wellbeing of loved ones at home. Within the emotional economy of wartime patriotism and praiseworthy military

masculinity, men strove to maintain their fraternal, domestic and financial responsibilities. Conscription, and the urgency to send men out to the firing line, ultimately defeated men's self-imposed priorities.

Notes

1 Memoir, Campbell, IWM 73/37/1, p. 14.
2 C. Figley and W. Nash, 'Introduction: For Those Who Bear the Battle', in C. Figley and W. Nash (eds), *Combat Stress Injury* (Abingdon, 2007), p. 2.
3 A. Gregory, 'Railway Stations: Gateways and Termini', in J. Winter and J-L. Robert (eds), *Capital Cities at War* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 44; L. V. Smith, *The Embattled Self. French Soldiers' Testimony of the Great War* (Ithaca, NY, 2007), p. 23.
4 A. Gregory, 'British "War Enthusiasm" in 1914: A Reassessment', in G. Braybon (ed.), *Evidence, History, and the Great War* (New York, 2003), pp. 67–85; C. Pennell, *A Kingdom United. Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2012).
5 J. White, *Zeppelin Nights: London in the First World War* (London, 2014), pp. 20–21.
6 N. Martin, '"And All Because It Is War!": First World War Diaries, Authenticity and Combatant Identity', *Textual Practice*, 29:7 (2015), p. 1249; M. Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity: The "War Generation" and the Psychology of Fear in Britain, 1914–1950', *Journal of British Studies*, 44:2 (2005), p. 345.
7 Memoir, Campbell, IWM 73/37/1, pp. 12–13.
8 Steedman explores how we reinterpret and rework our childhood memories for multifarious purposes. C. Steedman, 'Landscape for a Good Woman', *Past Tenses* (London, 1992), pp. 3–6.
9 J. White, *Zeppelin Nights*, p. 42.
10 Gregory, 'Railway Stations', p. 24.
11 For a discussion of the use of humour in the trenches, see, A. Watson, *Enduring the Great War. Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914–1918* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 90–92; J. Y. LeNaour, 'Laughter and Tears in the Great War: The Need for Laughter/the Guilt of Humour', *Journal of European Studies*, 31:3–4 (2001), pp. 265–275; E. Madigan, '"Sticking to a Hateful Task": Resilience, Humour, and British Understandings of Combatant Courage, 1914–1918', *War in History*, 20:1 (2013), pp. 76–98.
12 Barbellion, *The Journal of a Disappointed Man*, p. 206.
13 Dixon, *Weeping Britannia*, pp. 202–205.
14 C. H. Rolph, *London Particulars* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 1, 95–96.
15 Tears, Darwin observed, may be secreted 'under the most opposite emotions, and under no emotion at all', C. Darwin, *The Expression of Emotion on Man and Animals* (London, 1872, 1998), p. 163; Dixon, *Weeping Britannia*, p. 7; Vingerhoets, *Why Only Humans Weep*, pp. 3, 7.
16 See, for example, the case studies cited by Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class*, pp. 199–201.
17 Rolph, *London Particulars*, pp. 175–177.
18 Second Lieutenant Lionel Grigson, 9 May 1917; Lieutenant Kenneth Grigson MC, 20 July 1918; Cadet Claude Grigson, 15 October 1918; Captain Aubrey Grigson, 27 April 1942; Air Commodore John Grigson DSO DFC, 3 July 1943.
19 M. Walsh, *Brothers in War* (London, 2006), pp. 405–406. Other notable examples are the Beechey family from Lincoln who lost five out of eight brothers; the Smith family from County

Durham who lost five out of six brothers, and the Souls family from the Cotswolds who lost five out of six brothers.

20 Grigson, *The Crest on the Silver*, pp. 73–74.
21 Eve's diary, 11 May 1915, Dodsworth, IWM 82/12/1.
22 Kit's memoir, Dodsworth, IWM 82/12/1, p. 2.
23 For a discussion of this phenomenon, see, Dixon, *Weeping Britannia*, p. 211.
24 Cearns, *The Love of a Brother*, pp. 32–33.
25 Mitchison, *All Change Here*, pp. 107–108.
26 For a discussion of combatants' use of superstition in both world wars, see, Francis, *The Flyer*, p. 124; Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, pp. 97–100.
27 Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, pp. 362, 403. Superstitious fears also accompanied Naomi Mitchison's departings from her brother and fiance. Calder, *The Nine Lives of Naomi Mitchison*, p. 43.
28 Campbell, IWM 73/37/1, p. 12.
29 Madigan, *Faith under Fire*, pp. 185–186.
30 Mitchison, *All Change Here*, p. 104.
31 Rathbone, *We That Were Young*, p. 65.
32 K. Roberts, *One Bright Morning* (1967, 2008), p. 127.
33 Ibid., pp. 145–146.
34 Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, pp. 213–214.
35 Edward Brittain is absent from Lynne Layton's consideration of Vera's pro-war stance. L. Layton, 'Vera Brittain's Testament(s)', in M. Higonnet et al. (eds), *Behind the Lines* (New Haven, 1987), pp. 71–72.
36 Brittain, *Chronicle of Youth*, pp. 84, 89–90; Ibid., *Testament of Youth*, pp. 57, 99–100.
37 Ibid., *Chronicle of Youth*, p. 15.
38 Roper, *The Secret Battle*, pp. 296–298.
39 *Morning Post*, August 1916; R. Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (London, 1929).
40 Ibid., p. 57.
41 J. Moorcroft Wilson, *Robert Graves. From Great War Poet to Good-Bye to All That (1895–1929)* (London, 2018), p. 45.
42 R. Graves, 'The Smells of Home', *The Spectator*, 30 November (1918).
43 Longer forms were also available for formal wills listing one or more beneficiary. These were witnessed and allowed for the naming of executors. Letter, 6 May 1915, Lennon, IWM 08/36/1.
44 This conclusion was drawn by the pre-eminent Russian military psychiatrist, Grigorii Shumkov, based on his observations of soldiers during the Russo-Japanese war (1904–1905). Plamper, 'Soldiers and Emotion', pp. 89–90.
45 Letter, 4 June 1915, Lennon, IWM 08/36/1.
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3

Domestic heroes

We met many heroes of that kind.[1]

Referring to the devotion of single young men to their parents and siblings, the chairman of the Preston military service tribunal, Harry Cartmell, spoke of his work as a valuable instruction on the economic condition of the country. What makes this admission most surprising is Cartmell's former experience as a Poor Law guardian. His admission indicates the hidden depths of familial support borne by young men and women, especially in working-class families.[2] Caring for dependants was embedded in the Poor Law legislation, the gendered bias of financial responsibility originating from the so-called 'liable relatives' clause of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act requiring blood kin to bear financial responsibility for poverty-stricken welfare recipients.[3] By the late nineteenth century, the rhetoric of relief altered to redefine this as a moral duty.[4] Convictions for failure to support dependent relatives averaged 8,000 per annum throughout the 1880s.[5] Most did not shirk from this obligation; rather, as was found by a survey of working-class life in Middlesbrough, it became a natural extension of strong affection and duty.[6]

A hierarchy of responsibility underpinned this duty. Despite the vital contributions made by wives and daughters in many households, single, able-bodied young men were predominantly identified as the main providers for dependent family members.[7] Shouldering the brunt of family survival this way fed into notions of masculine respectability, demonstrating the mindset of serving men attempting to maintain this role. One example of the Poor Laws in operation, reported in the *Burnley Express*, involved a brother and sister, Edward and June Spencer, brought before the magistrates to explain why their family of four was not

contributing to the upkeep of their sixty-seven-year-old father. June, unmarried and suffering periods of ill health, successfully pleaded that her income was insufficiently reliable to sustain a regular payment. The son's argument that his father had put himself in the workhouse through drink was rejected and Edward was ordered to make a weekly payment of two shillings out of his 45 shillings earnings.[8]

Domestic unity

The wages of young men and women often made a crucial contribution to total household incomes. Social surveys conducted in the interwar years consistently found that working-class families with children in work were the least likely to fall below the poverty line.[9] Temperance movements such as the Band of Hope and the Church of England Temperance Society fostered youthful breadwinning through messages to children and young people that duty to home and family took precedence over individual pleasures.[10] Familial security came at a personal emotional cost, and siblings experienced loneliness when economic necessity forced their departures from home. Education legislation facilitated work by school-age children. Under the 1870 Elementary Education Act, children passing a labour certification or attending at least 250 sessions of schooling over a five-year period (the 'dunce's clause) were permitted to leave school before the official leaving age of twelve years if there was a good prospect of work.[11] Even though the 1890s and 1910s saw incremental increases in the school-leaving age, this 'half-time' system remained in place until the 1918 Education Act. Although this practice was concentrated in the textile industries of Yorkshire and Lancashire, a study of the London School Boards suggests that regular labour during school hours was replaced by work undertaken before or after the official school day.[12]

Economic security helped to shape the emotional culture of men's domestic lives.[13] Boys leaving school regarded employment as an important marker of manhood and were proudly aware of their vital contribution to household economies. In the pre-war years, working-class boys and adolescents found it comparatively easy to obtain temporary, 'blind-alley' occupations.[14] Focus on the plight of 'boy labour' glossed over similarities in the work patterns of young people, with no comparable debate emerging

about ‘girl labour’, despite girls’ input into household economies.[15] Research carried out against the backdrop of the equal pay campaign during the First World War highlighted women’s role in supporting households. A survey of 2,870 women undertaken by the Executive Committee of the Fabian Women’s Group in 1915 found that almost half were partially or fully responsible for the maintenance of others.[16] A separate investigation by Seebohm Rowntree and Frank Stuart in 1919 reported a far lower figure of 12.06 per cent by discounting working women’s contributions if the male breadwinner’s earnings were above the poverty line.[17]

Personal narratives proffer an insight into sisters’ attitudes to war work and how they balanced the conflicting demands of family and state. Violet Page was in domestic service. Her regular correspondence with her older brother, Fred, a private in the Middlesex Regiment, betrayed little dissatisfaction with her position. At just shy of 1.5 million, in 1901 domestic service formed the largest group of working people. The relationship between servants and employers was widely regarded as a microcosm of society.[18] Like many young women in service, Violet was contemplating following the example of her mother and aunt by joining the approximately one million ‘Tommy’s Sisters’ employed in munitions.[19] Instead of the reasons commonly given for leaving service, namely unsatisfactory relations with employers and low wages, the factors propelling Violet to consider alternative work were primarily family centred.[20] Out of a family of eight, only Violet and her two soldier-brothers lived away from home. The lure of returning to her packed and lively South Acton home trumped the prospect of better pay and conditions outside of domestic service. Like many working-class women, Violet did not view the war as an opportunity for improvement.[21] In the pre-war years, domestic service was regarded as a ‘soft’ job for working-class girls, enabling progression and, in the main, offering far better conditions than in industry.[22] Although Fred concurred with their mother that his sister should stay in a secure position, Violet tartly dismissed his opinion, placing the domestic realm at the centre of her reasoning:

> you would not [say that] if you was only off 4 hours once a week & had to get home & back in that time & see all the others have their evenings & the weekend free, it [domestic service] is alright for girls with no home.

Unregulated hours of work and lack of holidays, coupled with loneliness, stretched Violet's tolerance for her employment.[23] Drawing attention to her financial contribution to the household and jostling for a new place on the family hierarchy, Violet requested that Fred ask her, not their mother, for additional money, stating, tongue in cheek, 'don't forget I am the millionairess'. By subtly reinforcing her growing independence and the fact that money was not a prime motivation, Violet asserted her autonomy over her life choices. Her professed longing to be immersed once more in family life placed her among the estimated one million who left domestic service during the war.

Violet's sense of isolation from the family hub is echoed in a conversation between a brother and sister in Kate Roberts's novel, *One Bright Morning*. The protagonist Ann Owen's older brother, Roland, spends five years in England as an apprentice before joining the army, the cost of travel to rural Wales limiting his annual visits home to a mere two. Although Ann observes the struggle that Roland has in reintegrating with his family, and his swollen eyes on leaving, she does not appreciate the emotional toll that separation places on her sibling. In one conversation, Roland confides how terrible it is to be sent away, his isolation heightened by his family's belief that he is 'quite happy'.[24] Nostalgic yearning for home was common among men and women detached from their working-class homes for financial rather than military reasons – an under-appreciated emotional cost resulting from economic conditions.

The centrality of young men's wages to familial breadwinning models remained underappreciated both by government and by many sections of society. Total family income, as Gregory reminds us, was the actual determinant of wellbeing in wartime.[25] Not until 1917 were war pensions extended to dependent parents. Economic factors influenced the timing of men's decision to volunteer. The chronology of recruitment patterns shows that many waited until the official clarification over pay and separation allowances on 28 August 1914.[26] The relative youth of combatants meant that a greater number of mothers than wives received the benefit.[27] Some mothers experienced the paradox of benefitting financially from having a son or sons in service. Annie Taylor, the mother of two serving sons in an Oldham coal-mining community, was better off due to the dual effect of having fewer mouths to feed and receiving a regular income from service

pay. The receipt of regular payments had a similarly beneficial effect on many households.[28]

Examining brothers' caring and breadwinner roles casts a different perspective on familial financial and emotional interdependencies and how these were disrupted by war. Caring for loved ones was as much of a man's job as soldiering. The five Holmes brothers grew up in Battersea, London. When war broke out, Gus, the eldest, was sent to an Australian supply column; Arthur was already serving with the 7th Lancers in India and the youngest, John, lied about his age in order to volunteer. This left the remaining single brother, Bill, to look after their widowed mother, aged fifty-five in 1914, and two youngest sisters for as long as he was able. He shouldered this responsibility despite feeling that the 'patriotic thing' would be to volunteer. Anxieties about the persistent bombing raids and blackouts affecting London, the first iteration of war on the home front, doubtless influenced the Holmes brothers' reasoning, based on the individual make-up and economic circumstances of their family. The expectation rested on Bill, rather than on his married brother or two older sisters – one married and one in domestic service. Local awareness of his family circumstances meant that Bill experienced no backlash from his neighbours or at his workplace; it was 'only normal' that he should stop at home.[29] Bill's misgivings coalesced following the introduction of conscription, and he joined the London Regiment. When Gus was killed later that year, his mother unsuccessfully requested that the War Office release him. Regardless of his mother's wishes, Bill's 'strong feeling of patriotism' committed him to serve 'to the bitter end'. Fraternal guilt and frustration at playing a passive role at home stiffened his resolve. Such reservations could be firmly squashed by serving brothers. When Joe Miller's mother told him that his younger brother was 'anxious' to join the Army Service Corps he acted swiftly, writing 'don't be silly, stop where you are and look after mother', and reminding him bluntly, 'that's your job'.[30] Men took, or were made to take, their military and family duties equally seriously.

Calculative patriotism

Conscription and the tribunal system thrust fraternal decision making into the public eye. Evidence of brothers' economic relationships emerges from

the hearings of the local and county tribunals established to determine exemptions from service under the Military Service Act 1916. Surviving tribunal papers, together with press reports of hearings, reveal how brothers framed their claims, and official attitudes towards their reasoning.[31] Details of fraternal interdependencies emerging from these 'enforced narratives' show the careful balancing of cultural expectations of masculine roles in wartime.[32] In his analysis of working-class respectability, Peter Bailey makes a cogent case for the 'calculative' nature of this concept.[33] Respectability was a socially expedient choice made in particular settings. This 'calculative choice' provides a useful framework when considering the weight given by appellants to their familial and national duties. Under the legislation, local tribunals could issue absolute, conditional or temporary certificates of exemption for claimants appealing on the grounds of serious hardship due to exceptional financial or business obligations, or of domestic situation.[34] Charged with implementing the legislation, tribunals undertook this task with only intermittent, non-binding guidance issued by the Local Government Board (LGB) to support them. Consequently, the guiding principles developed by these quasi-judicial bodies were often contradictory or swayed by individual or local prejudices.[35] Implementation of the regime rarely met conscripted men's expectations.

Statistics amply corroborate the importance attached by men to their domestic responsibilities. Challenging Ilana Bet-El's characterisation of conscription as a passive bureaucratic process, Gregory argues that 'a perfectly normal response' was not passive acceptance, but an appeal.[36] A breakdown of grounds of appeal from one local tribunal found 40 per cent of cases were on domestic grounds; 40 per cent on business grounds; 10 per cent a combination of business and domestic; and 10 per cent on grounds of conscience.[37] These statutory grounds masked men's underlying emotional concerns as brothers acted in consort to create a generational shield against parental anxiety and grief. Four factors affected deliberations concerning brothers: government policy regarding the treatment of single men; the relative ignorance of the vital support these men (and their female counterparts) made to household economies; tribunals' treatment of brothers as 'economic units'; and the challenge made to tribunals' autonomy by the military representative. Even where tribunals appeared sympathetic, the military representative would appeal decisions, usually successfully. One such representative was instructed 'to press all cases of

single men under thirty years of age' regardless of merit.[38] Little consideration was given to how failure to facilitate men's statutory rights might affect morale. Instead, a highly oppositional system developed, pitting men's financial and domestic concerns against the military imperative of the state. Claims for full exemptions were rarely successful. Of the 11,307 cases heard by the Middlesex Appeal Tribunal, only 26 applicants received a full exemption and 581 a conditional exemption, while 2,813 were granted time to make alternative arrangements. That men continued to appeal despite such high odds illustrates their real anxieties and their calculative weighting of familial versus national duty.

Temporary exemptions were still valuable. They garnered time to put financial and domestic affairs in order. When casualty rates ran high, exemptions of three to six months could be life saving.[39] A prime example is seen in the efforts of Ernest and Percy Pratley to preserve their two grocery businesses in Bexhill, Surrey. Percy joined the Coldstream Guards in 1915, leaving Ernest in charge of running both businesses, a hard-won achievement for the two eldest sons of a coal merchant's labourer. Ernest, married and aged 36 in 1916, made a series of claims. Initially he focused on securing the services of his three married assistants, arguing that their physical labour was essential. His pleas were unsuccessful, making him reliant on his sister, three boys and three girls to help run the shops – a situation which the local paper branded as 'girls' taking men's places. Rather than a pejorative use of the word 'girls' for women workers, this was a factual statement of the substitution of underage labour to free up men of military age. In 1917, Ernest made his first personal claim. The burden of managing both businesses with a depleted staff had been detrimental to his health, resulting in severe neuritis. The chairman articulated the tribunal's misgivings over exempting a man passed fit for general service, mindful of the public distaste for businessmen apparently prospering at the expense of fighting men. Ernest, he cautioned, should take care not to kill himself by 'working too hard and getting money quickly'. Percy's hospitalisation with severe shrapnel wounds in July 1917, together with his sister's joining the WAAC, garnered Ernest a further exemption, this time conditional on his joining the Sussex Regiment volunteers. Having complied with this condition, Ernest obtained a final exemption in July 1918, succeeding in his ambition of maintaining both businesses intact for the war's duration.[40]

Brothers of military age were frequently regarded as socioeconomic units rather than individuals by tribunals determining claims. In turn, numerous examples show siblings regarding themselves as a joint resource, determining between themselves who was best placed to enlist and who should remain at home, acting as a generational cohort to safeguard present and future prospects. It was common for brothers to establish separate business entities in the same trade or profession; setting up multiple single businesses as opposed to one family-owned business was a far more effective familial strategy in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Especially in the early years of their inception, such businesses were too fragile to sustain more than one household.[41] Little information exists on the war's impact on these small businesses, caught up as they were in the demands of the wartime economy. While the normal course of trade must continue, 'every private interest', declared Edward Lloyd, an official at the Ministry of Food, 'must be subordinated to the successful prosecution of war'.[42] According to the 1911 Census, there were approximately 1.2 million employers or proprietors out of a population of 18.3 million. A comparatively small number within the workforce, they formed a significant proportion of appeal cases.

Siblings engaged in the same reserved trades were rarely both able to claim exemption from service. The direct effect of rationing on food businesses, the general loss of manpower, the reallocation of resources to larger industries, weak distribution systems and the declining purchasing power of customers worsened the plight of single-owner businessmen, who would conceivably face ruin if called up. Conscription placed particular strains on one-person businesses, which often represented an investment of life savings. As one opponent to conscription, Liberal MP William Pringle, pointed out, if a single businessmen was pressed into service, his capital would be conscripted as well, disadvantaging his chances of re-establishing himself afterwards.[43] A twenty-six-year-old married man maintained that it was his 'duty' to preserve the ironmongery business in which he and his soldier-brother had invested their life savings.[44] Uncertainty as to the war's likely duration fuelled men's anxieties and complicated contingency planning. Against this economic backdrop, brothers who were permitted to pool resources gained an advantage.[45]

Even where tribunals were sympathetic, recognising not only the personal devastation but also the risk to the local economy, the odds were

against sole proprietors. Of the 165 cases heard in the Buckinghamshire town of Marlow, over three-quarters of the thirty-three claims made by one-man businesses were ultimately rejected.[46] These statistics belie a more complex picture. Originally, the LGB accepted that single-owner businesses should receive special treatment. As the war progressed, attitudes became entrenched. Officials believed that businessmen had ample time to make preparations, whereas local concerns focused on the continuity of key services.[47] As the parameters for eligibility expanded, the pool of community businesses becoming vulnerable to closure grew.[48] In December 1917, new guidance clarified the 'special hardship' condition for sole proprietors. To obtain exemptions, businessmen must have explored all possible means of carrying on the business through a relative or friend or, as a last resort, disposing of the business. If this drastic measure was required, the tribunal was obliged to assess the man's chances of later reviving the business.[49] Eventually, action was taken to address the issue more systematically. In 1918, the Minister of National Service appointed Frederick Pickering, a Bradford businessman, to coordinate cooperation among trade associations and regional one-man business associations to help safeguard businesses once their owners had been conscripted.[50]

Tribunal work was arduous.[51] In March 1916, several members of the Manchester Appeal Tribunal resigned, due to the 'prolonged and exacting' work.[52] The Salford tribunal alone heard 2,500 appeals between January and April 1916.[53] Even a conservative estimate suggests that tribunals dealt with 1.25 million cases.[54] Membership was predominantly male and tended to be dominated by local 'worthies'.[55] Portrayed by one sketch writer as 'a leading light, a kindly light', Harry Cartmell, Mayor of Preston, is an exemplar of the typical member.[56] An English solicitor and justice of the peace, a conservative councillor, active church-goer and a Poor Law guardian, Cartmell was firmly ensconced in the town's social and business life. Determining cases affecting the livelihoods and wellbeing of men and their families, many of whom would have been known to tribunal members, weighed heavily on some. Speaking to the council in November 1916, Cartmell acknowledged the high personal stakes involved, reassuring his audience that his colleagues did not forget the 'seriousness' of their duty, actually, as well as figuratively, a matter of life and death.[57] In April 1918, the Conwy Borough tribunal dealt with a 'difficult case' when refusing to grant a further exemption to a young man performing the national service of

sea fishing. Six brothers were in service, and the remaining two could not physically man the fishing boat. At this late stage of the war, the decisive factor was the man's Grade I assessment, the highest category of fitness.[58] The livelihood of the remaining two siblings and the viability of the family business was sacrificed in the national interest. Doubtless, the Preston tribunal was not alone in endeavouring to give every applicant 'a full, patient, and careful hearing'. The human cost of 'hard' decisions is lost in the public records – official recognition of their emotional and practical consequences prompted their post-war disposal. What remain clear are the persistent efforts made by men to protect fraternal and familial interests.

These 'intimate, local and highly personal' tribunal decisions came under intense scrutiny.[59] The staggering number of cases produced plentiful copy for the press. 'Difficult' or 'hard' human-interest stories were headlined, signalling the emotional tenor of the mostly factual reports and recognising the difficulties these placed on both applicants and decision makers. Cases about siblings commanded attention. These appear rarely to have attracted the levels of public scorn directed at conscientious objectors, perhaps as a result of the 'normalising' of the appeal process when driven by domestic or business concerns.[60] Within this acutely politicised arena, such stories provided a useful peg on which editors and journalists could hang the wartime tropes of patriotism, family sacrifice and brotherly bonds. Interestingly, it was often within these cases of note that appellants were labelled as 'brothers' rather than as 'sons'.

Tribunals became an arena where men's behaviour was both judged and praised. Men sprang to the defence of brothers whose characters were slurred, one man protesting against the portrayal of his sibling as lazy and idle.[61] Brothers placing their familial responsibilities on a secondary footing to military service were lauded using the rhetoric of manly heroism; a public affirmation that national duty should prevail. Offering to go in place of his younger sibling, one brother was congratulated for having 'spoken like a man'.[62] Approval greeted a man caring for his mother, who stated that it would be no hardship if he had to serve. Drawing a parallel with one of the man's decorated serving brothers, the chairman shook his hand, proclaiming, 'You are a bit of a hero yourself'.[63] Thus, the tribunals laid down clear markers of praiseworthy, manly behaviour. Contradicting Cartmell's retrospective categorisation of men caring for dependants as

heroes, this distinction was more frequently directed at those who uncomplainingly accepted the tribunal's finding against them.

Praise was directed towards siblings who determined with a minimum of fuss who should serve. Often, siblings made these decisions without obvious friction, reflecting an in-built cultural and familial calculation by means of which resources were pulled together. Some tribunals allowed brothers to choose which one would serve. In many cases, men placed themselves at the mercy of fate, usually by tossing a coin. Local press reports frequently highlighted these 'sporting' gestures, with their echoes of childhood practices, perpetuating a discourse of masculine insouciance in defiance of danger, and presumably seeing such incidents as the ultimate exercise of fairness between brothers. Interestingly, winners of the toss chose either to enlist or to stay at home – a further sign that both options had equal merit, depending on the specific circumstances of the sibling unit. Chance was not permitted to override the tribunal process. One 'sporting' offer made by two brothers to toss the coin was rejected as the elder brother, unfit for active service, had already received a temporary exemption. Acts of fortune could not displace tribunal deliberations.[64]

Fiercest criticism was levelled at large families of brothers disinclined to serve their country. Mr E. Brierly, Manchester tribunal chairman, declared the case of four brothers owning six butchers' shops between them, 'one of the worst' he had heard. Particularly demeaning in his view was the evident fact that none wanted to serve.[65] In May 1916 the *Liverpool Daily Post* reported one case with the headline, 'Farmer's six sons. Not one "disposed to go"'. The headline reflected their shared belief, articulated by the eldest brother, Joseph Pope, that they were doing as much good at home as in the army.[66] Farmers regularly expressed this view, supported by guidance repeating the government's message that maintaining high food outputs was 'essential'.[67] The Board of Agriculture lobbied hard to give rural areas a tribunal representative pressing the case for the maintenance of food production. This official endorsement meant that tenant farmers had 'a very good war', with average profits per acre in 1917 running at 445 per cent of 1913–1914 levels.[68] The Pope brothers' collective unwillingness to serve counted against them, one tribunal member stating that it was unfair for others to fight on their behalf, while another expressed astonishment that not one had gone. Showing little sympathy for their stance, the tribunal granted conditional exemptions to only the two eldest brothers. Naming of

the brothers in the press report broke the convention that claimants' names and addresses would not be published;[69] removing this protection was a further sign of disapprobation at the brothers' perceived failure to do their duty.

From the regime's outset, brothers of serving age were treated as models to illustrate how the system should work. The War Office attempted to instil trust in the workings of tribunals in a 'homely' way by using a fictional case study, *Single Men First*, written by Captain Bernard Townroae, the private secretary to the Director-General of Recruiting. Widely disseminated in the local press, this told the story of Henry, persuaded by his widowed mother to stay at home after his brother enlisted. Despite working in munitions, Henry determined to join up, a move opposed by his employers. Taking both Henry's domestic responsibilities and workplace indispensability into account, the tribunal postponed his call-up. That evening Henry articulated his 'relief' at having subrogated his decision by entrusting it to 'the hands of my country'.[70] The message that the tale wanted to impart was that for willing men like Henry, whose family had already made a requisite sacrifice, the tribunal process should hold no fear.

Prime Minister Herbert Asquith bolstered men's 'trust' through his public statements. Introducing the first Military Service Bill in January 1916, Asquith pronounced that it would be 'a monstrous thing' to call up a single, unmarried son caring for a mother who had already sent three or four sons to fight, and whose sons had been killed, wounded or disabled.[71] The sentiment was repeated by Walter Long, President of the LGB, and endorsed in instructions to the tribunals.[72] These statements appear to mark official recognition that young, unmarried men were often mainstays of household survival, and placed limits on the sacrifice demanded of individual families.[73] Notwithstanding this, the main obstacle facing single men with caring responsibilities was an earlier pledge made by Asquith, that married men would not be called up before their unmarried counterparts.[74] This stance shaped the politics of military service by maintaining the centrality of marital status.[75] As a result, married men were more than twice as likely to be successful in gaining exemptions.[76] Fit young males were prime fodder for military recruitment. As such, any privileging of family responsibilities ran counter to the pressing military demands and, over time, according to one tribunal chairman, were 'tacitly abandoned'.[77]

What constituted a ‘fair’ level of family sacrifice remained a matter of interpretation for individual tribunals, often setting them at odds with families’ view of what was fair. The lack of overriding guidance contributed to the arbitrariness of the process. Men performing similar roles in supporting dependants had no way of predicting the outcome of appeals.[78] Highly subjective and inconsistent reasoning added to the anxieties facing conscripted men. One man caring for his invalid mother claimed a greater domestic responsibility than many married men. A joint decision between himself and his two serving brothers had determined that he should stay at home. Dismissing the appeal, the tribunal’s bias towards military ideals of masculinity was illustrated by a challenge from the military representative. He asked if the man was not ‘burning with fury to have a go’ at the German who had shot one of his brothers. From his standpoint, revenge took precedence over filial duty.[79] Other brothers believed that they had entered into a firm ‘agreement’ with the tribunal over their respective service and exemptions. Tempers ran high when these were ‘broken’. Alfred Baggs protested angrily when his younger brother, David, lost his agricultural exemption. An earlier hearing, concluding that Alfred’s and his father’s farms could be run as one business, offered Alfred the option of volunteering in his brother’s place. In return, he was promised a favourable response to David’s upcoming case. Outlining his personal sacrifice, Alfred reasoned that the ‘cost’ of relinquishing his ‘happy’ home life with his wife and children was only lessened by the consolatory knowledge that he had ‘done the right thing’ by his brother.[80] The Baggs’ case highlights the predicament tribunals faced when determining the genuineness and underlying anxieties of ‘domestic’ concerns. Shortly after the refusal of David’s exemption their father, depressed and worrying a good deal about his serving sons, committed suicide.

For some tribunal members, the extent of unmarried men’s domestic responsibilities was an unknown quantity. This had especial relevance for cases involving brothers, siblings often sharing such responsibilities. Harry Cartmell was struck by the ‘unselfish’ commitment of young, unmarried men bearing caring and breadwinning responsibilities for dependants. Such cases demonstrated ‘the greatest devotion’ and cast the young men undertaking them as ‘heroes’.[81] It seems unlikely that Cartmell was alone among his peers in coming face to face with the realities of economic survival for many households and, as noted earlier, he would have been

better placed than many in his understanding of these. The focus of Poor Law administrators on the recalcitrant or unwilling may have masked the commonality of this obligation to support dependants. Ignorance of such responsibilities undoubtedly influenced tribunal deliberations, reinforcing the bias against young men filling traditionally 'feminine' caring roles and infantilising them by ignoring their financial contributions to household coffers. Despite Cartmell's retrospective praise, the tribunal system devalued men's 'acts of devotion'. The consequences for families were grave.

Brothers built their cases around real domestic anxieties. Tribunals dismissed claims of deprivation when concluding that dependants would be better supported by charitable relief or the allowance system. Rebuffing the fears of an eighteen-year-old who 'could not bear the thought' of his invalid mother relying on charity, the tribunal calculated that the mother would not be 'much' worse off once her son was in the army. This optimism did not match the experience of some families who viewed separation allowances as 'starvation money'.[82] In this instance, the mother was kept in the family home by the joint endeavour of the man, his sister and younger brother. The sister's role was unheralded by the local newspaper, which instead indicated its approval of the 'two good boys', amplifying the supposed 'rarity' of such devotional acts.[83] At first, the system of allowances did not allow for the multifarious systems of familial support. The Bristol tribunal adjourned a case after the military representative confirmed that the dependent younger brother and sister of a married man would not be eligible for a separation allowance.[84] When young women entered the workforce, they faced similar prejudice. One lathe worker complained bitterly at the dismissal of her claim for equal pay. Despite the fact that she was supporting her elderly parents after her brother's death at Gallipoli, her foreman brushed off her request, stating that a married man with children needed more money than a girl. Women's wants were less, as 'they don't require tobacco; and tea and toast is cheaper than beer and beefsteak'.[85]

Although it is difficult to judge whether claims were made in good faith, many fraternal concerns appear genuine. As discussed in Chapter 1, siblings' caring instincts for weaker or 'delicate' brothers and sisters were forged from a young age. A greengrocer asked what would happen to his dependent brother, discharged from the army with no pension and suffering from consumption.[86] A twenty-seven-year-old labourer, fearing that his

brain-damaged brother would become ‘the laughing stock of the barrack room’, preferred to go in his brother’s place, doing ‘my bit and his as well’.[87] In one ‘pathetic appeal’ before the Todmorden tribunal, a local weaver and sole carer of a blind sister outlined her almost total reliance on him: she could not ‘fight her own way’ without his assistance. The youngest of a family of ten, these two siblings had adapted their lives ‘one to the other’. Having given up everything to care for his sister, the man insisted that he was not sheltering behind her. Given the geographic dispersal of the remaining siblings, the tribunal granted him a conditional exemption based on his domestic circumstances remaining unchanged.[88]

The war service of sisters was not immune from scrutiny. A military representative made short shrift of the household expenses of a jobbing labourer who was supporting his delicate mother and sister. Concluding that his contribution amounted to 16s a week, he recommended that the man’s sister leave school and take up employment.[89] During a hearing based on the dependency of a mother and two younger brothers on their elder sibling, Cartmell pointed out that the man’s twenty-nine-year-old sister, who kept house for him, need not be destitute at a time when ‘all sorts of people’s daughters’ were finding work, many at their country’s behest.[90] Cartmell’s professed sentiments did not extend to his own family. While all four of his sons saw active service, records suggest that his two single daughters played a supportive role in the charitable and civic activities of their mother and father. Cartmell’s thinking was in line with that of other tribunals in the area. Refusing an appeal by a farmer on behalf of his sibling who acted as cow-man, shepherd and horseman, the chairman stated that his three adult sisters, a teacher, a town hall clerk and a housekeeper, should be utilised to assist with the dairy farming. In these ‘exceptional’ times, he reasoned, ‘we all have to be inconvenienced’.[91] Some tribunals demanded a sacrifice of life chances. Twelve-year-old Henry Catlow was withdrawn from school to help his father plough their 88-acre farm. The tribunal also recommended that his two sisters, both mill workers, help at home. Combining the resources of the available Catlow siblings freed their eldest brother for service.[92] Employers facilitated these arrangements. Liverpudlian firm J. Bibby & Sons, an oil cake manufacturer, offered one sister a position in her brother’s place for the duration of his wartime service.[93]

Domestic drudgery

In better-off families, responsibility for providing practical and emotional support to ageing parents fell on the 'dutiful daughter', even when the household was well supported by servants. Gender and class expectations framed familial expectation of these 'dutiful' acts, described by Phyllis Puckle, the daughter of a country doctor, as being little more than the work of 'a general dogsbody'.[94] Very few of 'our sort of girl' worked, explained former VAD Charlotte Bush, 'you sat at home and did your embroidery and the flowers sort of thing'.[95] Concerns about morality fuelled parental opposition to specific forms of service. Hearsay evidence given to Lucy Streatfeild, charged with heading the inquiry to investigate allegations of immorality among members of the WAAC, included that of a soldier-brother. He begged his father to refuse his sister permission to join: 'if you knew *what* the women were *like* out there, you'd never allow it'.[96] Feelings of frustration are expressed in *We That Were Young*, through the character of Pamela. Referring to the drudgery of household tasks falling to middle-class daughters, she drew on the chore-based metaphor of seeing her talents dry up like 'washing gloves in the sun' to express her dissatisfaction. Rankling her further was her mother's hero-worship of her feckless brother, Leo. Sick of her restricted options and bemoaning the absence of her male friends and cousins, Pamela resolved to go and nurse, or some other drastic action.[97]

The experiences of the munition worker or VAD overshadowed those of ordinary women.[98] Further eclipsed are the voices of single women contributing to household tasks but lacking the authority of the household 'mistress'. The few glimpses we see of these lives are through the escapees, those women war workers who wrote about their service. Still living in the family home, Kit and Eve Dodsworth immersed themselves in community initiatives: collecting for Belgian refugees; helping with teas at the YMCA; knitting socks; and filling hot-water bottles and performing other 'thankless' duties at the local hospital. Like many of their middle-class peers, the Dodsworths fulfilled a tradition of volunteering that remained largely unbroken during the war.[99] From January to May 1915, variants of the refrain 'very dull' and 'nothing of interest' litter Eve's diary entries.[100] Eve epitomised the 'many sisters', in Rose McCauley's 1914 poem for whom the war was 'poor fun', idling at home while their 'many brothers' sat in the 'blood and muck' of the trenches.[101] York was a garrison town and

the Dodsworth family home was an ideal site from where to view local regiments parading on the green. A favourite pastime for the sisters was sitting and observing from the window seat, talking to rankers whom they had befriended at the YMCA. The Dodworths' situation in the domestic sphere, watching men march off for war, emphasised their status as passive bystanders and stoked the sisters' restlessness. Having determined to volunteer for overseas service as VADs, 'the most exciting moment of their lives' occurred on Friday 7 May 1917, when they received the wire asking them to proceed to France.

More typical of many middle-class unmarried women's experience is that of Ethel Spofforth, daughter of a prominent Bristolian. Following a motoring accident while pregnant, her mother, Esther, suffered from poor health. Her youngest sister, Dora, was born with one leg shorter than the other. Interviewed in 1975, Ethel spoke of her aspiration to become a nurse, an occupation for which she was ideally suited, having nursed her mother, father and sister throughout her life. Her volunteering at Bishops Knoll, a private hospital established to care for wounded Australian soldiers, was a guilt-fuelled activity. Short-staffed after the call-up of his clerks, her father worked excessively long hours at his law firm. This, coupled with their mother's frailty and the departure of the families' two domestic servants to work in munitions, made Ethel painfully aware of the patriarchal expectation that she should stay at home. Her limited volunteering was approved of only grudgingly. Duty to her family blighted Ethel's desires and prospects. Her father refused to allow her to take up nursing professionally, on the somewhat spurious ground that she would be depriving work to those less well off. Ethel tussled with these conflicting pulls on her time. In contrast, her older sister, an administrator with the Red Cross, was 'lucky to have a life'. Familial expectations trumped patriotic duty and economic concerns for many young women.

Even women performing senior roles found themselves bound by domestic responsibilities. Commandant Grace McDougall initially faced opposition from her brother, who, questioning whether the FANY would ever make it to the front, advised his sister to 'get some useful work'.[102] Grave family matters, including the deaths of her two brothers and the terminal illnesses of her sister and mother, disrupted Grace's important work. At one point, only the arrival of her sister from South Africa, ready to take up the task of looking after their mother, freed Grace to resume her

role. Apart from the toll on her heath, she was continually torn in two directions by a resurgence of the 'old struggle' faced by women – that of balancing family life versus work. Towards the war's end, Grace again faced the heartbreak of this dilemma when she returned home to nurse her mother. Unable to bear leaving her dying relative, she was bombarded by 'angry and frantic' letters from FANY personnel clamouring for her return. Once her mother was strong enough, Grace was obliged to tell her with a 'sad heart' that she was needed back on the fighting line. She never saw her mother alive again.[103] The 'old struggle' that Grace referenced can be seen in the operations of the Military Service Tribunals. When a quarry worker, the sole supporter of his mother and invalid father, applied for exemption, his sister, on service overseas, was directed to return home to release her brother.[104]

Authorities in charge of 'voluntary' services exerted pressure to ensure that women, although not 'conscripted' into service, did not prioritise family over military duty or use family responsibilities as a shield to shirk their duties. The first time that her family called upon her to look after her mother, suffering from a severe chill, Vera Brittain obtained a 'sceptical and grudging' leave of absence after much difficulty.[105] Arriving in Brighton to find her mother in no urgent need, Vera believed that she was 'perpetrating exactly the deceit of which I had been suspected'. Compounding her dismay was her parents' disregard of the rigours of her war service, accompanied by their refusal to accept that nursing discipline was comparable to that of the army. Pressure could be exerted in subtler ways. In 1916, Marjorie Denys-Burton worked as a VAD at a military relief hospital established by Celandine Hanbury-Tracy at Woodcote, her Oxfordshire home. When Marjorie returned home for an unspecified reason, Celandine asked her to be 'firm' with her family and return as soon as possible. She also wrote directly to Marjorie's mother, impressing upon her what a 'godsend' her daughter had been and hoping that she would be allowed to return 'for a good long spell'.[106] Both the Hanbury-Tracys and the Denys-Burtons were members of the aristocracy. Moving in 'the best of circles', they belonged to what David Cannadine calls 'a carefully integrated and functionally significant' network of social and political connections. Membership of this influential community added peer-level weight to Hanbury-Tracy's request.[107] Her direct appeal to maternal

patriotism, couched in the language of praise rather than duty, did the trick. Both Marjorie and her sister continued working at the hospital.

Familial sacrifice

Adding piquancy to some tribunal cases are pleas for the safeguarding of the family home. Having given up a good position in order to serve, one man wrote from the trenches to support his brother's claim. If his sibling was conscripted, they would probably have no home to return to.[108] One sister made a touching and eloquent appeal on behalf of the last of seven brothers for him to remain at home. Aged sixteen when their mother died, she had 'sacrificed her life' to bring them up, four of the boys being under the age of ten at the time. Three brothers had joined the army and one had been killed. With the siblings united in their efforts, she feared that if the last brother went the family home would be broken up and there would be no place for the men to return to when the war was over. The claim was refused.[109]

The regime's arbitrariness is borne out by the contradictory treatment of siblings' service as evidence in support of claims. When the solicitor for one appellant drew the Okehampton tribunal's attention to the fact that the man had four brothers in the army, the chairman pithily dismissed his appeal, commenting 'it would be a pity to spoil the family record'.[110] In contrast, a forty-one-year-old traveller was granted a three-month exemption. His four brothers had volunteered when war broke out, and four sisters were nurses, two serving overseas.[111] The case report commented twice on the 'excellent' record of his brothers.[112] There was some softening of attitudes as the number of 'hard' cases increased. In January 1918 the Bermondsey tribunal congratulated the family of eighteen-year-old George Samuels. The 'exceptional' nature of their sacrifice justified a temporary exemption. Six of Samuels' brothers had joined up: three had been killed, one had been wounded and permanently discharged, one was still in France and the last was waiting to be sent overseas.[113] Local sympathy for claimants and their families is occasionally reflected in the tribunal records., The local community concurred with the tribunal's belief that Kate Shallis, well-known and liked, a widow who had already lost four sons, was 'entitled to the comfort' of her son, John.[114] One newspaper reported that

the entire neighbourhood felt sympathy for the 'almost overwhelming loss' suffered by the family.[115] Typically, there was no acknowledgement of the grief of John, the sole surviving brother. Irrespective of public sentiment, military exigency prevailed, limiting his conditional exemption to six months. Here, the family's naming signalled public approval of their patriotism, adding to the rhetoric of national duty.

Once war fatigue set in, people increasingly questioned the plight of families. Sympathy swayed some military decisions. When, in April 1917, Joe Fitzpatrick was preparing to be drafted to the front line, his regimental sergeant major asked him how many sons his mother had in the army. On learning that all six Fitzpatrick brothers were on active service, and with his colonel's approval, he struck a disappointed Joe from the draft. Their mother's sacrifice was sufficient justification for his action.[116] Siblings who were denied active combat respected the underlying logic of such decisions. All three Wolton brothers, Eric, Owen and Hubert, were in the 5th Suffolk Regiment. A demoralised Eric was left behind on the troop transport RMS *Aquitania* while his unit, including his two brothers, left to take part in the Sulva offensive. Despite his disappointment, Eric accepted the rationale behind the decision, 'you don't want the whole lot killed'.[117] Recognition of familial suffering influenced these unofficial measures to protect families against multiple losses.

Conclusion

The effective waging of war required the classification and reclassification of individuals according to the needs of the armed services and the labour market.[118] Siblings and parents were accustomed to determining the best use of familial resources, dividing responsibilities for the financial and practical care of dependants. In wartime, the state replaced the family's role in determining the best use of these resources, bringing these intimate decision-making processes into the open via the arena of the military service tribunals.

Tribunals viewed siblings of both sexes as a unit, making decisions about their businesses, employment, homes and the care of loved ones. It is testimony to the importance that individuals placed on these responsibilities vis-à-vis their patriotic duty that, notwithstanding the overwhelming odds

against them, men continued to plead their cases. Knowledge of familial circumstances within their neighbourhoods and good standing seem to have offered some protection against the social disapprobation levelled at shirkers or slackers. These intangible and hidden protectors against public disdain hint at the emotional norms operating at community level. The tension between men's domestic obligations and their patriotic accountability was a matter of public debate in the years preceding the introduction of conscription in 1916. Discussions centred on men's roles as fathers, husbands or sons, but overlooked their roles as siblings.[119] The experiences of brothers before the military service tribunals highlight the joint economic responsibilities and 'acts of devotion' that many men bore on behalf of parents and siblings, a contribution that was widely under-appreciated in the First World War. The military imperative to send men out to the firing line regardless of their statutory rights and domestic circumstances increased the economic hardship suffered by their families. Men's and their families' understanding of 'fairness' rarely matched the views of tribunal members.

Middle-class families exerted an element of control over single daughters. Dependent on family make-up, some young women felt constrained by the expectation that they should assume the burden of household management. The paternalistic attitude may explain the willingness of some tribunal members to require working-class sisters and brothers to relinquish employment or educational freedom in order to free up a brother of fighting age. Peer pressure could be exerted to encourage elite families to relinquish their domestic stranglehold over their daughters and allow them to carry out war work. Such negotiation occurred in the privacy of social circles rather than in the public arena of the tribunal.

Brothers were expected to share business and familial responsibilities so that one or more might be free to serve. Men's narratives rarely record discord over the decisions regarding enlistment, despite evidence of the emotional and physical toll experienced by fighting brothers. Instead, serving men relied on their siblings at home to look after their business affairs and their loved ones, so as to maintain some continuity in their lives. A sibling's-eye view of men and women's war service highlights the centrality of the domestic concerns informing their decision making. This perspective focuses attention on what was at stake for men regarding their futures, the wellbeing of their families and their patriotic duty.

Notes

1 H. Cartmell, *For Remembrance. An Account of Some Fateful Years* (London, 1919), pp. 70–76.
2 Hera Cook makes the pertinent point that loss of familial support often led to a sharp fall in status for middle-class men. Cook, 'From Controlling Emotion to Expressing Feelings', p. 9.
3 Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 s.78. This provision had its antecedents in the 1601 Poor Laws and persisted until the National Insurance Act 1948.
4 D. Thomson, '"I Am Not My Father's Keeper": Families and the Elderly in Nineteenth Century England', *Law and History Review*, 2:2 (1984), p. 278.
5 Statistics apply to England and Wales. M. A. Crowther, 'Family Responsibility and State Responsibility in Britain before the Welfare State', *Historical Journal*, 25:1 (1982), p. 133.
6 F. Bell, *At the Works. A Study of a Manufacturing Town* (London, 1907), p. 115. Although there is no precise definition of 'old age', 60 has long been regarded as the age at which withdrawal from public life is permitted. Working-class men and women strove to remain working as long as their health permitted. P. Thane, *Old Age in English History. Past Experiences, Present Issues* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 24–25, 293.
7 Evidence supporting this gender bias is found in analyses of magistrate court decisions brought to recoup the cost of relief from blood relatives, and in the minute books of the poor law authorities. Thomson, '"I Am Not My Father's Keeper"', pp. 265–286; Crowther, 'Family Responsibility and State Responsibility', pp. 131–145; M. Levine-Clark, 'The Gendered Economy of Family Liability: Intergenerational Relationships and Poor Law Relief in England's Black Country, 1871–1911', *Journal of British Studies*, 45 (2006), pp. 72–89.
8 The guardians did not pursue a claim against the married sister and made a separate arrangement with the other brother. *Burnley Express*, 4 March 1916.
9 For examples, see, S. Todd, 'Breadwinners and Dependants: Working-Class Young People in England, 1918–1955', *International Review of Social History*, 52:1 (2007), p. 64; A. L. Bowley and M. H. Hogg, *Has Poverty Diminished? A Sequel to 'Livelihood and Poverty'* (London, 1925); H. L. Smith, *The New Survey of London Life and Labour* (London, 1930–1935); D. Caradog Jones, *The Social Survey of Merseyside* (Liverpool, 1934); P. Ford, *Work and Wealth in a Modern Port. An Economic Survey of Southampton* (Southampton, 1934); H. Tout, *The Standard of Living in Bristol. A Preliminary Report of the University of Bristol Social Survey* (Bristol, 1938).
10 Olsen, *Juvenile Nation*, pp. 112–114.
11 B. Simon, *Education and the Labour Movement, 1870–1920* (London, 1974), p. 138; L. Andrews, *The Education Act, 1918* (London, 1976).
12 D. Rubenstein, 'Socialization and the London School Board', in P. McCann (ed.), *Popular Education and Socialization in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1979), p. 236.
13 Cook, 'From Controlling Emotion to Expressing Feelings', p. 9.
14 W. R. Garside, 'Juvenile Unemployment Statistics between the Wars', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 33 (1976), pp. 323–324.
15 S. Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family in England 1918–1950* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 46–47.
16 E. Smith, *Wage-Earning Women and Their Dependants* (London, 1915).
17 Rowntree's survey also excluded male siblings from women's pool of dependants by including them in the category of 'large families'. Only ageing parents, invalid sisters and unemployed male husbands and fathers were specifically cited. B. S. Rowntree and F. Stuart, *The Responsibility of Women Workers for Dependents* (Oxford, 1921), pp. 100–104; S. Pedersen, *Family, Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914–45* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 156–158.
18 Todd, *The People*, p. 14.

19 Thom, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls*, pp. 12–14, 61–72; Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend*, pp. 18–19.
20 S. Ouditt, 'Tommy's Sisters: The Representation of the Working Women's Experience', in H. Cecil and P. Liddle (eds), *Facing Armageddon* (London, 1996), pp. 741–742.
21 Thom, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls*, pp. 10, 35.
22 R. Adam, *A Woman's Place 1910–1975* (London, 1975), p. 23.
23 Survey of 500 domestic servants conducted by the Women's Industrial Council in 1914. Cited by, Todd, *The People*, pp. 24–25.
24 Roberts, *One Bright Morning*, pp. 89, 203–204.
25 Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 286.
26 Ibid., p. 32; J. M. Osborne, *The Voluntary Recruiting Movement in Britain, 1914–1916* (New York, 1982), p. 154; Simkins, *Kitchener's Army*, pp. 106–107.
27 Roper, *The Secret Battle*, pp. 106, 134n.
28 Interview, R. Taylor, IWM 11113, pp. 22–23; V. de Vesselitsky, *Expenditure and Waste. A Study in Wartime* (London, 1917).
29 Interview, W. W. Holmes, IWM 8868.
30 Letter, 8 October 2015, Miller, IWM 01/48/1.
31 The papers of the Middlesex County Tribunal, covering most of outer London, is one of only two complete extant sets. In 1921 the Ministry of Health ordered the destruction of all files with the exception of Middlesex and Peebles. This instruction was not always followed. For example, the Northamptonshire tribunal retained over 11,200 appeal forms. This archive has been analysed by James McDermott. J. McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals, 1916–1918* (Manchester, 2011).
32 Carolyn Steedman coined the term 'enforced narratives' to describe autobiographical information extracted from individuals for bureaucratic purposes. Steedman, 'Enforced Narratives', pp. 25–39.
33 P. Bailey, '"Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?" Towards a Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working-Class Respectability', *Journal of Social History*, 12:3 (1979), p. 343.
34 Military Service Act 1916, s.2(1)(b).
35 Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 108; Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience*, pp. 89–90; McDermott, pp. 17–20.
36 Bet-El, *Conscripts*, p. 29; A. Gregory, 'Military Service Tribunals. Civil Society in Action, 1916–1918', in J. Harris (ed.), *Civil Society in British History* (Oxford, 2003), p. 181.
37 Ibid., p. 177.
38 *Manchester Guardian*, 11 October 1916.
39 Gregory charts the uneven chronologies of loss during the 1914–1918 conflict. Gregory, *The Last Great War*, pp. 122–131.
40 *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer*, 15 April 1916, 15 July 1916, 16 September 1916, 5 May 1917, 1 September 1917, 26 January 1918, 27 July 1918.
41 S. Nenadic, 'The Small Family Firm in Victorian Britain', *Business History*, 35:4 (1993), p. 94.
42 E. M. H. Lloyd, *Experiments in State Control at the War Office and the Ministry of Food* (Oxford, 1924), p. 259.
43 *The Times*, 16 May 1916.
44 *Middlesex Chronicle,* 25 March 1916.
45 See, for example, the parliamentary debate on the extension of conscription, HC *Hansard*, 11 April 1918, 104: 1738–1816.
46 The pre-war population of Marlow was 5,000. A. Ford, 'Reluctant Recruits. Appeals against Military Conscription in Marlow, 1916–1918', *Records of Bucks*, 56, pp. 1–16.
47 S. Badsey, 'Great Britain', *1914–1918-online*, date accessed: 13 December 2016, encyclopedia.1914–1918-online.net/article/great_britain?version=1.1.

During the last months of the war, the Military Service (No. 2) Act raised the upper conscription age limit from 41 to 51.

49 *One man businesses: cases of hardship: Co-operation*, Manchester City Archives GB127.MISC/1171.

50 *Manchester Guardian*, 28 January 1918.

51 Cartmell, *For Remembrance*, p. 240.

52 *Manchester Guardian*, 26 March 1916.

53 *Manchester Evening News*, 19 April 1916.

54 Gregory, 'Military Service Tribunals', p. 179.

55 Membership was later broadened to include representatives from agriculture, industry or other occupations reflecting the local community. *Letter sent from Local Government Board to County Councils regarding the establishment of Tribunal system*, TNA MH 47/142/4/1.

56 *Preston Herald*, 17 January 1914.

57 Cartmell, *For Remembrance*, p. 240.

58 *Liverpool Daily Post*, 20 April 1918.

59 Gregory, 'Military Service Tribunals', p. 189.

60 The treatment of conscientious objectors in the First World War has been comprehensively covered. Key works include, Bibbings, *Telling Tales about Men*; Boulton, *Objection Overruled*; J. W. Graham, *Conscription and Conscience: A History 1916–1919* (London, 1922); T. C. Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience*. Press mockery was directed at claims made by middle-class men in white-collar occupations. Ugolini, *Civvies*, pp. 193–194.

61 *Bath Chronicle*, 24 June 1916.

62 *The Times*, 11 March 1916.

63 *Manchester Guardian*, 20 April 1916.

64 *West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser*, 11 May 1916.

65 *Manchester Guardian*, 13 May 1916.

66 *Liverpool Daily Post*, 9 May 1916.

67 *Circular to Local Tribunals and Appeal Tribunals from Local Government Board regarding farm workers and food production*, TNA MH 47/142/4/2.

68 Gregory, *The Last Great War*, pp. 141–142.

69 M. Levine-Clark, *Unemployment, Welfare, and Masculine Citizenship. 'So Much Honest Poverty' in Britain, 1870–1930* (London, 2015), p. 122.

70 *Cambridge Independent Press*, 3 December 1915.

71 HC *Hansard*, 5 January 1916, 77: 956

72 *Circular to Local Tribunals from Local Government Boards regarding cases of Sons of Widows* TNA MH 47/142/4/1.

73 Later clarification confirmed that the determining factor was whether the economic situation of a widowed mother would be materially worse at the present time rather than anticipating her position if all her sons were killed. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 22 March 1916.

74 HC *Hansard*, 2 November 1915, 75: 524–526.

75 Levine-Clark, *Unemployment*, p. 120.

76 Ibid., p. 125.

77 Cartmell, *For Remembrance*, p. 77.

78 In April 1918, guidance was strengthened to reduce the discretion and independence of tribunals. Gregory, 'Military Service Tribunals', p. 189.

79 *Walsall Observer and South Staffordshire Chronicle*, 2 September 1916.

80 A. and D. Baggs, TNA MH 47/60/7.

81 Cartmell, *For Remembrance*, p. 77.

82 Gregory, *The Last Great War*, pp. 286–287.

83 *Western Daily Press*, 12 May 1916.

84 *Western Daily Mail*, 31 March 1916.
85 Cited by, Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend*, p. 122.
86 *Middlesex Chronicle*, 10 March 1917.
87 *Middlesex Chronicle*, 23 February 1918.
88 *Todmorden & District News*, 7 July 1916.
89 S. Harridge, TNA MH 47/72/75.
90 *Lancashire Evening Post*, 16 March 1916.
91 *Burnley Express*, 31 May 1916.
92 Interview, H. Catlow, Lancashire Archives 2013.0685.
93 FLWE 2000/101.
94 Thane, *Old Age in English History*, pp. 299–302; Puckle, Liddle WWI/WO/097.
95 Interview, C. Bush and E. Spofforth, IWM 516.
96 L. Streatfeild, *Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) Commission of Enquiry* (MSS.69/3/1, 1918); Letter from Lady Hope Dunbar to the Duchess of Atholl, cited by L. Dennant, 'Women at the Front During the First World War. The Politics of Class, Gender and Empire' (PhD, University of Warwick, 1998), p. 171.
97 Rathbone, *We That Were Young*, pp. 87–88.
98 K. Hunt, 'A Heroine at Home. The Housewife on the First World War Home Front', in M. Andrews and J. Lomas (eds), *The Home Front in Britain* (London, 2014), pp. 76–77; Karen Hausen makes a similar observation concerning the 'hard, grey realities' of German women's lives being masked by 'the pathos of hero worship'. K. Hausen, 'The German Nation's Obligations to the Heroes' Widows of World War I', in M. Higonnet et al. (eds), *Behind the Lines* (New Haven, 1987), p. 140.
99 Ouditt, 'Tommy's Sisters', p. 740.
100 Dodsworth, IWM 82/12/1.
101 'Many sisters to many brothers' first appeared in the 'Saturday Westminster Gazette', December 1914. D. Hibberd and J. Onions (eds), *The Winter of the World. Poems of the First World War* (London, 2007), p. 31; G. Simmers. 'Rose Macaulay: "Many Sisters to Many Brothers"', *Great War Fiction* (2009), date accessed: 5 June 2019, greatwarfiction.wordpress.com/2009/04/02/rose-macaulay-many-sisters-to-many-brothers/.
102 G. Mcdougall, *Five Years with the Allies [1914–1919]. The Story of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry* (1920), p. 22.
103 Ibid., p. 112.
104 *Kingston Times*, 24 February 1917.
105 Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, p. 261.
106 *M. Denys-Burton*, IWM 92/22/1.
107 Cannadine notes that this elite network started to break down from the 1880s. D. Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, 1990), p. 342; L. Davidoff, *The Best Circles. Society Etiquette and the Season* (London, 1973).
108 *The Times*, 24 February 1916.
109 *Western Daily Press*, 9 May 1916.
110 *Western Times*, 18 August 1916.
111 *Hull Daily Mail*, 20 September 2015.
112 *Coventry Herald*, 17 November 1916.
113 *The Observer*, 13 January 1918.
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4

Brothers in arms

According to fraternal accounts of combat, serving alongside a brother fortified the heroic qualities of self-control and endurance. Brothers formed a separate blood unit within the military unit. Some siblings believed this made them almost invincible. For the Francis brothers, Ted explained, it supported their physical and psychological survival:

> The main idea with Harry and I was keeping alive. We had no thought for practically any other people, there was only our skill and our knowledge and being aware of the danger and not feeling frightened. In every attack there was men more frightened than others, who couldn't hold themselves, men who really had shell shock … Everyone was afraid and as a matter of fact to see people who couldn't stand it made us a little bit more braver. We felt good they couldn't stand this sort of thing but we could. That was the feeling that made us go on and on and on.[1]

The soldierly ethic of endurance, the quality so essential to fighting men, was honed and strengthened by true fraternal bonds. Yet this benefit was double edged. Anxieties aroused by the fate of brothers exposed men's vulnerabilities. Although some fears were swiftly assuaged by men meeting up to reassure each other of their physical survival, waiting for news on the front mirrored the agony of those at home. Soldier-brothers shared an intimate and factual shorthand; there was no need for them to act as mediators of war. Bertram Evers had 'mostly nothing to say' to his brother Mervyn, a chaplain on the Western Front, believing his sibling to 'know as much about it as myself'.[2] Brothers acted in concert to shield families from the worst horrors, imposing an additional emotional burden both on siblings at home and on those fighting at the front. Concealing the worse aspects of trench warfare from familial audiences was almost as effective a constraint as censorship. Protecting families was a sign of manliness.[3] What this meant, however, was that fighting men could crumble under the weight of providing reassurance at a distance.

Mastery of emotions was key to men's emotional wellbeing and battlefield reputation. Detachment and the ability to desensitise themselves were useful qualities in men's struggle against fear.[4] Basil Henriques, whose older brother was the first officer of the Royal West Surrey Regiment to be killed in action, referenced the 'curious steel-plate armour' which continued 'to grow round one's head'.[5] The ubiquity of fear made any failure to master emotions understandable. Combatants' use of the words 'nerves', 'nervy' and 'fear' did not equate to a loss of self-control. A hierarchy of sympathy developed based on the spirit of equality. The distress exhibited by shell shock was judged sympathetically, whereas the abandonment of men via shirking or deliberate desertion of duty was not.[6] In his fictionalised account, *The Raid* (1946), Herbert Read described how the emotional deterioration of his comrade, Lieutenant P., aroused his fear that P. would 'bitch the show'. Acting on his concern, Read reported the 'coward' and P. was immediately taken off the attack. In Read's mind, fear was a natural physical reaction, only achieving the status of cowardice when it became 'a mental reaction'.[7] By relinquishing his emotional mastery, in Read's eyes, P. unmanned himself, posing a danger to his unit. Read had no qualms in reporting him and expressed no sympathy for his plight. Under this emotional configuration of masculine stoicism, military brotherhood was the most vital element. Analysing war narratives, we can see that sympathy was extended toward breakdowns triggered by fraternal deaths. Breaking down in these circumstances was both a common and a tolerated response. However, while fighting men understood that grieving brothers deserved compassion, the additional strain of witnessing fraternal loss made them demand the removal of this source of disquietude.

Side by side

Brothers enlisting and serving in the same sections, companies or battalions garnered resolve from acting in unison. This also applied to experiencing combat together. Even in the heat of battle, their civilian, familial identities remained intact, forming a buttress against the complete militarisation of men. Although Bob Hill found trench warfare 'a bit punishing', serving alongside his brother 'eased it up a bit'.[8] Richard Holmes refers to the 'mysterious fraternity' that men joined when entering military service.

Training created a bedrock of ritual and relationships, enabling soldiers to withstand combat conditions.[9] Interviewed for the BBC's *The Great War* television series, Charles Carrington spoke of the mixture of hysteria and bravery facing men under shellfire. What kept him going was the group collective: 'if they can take it, I can take it'.[10] By Ted Francis's reckoning, serving with a brother usurped this military brotherhood. In effect, the Francis brothers became a unit within a unit, countermanding the military culture by putting themselves first. Their solidarity alleviated the stresses of mechanised slaughter, making them a more formidable fighting force. Blood ties provided the mental and physical endurance to fight on without succumbing to fear.

What Roper terms the 'softer conception' of manliness encouraged by comradeship was pre-existing in fraternal relationships.[11] Siblings gained succour from the practical comforts of serving with each other. Sharing a small dugout in a reserve trench, Francis and Sid Collings did 'grand together'.[12] Volunteering on 10 September 1914, the brothers went out to the Ypres Salient in February 1915. Later that year, after a spell of sustained fighting, Francis made his way back to their bivouac under heavy shellfire and gas. Sid, arriving earlier, had laid out their overcoats and kit in readiness. Such small acts gave sustenance to battle-weary combatants. Shortly after their arrival in Rouen, Kit and Eve Dodsworth purchased yards of cretonne and bed covers to brighten up their bare, adjacent cubicles in the VAD quarters. By bedtime, they had 'a thoroughly comfortable and pretty room each'.[13] Middle-class sisters, accustomed to inhabiting the domestic sphere and routines of their home-town, found a sense of security in serving abroad together. Part of acclimatising to their new life was a sprucing-up of their shared accommodation to make themselves at 'home'. Munitions worker Isabella Clarke came over to Coventry from Belfast 'for the money', sending her widowed mother a pound and her grandmother five shillings each week. Isabella thrived on the work, 'delighted' by her new earning potential. Encouraged by her sibling's example, her sister joined her in England, taking up a job as a crane driver. The companionship of an elder sibling mitigated the newness of the situation, helping her to overcome her nerves and settle into her new role.[14]

Physical proximity gave brothers emotional support on the battlefield. John Lucy's vivid account of sheltering in caves while under attack evoked the nervy fidgeting of his section, trapped in semi-darkness, listening to the

raging battle. Straining John's frayed nerves further was the 'morbid' tallying of the deceased by one of their number. As the litany of each fresh name 'bludgeoned his brain', 'a great sense of misery and loss' possessed him. He moved over to his brother's platoon, where his sibling's 'absolute calm' and bearing steadied his discomposure, enabling his swift return to his section.[15] Both Lucy brothers were lance corporals, and prompting John's action was the potential shame of losing face in front of his men.[16] Denis's restorative presence fulfilled multiple functions. Firstly, John affirmed that his brother's name would not appear on the recital of casualties that had so unnerved him. Secondly, Denis's stoicism under fire had a soothing effect. Lastly, physical closeness, a restoration of normalcy amid horror, gave John the required boost to contain his emotions.

Even after death, brothers provided surviving siblings with emotional sustenance. Communion with the dead, as Rosa Bracco points out, was a narrative device in post-war novels, highlighting the 'terrible closeness' existing between soldiers and the threshold of the afterworld that the dead inhabited.[17] Lieutenant Thomas Gillespie was killed in action on 18 October 1914 at La Bassée. Almost a year later, his brother Douglas told his father that he would soon be 'in the thick of it' and, due to his service longevity, most likely leading the attack. Douglas suffered no forebodings, secure in the thought that

> if a man's spirit may wander back at all, especially to the places where he is needed most, then Tom himself will be here to help me, and give me courage and resource and that cool head which will be needed most of all to make the attack a success.[18]

Douglas fêted the qualities of wisdom and stoicism under fire in his spiritual imagining of his sibling. Both brothers had been members of Winchester School's OTC, volunteering when war broke out. Tom had been on active service for only two weeks before his untimely death. Wrapping his memory in the rhetoric of masculine sacrifice, Douglas's bestowal of maturity on his younger brother through the fraternal role of protector performed the dual function of reassuring father and son.

The writer Joe Ackerley's posthumously published memoir, *My Father and Myself* (1968), provides a markedly different slant on such narratives. He presented himself as an onlooker, criticising his brother's heroism, highlighting the indifference of senior officers and, most notably, commenting on his own cowardice. Illness had delayed Peter Ackerley's

service, making him junior in rank and length of service to his younger brother. When Peter volunteered for a dangerous ‘stunt’, capturing a salient in the German lines, Joe questioned whether his brother’s longing to prove himself spurred this act of bravery. Joe watched the start of the action, observing the ‘inferno scene … as in a dream’, his writing a stark contrast to the realistic prose bracketing this section of the memoir. When enemy fire shattered his dream-like state, Joe retreated to his dugout. The news that his brother had been hit abruptly stopped the ‘slow dragging of time’. Ignoring his predicament, Joe’s senior officers turned away while Peter lay in no man’s land like ‘the merest litter left after a riotous party’. They did nothing, and neither did Ackerley. It was, he explained ‘hard luck’ if the wounded died where they lay, as ‘one did not risk other lives to seek them out and bring them in. Or one’s own.’[19] Peter’s body became part of the detritus of war, treated with low-level contempt by the men who had sent him over the top. Spotlighting his brother’s foolhardiness in volunteering needlessly, Joe contrasted his battle-honed pragmatism with the callowness of Peter’s military understanding. Accepting the brutal realities of warfare, guilt stained Joe’s passivity, his fraternal discomfort volunteered through his dream-like recollection of the episode.

Brothers feared for each other’s safety. Transferred to another battalion, away from his brother, Stuart Sutcliffe consoled himself with the thought that remaining together would have led to greater anxiety. If either were wounded or killed, the other would ‘suffer deeply’.[20] The incident that brought this home to Ted Francis was his brother’s narrow escape from being killed by a sniper. Distracted on sentry duty, Harry removed his ‘detested’ helmet, accidentally raising his head too high. On a day when the brothers had been only 100 yards apart, the apparent thoughtlessness with which a fellow soldier delivered the incorrect news that ‘Your kid’s had it … one straight to the head’, infuriated Ted.[21] Mass casualties desensitised serving men, one death being much the same as another. Through his anger and worry, Ted’s reaction epitomised the reasons why many objected to brothers serving together. His disparagement of his ‘brainless’ comrade was a cogent sign of his fury that no quarter was given to the siblings’ ‘special’ relationship.

Intimate knowledge of the hierarchy of danger resulting from different injuries informed men’s reactions to fraternal woundings. In the first year alone, 24 per cent of officers and 17 per cent of other ranks were injured.

Over 41,000 men suffered amputations.[22] The categorisation of wounds determined men's return to the battlefield. Triaging occurred at the Regimental Aid Post, where patients received labels indicating the severity of wounds. Under this system, the treatment of the wounded was a secondary consideration to the conservation of manpower.[23] The valued red-and-white label denoted a 'Blighty' wound.[24] Such wounds were grave enough to require treatment back home and acquired almost mythical status, allowing men's removal from imminent danger with honour. 'Extraordinary imagery' was created around men's hopes of getting a Blighty, even though the majority, including the multiply wounded, returned to active service.[25] Percy Cearns made an eighty-mile trip to visit his brother who was recovering in hospital after being 'hammered' by a shell. Disappointed to have missed Fred, who had been transported home, Percy was glad that his brother would soon be with his loved ones. Fred had sustained injuries to his ribs, diaphragm, and collarbone. Three months later, Percy received the 'blow' that his brother, still unable to walk far or carry his kit bag, had been graded A3 (fit for active service), and railed against the unfairness of the decision.[26] Fred's experience was not atypical. Post-war analysis of casualties transferred overseas calculated that approximately 82 per cent of wounded men ultimately returned to some form of duty.[27] The longed-for Blighty wound delivered a reprieve rather than an end to front-line service.

Unsurprisingly, then, the Blighty appears as a trope in sibling narratives. Catching the tail end of the Black Watch's fatal charge at Richbourg L'Avoué, Jack Haldane came home 'with a useful Blighty'. 'Marvellous' as his sister found it to have him back, the caked dirt and lice on his kilt brought home with him the realities of the firing line.[28] Alfred Wagstaff's disquiet on hearing of his brother's wounding and transfer to a field hospital was lessened by knowing that his sibling was far away from the Somme battlefield. During a 'big push' a minor wound could spare men from death or severe mutilation. In this realignment of fortune induced by war, Wagstaff remarked that his brother was 'luckier than I was … very lucky having this gash in the thigh'.[29] Intertwining mutilation with more comforting images of escape and home, the Blighty was, as Paul Fussell remarks, a means of disguising the damage wrought on men's bodies. Men's removal to safety was tinged with bitter-sweet regret, and sadness that their brothers were unable to accompany them.[30] Benjamin Whalley saw his brother fall after being shot in the thigh at Neuve Chapelle.

Grabbing an opportunity to speak to him, Benjamin frankly acknowledged his appreciation of his brother's 'escape', confiding, 'I wish I were you'.[31]

During the Battle of the Somme, Edward Brittain suffered injuries to his left hand and right thigh. After spending three days 'in hourly dread of a telegram' since the start of the offensive, Vera received word that her brother was in a ward at *her* hospital, the 1st London General. Despite an unsympathetic matron who doubted her motives for being on another ward, Vera took daily tea with her sibling during his three-week stay. 'It was a joy' to have him there even if work prevented Vera from seeing much of him.[32] The following year, after Vera had 'manoeuvred' herself to the base camp at Étaples, she was conflicted by the news that Edward's battalion was being posted away from the Ypres Salient. 'Half the point' of being in France was to be permanently near her brother for the duration of their wartime lives. Vera had eagerly anticipated seeing him walk up the road one day to see her.[33]

In stark contrast to the benefits that brothers derived from serving in close proximity are examples of the emotional toll that this placed on fellow combatants. Deaths of siblings within the military unit pierced the stoicism of comrades, leading to open criticism of the policy permitting siblings to serve together. Something deep-rooted in the universality of these blood ties got under the skin of combatants, disturbing the cohesion of trench brotherhood. Brotherly losses were presented as a 'higher' loss or doubly poignant. Paradoxically, it was in these deaths that the strength of fraternal ties was lauded. The recurrence of stories involving brothers in combat shows the deeper emotional resonance that they held for witnesses, explaining their wide circulation through contemporary newspaper reports and letters, and later in men and women's war stories. One example entered the public discourse via the wide media dissemination of the story of the Hardwidge brothers from the Rhondda valley, who reportedly died in each other's arms (Figure 5). A perceived act of heroic sacrifice – a soldier risking his life to provide succour to his wounded sibling – made this incident newsworthy.[34] Masking the violence of the brothers' deaths was the intentionally anodyne image that they had died holding fast in a fraternal embrace. Brothers' deaths acted as a counterweight to the depersonalisation of mass slaughter. Representing a universal bond, such deaths gave men and women attempting to make sense of the carnage a trope by which they could describe the weight of personal loss sustained on the front line.

Families at home could empathise, informed by their own anxiety and grief for loved ones.

Early in the war, published memoirs contained horrifying accounts of sibling deaths. Kate Luard published her anonymous account of nursing on the Western Front in 1915.[35] The daughter of a vicar, Luard was an experienced military nurse, having served for two years during the South African War. Aged forty-two in 1914, she enlisted with the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve. Among the incidents she related was one of a man whose brother was killed at his side under the pounding of German shells. In the heat of combat, the man carried on shooting. When his parapet was damaged, he shored it up, using his brother's corpse to substitute for a sandbag. The dissociative effect of technological warfare displaced this most familiar of bonds. After the 'stress was over', and realising what he was leaning against, the man asked, 'Who did that?'[36] Introduced as 'a true story', this matter-of-fact narration of a harrowing event packed an emotional punch. Luard rarely commented explicitly on her views about the conflict, her objective reporting bringing home to her readers the poignant mixture of the everyday and the horrific. Written on 10 May 1915, this entry came near the end of the book, which finished before the death of Luard's brother, Frank, at Gallipoli on 13 July 1915.

Figure 5 'They died in each other's arms', *Daily Mirror*, 24 August 1916.

A culmination of suffering

The counterpoint to the strength that siblings derived from serving together was the toll that fraternal distress took on their comrades. 'Brothers', stated

the writer and poet Edmund Blunden, 'should not join the same Battalion.' His blunt view was prompted by a 'boy' 'half-crying, half-exhorting' over the stretchered body of his near-dead brother. While recognising the comfort of a 'known voice' in 'an inhumane night', Blunden believed that the frequent enlisting of brothers together resulted in 'a culmination of suffering'.[37] There are no official statistics on sibling deaths. A list of brothers killed on the same day, maintained by *The Long, Long Trail*, shows almost 90 per cent (326 of 328) served in the same unit or ship.[38] One unintended consequence of the promotion of the Pals regiments among volunteers was the preponderance of brothers and cousins serving alongside each other, with the attendant increased risk of multiple casualties being borne by families. This explains why so many negative comments regarding the joint service of siblings appear in narratives of the Somme offensive, where the volunteers of Kitchener's army played such a prominent part.[39] W. Gregory believed it 'an awful damn mistake' to have several pairs of brothers in the 18th Kings Regiment, a viewpoint that was chiefly shaped by the loss of three fraternal units in the offensive.[40] Among the many dead, Arthur Wagstaff particularly remembered the legs of 'two poor chaps' sticking out from the mound of a fallen trench after heavy shellfire, and being struck by the realisation that they were two brothers.[41] Similarly, John Johnston, serving as a machine gunner with the Rifle Brigade, recalled two sibling casualties from a Lewis Gun Team.[42] One had been killed outright. The badly wounded survivor, half-conscious, kept asking for his sibling, unaware that he lay beside him.[43] Fraternal pleas such as this seared themselves into men's memories in the same way as dying men's cries for their mothers.[44] Some combatants felt a personal affinity with stricken siblings – Johnston had lost his own brother ten months before. At other times, serving men displayed a more objective empathy. Supervising a party of men clearing the battlefield, Norman Collins distinguished the 'quite natural' grief of those 'very upset, very, very upset' men picking up the bodies of their kin. His 'role' was to provide unobtrusive comfort by 'a stroke on the head or a pat on the back'.[45] Collins accepted blood ties as exonerating the emotional unravelling resulting from men facing the bodily ravages of a battle that had left 45 per cent of their regiment dead or wounded.[46] Clearly, officers and men could be respectful of the grief occasioned by brotherly loss. As is discussed further in Chapter 5, weeping for a sibling was not automatically regarded as shameful or unmanly.

Instead, these deaths offered both a respectable outlet for emotions and a chance to express regret for another's loss.

Witnessing the distress of surviving brothers stoked combatants' animosity towards the 'claiming' policy. Such episodes stretched men's resilience. Captain J. C. Dunn, acting medical officer for the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, recorded a hearsay account illustrating men's resistance to imparting bad news to brothers. A survivor of a direct hit, Captain Walter Fox related that the 'most awful part of the Show' concerned a man's request to pass word to his brother moments before he was killed. Shortly afterwards, on meeting the man's brother, Fox could not tell him that his sibling's body had been taken away for burial. When the man subsequently heard the news, 'he nearly went out of his mind'.[47] Fox's intuition regarding the anonymous brother's response partly justified his reluctance to engage. His behaviour ran counter to the usual code that rankers and officers should furnish details of combat deaths to family members. Fox evaded this 'duty' in order to avoid the expected fraternal anguish, which would have been an unbearable prospect for Fox in the immediate aftermath of surviving a close shave.

Men's belief that brothers should not serve together was discussed openly. Comrades were unnerved by observing the intense trauma of anxious or grieving siblings. Private Edward Lynch recorded one memorable incident:

> Paddy had gone to find his brother Jim, for whom he's spent the last three nights searching – crawling around in no-man's-land turning dead men over in a vain search for the brother who fell that first day … In memory still we can hear that low, pleading call, 'Jim, Jimmy, Jimmo,' amid the rattle of the enemy guns and rifles … Then silence as we wonder if they got him. Silence for ten minutes or so and again there would come from some other direction the pleading call. The call of brother for brother laid low days before.[48]

The repetitive nature of Patrick's cries and desperate actions as he was impelled to continue searching is suggestive of psychic trauma – a reason, perhaps, why no one intervened directly to halt his futile search. Men's unease hindered their ability to end the source of their discomfort. The heightened distress of this individual loss triggered recognition of both a universal relationship and a universal loss. Battle-hardened, Lynch had become inured to the cries of the wounded and dying. Numb to the by now familiar horrors, he could not obliterate the haunting memory of Paddy's pitiful cries for his lost brother.

Lynch adopted the 'morally neutral' tone commonly used by combatants when speaking of traumatised men.[49] Fraternal narratives support the view that the 28,000 shell shock cases recorded between 1914 and 1917 represented a significant underestimate of the scale of psychological trauma.[50] Men, their nerves frayed by recent battle, baulked at having their brief moments of respite disturbed by the emotional unravelling of comrades. Lynch circumvented this dilemma by implicitly placing blame on those higher authorities who had created the circumstances that permitted such troubling incidents. Spectators of Paddy's plight suffered the profound guilt experienced by many survivors of battle.[51] Their solution was to blame not the individuals but the military rules that unsettled the emotional norms of the fighting unit. Experience and close comradeship made interventions easier. Sidney Rogerson, a junior officer on the Somme, refused permission for a 'morbid' search of Dewdrop trench. The requesting soldier, Mac, had served with Rogerson since his commission. Apart from it being 'almost unthinkable' that Mac would find his brother, foremost in Rogerson's mind was the probability that the discovery of the mangled, decomposed body would leave 'a dreadful blot' on Mac's memory. The depth of Mac's grief is conveyed obliquely. It took some time for him to accept the force of Rogerson's argument and 'cheer up'. Rogerson then spent a great part of the morning with him.[52] This short account exemplified Rogerson's view of warfare as a compound of 'fright and boredom, humour, comradeship, tragedy, weariness, courage and despair'.[53] Comradeship informed Rogerson's actions. He did not rely on the force of command alone, spending valuable time dissuading Mac, ensuring that his friend did not brood alone.

'I could not have stuck it much longer'

Senses became distorted in the habitus of the trench: immobility, the enemy's invisibility, extremes of weather and the constant battery of artillery and shells.[54] Conflict-inspired fears haunted men: burial in mud or under collapsed dugouts; evisceration or dismemberment by shrapnel, or simply dying in pain.[55] With corpses left unclaimed for days, ad hoc and mass graves were the antithesis of the 'good' Victorian death. Quite simply, bodies and minds disintegrated in this environment. Extremely relieved to

see his younger brother safe and sound after the battle of Le Cateau, John Lucy felt ‘heart-ache’ about his brother ‘being in the slaughter’. His ‘foolish’ solution was to ask Denis to join his section, a request that his sibling ‘rightly’ refused.[56] Lieutenant Basil Henriques suffered a nervous breakdown after the Somme, where his tank came under artillery shell. He wrote of his fatigue and loathing ‘for the sights and the noise and the ugliness and the futility of it all’. In April 1917 he returned to his company, serving as a Reconnaissance Officer at Ypres and Bapaume. Despite openly acknowledging the stresses and strains of his role, Basil appreciated his relative good fortune as compared to that of the men up the line, including his brother Julian, writing, ‘It is he to be pitied, not I’.[57]

Letters between brothers fulfilled many functions, and often contained graphic and evocative descriptions of combat. Alongside accounts of adrenalin-fuelled attacks and near-death experiences, men described comrades being ‘bowled over like skittles’, ground ‘soaked with blood’ and shell attacks like ‘firework displays’.[58] At other times, details were hidden behind stock phrases as brothers recounted having experienced a ‘lively’ or ‘exciting’ time. Receiving letters could provoke feelings of guilt. Captain Ernest Hewish felt like a ‘worm’ sleeping soundly in his bed after receiving an interesting letter from his brother, resting after four days on the front line. Hewish, based in Herne Bay, appreciated the two brothers’ relative fortunes.[59] Writing to loved ones led to an awkward juxtaposition of descriptions of warfare and home news. Shells, Arthur Rowe told his brother, ‘seem to rip everything before them’. Only after hearing them whiz overhead could you breathe again. Coming under fire was ‘very similar to a firework display’, only ‘a bit more dangerous.’ Hearing that his brother Charles, working as a clerk, was due to go on a seaside holiday with his wife and young son, he compared being in the trenches with a coconut shy: ‘You just wait till a gunman pops his head up, then you send a bullet at it.’[60]

Signs of war strain took a variety of forms. Fatigue was foremost in Reg Park’s mind in a surviving fragment of an undated letter. ‘I could go to sleep standing’, he wrote to his brother Tom. With the clichéd acknowledgement that he ‘mustn’t grumble’, Reg, the son of a Yorkshire farmer, accepted the unexceptional nature of his privations. Restorative rest often proved elusive even when men’s turn up the line ended. Reg concluded by asking Tom to excuse his mistakes and bad writing, as ‘my nerves are a bit on edge as we are under continuous hours shell fire even in

our "rest" billets'.[61] His letter conveyed the strain experienced by men under the constant barrage of artillery. Bombarded for seventy minutes, during a sixteen-day stint, 2nd Lieutenant Stanley Jones expressed similar feelings to his brother, the Reverend Gerald Jones. Stanley singled out an 'artillery duel' between the warring sides as 'the worse thing' he had ever experienced and 'quite impossible' to explain. The cumulative effect of shelling was beginning 'to tell' on his nerves.[62]

Fraternal admissions of stress under fire were not uncommon. In an eight-page letter written to his older brother shortly after arriving on the front line, Alf Arnold confessed to having been 'really nervy' twice. Under machine-gun fire for a forty-eight-hour spell, the reaction of one wounded soldier unnerved him: 'he did not half shout and his screams together with the hail of bullets upset us not a little'.[63] When open expressions of fear or anxiety could be seen as cowardly, the ability to disclose frankly such emotions must have been a welcome release. Experiencing heavy warfare gave rise to intense emotional reactions. Tom King came under sustained attack for over thirty hours during the Battle of Bullecourt in May 1917. Detailing the 'real hell' of this experience to his brother, Tom made plain the cumulative effect of shelling:

> I could not have stuck it much longer. My nerves were beginning to give way. Officers and men were continually going out with shell shock. It was terrible + I shall never forget the ghastly sights of it all, and the stench of the dead was terrible.[64]

Tom's profound anxiety was typical of many men's response to trench warfare, where enforced immobility blocked the fight or flight instinct.[65] In addition to coping with the battle's aftermath, Tom's concerns encompassed his brother, Jack, fighting in 'the hottest part of the whole show'. His worries were heightened by conflicting news from home. His sister said Jack was suffering from shell shock but his parents reported that he was wounded. All Tom could do was 'hope there's nothing much amiss with him', powerlessness adding to his anguish.[66]

Fear of censorship constrained confidences. A proclivity to sending home 'long and newsy' letters led to Lance Corporal Arthur Sadd being disciplined and losing his stripe.[67] As a result, he told his sister, he was rather 'fed up'.[68] The strictures of censorship held fast, with Joseph Pearce adopting the umbrella phrase 'rather an exciting time of it' to describe his experiences.[69] At times the discipline slipped. Towards the end of 1917

Joseph remained troubled by a near-death experience during his first stint in the trenches. After recounting this episode, when four comrades died, he swiftly moved on to 'something more cheerful'.[70] Particularly traumatic memories often pierced habitual patterns of reticence. Writing his memoir, Percy Cearns was informed by public accounts of the Gallipoli campaign and knew that Fred underwent the severest suffering. Fred maintained a steadfast refusal to complain either in his letters home or verbally when meeting up with Percy. Only one incident pierced this self-imposed restraint. A sergeant was shot in the head while on patrol with Fred, and died soon afterwards. Percy relayed the 'pain' in Fred's voice when telling him of this. Some war traumas had to be shared with trusted confidants.

Humour or a light tone deflected familial jitters. It was undeniable, Arthur Sadd admitted to his elder sister, that trench warfare 'was a bit tiring to the nerves', but as long as nothing landed within ten to twelve yards, it did not 'worry you a lot'.[71] Writing to his twelve-year-old sister, Edward Chapman wrote about an early experience of shelling:

> The attacking party had some bombs, which went off with a great bang, but were quite harmless. This made it very real. One went off near me, and a man I was with was hit by a tiny piece of tin. It was only a very small cut, but the funny thing was that he had been at the front for 12 months without getting a scratch![72]

Chapman related his account with an age-appropriate sensitivity, taking care that his sibling was not overly alarmed by his proximity to danger. Decorating Chapman's letters are humorous sketches. In one series entitled 'Here are some pictures relating to the *Great War*!!!', he depicted a rifle firing, with the caption 'Bang! Oh my poor nerves!!'[73]

Premonitions of death invaded men's thoughts. Lieutenant Colonel Archie James could not 'describe the awful sights of the battlefield' to his brother, yet went on to state that every inch of ground gained was blood soaked.[74] After this, he did not pretend to look forward to going back in the line, reluctantly accepting that 'someone has to be "food for the cannon"'.[75] His main anxiety was the knowledge that he would return with a new draft of inexperienced men. Censorship, Archie explained, prevented him from furnishing further details. This was possibly an avoidance tactic, as officers wrote letters on trust.[76] Men's reasons for concealment varied, the unsettling effect of writing about violent and disturbing events being but one of them.[77] Archie may have inferred that his naval officer brother did not

require a detailed record in order to understand his sibling's experiences. In March 1918 Archie was 'too worried and busy' to write, having been through a 'trying time' during which his 'poor battalion had suffered'. The West Riding Regiment had come under heavy gassing and shelling that month, one division alone losing 3,000 men to gas poisoning.[78] Despite his sparse correspondence, Archie knew that he could rely on his brother's empathetic understanding. With his battalion engaged in a major German attack, he flagged his concerns, honed by two years' experience of trench warfare. He would be 'very anxious' over the next fortnight.[79] Archie used the language of fear as a coded sign to his sibling. His fears proved well founded. Five days after writing this missive, Archie was killed.

The war reporter Phillip Gibbs cast himself as an 'onlooker' as compared with his 'kid' brother, Arthur.[80] Enlisted as a trooper, Arthur was awarded the Military Cross and left the army in 1919 with the rank of major. In this regard, the Gibbs brothers were not unusual in regarding war service as derailing the 'natural' authority vouchsafed by birth order. While lacking his reporter brother's 'broader vision of the business of war', Arthur's was 'the greater knowledge'.[81] After the Battle of Ypres, Gibbs pondered how his brother 'faced the nerve strain' which, as Phillip had seen first hand, broke so many men. After a nonchalant greeting, Arthur seemed 'bright as ever' and Phillip believed his sibling had enjoyed the 'horrible thrills' of battle. Arthur's mask slipped later, when gunfire recommenced. Only then did Phillip realise the effect of constant shelling and multiple casualties on his sibling: 'I saw that his nerve was on the edge of snapping.' Consequently, Phillip determined to 'rescue' his brother by any means possible.[82] In *The Grey Wave* (1920), Arthur reflected that his brother's visits were a double-edged blessing, accentuating his loneliness. He yearned to accompany Phillip when he left.[83] Later, Arthur described his breakdown. Wanting to go away and hide, his main fear was not death but continuing 'in that living hell'. Eventually, Arthur asked for Phillip's help in securing a transfer, 'miles away from shambles and responsibility and spit and polish'.[84] Phillip's network of contacts was the ultimate source of relief for his brother. Neither brother saw any shame in optimising those spheres of influence open to them.

The stigma of shell shock weighed heavily. After serving with the RAMC at Poperinghe in 1916, Captain Bruce West began to suffer from neurasthenia.[85] Even when he was removed from the battlefield, the 'fear of

fear'– the social disgrace of being labelled unmanly or a coward – stoked West's anxieties.[86] Since the emergence of the first shell shock cases in early 1915, the medical profession had voiced concerns that emotionally immature men, temperamentally unsuited to the job of soldiering, had been swept up in the rush to recruit.[87] This 'weakness' was not cast as cowardice. The Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Manchester University, Grafton Elliot Smith, took pains to distinguish shell shock sufferers from malingerers. 'Morally unassailable men' were unable to continue, due to their nervous systems being 'positively unfitted' for war.'[88] The prevalence of shell shock may have lessened the stigma of mental trauma, but this attitudinal shift was not all pervasive.[89] Arriving at the 4th London General Hospital, West became 'sensitive' and 'troubled' about attendants and patients saying 'insulting things' about him.[90] Placed on a ward by himself, overhearing such remarks made him 'thoroughly miserable' and he 'finally fell crying'.[91] After leaving hospital, West relinquished his commission on the grounds of ill health, a fact humiliatingly recorded in the *London Gazette*. His older brother, John, a fellow medical officer, advised him to take three months' holiday followed by a year's civil work before rejoining the army.[92]

West was still experiencing symptoms – 'feeling nervy', depression and sleeplessness – the following February.[93] Later that month, he rejoined the RAMC, only to resign a week later. In April he attended a 'pretty stiff' medical board.[94] All 'injured' veterans were required to attend such boards at regular intervals. Highly formal, and often conducted in an atmosphere of suspicion, the boards' imperative was to turn men around and send them back to the front.[95] At this stage, with Bruce unsure of the best course of action, his brother John stepped in, advising Bruce to write to Daniel Rambaut, the medical superintendent of St Andrew's Hospital, Northampton, and ask to be taken on as a voluntary boarder. Such was his faith in his brother's judgement that Bruce followed his advice that same day. Apart from the trust in his brother that Bruce's swift action exhibits, arguably this cast Bruce in a passive role, reliant on his elder sibling – an example of the 'inversion' noted by Meyer. Instead of war turning boys into men, shell shock reverted them to boyhood.[96] Drawing on his professional knowledge and networks, John ensured that his sibling avoided a fate befalling many shell shock sufferers, unable to attain 'emotional settlement' once discharged from hospital and returned to their family's care.[97]

Many doctors treating sufferers of shell shock lacked specialist training and knowledge.[98] St Andrew's was a private facility, formerly known as the Northampton General Lunatic Asylum for the Middle and Upper Classes.[99] In response to a shortage of psychiatric facilities, it agreed with the War Office to take ten certifiable officers at an agreed rate of £2 2s per week, rising to £3 3s for those officers needing constant attendance.[100] With limited specialist personnel, it fell into the second tier of treatment centres identified by Peter Leese. Highest levels of treatment were limited to a handful of highly specialist hospitals: Springfield and Queen Square in London: Maghull near Liverpool and Craiglockart in Edinburgh. The experiences of patients at these top-tier facilities, made familiar through famous literary cases such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, were highly atypical.[101] Most soldiers received low-cost treatments in non-specialist wards.[102] Officers comprised one in six of shell shock cases. Despite the widespread perception that they received better treatment than the rank and file, the arrangement reached with St Andrew's represented an official acknowledgement of the straitened circumstances facing officers without private means who required treatment for mental disorders.[103] It is unclear from the records what financial arrangements the West brothers made with the hospital. Through his actions, John ensured that Bruce received treatment in surroundings commensurate with his class and avoided the ignominy of committal to a psychiatric hospital. Wrapped up in John's concern for his brother's mental health was anxiety over his brother's, and his own, military and social standing.

Waiting anxiety

Anxiety, wrote munitions worker Peggy Hamilton, was 'ever-present'. Along with the anguish for the fallen, it lurked 'just below the surface, every hour of the day'.[104] Preparing for bad news or 'anticipatory mourning' became routine, making siblings at home and overseas vulnerable to constant fear.[105] Waiting, 'an onerous and unavoidable reality', involved a degree of effort.[106] Men were acutely aware of the stresses placed on families waiting for news at home. Letters could take six days, including the time required for censorship, to arrive from the Western Front. Tension built once awareness of battles seeped back home through newspaper

reports, soldiers on leave or from neighbours. The ‘harbingers’ or ‘dark angels’ of death, namely young boys delivering telegrams notifying families of casualties, ‘frightened everybody to death’.[107] Raynor Taylor’s mother received ten such telegrams, nine informing the family of woundings suffered by his three siblings. The final telegram erroneously stated that Albert Taylor, who had been taken prisoner, was missing believed dead. Raynor believed that the cumulative stress of receiving these wires contributed to his mother’s death.[108]

Witnessing displays of parental anxiety was troubling for brothers. Men were constantly aware of familial worries, which were compounded if more than one son was on active service. It was a ‘bad accident’, Geoffrey Grigson remarked, that his elder brothers, born between the years 1891 to 1905, were all liable for military service. When his older brother was reported missing, the ‘indeterminate sentence made the agony worse’ for his father, who, like others in his situation, ‘wrote letters here and there, through Switzerland into Germany, to officers who had last seen him, to the War Office, and scanned the lists of prisoners-of-war, and kept lighted in his heart some blackening match-end of hope’.[109] Paternal unease exhibited itself through these almost ritualistic searches, keeping the final confirmation of death at bay. Anxiety could be habit forming. Fraternal disquiet was framed within, and responded to, wider familial suffering. In his autobiography, the psychologist Pip Blacker recalled vividly a period of household tension after his brother went missing at Loos. He presented this as a liminal moment, a period of ‘transition or even metamorphosis, such as the insect larva undergoes when it emerges from its earthbound state to find itself dangerously poised in a new medium’.[110] Blacker listed the three separate concerns dominating his thoughts at that point. Predominant among these were his fraternal and filial anxieties. Lastly, thoughts of the future challenges before him prompted him to question, ‘Would I be equal to what I knew lay ahead?’[111] These tensions merged with feelings of helplessness. Leaving for France the following day, there was little that Pip could do.

On 28 June 1918, Edie Appleton was serving at No. 3 General Hospital, Le Treport when a serviceman with the New Zealanders, her brother Taff’s regiment, was brought in on a convoy. Edie was relieved to hear that Taff was most probably at Doullen, a quiet part of the line. This commenced a period of fluctuating anxiety, marking a change in the pattern of Edie’s

habitual diary keeping, which rarely recorded familial or domestic news. Travelling on a transport train that December, they stopped at Liege, where a New Zealand division was stationed. Although 'she gazed and gazed', Edie had no luck in seeing 'dear old Taff'. When Taff's division was 'in the thick of it' at Bapaume, Edie became less steadfast, wishing 'the whole bloody war at an end – & all the boys safely home'.[112] The debilitating combination of hearing scraps of news, together with delays or absences in the mail, dented her stoicism. Edie's was an unusual perspective – treating the recently wounded while held fast in the limbo of waiting. Her role was less passive, and her opportunities for news from different outlets were more diverse than for her family at home. Nonetheless, she experienced the same sickeningly long wait for confirmation that her beloved brother was safe from harm.

Sometimes, battle conditions prevented the provision of particulars demanded by families. High casualties meant an absence of surviving witnesses. Difficult terrain or enemy fire frustrated the timely retrieval of bodies. Card indexes keeping track of wounded men were often incorrect, due to the constant movement and reorganisation of fighting units and the scattered arenas of war.[113] Alfred Hewish died of wounds at Passchendaele on 22 October 1917, aged twenty-nine. News of his death reached his family only in January 1918. Ernest tracked his emotional reactions to the unfolding of this news. Reading newspaper accounts of the ridge's capture, 'an epic of heroic endeavour against fearful odds', he noted his fraternal anxiety, having not heard from Alfred 'for quite a long time'.[114] That December, Ernest was 'disgusted' when press reports of Alfred's wounding appeared before the family were officially notified.[115] Doubt increased with the continuing absence of news. Ernest's growing acceptance of the likelihood of Alfred's death appeared in his telling expectation of imminent 'news' from France.[116] Responding to a request for further details of Alfred's demise, Second Lieutenant Baker, an officer in Alfred's regiment, expounded on the 'experience gap' between families and the conditions facing fighting men. Tracing missing men in 'a wilderness of waterlogged shell holes', was a complex endeavour. He appreciated that it was difficult for people at home 'to realise the nature of an attack' in such terrain, adding empathetically, 'God knows no-one wishes them to realise it if they have lost their dear ones in such surroundings'.[117] Baker explained the reasons for the delay to Ernest, perhaps believing him to be a safer conduit for

‘realistic’ information than his mother. High casualties in Arthur’s section rendered him reliant on hearsay for any personal recollections that might comfort his family.

False hope flourished in the absence of hard facts about missing men. Initially, there was ‘no proof’ that Captain Alfred Parker was killed in action at Ploegsteert Wood on 7 November 1914. It took two months for his company commander to confirm the ‘bad news’.[118] Possibly, the circumstances of Alfred’s death during a chaotic and bloody battle gave rise to the circulation of a rumour that he was alive and a prisoner of war in Germany. An item to this effect, entitled ‘The “Dead” Officer’, appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and was picked up by other newspapers.[119] These rumours took hold to such an extent that Alfred’s widow suggested that a public denial would be the only means to lay them to rest.[120] Evelyn Parker rejected this notion, as reports did not name his brother. Despite professing that there was ‘no foundation’ for the rumour, Evelyn took steps to verify his brother’s death, drawing on his connections to make further enquiries via the Swedish ambassador in Berlin and ‘in any other way possible’.[121]

Brothers allayed the agony of family members by imagining the fate that might have befallen men reported missing. In November 1916, Murray Round died at Beaumont Hamel. He was initially reported as ‘missing’, and his family endured a period of angst. During this time his surviving soldier-brothers attempted to rally the spirits of their family at home. Having received the ‘nasty shock’, Harold immediately contacted his Divisional HQ to try to find out more. He also advised his parents to make enquiries of the adjutant of Murray’s battalion. Having covered these practicalities, he attempted to reassure his family by considering all possible outcomes, from Murray’s capture to his death. The first point that Harold was keen to emphasise, was the Germans’ fair treatment of officer prisoners. By this means he directly addressed familial wisdom that Murray would be better of ‘out of it all’ than in their hands – a proof of the traction that tales of German barbarism held within middle-class families.[122] Harold avoided neither the very real possibility that his brother was dead nor the awfulness of not knowing his fate, exhorting his family to be brave and draw on their faith for strength:

> Perhaps it were better he was out of it all, but if only we could know that he is ‘out of the stress of the doing, into the peace of the done’ then we, who are left here, would & must ask for

> courage to go on bravely to the end as he would have wished us to go on. 'Lift up your hearts' & put your trust in the Lord.[123]

Consolation was incompatible with confronting the fact of death, for many families. Grieving was postponed while awaiting the confirmation of a loved one's death.[124] Anticipatory mourning rendered families vulnerable to dreadful imaginings of the possible fates that had befallen men. Harold proposed religious faith as a way for his family to exert control 'over an impossible situation'.

Men strove to visit the graves or battle sites of missing brothers to relay pertinent information back to families. Former miner Harry Hill, actively engaged in fighting, could not visit the spot, only five or six miles away, where his brother Tom had been killed:

> I weren't far … I couldn't get up in that area while all this job were on but as soon as I could I asked permission to go and they let me go and of course I didn't do any good. They just knew he had been lost and that were it.

Harry would have wanted to reassure his mother; all four brothers joining up had been 'a nasty smack' for her. Unfortunately, he was unable to provide any comfort. The bodies were 'buried higgledy piggledy' and 'nobody knew' how Tom had died.[125] Certainty came at a price. As was seen earlier, confirming the safe-being of brothers could involve the scrutiny of bodies. Edmund Williams surrendered during the Battle of St Quentin. He was carrying a wounded German officer along the trenches when they came across a dozen dead bodies. Williams ascribed his ability to search for his younger brother to his military discipline:

> So I thought I'd better have a look and see that he's not amongst these. If he's amongst these then I would know for certain that he's been killed and where he'd been killed. You see the brain, the routine was still functioning.[126]

When Edmund finally saw his brother again at the St Quentin hotel, where both had been taken as prisoners, his relief was palpable. Debilitated by his front-line experiences and, presumably, the strain of worrying what had happened to his brother, he had fallen asleep on the floor. On coming face to face, the brothers asked each other, 'What the hell are you doing here?' Contrasting with this outward display of heartiness, Edmund recalled succumbing to 'a feeling of peace'. Knowing that his brother was safe beside him meant that his anxieties were over. 'What more did we want?'[127]

Men placed limits on the extent to which they were able or wanted to take action to reassure their families. Receiving official confirmation of Murray Round's death had been a long-drawn-out process, taking eight months in total. Shortly afterwards, the Round family received the devastating news that Harold had been killed by a shell. Arthur Round was unwilling to spend 'a large part' of his forthcoming leave tracing the graves of both Harold and Murray. Travelling in France was 'a very tedious and slow process' and 'hardly worth' the time when he received only fourteen days' leave. Arthur's sense of duty prevented an outright rebuffal of his family's request, but he placed the onus on them. If it were the family's unanimous wish, he affirmed, 'I will of course do my best to do so'.[128] His call for unanimity suggests that he would find it hard to refuse a direct parental plea, and perhaps hoped for an intervention on his behalf. The formal politeness of his tone inserts an emotional distance between their request and his refusal.

Arthur's letter hints at the emotional fatigue that men experienced when providing reassurance while enduring the stresses of combat. He distanced himself from family anxieties, marking his rite of passage as a fighting man in need of respite. He refrained from spelling out a further reason, a belief that his search might prove futile, gleaned from witnessing too many deaths and too many bodies. His desire for some let-up from familial concerns is seen in a plea to his older sister Constance, a VAD in the Witham Auxiliary Hospital, to 'have a heart!!' and postpone her intended move to the Western Front. Constance's wish to do more is countered by Arthur's reminder of the substantial sacrifice already made by the family. Implicit in this exchange is the fraternal expectation that Constance should sublimate her ambitions – and possibly also a desire to be closer to her remaining sibling – in order to salve her brother's anxieties.

Conclusion

Amid the horrors of trench warfare, brothers derived strength and comfort from serving alongside or near to each other. This increased soldierly efficacy by boosting bravery under fire and providing a stabilising influence at moments of high tension. Sisters undertaking war work together found similar benefits in entering new workplaces or environments with each

other, sometimes deriving additional perks, such as sharing accommodation or being allowed to work the same shifts.

Fraternal closeness came at a price as men witnessed siblings' woundings and deaths. Knowledge of casualty rates led to increased anxiety. Fear of dying was more debilitating than fear of killing. Transforming fear into anger was an essential doctrine of military training.[129] Concerns were sated only once a brother's safe return was ascertained. The 'soldier's tale' inevitably dominates narratives of life on the firing line. Women did not risk death or participate in the activities that proved so psychologically disturbing to their brothers and other menfolk.[130] Sisters serving overseas contrived to obtain placements close to their serving brothers. Their acts of patriotic service were fuelled by anxieties resulting from the cumulative loss of peers and personal knowledge of the ravages war wrought on men's bodies and minds. The agonising hiatus between hearing of a sibling's participation in an attack and receiving confirmation of their survival was undiminished by physical proximity. The enervating preoccupation with absent siblings refocused the emotional energy of households. Men and women on active service replicated the ever-present anxiety of those waiting at home.

Serving men criticised the rules permitting brothers to serve together. Sibling units within the military unit could be emotionally disruptive. Fraternal losses shattered men's emotional armour, sometimes bringing them to breaking point. Empathising with their predicament, siblings' comrades did not want to be haunted by the sights of brotherly grief. Such conflicts demonstrate the elasticity of communities of emotion. Fraternal losses aroused disquiet, but the lateral military 'brotherhood' remained intact. Criticism was directed upwards. Soothing this path was the cultural respect for blood ties. Notably, these narratives present a different perspective to the contained grief and desire for privacy appearing in the accounts of brotherly loss that are examined in the following chapter. The engrained values of sympathetic kindness, combined with comradeship, meant that soldier-brothers were shown remarkable compassion, as evidenced in the issuing of passes to facilitate meetings-up, leave to visit wounded or dying brothers and empathy towards men's emotional response to the death or wounding of brothers.

When men's nerves broke, brothers intervened to remove them to safety or to ensure that they received due care and attention. Although the stigma

of shell shock lessened as the war progressed, sufferers often felt shame. With medical treatment varying considerably according to men's class and financial means, any influence brought to bear by brothers was welcomed. Fraternal interventions to remove brothers from the strain of active service were an effective shield against complete psychic breakdown. Once again, such instances illustrate the privileging of fraternal love over national duty.

Siblings at home received graphic details of the traumas of mechanised warfare and the strain this inflicted on soldier-brothers. Scholars have highlighted the role that younger sisters played as confidants during wartime. Younger and older brothers received news, fears and experiences not shared among the wider family – a surprising oversight in the historiography. Combat narratives confirm the existence of such emotionally beneficial fraternal ties. Men divulged stresses and strains, free of the fear of being regarded as unmanly. Siblings' reactions to being passive recipients of fraternal emoting remain largely hidden from view. Often this was accompanied by the heavy burden of shielding their wider families from the full excesses of war facing their brothers. Men on the front line did their utmost to find word about brothers missing in action, often scrutinising the dead to ascertain whether their sibling was among the number. At times, the relentless steps taken in this regard are suggestive of deep-rooted trauma. Occasionally, combatants rebelled against assuaging the waves of demands from anxious or grieving loved ones at home, requesting some much-needed respite. Self-preservation demanded that limits be placed on filial duty.

Notes

1 Francis, '"All Quiet on the Western Front"'.
2 Letter, 14 October 1914, Evers, Liddle WW1/GS/0532.
3 Roper, *The Secret Battle*, pp. 63–64.
4 Francis, *The Flyer*, p. 118.
5 Lt Ronald Henriques was killed on 14 September 1914, aged thirty. B. Henriques, *The Indiscretions of a Warden* (London, 1937), p. 123.
6 Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, 78–80; J. Meyer, '"Gladder to Be Going out Than Afraid": Shellshock and Heroic Masculinity in Britain, 1914–1919', in J. MacLeod and P. Purseigle (eds), *Uncovered Fields* (Leiden, The Netherlands, 2004), pp. 195–196.
7 H. Read, 'The Raid', *Annals of Innocence and Experience* (London, 1946), pp. 151–152.
8 Interview, Hill, IWM 10770.
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10 Charles Carrington, *I Was There: The Great War Interviews* (BBC, 10 March 2014).

11 Roper, *The Secret Battle*, p. 303.
12 Diary, 18 February 1915, F. S. Collings, IWM 77/124/1.
13 War Experiences of a V.A.D., Dodsworth, IWM 82/12/1.
14 Interview, I. Clarke, IWM 774.
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21 Francis, '"All Quiet on the Western Front"'.
22 Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 33.
23 Carden-Coyne, *The Politics of Wounds*, p. 23.
24 The term Blighty colloquially referred to England. Its use originated with colonial troops, adopted from the Hindu word bilãyati meaning foreign land.
25 Carden-Coyne, *The Politics of Wounds*, pp. 69–70.
26 Cearns, *The Love of a Brother*, pp. 51–52.
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28 Mitchison, *All Change Here*, p. 113.
29 Interview, A. Wagstaff, IWM 17552.
30 Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p. 177.
31 Interview, B. Whalley, IWM 24551.
32 Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, pp. 277–281; Ibid., *Chronicle of Youth*, p. 236.
33 Ibid., *Testament of Youth*, p. 391.
34 Versions of this story appeared in several titles including, *Daily Mirror*, 24 August 1916; *Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail*, 18 August 1916; *Hull Daily Mail*, 2 October 1916; *Portsmouth Evening News*, 18 August 1916.
35 K. Luard, *Diary of a Nursing Sister on the Western Front 1914–1915* (London, 1915).
36 Ibid., p. 299.
37 E. Blunden, *Undertones of War* (London, 1928, 2000).
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41 Interview, Wagstaff, IWM 17552.
42 The Lewis light machine gun, produced by the British Small Arms Company, required a team of men: one to fire the gun, one to change the magazine and an additional two or three men to carry spare magazines and offer protection.
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60 Letter, n.d., Letters from the Western Front, IWM 11/226.
61 J. R. Park, IWM 13/13/1.
62 Letter, 26 April 1915, S. Jones, Liddle WWI/GS/0869.
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64 Letter, 22 May 1917, King, IWM 89/7/1.
65 Bourke, *Fear*, p. 205.
66 Letter, 22 May 1917, King, IWM 89/7/1.
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68 Letter, 26 November 1915, Sadd, IWM 96/57/1.
69 Letter, 18 April 1918, Pearce, IWM 13303.
70 Letter, n.d., Pearce, IWM 13303.
71 Letter, 16 February 1916, Sadd, IWM 96/57/1.
72 Letter, 10 March 1916, Edward Chapman, IWM 92/3/1.
73 Letter, 23 March 1916, Chapman, IWM 92/3/1.
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5

Brotherly loss

> I often think about my brother William – Bill. He used to hold my hand when we went to school … It broke my heart when he died. I would have liked to have died with him – but I didn't, and here I am today.[1]

Interviewed in 2004, centenarian Fred Lloyd demonstrably missed the love shown him by his 'giant' of a brother, capturing the essence of their fraternal bond in the motif of a clasped hand. The potency of brotherly grief is found in such simple recollections, the inconsequential acts of remembered love that haunted some men. The accounts examined in this chapter confirm that many brothers are mourning the loss of not only stable figures in their lives but also their childhood companions and protectors. The youngest of sixteen, Fred was working as a potboy at 'The Rocks', a local estate in Uckfield, East Sussex, when war broke out. Three of his brothers joined up, two were killed in action.[2] Closest in age to Fred, Bill's death at the age of twenty-one resonated most strongly with his surviving brother. One of the last surviving Great War veterans, Fred provides a glimpse of the lifelong guilt and heartache experienced by surviving siblings.

Challenging the convention that male grief was carefully managed, fraternal narratives reveal the spectrum of responses to brothers' deaths, rebutting the view that open displays of emotion were condemned as unacceptable. The passing of time did not obviate the urge to mark these untimely deaths.[3] Anniversaries prompted painful feelings of loss, anger and guilt: veteran reunions; commemorative activities; other deaths and funerals; subsequent wars; and visual or aural reminders of the deceased.[4] Even where bonds between brothers were distant, emotional responses to deaths infiltrated the intimate networks of surviving siblings as fathers, mothers, wives, workmates and friends mourned their loss.

The ways in which men and women expressed grief over fraternal deaths both shaped and were shaped by familial and societal mores. Men were expected to privilege the grief of female family members, particularly mothers, and to act as masculine role models for their younger siblings – a responsibility apparently borne willingly, with little bitterness. Rather, men's concern and sympathy demonstrated love from afar. What remains largely undetected is the additional burden that such support placed on combatant and non-combatant brothers. As was pointed out in Chapter 3, the high proportion of male siblings serving together in the Pals and Territorial units resulted in many soldiers being close to brothers at the time of their deaths, an additional trauma forming part of their wartime experience. Others received the news indirectly by post or telegram, and siblings living at home witnessed the distress of parents and other family members.

Grief manifested itself in a variety of forms: expressed openly in the shape of tears or anger, or more obliquely through sleeplessness or loss of appetite. Reliance on written narratives means that physical signs of grief, such as a voice cracking, a face whitening or feelings of nausea, go undiscovered, although handwritten texts may provide tacit clues to men's emotional states. A machine-gun bullet to his heart killed Ernest Burrell in March 1916. Writing to their stepmother, his brother Bill, a farm labourer, repeatedly scratched out his words, providing poignant insight into the turmoil that many experienced when consoling loved ones.

> I am very sorry of poor Ernest and what you was telling me of dad it realy [sic] upsetting me … but never mind mother don't upset yourself well I no it worry you a lot and I am please you have dad.[5]

His short message, lacking the literacy of letters sent by upper- and middle-class men, still carried the same themes of personal distress and concern for parents, challenging the assumption that working-class inarticulacy masked emotional reactions to loss.

Demographic trends affected men's intimate knowledge of death. From the latter decades of the nineteenth century onwards, life expectancy increased. Improvements in public health, housing, diet, medicine, pay and working hours meant that people from all classes became less accustomed to facing sibling mortality in infancy.[6] Parents, where possible, sought to protect children from illness and death by removing them to the homes of

friends or relatives. In *The Innocent Eye* (1933), the memoir of his 1890s childhood, Herbert Read recalled being 'sent away' to stay with an aunt when both his baby sister and father were mortally ill.[7] The effect of combat deaths on siblings has been neglected, despite the disproportionate numbers of fatalities suffered by the young. These deaths had particular salience for children and adolescents still living at home. Figures for England and Wales show that one in six men under the age of twenty were likely to be killed, and one in seven of those aged twenty to twenty-four.[8] Likely reasons for this are the significant numbers of young men volunteering when war broke out. Casualties were higher in the first days, even hours, of battle as unprepared combatants faced mechanised warfare.[9]

School-age brothers were constantly reminded of the perils of war. Educational communities of all sizes commemorated their war dead, displaying lists and photographs of the fallen, reading out names at assembly or chapel, and bereaved boys wearing black armbands.[10] Before the 1915 order forbidding the repatriation of bodies, funerals were held at some public schools. Manchester Grammar School lost 521 former pupils and teachers, 100 during the Somme offensive alone. The school magazine, *Ulula*, routinely performed the 'proud but poignant' task of recording the exploits and deaths of alumni.[11] Family ties intersected with this communal mourning. Several obituaries of Old Mancunians noted that the departed serviceman was one in a succession of brothers attending the school, the death toll affecting cohorts of past and present pupils. Pickup Croft Sunday School, of St Peter's parish, Burnley, serving a 'difficult class' of children from the surrounding working-class neighbourhood, suffered disproportionate losses.[12] Thirty former pupils were killed, including three pairs of brothers, reflecting the numbers joining the East Lancashire Regiment from this close-knit mill community.[13] Despite their physical distance from the front, schoolchildren were immersed in communal rituals of death and mourning. In 1916 the headmaster of Rugby School abandoned the practice of reading out the names of casualties, due to the depressing effect on the school population.[14]

A more intimate subset of the old school network is found in fraternal correspondence. Cecil Falk compiled a roll call of his former fellow pupils in St Hill's house at Rugby: 'Van Grysen, Hyne, Chambers have all been killed – also Judge, while Baggaway, Swift, Winner, have been wounded.'[15] Writing to his brother at the end of his first year on active service, Falk's

listing of names was a more personal act of commemoration than the formal naming of the dead on Rugby's roll of honour, and a shared reflection with his sibling on the heavy sacrifice borne by their generation. The high death toll within their immediate circle underscored the risks faced by combatants, fuelling the anxiety that Cecil felt about the imminent service of his sibling. The boundaries of these communities of mourning extended beyond the walls of each establishment, to the younger brothers and sisters who had acquired quasi-brothers vicariously via the friendships forged by their older brothers.

A brother's emotions on hearing of a sibling's death could be immediate, countering stereotypes of Edwardian repression. After a telephone call from his sister confirming that his beloved younger brother, Arnold, was killed on 25 May 1915, the diplomat George Vansittart recalled that 'London suddenly seemed void'. Stopping only to secure his papers, he left his office and 'plunged into the mutilated plane-trees of the Mall, as far as possible from light or sight, and sobbed my heart out'. Despite recognising that such behaviour would be wholly inappropriate at his brother's memorial service, where 'one must behave like a gentleman whose code is to hide their grief', Vansittart questioned the function of public decorum in his observation that 'anyhow one is alone in one's grief'.[16] Empty rituals failed to provide an outlet for the wretchedness experienced by many bereaved brothers and sisters. Vansittart's experience highlighted two key themes emerging from other accounts of a sibling's death in combat. The first of these is the flight to privacy, a haven where emotions could be vented freely. This sprung from a belief that exhibitions of distress would not be condoned, reinforcing the convention that masculine grief was an essentially private emotion. Second, his behaviour conveyed a knowing awareness of public codes of mourning. His professional awareness ensured that work responsibilities took precedence in the immediate aftermath. His social awareness ensured his compliance with behavioural norms. Even though men abided by these social scripts, they did not always feel obliged to conform to such conventions in private. Significantly, when writing their memoirs, often several years afterwards (Vansittart's memoir was published in 1958), some men chose not to omit these charged emotional responses to brotherly loss.

From these two threads, we start to see the intersection of communities of mourning emerging from each combat death. At its heart is the personal expression or repression of grief, followed by interaction with immediate

family members, comrades and colleagues, and finally the wider society. Fraternal narratives support Rosenwein's concept of 'not entirely concentric circles' of emotional communities. Bereaved siblings exhibited their understanding of wider emotional conventions and their ability to adapt their behaviour according to the needs or demands of individual communities.[17] At the nexus of personal, military, societal and familial codes of masculinity we see the multiplicity of roles performed by men: providing support to mothers and sisters; sharing their emotions with brothers or other trusted recipients; and passing on societal conventions to younger siblings. Men's accounts expose the pitfalls of focusing on condolence letters. The communities of mourning revealed by such collections are inevitably influenced by the proprieties surrounding the mode of communication and the recipient's gender, class or occupation. To better understand the bonds of communal mourning, it is necessary to examine the range of communities available to the bereaved, both at the time of their loss and in the days, months and years afterwards.

External signs of grief were hidden by sisters. Finding spatial privacy within the social routines of domestic life proved difficult. Attending chapel one Sunday, Ella Lethem found the prayers for the men at the front rather upsetting, reminding her of her brother Jack's body lying on the battlefield. Managing her unpredictable emotions in public was difficult when they could overcome her 'with such a rush'. Amid the ritual of the service, she took some solace from the fact that no one in the congregation saw her cry.[18] Both Irene Rathbone, in her fictionalised account of her wartime experiences, and Vera Brittain in her memoir show breakdowns occurring in particular spaces with personal significance within the home: the former nursery shared by the Seddon siblings, and the dining-room containing a portrait of Edward Brittain.[19] There, long after her family had retired to bed, in a place brimful of the musical afternoons and evenings spent with her sibling, Brittain fell to her knees, repeatedly crying out Edward's name in the vain hope that her persistent calling would somehow bring him back.[20] Familial sensitivities and conventions governed these behaviours. Both sought a refuge away from their older family relatives – Rathbone's elderly aunt, Brittain's parents – a spatial carapace for themselves and their loved ones.

Behaviours such as this contribute to the perception that siblings suffered a disenfranchisement of grief within their family circle. Fictional accounts

allowed more scope for describing the viscerality of emotional responses. Compared with her public stony countenance, within the privacy of her bedroom, rage and grief wracked Joan Seddon's body: her face was sodden with tears and saliva, her eyeballs becoming a 'heaving instrument of sobs'.[21] In solitude, Joan was unable to maintain the physical effort of stoicism. A useful comparison is found in Francis Brett Young's *My Brother Jonathan* (1928). In this work the Black Country novelist introduces us to the Daker brothers, Harold and Jonathan. After receiving news of his younger brother's death, Jonathan takes refuge in his bedroom. There, feelings of guilt at having reproached his brother for failing to spend his last leave at the family home compound his grief. The bed shudders beneath him as he is convulsed by uncontrollable violent muscular contractions. His emotional response feels alien to his adult self; he has not behaved in this way since he was a child.[22] Although the novel has some autobiographical overtones, Brett Young, the son of a doctor, served with the RAMC. The oppositional fraternal bond was not replicated in his real-life relationship with his brother, Eric. The Brett Young siblings collaborated on early novels, and Eric survived the war. Of interest is the treatment of emotions within these two fictional accounts, both of which display an embodied response that is rarely conveyed explicitly in diaries, letters or memoirs.

Grieving families

Familial communities of emotion reflect the web of relationships within each domestic circle. Grief was shaped and moulded by family expectations. 'God help me to help them all,' was Ella Lethem's plea on hearing of her brother's death. In the hierarchy of grief encompassing her mother, father and John's widow, she saw her grief through a supportive lens.[23] Men were acutely aware of their consolatory duties. Male expressions of grief are rarely the locus of historical study,[24] and this bias is exacerbated in First World War studies, due to the privileging of maternal grief, mirroring the previous historiographical focus on maternal love and toil.[25] A number of factors have contributed to this. Mass conscription and high death tolls made it politically expedient to showcase 'equality of sacrifice',[26] leading to the showcasing of women's vicarious service to the nation via the suffering of their sons.[27] The public profile and status of

mourning women, especially mothers, remained strong in the war's aftermath. Men's absence due to work commitments exaggerated the bias resulting from women's highly visible presence at commemoration services.[28] A focus on condolence letters, centred on mothers, perpetuates a vertical bias, consolidating their privileged status and relegating menfolk and children to a supportive role.[29] This emphasis overstates the generic conventions, and consequently the recipients of written condolences, in determining the radius of support networks.

Condolences were shaped by letter-writing conventions, the relationship between recipient and sender, and the personal experience of the sender. Edith Payne was the eldest of seven – six sisters and one brother, Albert, killed in action on 8 August 1917. Living in the family home with her parents and two sisters, Edith, aged thirty-nine, was a primary school teacher, a profession which she shared with Albert. He had married Elizabeth Ager in 1915 and their daughter was born the following year. The condolence letters sent to Edith came from family friends and relatives, many of whom had lost a son, husband or brother themselves, and their feelings of personal loss infiltrated their expressions of condolence. As her cousin wrote:

> I can quite understand how you all feel, having such a short time ago gone through the same great sorrow myself. Why our brothers and husbands are taken away from us in this great war God alone knows.[30]

These letters, grounded in the shared experience of home-front grief and mourning, referred to the 'hardship' of losing so many 'useful lives', the suffering of 'very many', and 'these awful times & so terribly cruel'. At this stage of the war, rather than expounding on Albert's personal qualities and sacrifice, the focus reflected on a shared understanding of loss.

Viewing familial grief from a lateral perspective provides a much-needed counterweight to this dominant discourse of female grief. French sociologist Emile Durkheim believed that the family group was diminished after the death of a member. In response, individual members seek each other out to reassemble as a unit.[31] In wartime, the desire to reassemble was impeded by distance, the seeking out occurring partially by correspondence. A sibling's-eye view shows how individual families managed societal and kinship norms of mutual support and appropriate mourning behaviours. 'Terribly cut up' after receiving a postcard from his sister telling him of his

brother's death, Mowbray Meades wrote to his wife. Isolated from his family, Meades outlined his perspective of the relational web of familial grief. Acknowledging the upset of his father, mother and sister Hettie, he singled out his mother as being inconsolable. Confined to correspondence, he had been unable to say much when replying to the news. Finally, he ended by asking his wife to 'be very careful' when breaking the news to their five-year-old daughter.[32] Meades illustrates how condolence at a distance operated within specific families. Siblings rather than parents were routinely tasked with breaking the news of deaths. Whether this was designed to protect parents or in recognition that inter-generational communication was more appropriate is a matter of speculation. While the strain that writing condolences placed on rankers and officers has been noted by Roper, less attention has been paid to soldier-brothers' multiple roles as combatants, bereaved and consolers.[33] Broadening our understanding of the communities of support offered to and by *all* family members counteracts the inevitable privileging of the maternal role.

Roper spotlights the phenomenal practical and emotional efforts made by mothers of fighting men, underpinning his ground-breaking argument that the 'emotional survival' of soldiers depended, in part, on such dedication. Filial support proffered to bereaved mothers offers a counterweight to this conceptualisation. Amid their own profound loss, men of all classes were expected to privilege the intense grief of mothers. Writing to his mother after the birth and death of her baby daughter on the same day, Bim Tennant, regretting his absence, put forward his younger brother Stephen as the 'son of comfort, a son of consolation'.[34] Although scholarly attention has been paid to the extent to which combatants hid graphic accounts of warfare from mothers, the strain of fulfilling this consolatory duty can be fully understood only by an equal focus on lateral and vertical planes of support. The daughter of a Northumbrian blacksmith, Annie Blaystock recounted the physical and emotional toll on her mother after her brother was killed on his return to the front, following a period of convalescence. The 'awful blow' caused her mother to 'let herself go', losing weight to the extent that the family feared they might lose her too. This heart-rending maternal reaction dwarfed the grief of other family members: 'I think that was the hardest thing that ever happened to mother. And all of us, we were all terribly upset.'[35] A comparable tendency is seen in the familial correspondence of the Baines family following the deaths of Jack and Jock.

A letter from their sister Keenie first considered their mother's suffering in light of the 'terrible blow', before recognising 'the terrible losses for us all'. Subsequent letters highlight their mother's 'brave' or 'admirable' fortitude while simultaneously seeking out sources of comfort for her.[36] Bundled into the 'and all' of the family, sibling loss appears almost as an afterthought, a footnote to maternal trauma.

Male family members reinforced the expectation that the grief of mothers took precedence. Conscientious objector Percy Wall was the second-eldest of six children. His working-class parents, Tom and Charlotte, active socialists, supported his stance and campaigned on his behalf.[37] After telling Percy of the death of his older brother, Dick, a sergeant-major in the Shropshire Light Infantry, his father made plain his expectation that his son should 'bear up' as best he could, following the 'brave' example of his mother, sister and brothers.[38] Tom's exhortation to try 'for their sakes' acknowledged the strain that he was placing on his son. At the time, Percy was serving his second sentence of hard labour in Walton prison, Liverpool. His father was reluctantly fulfilling an earlier promise not to withhold any bad news concerning Dick. Hard labour was a harsh regimen; men struggled with isolation, the first month of the sentence being spent in solitary confinement. Thereafter a strict rule of silence was imposed. Letters to and from home, the lifeblood of emotional support, were rationed. This punishment was cyclical. Having completed their sentence, conscripted men were returned to barracks, where their continued refusal to obey orders led to a further court martial and imprisonment. These consecutive sentences took a considerable mental and physical toll on them.[39] In his unpublished memoir, *Hour at Eve*, Percy confessed to brooding alone in his cell after receiving the news.[40] His physical separation from his family hardened his belief that he could better express his full feelings by 'one good grip of the hand' with his father, or by embracing his mother and siblings.[41] The additional stress on his already weakened state led to his refusal to participate in post-Armistice protests organised by his fellow conscientious objector inmates, fearing that further nervous strain would result in a breakdown.

Replying to Tom's letter, Percy masked his wretchedness, directly addressing any concerns – even echoing his father's phrasing – in his earnest reassurances that he would not add to his family's anguish. He made

his mother, Charlotte, the central focus of his condolences, taking special care to assure his ‘dear, dear mother’ of his efforts to alleviate her despair:

> I cannot make up your loss but I can and will when I come, be more, much more to you than I ever was … Not because I am suffering anything here. Please don’t think that … But to be to you all were it possible, two sons or brothers.

In a second letter, written a fortnight later, Percy again devoted a large section to his mother, worrying about the detrimental effect of the news on her health and comforting her with the prospect of his return home. Then the entire family would rally round to ensure that she did not ‘suffer a moment’s sorrow in future that it is within our power to prevent’.[42]

Percy’s ready acceptance of his father’s strictures challenges psychological findings that sibling trauma might be doubled by the absence of parental support and attention.[43] Societal and familial failure to recognise fraternal loss resulted in a ‘disenfranchisement’ of grief.[44] Rather than being burdened by familial obligation, Percy gained succour in the strengthening of their bond by a ‘mutual clinging closer, a sharing of joys and sorrows’.[45] This staunchly pacifist family could not draw on the rhetoric of heroic sacrifice as a consolatory device. Instead, Percy relied on family unity, believing that their shared suffering could break down the barrier of physical separation. By stressing their concordance, Percy underscored the lack of discord arising from the Wall brothers’ opposing stances. Notably, in his memoir, the privileging of maternal loss is omitted. Here he concluded that both parents, along with his sister and brothers, and by implication he himself, had ‘lost their eldest son in a cause in which they did not believe, in a service that was anathema to them’. In this reformulation of his response to Dick’s death, Percy linked it closer to his pacifist protest against the war and the heavy sacrifice made by the families of conscientious objectors.

Mapping the support networks within families shows how the specificity of individual bonds bolstered or strained emotional obligations. Some bereaved brothers divulged intimate responses to their loss to siblings, such correspondence being explicitly kept from their parents. The Raws family migrated to South Australia from Manchester in 1895. The youngest brothers, Goldy (Robert Goldstone) and Alec (John Alexander), served with the Australian Imperial Force. On 28 July 1916, Goldy was reported missing. The following day, regrettably too late to see his brother, Alec

joined his brother's Battalion. His correspondence in the succeeding days shows the complex interweaving of lateral and vertical planes of familial support. Despite providing graphic details of the Pozières offensive to his mother, Alec baulked at confirming his brother's likely death when writing to his parents.[46] Skirting away from this task, his initial strategy was to proffer his parents the most hopeful prognosis, that their son was wounded. To his sister, he spelt out likelier outcomes based on the limited information that he had gathered: their brother was dead, taken prisoner, or had suffered a head wound likely to blind him.[47] Eventually, he was obliged to dissuade his father of any 'foolish hope'. The strain of transmitting this message caused him to write 'coldly and without emotion'. Alec used his combat experience as emotional cover; 'circumstances' made it 'impossible to give way' to grief. He confided his war strain and anger to his older brother Lennon, the recipient of his admission that Goldy's death was 'a far greater shock to me than I had thought possible … probably due to nerves'.[48] This letter is infused with rage as Alec bitterly lays the blame for Goldy's 'murder' at the feet of 'the incompetence, callousness, and personal vanity' of those in authority. Even within the safe space of his brother's discretion, he finds it necessary to contextualise his reaction: recent experience of battle has weakened his usual resolve. Alec's manipulation of his war work as an explanatory mechanism tailored to specific recipients indicates the intricate emotional manoeuvrings performed by bereaved brothers. Within the confessional of sibling correspondence, he could isolate his concern for his parents while expressing his worries and grief.

Examples of the deep grief experienced by fathers have been portrayed as aberrations, with scant evidence that displays of male grief were not socially sanctioned.[49] Where male loss has been the focus of attention, a more nuanced picture emerges. Valerie Sanders' study of elite Victorian fatherhood shows bereaved fathers freely interrogating their loss in private letters and diaries.[50] Cumulatively, accounts of male outpourings of grief indicate a certain level of public compassion for, and levels of acceptance of, masculine emotional expression. Pat Campbell believed that his father, John, 'suffered most' after Percy's death:

> It was said of an English king that he never smiled again after the loss of his son, and though this would not have been literally true of my father, yet during the rest of his life there was probably not a single day on which he was unaware of Percy. His grief was all the greater

because he believed that he had not appreciated him during his lifetime and had not always been fair to him.[51]

Like many fathers, John went to great efforts to establish a precise timeline leading up to Percy's death. As a newly minted officer, Percy was thrust into difficult combat conditions. Muddled reports show that at some point Percy became separated from his battalion. Piecing together fragmentary, contradictory and often inconclusive information regarding Percy's decisions, movements and death, John was hampered by a paucity of survivors and his son's short period of service. Based on his own combat experience, Pat commented on the impossibility of this task. In light of this, he was surprised 'that my father found out so much'. This 'memory work' was steeped in grief. When John, a mathematician and fellow of Hertford College, died suddenly in October 1924, just ten years after his son, his obituaries referred to the 'terrible blow' of Percy's death, the anxiety caused by his having two other serving sons and his subsequent loss of interest in practising his profession for almost six years. Given the conflicting demands placed upon grieving men within their immediate families, men sought comfort from other networks. Friendships forged through professional links were fertile sources of emotional support for bereaved fathers.[52] Christopher Addison, who served in the coalition government under both Asquith and Lloyd George, recounted a 'sad' discussion with his colleague Andrew Bonar Law, who had just learned of the death of his oldest son in Palestine.[53] Older serving men might have access to such networks, but many young volunteers and conscripts knew of no professional life outside of school or university. What men's narratives reveal in their stead are glimpses of soldierly compassion.

Flight to privacy

During combat, men demanded emotional stoicism from comrades. Fear, grief or anxiety distracted men, jeopardising their safety. Outside the battlefield, men more readily commiserated with losses experienced by others. Few narratives relate any stigma being attached to manifestations of grief. Among men habituated to dealing with the casualties of war, bereaved brothers found themselves treated with empathetic consideration or what Lance Corporal John Lucy termed 'deeds of rough kindness'.[54] As was seen

in Chapter 3, witnessing fraternal grief troubled serving men. Nonetheless, they overcame their discomfort out of fellow feeling for their bereaved comrades. Thanking his mother for passing on messages of sympathy, Joe Evans also noted that his pals in the trenches had also been 'very sorry'. These considerations helped him 'a great deal' to bear his sorrow.[55] For James Burns, it was the momentary clasp of a comrade's hand that provided consolation, a deep yet silent expression of sympathy he never forgot.[56]

Despite these acts of solicitude, some men's immediate response to hearing of the death of a loved one was a strong desire to flee to a place of seclusion where they could express their misery out of sight of comrades or work colleagues. When a stray bullet killed his older brother, Herbert Read's grief was 'too violent to tolerate sympathy or consolation'. Blinded by tears, he fled from his garrison headquarters to the seclusion of a nearby park.[57] In his diary, Siegfried Sassoon wrote of 'escaping' to woods where 'grief had its way with me'.[58] Reacting here to the death of his close friend and lover, Lieutenant David Thomas, Sassoon later merged the emotions he felt over this loss with the death of Hamo four months earlier. The American psychologist and gerontologist Robert Kastenbaum coined the term 'bereavement overload' to explain how individuals confronting multiple losses in rapid succession struggle to accommodate their feelings.[59] For men faced with so many deaths, compartmentalising grief was hard; the emotional boundaries between deaths of brothers, friends and comrades became blurred. Strategies to contain emotions proved ineffective. Men were caught in a 'powerful double bind'. Military efficiency depended on combatants' ability to form intimate bonds with their comrades, making them emotionally vulnerable to combat deaths.[60] Joanna Bourke and Sarah Cole both ascribe the reluctance to form close wartime friendships to men's desire to guard against such vulnerability,[61] a coping mechanism that was dissipated by news of a brother's death.

We can only surmise about men's urgent need to draw a veil over their emotions. Undoubtedly, this was prompted by a compulsion to hide conspicuous outbursts of grief. Sobbing, a violent version of weeping, was a clear breach of the stiff upper lip.[62] The drive to find a refuge where emotions could be given free rein may have been a physical response to loss. Gesa Stedman's analysis of emotion metaphors shows how agitation and movement can be a means of verbalising the body. Constructing their response as a drive to escape scrutiny provided bereaved brothers with a

means to bridge the gap between what they felt and what they could express.[63] Credibly, such behaviour was rooted in childhood practices. Privacy would have been a valued commodity in the ultra-masculine environment of public schools or the cramped living conditions of many working-class households.[64] Pupils at elite schools gained autonomy and a sense of security when granted the privilege of personal space.[65] Children growing up in or near the countryside instinctively 'nest' in quiet rural spaces to reflect or mull things over.[66] J-M. Strange notes the gendered choice of space when expressing feelings. One emotional discussion between a working-class father and son took place outside, away from the domestic realm – the pair returning home only after the father had composed himself.[67] Status conferred a measure of privacy. A colleague informed Sir Lennon Raws, Chairman of the Australian Metal Exchange, of Alec's death, a mere six weeks after Goldy was reported missing. Stunned by the news, Raws asked to be left alone. After contacting his brother-in-law and sister, he burst into tears. Like Percy Wall, Lennon later took comfort in 'the beautifully sacred times' emerging from the assembly of his grieving family, his married sister Helen returning to the family home from Victoria. Together once more, the three remaining siblings and their parents were united by 'a common bond … too often frayed and broken by the friction of ordinary life'.[68]

Men may have been inhibited by the anticipated reaction of people around them, or, like Herbert Read, immune from their sympathy.[69] Officers and rankers alike discharged the unwelcome duty of formulating messages of condolence to bereaved parents. This experience likely coloured their attitudes towards receiving consolatory words from comrades. Mindful of their environs, men were conscious of the burden that witnessing their distress placed on comrades, colleagues, and family members.

Narratives are often silent as to the precise form of men's grief. Rifleman James Johnston, a former government official, died of pneumonia on 20 May 1915. Shot twice at Fromelles, he suffered from exposure after being left in the open for two days. During a rest period, his brother John received the official notification of his sibling's demise. Deflecting his feelings of anxiety for his 'missing' brother in a double negative, John was 'not unprepared' for the news. Writing nine years later, he remembered the flashbulb moment 'as if it was yesterday', hinting at his reaction by the

comment, ‘fortunately I was alone’.[70] Through such silences, grieving men impel us to fill the emotional gaps in their memoirs.

For some siblings, the demands of everyday life constrained expressions of grief. Cecil Burch learned of his brother Raymond’s death when preparing for his School Certificate Examination in practical mathematics. Recording that he ‘had no time to feel’, Cecil continued with the job at hand. This was no unfeeling task. Raymond had passed his love of mechanics to his sibling. In Cecil’s mind, the examination embodied the ‘mechanics of [Raymond’s] own life’. His ‘grief and love’ for his lost brother remained with him until his death in 1983.[71] Domestic obligations provided an emotional focus for grieving sisters. When her mother took to bed, ill with grief, Ella Lethem believed it fortunate that responsibility for housework left her with ‘scarcely’ time to think.[72] The ‘mechanical habit of work’ was an essential distraction from troubling emotions.[73] Ella’s fiancé, Douglas Crockatt, noticed her labours on behalf of her family. The following February she looked tired and needed ‘taking care of’.[74] Previously Crockatt had told Ella, in his absence, to visit his mother. On their first meeting Ella was thankful to release her pent-up emotions; a previous breakdown had been stalled when her father had begged her not to cry on seeing the proofs of photographs of her brother that had been taken before his death.[75]

Siegfried Sassoon wrote to his mother, nicknamed Ash, after learning of Hamo’s death at Gallipoli. Initially ill prepared to offer her comfort, he resorted to rhetorical stoicism, asserting, ‘I can’t write anything. We must keep our chins up, that’s all.’ A few days later, still numb from shock, Sassoon adhered to the convention that required both son and mother to carry on as normal:

> Now you have got over the worst of it, and you must be a brave Ash and proud of what everyone will say about him. I am lucky to be here where I have to keep on as if nothing was wrong, but I long to be with you … Everything I write seems futile. My brain won’t work. God bless you, my dearest, for all you have done and all you have endured for us.[76]

Implicit in Sassoon’s letter is his recognition that his mother’s grief, without the distraction of ‘work’, would be harder to bear. In lieu of this, he stressed his mother’s continuing maternal responsibilities as a reason to stay strong: ‘You still have got Michael [his younger brother] to live for, and he would be absolutely alone in the world without you.’ He presented the discipline

of stoicism as an emotional prop supporting them both through their bereavement. Sassoon's protectiveness of his mother continued after the war, becoming the catalyst for the breach of his friendship with Robert Graves. Sassoon objected strongly to the satirical portrayal of Ash in *Goodbye to All That.* Grave's depiction of Ash's attempts to reach Hamo via the spiritualist practice of automatic writing was 'one of the most hurtful things' he had seen in print.[77] Sassoon succeeded in getting the offending section removed, but his relationship with Graves never recovered.

Languages of loss

Brothers took solace in successfully repressing their instinctive response to a sibling's death. Upholding codes of self-restraint boosted men's sense of duty and manhood; combat conditions necessitated their adoption by fighting men. On 30 September 1915, Francis and Sidney Collings came under heavy fire at Ypres. A shell hit their trench, burying Francis, a head wound leaving him dazed. At the earliest opportunity, he asked his sergeant major if Sid was dead. The affirmative reply was brusque. Francis was told to 'Take it like a soldier' – an example of the pragmatic limits of empathy during battle. Compensating for this military severity was Francis' belief that Sid's presence accompanied him throughout his uncomfortable journey to the nearest dressing station, his brother's 'voice' soothing away discomfort. Copying out his diary two years later, Francis elaborated on the after-effects of Sid's death:

> The memory of it all is deep printed on my memory especially 30 September 1915 when I parted for a while from my beloved brother. He was a true christian [sic] and highly esteemed by all who knew him. To me he will always be 21 yrs. And cut off for the purpose of stamping the hand of militarism and lifting this world nearer Peace and Love.[78]

The majority of Collings' journal entries, written in a tiny commercial diary, were concise and factual, recording his tasks, rest periods, references to Sid, attendance at services and the weather. His adoption of sacrificial 'high diction' supports the contention that use of such rhetoric was not restricted to the classically educated elite.[79] As a devout Anglican, Collings found some consolation in traditional ideals of Christian manliness and the belief that they would be reunited in the afterlife. Collings was not alone in

taking consolation in the thought that his brother inhabited an intermediate state, an orthodoxy that gained currency among the church-going population during the war years.[80] Constrained by the language of sacrifice, Francis singled out Sid's death on the cusp of manhood for its personal significance.

War narratives are populated by factual accounts of brothers' deaths. In *A Soldier from the War Returning* (1964), an expanded version of his 1929 memoir, *A Subaltern's War*, Charles Carrington made a passing comment on his brother's death in a passage depicting the Somme battleground:

> Right and left ran the ridge from Delville Wood to High Wood (where my brother, Christopher, had been killed in October), from High Wood to Pozières, from Pozières to the hill above Thiepval, the watershed which had been the original objective for 1st July, the starting point from which we were to exploit the victory that was never won.[81]

Carrington was one of the interviewees informing the BBC TV series, *The Great War*, marking the conflict's fiftieth anniversary. This was patently a period of reflection for him. In his preface to the 1964 edition of *A Subaltern's War*, Carrington rejected a narrow categorisation of his work as one of disillusionment. The son of an Anglican clergyman, he had been an underage volunteer, enlisting at the age of seventeen. His combat experiences as a junior officer ran the spectrum of enjoying life in 'cushy' trenches to coming perilously close to breaking down at Passchendaele. Reviewing his earlier writings as an 'old' survivor, Carrington reasoned that, having entered the war with open eyes, nothing had happened that he had not bargained for.[82] This perspective is reflected in his contraction of Christopher's death to one of a series of facts that, along with the terrain, formed his record of a failed campaign. His language mirrored that of official, regimental and battalion histories, utilising the vocabulary of military deaths. Men were reported missing, wounded or killed in action. Factual terminology replaced the consolatory euphemisms of death and dying associated with the Victorian 'good death'. By inserting the fact of Christopher's demise, Carrington completed his personal war story in unsentimental fashion, neither glorifying nor vilifying the loss of his brother.

The writer John Buchan was too ill to serve in 1914. Alongside the memorials he wrote for friends, he compiled a history of the Royal Scots Fusiliers in tribute to his younger brother Alastair.[83] All casualties,

including Alastair's death at Arras in April 1917, were recorded faithfully. The only indication that the death of this one officer might have greater significance for the author is Buchan's footnote: '"A most charming and gallant young officer," Mr Winston Churchill wrote – "simple, conscientious, and much liked by his comrades."'[84] The convention of restraint meant that this briefest of mentions served as Buchan's epitaph to his brother. What both these examples show is that, even when confined by the constraints of writing factual accounts, the desire to mark the death of a sibling was irresistible. Failure to express emotions must not be equated with coldness or an unfeeling nature.[85] Men derived pride from their self-control, believing that this was the appropriate way to honour fraternal deaths. Exerting control bolstered men's status and underlined the depth of their sorrow. Unencumbered by the language of 'high diction', such accounts made a clear link between soldiering and death.

Emotions could be buried by embracing the rhetoric of youthful manly sacrifice. Siegfried and Hamo Sassoon regarded enlisting as their duty. Hamo's death from mortal wounds at Gallipoli reinforced Sassoon's resolve to follow his sibling's example.[86] Choosing not to record his response to his brother's death in a conventional diary entry, Sassoon wrote a short poem entitled 'Brothers'. This verse shows the influence of Rupert Brooke with its idealistic spirit of 'Happy Warriorism'.[87] The symbolism of romanticised sacrifice displaced any personal emotion, as Sassoon wrote:

> Your lot is with the ghosts of soldiers dead,
> And I am with the fighters in the field;
> But in the gloom I see your laurelled head,
> And through your victory mine will be revealed.[88]

Sassoon's use of the phrase 'laurelled head', the classical symbol of military victory and honour, owes a clear debt to A. E. Housman's poem 'To an Athlete Dying Young'.[89] The inspiration for Housman's touching elegy is commonly held to be Adalbert Jackson, who died at the age of twenty-nine in November 1892, although a likelier subject, Archie Burnett convincingly argues, was Adalbert's older brother and Housman's 'greatest friend', Moses.[90] Housman's invocation of the laurel, with its association with youth and male perfection, can be seen as a 'gift of love'.[91] The evergreen laurel, like the poem, and like our memories of the lauded athlete, will not wither in death.

Sassoon had accrued neither the language nor the experience to fully express his emotions. Writing to literary critic Michael Thorpe in 1966, he pronounced his wartime self as 'immature, impulsive, irrational and bewildered', stating that he did not uncover his real voice until 1924.[92] Like many of his class and education when searching for declarations of grief, the familiar rhetoric of patriotic sacrifice asserted itself. Lacking appropriate alternatives, he resorted to cliché and the inspiration of a poet he admired greatly.[93] Housman's haunting image of everlasting youth cut down in its prime resonates throughout the poem. Sassoon's words become a loving gift to Hamo, one that ensures his brother will not be forgotten. The distancing of grief is emphasised by Sassoon's use of the universal and impersonal 'Brothers' as the poem's title. This dedication remained unchanged in its published form during the war years.[94] Thirty years later, in his *Collected Poems* (1947), Sassoon reaffirmed his kinship bond by renaming his elegy 'To My Brother'.[95] Michael Thorn believes Sassoon to have been less concerned, when compiling this edition, with literary excellence than with a desire 'to render a true picture of his varied responses to war'.[96] Sassoon's three-volume account of his experiences, *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston* (1937), presented his fictionalised persona as an only child, sidestepping the need to address his sibling's death.[97] Essentially a private person, Sassoon regarded his poetry as 'his real biography', an authentic record,[98] erasing Hamo from this 'true' version of his war story would have been a significant omission. Sassoon's desire to amend the poem's subject from the universal to the particular, his lost sibling, further personalised his poetic record of the conflict. By this smallest of gestures he reinstated his flawed poem as a personal memorial to Hamo.

'Black hate'

Fraternal deaths frequently aroused anger. Rage is often associated with masculinity, yet gendering emotions results in an over-simplification of men's responses. Grief comprises a range of feelings, including anger, and men's narratives may simply have been spotlighting one facet of its expression.[99] Nineteen-year-old David Potts, the youngest son of a London-based commercial traveller, died of diphtheria at Limberg Main Hospital,

Germany, five months after his capture at Gavrelle, near Arras. The news hit his two elder brothers hard, and the end of the war saw a resurgence of bitterness. The Armistice fell on David's birthday. Writing to his mother the following day, Leonard Potts declared that the 'wretched business' made his blood boil, arousing a desire 'to kill every Hun prisoner', especially officers.[100] Maintaining a level of 'brotherhood' with his fellow rankers, the knowledge that his sibling would not return home festered in his mind. Anger, rather than grief, revealed his feelings to his grieving mother.

Local and national commemorations sparked anger focused on particular themes: the diversion of funds away from returning veterans and war widows, and a distaste for the glorification of war that was associated with the ceremonial. Local historians have speculated that lingering feelings of bitterness towards the needless sacrifice of loved ones led to a silent boycott, resulting in the absence of some names from memorials. One such instance occurred in Kelvedon, Essex. In 1919, the organising committee determined to commission a memorial cross. When the provisional roll of honour was publicised, the landlord of the White Hart public house, Vincent Gisby, wrote requesting the removal of his siblings' names.[101] Somewhat ill advisedly, the committee ignored this request. Vincent refused to change his mind. Eventually, a local family donated £75 to cover the cost of reinscribing the memorial without the disputed names.[102]

Sometimes fury and frustration boiled over into physical violence. John Lucy's aggressive reaction following the death of his brother Denis sprung from an accumulation of factors. The brothers' sections had been charged with capturing a German platoon. In the chaotic aftermath, John was incorrectly informed that Denis had been wounded. His loss was compounded by the knowledge that, for days, his sibling's body had lain 300 yards away. In his post-combat state, John recorded feeling 'fatigued, fed-up and moody', dreaming of his dead sibling and reading letters from home 'in misery'.[103] After this period of brooding, on meeting the sole survivor of Denis's section, John went for him 'bald-headed'. Triggering this aggression was John's accusation of cowardice, rooted in a belief that the man had abandoned his brother.[104] Once the unlikelihood of Denis's escape from sustained fire had sunk in, Lucy regretted his outburst, accepting that his blame was misplaced. Notably, John failed to acknowledge one other potential source of his rage – his brother's impetuousness. At the outset of the manoeuvre, John had been alarmed at

Denis's unnecessary risk taking. Panicking, he had shouted out a warning, exhorting Denis to 'take care'. This shameful breach of stoicism had caused him to blush. John does not link this episode directly to his subsequent anger, directing his pent-up emotions instead towards a stranger.

More commonly, anger was directed at the enemy. Sassoon channelled his grief for lost comrades and Hamo into hatred for the Germans. The catalyst was the death of his beloved friend David 'Tommy' Thomas. Seemingly against his nature, his rage spurred him to action:

> I used to say I couldn't kill anyone in this war; but since they shot Tommy I would gladly stick a bayonet into a German by daylight. Someone told me a year ago that love, sorrow, and hate were things I had never known (things which every good poet should know!). Now I've known love for Bobbie [Hanmer] and Tommy, and grief for Hamo and Tommy, and hate has come also, and the lust to kill.[105]

Some commentators have disregarded the significance of Hamo's inclusion in this litany of names.[106] Sassoon's precise phrasing marks out distinct phases of his grief. Such 'name-tallying' or enumeration of deaths fulfilled a desire for accuracy.[107] Each name signified a specific relationship, their recital a telling example of the cumulative effect of deaths on serving men. Sassoon's response challenges our view of the distancing technique used as a protective shield. Deaths of brothers, lovers and close friends pierced these barriers, each death adding to the emotional burden experienced by survivors. Men in combat were well able to distinguish between the camaraderie of the fighting unit and the affection or love felt towards a brother or true friend.[108] A diary entry written three days later reveals further evidence of Sassoon's turmoil, his need to avenge the deaths of his brother and friends linked to a careless disregard for his future. Alongside his lust for revenge, we can read frustration at Sassoon's helplessness. A hot-headed disregard for personal safety, coupled with chafing against enforced inaction, emerged in his stated wish to 'smash someone's skull; I want to have a scrap and get out of the war for a bit or for ever'.[109] This vengeful desire tipped over into recklessness, earning Sassoon the nickname 'Mad Jack' by his men; his fellow officers wondered whether he possessed a death wish – a question that Sassoon felt unable to answer.[110]

Angry outbursts show how unprepared young soldiers were against the maelstrom of emotions accompanying combat. At this stage of his service, Sassoon appears unable to separate ideals of duty and sacrifice from the grief and anger he experienced. It is instructive to compare his response to

Hamo's death with his later poem 'Lamentations', published in *Counter-Attack* (1918). The narrator comes across a grieving brother watched over by a patient sergeant. The two men are unable to intervene as the man 'howled and beat his chest / And, all because his brother had gone west'. The ranker's 'rampant grief' is exposed as he 'moaned, shouted, sobbed and choked'. The poem ends with the narrator's stated belief that 'such men have lost all patriotic feeling'.[111] Critics have interpreted this final statement in various ways: as a condemnation of excessive grief; as an ironic deflection of Sassoon's grief for Hamo; and as a distancing technique.[112] The poem is based on an incident at the infantry base camp in Rouen in February 1917. Having been diagnosed with 'trench fever' the previous August, Sassoon had reported there for action after convalescing in England. According to his account in *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930), he came across a man weeping uncontrollably in the guardroom. Detained for assault, the ranker had just heard of his brother's death. In the words of the attending sergeant, the man had taken the news to heart more than most, his reaction bordering on hysteria: 'arf crazy, 'e's been, tearing his clothes off and cursing the war and the Fritzes. Almost like a shell shock case 'e seems.'[113]

Literary biographer Jean Moorcroft Wilson argues that by weighting the poem's perspective in favour of the middle-class narrator, Sassoon underscored the insensitivity of the 'stiff upper lip' mentality and the empty rhetoric of 'high diction'.[114] Such interpretations underestimate the level of grief felt by Sassoon for Hamo. Over twenty years separate Sassoon's acts of writing 'Lamentations' and recording the incident in his memoirs. In this context, the closing line can be read as a reflection on his experience of, and reaction to, a fraternal loss. Unlike the stricken man he stumbled across, Sassoon vented his grief in private, his words implying a similar loss of control. The poem's conclusion may thus suggest deeper sympathy for a grieving sibling, both men realising the emptiness of sacrifice made in the name of patriotism. This reading is given further weight by Sassoon's choice of title. The Old Testament book of Lamentations comprises a collection of poetic laments for the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem in 587 BCE.[115] Biblical scholar Adele Berlin submits that it represents both an expression of and a memorial to the suffering and grief associated with this calamitous event.[116] In addition to the profound grief

signified by his title, Sassoon's use of the plural invokes a similar series of vehement responses to the carnage witnessed by soldier-brothers.

George Vansittart found it difficult to overcome feelings of bitterness towards the Germans. His rage, like his grief, failed to abate. In 1928, a tour of the cemetery where his brother Arnold was buried reawakened feelings of anger.[117] For Vansittart, the endless rows of graves emphasised the futility of combatant deaths. Viewing these in respectfully tended cemeteries 'stifled' forgiveness.[118] Vansittart's emotions conflicted with his Christian faith and his diplomatic duty. Government policy at the time favoured appeasement, a strategy he knew had failed, but requiring him to remain circumspect in his feelings. Vansittart remained within the mainstream of the political elite and, as such, his memoir does not fall within the disillusionment canon. By juxtaposing his loss against the conventions of religion, society and government, he shows the discomfort experienced by members of the establishment in reconciling their emotional and professional lives. Irene Rathbone presents outbursts of anger as atypical, contextualising them within the wartime emotional economy. On hearing her gentle friend, Barbara, express a wish to see more howitzer guns, hoping that they will kill millions of Germans, Joan Seddons is surprised. Analysing this response, she concludes that, with 'two brothers and a fiancé fighting, and a brother-in-law wounded and missing', it was no wonder that her friend felt that way. Reflecting on the warcraft of the Germans, Joan concurs with this expression of 'undiluted patriotism'. Later in the novel, Joan shivers at the 'black' hatred for the enemy expressed by her friend, Jack, following the death of a close comrade. Personal loss has brought home the horrors of war to her loving friend in a way that no other experience has.[119]

The passing of time did not dissipate the bitterness arising from sibling deaths in combat, particularly when the surviving brother believed the death had been avoidable. A British shell killed Nickell Dorgan on 31 August 1917. The circumstances of his enlistment made his loss especially hard to bear for his eldest brother, Jack. Like their father, all three Dorgan brothers worked at the Ashington colliery in Northumberland. Responding to a significant fall in production, the government acted to stem the shortfall of labour. Notices were posted at collieries reminding men of the vital importance of coal production to the war effort. Despite this local publicity, Nickell's act of enlistment was propelled by an accusation of cowardice: the

receipt of a white feather in the morning post.[120] Pale with emotion, Nickell immediately left the family home and volunteered for the Durham Light Infantry. This was the last time Jack saw his sibling alive. Family shame prevented Jack from confronting the young girl thought to have sent the feather anonymously. Years later, when Jack was responsible for engineering apprenticeships at a company based in York, he was approached indirectly and asked if he would offer a placement to the woman's son. His response revealed his long-standing resentment: 'Knowing who I was talking to I turned them down flat. Didn't tell them why, never mentioned the white feather, but turned them down flat.'[121] Emotional restraint governed Jack's response. Unable to openly express his anger at the woman's wartime actions, he nonetheless exacted subtle revenge.

Discomfort

Distance of time did not dilute the discomfort aroused by contemporary emotions. Personal accounts reveal the ambivalence that men felt about these outpourings. Some appear to have been active conspirators in maintaining societal standards regarding the manly expression of grief. Unable to deny the emotional truth expressed in their accounts, men later downplayed overly passionate responses as immature or self-indulgent. Writing in 1933, Herbert Read acknowledged that the war had induced him to write about emotional situations.[122] Before witnessing the 'terrible fragility of life' at the front, Read had suffered the loss of his parents and a sister, his mother dying unexpectedly just before his enlistment in December 1914. From an early age he had experienced the potent entwinement of moral teachings and communal enjoyment of sentimentality.[123] Growing up, he was exposed to highly sentimentalised narratives of death. The Victorian practice of reading aloud works intended to produce a 'weeping effect' acclimatised the young to still high mortality rates.[124] One of the books that his mother regularly read to him was the evangelical text, *Little Meg's Children* (1868).[125] Tears were not discouraged; Read and his brothers wept freely when the death of Little Meg's mother was recounted with 'grim pathos'.[126]

Notwithstanding these experiences and interests, Read exhibited discomfort when confronted with his contemporaneous reaction to the news of his brother Charles's death: namely, a poem written on the same day in which he had sought to 'expel' his feelings. Read reviewed this work after the outbreak of the Second World War, during the process of editing and extending his 1933 childhood autobiography.[127] While he was happy to reproduce some of the poem's lines, others were, to his eyes, 'angry and resentful and vainly consolatory … too raw' for publication. Read had published his fraternal lament, *Auguries of Life and Death*, privately in 1919, the same year as his collection of war poetry, *Naked Warriors*.[128] By this means he ring-fenced the recipients of his innermost thoughts. Read was well practised in exploring his intimate past, and it is telling that these private musings remained too painful to be exposed to wider public view. He later developed a keen interest in psychoanalysis, not only through reading, among others, the works of Alfred Adler, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, but also by exploring how it could be used to further literary criticism.[129] Read confided his reluctance to face his wartime traumas to the Swiss critic H. W. Hausermann in 1937. While he admitted that he would have benefitted from undergoing analysis in the 1920s, caution held him back, fearing that wading 'too deep' into unknown waters would result in his 'drowning'.[130] Earlier, in 1933, Read had feared unleashing emotions contained since the end of the war. Re-reading his observations proved an unwelcome reminder of the ferocity of the turmoil experienced by his younger self.

Experiences such as those of Read and Sassoon highlight the difficulty men faced when attempting to communicate their feelings of loss. Even these young poets and memoirists, comfortable with literary conventions and expressing themselves via the written word, lacked the requisite language or found themselves disarmed by the emotions they evoked. The two men came from diverse backgrounds. Sassoon, the son of a financier, educated at public school and Cambridge, was a typical member of the elite officer class. Read, the son of a Yorkshire tenant farmer, continued his education at evening classes after leaving school at sixteen. An unexpected legacy from his uncle provided him with the opportunity to study law and economics at Leeds University. Sassoon's immediate default on the death of Hamo was to fall back on the elegiac conventions of patriotic sacrifice, language that he rejected as the war progressed.[131] Read evidently found the

necessary language to express the depth of his loss but later appeared trapped by the fear or distaste that his earlier emotions provoked in him. Both these literary young men faltered in finding the appropriate words to express their grief.

Conclusion

Personal narratives reveal that brotherly loss unleashed powerful emotions. Fighting and weeping were not mutually exclusive activities. Men's adherence to codes of manly behaviour and their desire for emotional privacy meant that strong and unsettling feelings often remained hidden from public view. Men's awareness of the correct time and place to grieve ensured that emotions did not interfere adversely with the job of warfare, nor their family obligations. Shouldering emotional responsibilities to families and comrades was their way of showing manly love and dedication. Sisters shared a comparable desire for privacy, the seeking out of places at work or within domestic households. Blood ties appear to have offered siblings a safety valve, shielding them through the respect and sympathy accorded to the loss of close kin. Under prescribed conditions, brothers could grieve openly for brothers, and adherence to these codes led to the sympathetic treatment of grieving men by comrades and officers.

Anger provided a means to express one facet of grief, ranging from hot-headed violence to colder acts of revenge. Expressions of loneliness are a common trope in narratives of brotherly loss. Sibling grief is often underestimated, sublimated by the anguish felt by bereaved parents, especially mothers, or masked by the cultural weight of stoicism. Ideals of family unity provided some relief. Reaching out to grieving family members and the reassembly of the family under emotional pressure were acts of filial and fraternal love performed willingly to compensate for physical absences. Intra-generational bonds and an understanding of grief at the peer level of siblings, cousins and friends forged a separate plane of communal mourning and support. The burden of assuaging familial anxieties exposed tensions within families. While Harold Round believed that his mother bore the 'hardest task' of sitting and waiting for news, he also acknowledged the emotional toll on himself. What he found hardest of all, he confessed, was 'writing words of comfort to poor mum'.[132] To reduce

their trauma, some men and women placed limits on their efforts to reassure their families at home.

But sometimes grief proved too strong an emotion to be contained successfully – it spilt out in both private and, later, published memoirs. Carol Acton considers the 'linguistic war' between the consolatory language of grief and mourning and the 'Old Lie' of patriotic sacrifice.[133] Finding the language to express grief was hard for men and women of all classes. The greater literacy of the elite and their knowledge of literary traditions did not ease this most painful of tasks. Revisiting earlier writings, men and women were discomforted by the reawakening of raw emotions. Ambivalent about their emotional outpourings, many siblings determined to mark the deaths of their childhood companions emotionally as well as factually, overcoming any reluctance to expose their grief.

Notes

1 'Fred Lloyd', M. Arthur, *Last Post* (London, 2005), p. 117.
2 Thomas Lloyd died of wounds on 2 October 1917, aged thirty-one. Bill Lloyd was killed on 23 August 1918, aged twenty-one.
3 S. Bank and M. D. Kahn, *The Sibling Bond* (New York, 1982), p. 271.
4 J. H. Harvey et al., 'Fifty Years of Grief: Accounts and Reported Psychological Reactions of Normandy Invasion Veterans', *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 5:4 (1995), pp. 322–333.
5 Spelling and grammar as original. Letter, n.d., W. Burrell, IWM 02/15/1.
6 The impact of declining mortality rates on parents' experiences of death should be tempered by the fact that infant mortality rates, especially among working-class families, remained high in the 1880s and 1890s. Cannadine, 'War and Death', p. 193; R. Mitchison, *British Population Change since 1860* (London, 1966), pp. 49–50; Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty*, p. 230; A. Gregory, *The Silence of Memory. Armistice Day 1919–1946* (Oxford, 1994), p. 22; Roper, *The Secret Battle*, p. 89.
7 H. Read, *The Innocent Eye* (Otley, 1933), p. 59.
8 The weighting of casualties towards younger servicemen is born out by Winter's analysis. One in seventy men aged forty-five to forty-nine was killed, the average across all ages was one in eight. Winter, 'Britain's "Lost Generation"', pp. 450–451.
9 A. Prost, 'War Losses', *1914–1918 Online*, date accessed: 8 October 2014, encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/war_losses.
10 Seldon and Walsh, *Public Schools and the Great War*, pp. 88–90.
11 *Ulula*, XLVI:343 (1918), p. 121.
12 Board of Educators Report, February 1913; Diocesan Report, 2 May 1913, Pickup Croft School, Lancashire Archives, SMBY/32.
13 Five of the brothers listed on the memorial served with the East Lancs. P. C. School. *Unveiling of the War Memorial in the School on Saturday, 16th September, 1922, at 3.0 P.M.* (Burnley, 1922).
14 Seldon and Walsh, *Public Schools and the Great War*, p. 90.
15 Letter, 27 December 1916, Falk, IWM 06/74/1.

16 R. Vansittart, *The Mist Procession. The Autobiography of Lord Vansittart* (London, 1958), pp. 145–146.
17 Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 24.
18 Diary, 3 March 1918, Lethem, Liddle WW1/DF/074.
19 Rathbone, *We That Were Young*, pp. 416–418.
20 The Brittains commissioned Graham Glen to paint Edward's portrait after he had been wounded and awarded the Military Cross. Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, p. 438.
21 Rathbone, *We That Were Young*, p. 418.
22 F. Brett Young, *My Brother Jonathan* (London, 1928), pp. 480–481.
23 Diary, 6 November 1917, Lethem, Liddle WW1/DF/074.
24 Joy Damousi's case study of a community focusing on a grieving father remains a rare exploration of the gendered expression of wartime loss. Damousi, *The Labour of Loss*, pp. 46–64.
25 Strange, 'Fatherhood Providing and Attachment', p. 1009.
26 Gregory, *The Last Great War*, pp. 112–113; Gullace, *'The Blood of Our Sons'*, p. 2.
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84 Ibid., *The History of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1678–1918*, p. 377.
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86 3 December 1915, in Hart-Davis (ed.), *Sassoon Diaries*, p. 22.
87 M. Thorpe, *Siegfried Sassoon. A Critical Study* (London, 1966), p. 15.
88 The poem was written approximately six weeks after Hamo's death on 1 November 1915. Diary entry, 18 December 1915, *Sassoon*, p. 27.
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103 Lucy, *There's a Devil in the Drum*, pp. 177–192.
104 Ibid., pp. 206–207.
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118 Vansittart, *The Mist Procession*, p. 366.
119 Rathbone, *We That Were Young*, pp. 70, 123–124.
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6

Memory keeping

‘They were the best of us.’

Prefacing his memoir, *The Family Story* (1981), Tom Denning, the former Master of the Rolls, recorded his stock answer to a frequently asked question: namely, what were his parents like, having brought up such high-achieving sons – a judge, an admiral and a general.[1] Denning would always correct the inquirer: ‘You forget. We were five brothers. Two were lost in the First World War. They were the best of us.’[2] In this brief retort we see Denning perform a complex act of remembering and commemoration: through his subtle invocation of the ‘lost generation’ – the ‘best’ of the cohort of young men who fell in the Great War; through his emphasis on the loss experienced by his fraternal family unit; and through his use of the slightly admonitory second-person ‘you’, which draws the attention of both the imagined questioner and his intended reading public to their collective, continuing duty to remember the sacrifice of the fallen. Even Denning’s choice of title – *The* as opposed to *My Family Story* – indicates his intention to present his family’s history, in which his and his siblings’ wartime experiences play a prominent role, as emblematic. By presenting his ‘story’ this way, he rendered his high-achieving, atypical family unremarkable: sharing the poignancy of loss that was common to so many families and communities.

Examining the intimate ways in which siblings ‘kept’ the memory of brothers contributes to our understanding of how the war is remembered.[3] Revealing and recording love is one of the vital functions of war writing, states Kate McLoughlin.[4] Often these memories remained hidden from view, recorded in private letters and diaries, or in memoirs intended only for the eyes of family members and close friends. Photographs, personal

belongings and war mementoes were kept in households. If, as Sarah Ahmed submits, family happiness can be both assembled and circulated through material objects, so surely can other intermingled familial emotions such as grief.[5] Private acts of remembrance strayed into the public sphere: through published memoirs and the display of material objects. Siblings created 'verbal memorials', permanent textual spaces, to honour their dead brothers, circumventing the dominant ideology of state remembrance by restoring the individual personalities and particular war stories of brothers.[6] In the days following the 'awful news', Percy Cearns sat down and began to write what he could remember of Fred's civilian life, asking rhetorically, 'What better testimony than this is necessary to prove his worth?'[7] Driving this act of devotion was Percy's belief that it was his brother's 'due' that his 'wonderful character and true Christian spirit' should be recorded so that others might benefit from emulating his pattern 'of how to live and die as a man'.[8] This memory work was a 'personally onerous' duty for surviving siblings.[9] Mindful of familial sensitivities and carrying the weight of their own loss, men and women sought multifarious ways to honour their brothers' memories. Oftentimes, this required the negotiation of the dual task identified by Winter, that of honouring those who fought without glorifying the war.[10]

Names 'are more often lost, than made in war'. Once uniformed, military men surrendered their given names. Known by surname, rank and number, they became an 'anonymous social type par excellence'.[11] This depersonalisation seeped into the public discourse at every stage of the service life cycle, from the ideal of the 'soldier hero' stoking recruitment and conscription campaigns, to the characterisation of the common soldier as the ubiquitous 'Tommy'.[12] In his 1917 memoir, Percy Cearns articulated this phenomenon directly:

> Private F. E. Cearns, No. 281228, just a cipher amongst the teeming millions known collectively as the British Army; No. 281228 – and that is all that concerns the general public; just another in the long list of killed, published all too often in the daily papers.[13]

Paradoxically, laudatory portraits made brothers unremarkable by subduing individual personalities in favour of a stereotypical ideal. Detailing men's characters raised these accounts above the anonymity imposed by the language of sacrifice, enabling siblings to share some of their own war experiences along with those of their siblings. Although the

names of men killed in action appeared in published lists of casualties, the sheer scale of fatalities removed their individuality. This 'anonymisation' process continued in national commemorations: by the removal of the individual from state acts of remembrance; the stark simplicity of Sir Edwin Lutyens's design of the Cenotaph's empty tomb in Whitehall; the tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey; and the depersonalisation of the gravestones in the permanent war cemeteries maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. In their desire to promote equality of treatment, the Commission imposed a rigid uniformity, decreeing that all tombstones be of the same non-denominational shape, made from Portland stone, with a prohibition on extravagant inscriptions or personal monuments.[14] The scrupulously immaculate way the cemeteries are maintained marks them out as strange and, like the dead they commemorate, immune from the ageing process.[15] Fierce opposition greeted the official policy regarding the non-repatriation of soldiers' bodies and the insistence on homogeneity. In 1919 the Commission received approximately ninety letters a week protesting the measure.[16]

A retrospective emphasis on the physical vitality and beauty of soldier-brothers, apart from reaffirming their heroic masculinity, can be viewed as a reluctance to dwell on their shattered or decayed remains. Seeing Edward off to France in December 1914, Vera Brittain remarked that her tall, uniformed brother 'really is a fit object of devotion'.[17] Although character mattered more than looks in the Campbell family, Pat felt obliged to note that Percy was 'very good-looking'.[18] The most intimate of 'material' fraternal memories concerned the bodily remains of brothers. Like many wartime diarists, the Canon Francis Drinkwater punctiliously listed casualties. In this mourning ritual, he dedicated a page at the end of each volume, titled R.I.P. (Rest in Peace), recording the names and burial places of Roman Catholic men.[19] Among these, he briefly recorded the wounding of his brother Jonathan and death of his brother Oscar, known as Oxo, a lieutenant in the Royal Flying Corps, shot down and killed in August 1918. In June 1979, Drinkwater added a supplementary note to his diary to clarify that Oxo was his brother. Unlike other 'memorials' in this chapter, Drinkwater did not furnish any further characterisations of Oxo as a soldier or a brother. Instead, he related a visit made to Oxo's grave some months after the Armistice. By this time his brother's body had disintegrated so much that it was identifiable only by his dentures.[20] The Commonwealth

War Graves Commission established rigorous guidelines for the exhumation and reinterment of bodies. When identifying remains, the registration officer was advised to look out for identity discs, pay books, visiting cards, letters, boots, cigarette cases, watches, markings and handkerchiefs.[21] Drinkwater took Oxo's fragmentary remains back to his hotel, where he spent the night cleaning them.

A common fear among Roman Catholics was that their lost ones had died without receiving the final sacraments.[22] Through his tender ministrations, Drinkwater restored some dignity and ritual to the laying to rest of his brother. He initially intended to take Oxo's remains back to England, but the 'difficulties' involved – presumably the strictures on the repatriation of the remains of the war dead – led to his arranging for Oxo's reburial in the Brown's Road Military Cemetery, Festubert.[23] Over sixty years after his brother's death, Drinkwater reflected on his absence, a non-presence reconjured by the frail remnants of his brother's body. Oxo's individuality had been lost, along with his family's right to a personal burial and grave to remember him by. Drinkwater's final fraternal acts combine his 'caring' for Oxo's bodily remains with his 'religious' role of officiating over the dead.

Fraternal memorials

The official 'anonymisation' of the dead at national level should be contrasted with efforts made at community, parish and family level to counter this dominant ideology. Many bereaved families erected private memorials to their loved ones, not only in churches, schools and workplaces at home, but also on the battlefields of France and Flanders.[24] Family and parish memorials could reject the formal language of national memorials. The names of James Pykett and his brother Frank appear on the memorial at St Mary's church, Ayston, along with the names of two cousins, Tom and Harry. This rare example of colloquialisms on war memorials is dedicated to 'the brave lads' of the village (Figure 6). Eight of the ten men who went from the village were killed in what one local paper referred to as a 'mournful but heroic record'.[25]

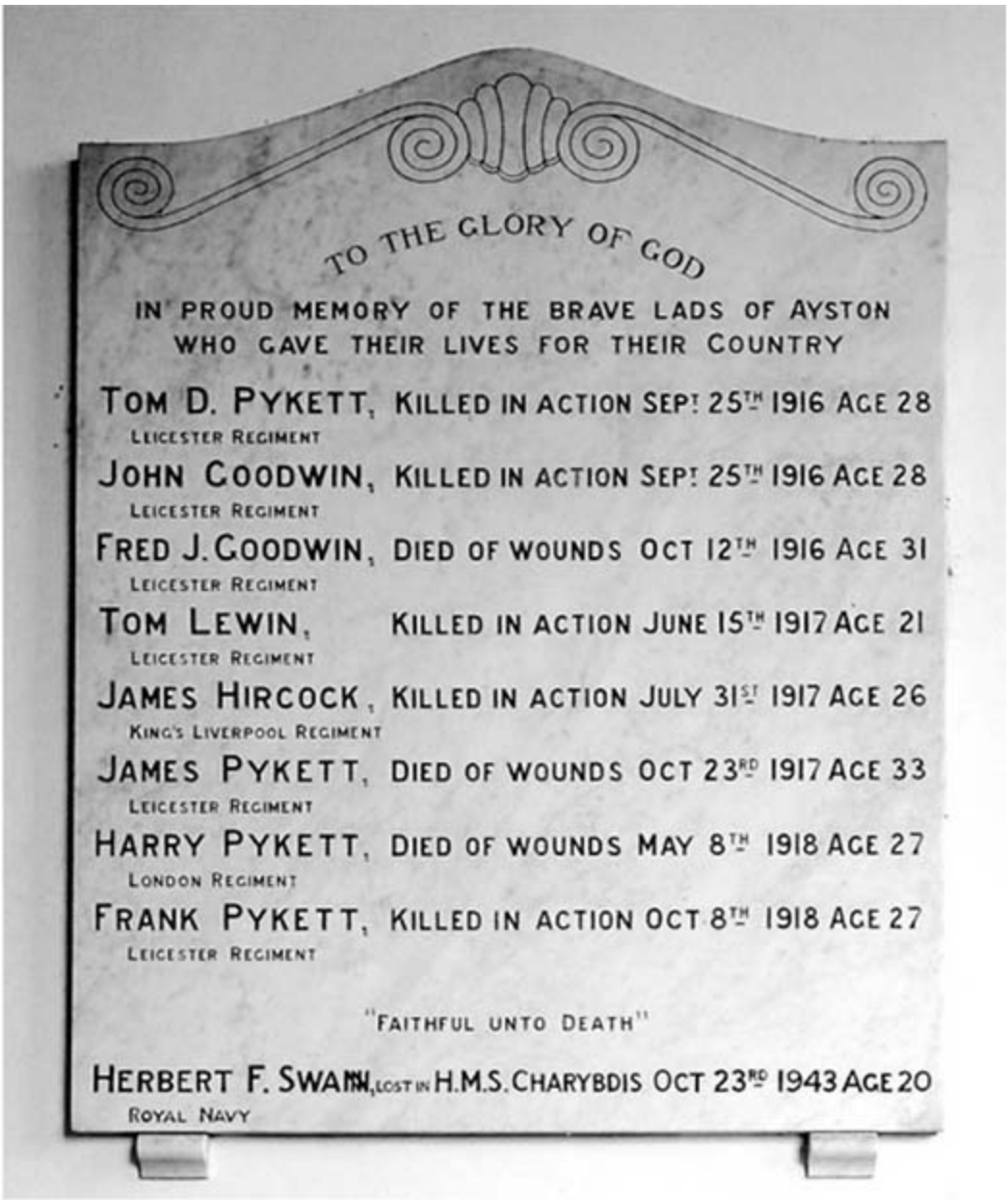

Figure 6 War memorial, St Mary's church, Ayston.

Jon Davies notes the 'primal need' for communities to mark 'their particular irreplaceable loss'.[26] Some used the wording 'The men of this parish' on local war memorials. The parish, one of society's oldest collective identities, reserved the memory of its war dead to those who knew and loved them best:

> In leaving out the names [of the war dead] the memorial builders are serving notice that this is 'private', that is to say, a communal matter: they are talking to themselves of the dead they

know to be their dead.[27]

There was no need to invoke ‘the evocative reach of the inscribed name’ in order to recall the dead who remained enfolded in the parish’s collective memory.[28] Similarly, the name of Captain Hubert Dixon, killed in action on 12 March 1915, does not appear on the memorial lych-gate at St Giles church, Great Longstone, commissioned by Dixon’s brother. Instead, Hubert’s name is included, along with those of the war dead from local villages, on a shrine inside the church. Of the 1,010 names recorded on the ten bronze plaques on the Lancaster war memorial, there are fifty-seven pairs of brothers, five instances of three brothers and one of four. Within this memorial to communal morning, familial loss and sacrifice is highlighted by the bracketing of names with the word ‘BROTHERS’ (Figure 7). The four mothers and widows who suffered the greatest losses were invited to the unveiling ceremony in 1924. These included Annie Butterworth, who lost four sons, her husband, James, reportedly having died from a ‘broken heart’.[29]

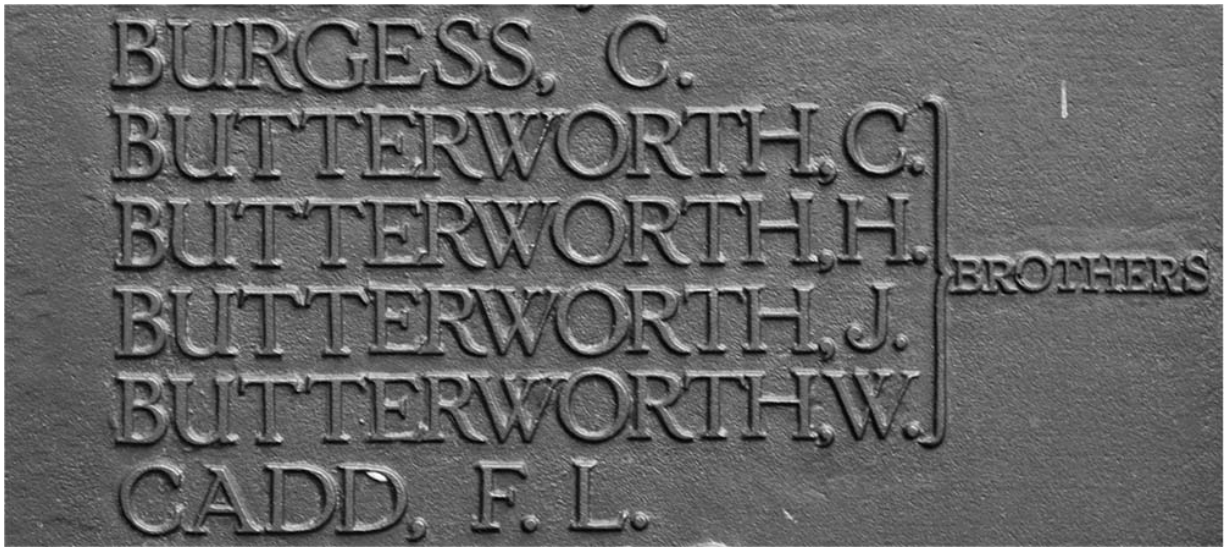

Figure 7 Bracketed names of the Butterworth brothers, War memorial, Lancaster.

Fraternal epitaphs and figurative statuary recorded a direct personal connection. Maisie Kelly commissioned the sculptor Eric Gill to design a memorial for the fallen of Bisham, including her brother, the composer and Olympic rower, Frederick Kelly.[30] Before the war, they had shared a rented

house, Bishops Grange. Maisie's choice of Gill reflected their shared interests and social milieu. Erected 'in memory of a most beloved brother', the memorial's depiction of a crucified Christ is believed to reflect Gill's belief that faith in the resurrection and redemption would comfort the bereaved. Commissions benefitted 'pioneers' of modern sculpture such as Gill and his pupils.[31] The author and children's illustrator Edith Farmiloe designed a bronze sculpture to honour her brother, Major Geoffrey Brooke Parnell, and the other four officers and eleven men of 1st Battalion of the Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment who fell at the 'grim slaughterhouse' of High Wood on 15 July 1916. The final iconographic image presents Parnell as a crusading saint with wings, holding a sword in his hand (Figure 8). Apart from the obvious link to chivalric masculinity, Edith's act of memory-keeping replaces her sibling's mortal flesh with a permanent visual and sacrificial representation.[32] Access to private means enabled such sororal commemorations to visibly represent sibling values of personal significance.

Figure 8 Memorial to Major Geoffrey Brooke Parnell, Holy Trinity Church, High Street, Guildford.

Memorialisation was not the preserve of the elite. As early as 1916, street shrines, or what a *Times* correspondent referred to as 'war corners', started appearing in London streets, a phenomenon that soon spread across the country.[33] Over a dozen shrines and rolls of honour were erected and dedicated over one October weekend in Hull alone.[34] These ranged from temporary crosses hung from railings to collections of postcards,

photographs and flowers. In October 1916, the London *Evening News* organised a display of commercially produced shrines at Selfridges on Oxford Street, with prices ranging from 30s to £14 10s.[35] Praising the patriotism and spiritual devotion behind such memorials, the *Hull Daily Mail* noted that the accompanying prayers were not only for the dead but also for the wounded, serving men and those remaining at home, singling out the 'boy-men of the future' for whom brothers and fathers were fighting.[36] Community feeling was embedded within these memorials. Their popularity was widespread and garnered local enthusiasm, as shown in the teeming terraces and windows filled with one or more photographs of uniformed lads in khaki or blue. One 'very interesting' example was erected at the intersection of Montrose Avenue and Gibson Street, Hull. Brackets were placed on each side of the four feet by two feet structure to support flower vases. The gilt-framed roll of honour was inscribed with the motto 'Our Lives for Our Friends'. Topping the list of thirty-one men from nineteen houses were the five Harrison brothers, four of whom were serving or had served in the Hull Pals.[37] The paean to civic pride, family duty and sacrifice, was reflected in the images adorning the shrine: the Hull coat of arms, St George slaying the dragon and a soldier and sailor next to a rural home. This representation of the ideals of masculine chivalry was a romanticised reminder of what men were fighting for. Juxtaposed to these, the bracketed acknowledgement that five of the fallen were brothers grounded this memorial in the singular sacrifice of a neighbourhood family.

A similar phenomenon is seen in the bequest of what Keith Grieves and Jennifer White term 'precisely-loved' places, honouring the dead of specific localities.[38] The post-war 'outdoor movement' championed the democratisation of the countryside and valued wild spaces. In the years immediately preceding 1914, concerns over society's moral and physical decay in the wake of urbanisation led to a 're-evaluation' of country life. Initiatives such as the Clarion Movement promoted cycling and rambling among the working classes. Explicit links were made between three cultures of landscape: mental, spiritual and physical, feeding into youth movements and youth literature, 'especially those nurturing open-air boys'.[39] For interwar writers, the countryside came to represent a lost past and the village community 'a synecdoche for the nation as it used to be'.[40] A 1955 survey of public attitudes by anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer affirmed the

deep-rootedness of this tradition. Despite England's being overwhelmingly urban, most pictured it as rural.[41]

Founded in 1895, the National Trust was charged with preserving land and buildings of beauty or historic interest for the nation, becoming the beneficiary of land donations and part of a wider movement agitating for the provision of a social gain to returning soldiers by facilitating restorative outdoor leisure activities.[42] Although appeals for land were halted during the war years, the movement gained impetus by the rededication of 'affective terrains' to honour men who had died fighting for the country and countryside they loved.[43] Writing to the *Manchester Guardian* in 1916, Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley, one of the Trust's founders, bemoaned the hackneyed design of Boer War memorials, calling for open spaces to be given as 'lasting' memorials to the fallen, ones that recognised men's love 'for the beauty of their homeland'.[44] Prompting his call was the 'good example' of a Liverpool cotton merchant, Mr A. V. Paton, who donated twenty-seven acres of moorland at Thurstaston, Cheshire in memory of his brother, Captain Morton Brown Paton. The siblings had shared a 'great love' of the view over the Dee estuary. Similarities between the hill and the slopes of Gallipoli where Morton had died endowed the 'propinquity' of this site with a double meaning.[45] The memorial's 'affective terrain' is overlaid with shared fraternal memories and a reminder of the brother's sacrifice in the form of 'a local Achi Baba'.[46]

Growing hostility towards intrusive monuments threatened the 'affective engagement' between the acts of visiting, walking and climbing, and remembering the dead of a locality.[47] Epitomising the unobtrusive commemoration of a loved one through the gift of land is the bequest made by London barrister William A. Robertson in 1937.[48] Eight 'sites of memory' were preserved for the nation in the names of his brothers, Laurance and Norman.[49] Marking these sites are small, concrete obelisks, each with a metal plaque recording the brothers' names, rank, regimental affiliation, and date of deaths.[50] Unlike the testamentary provisions for brothers seen in Chapter 2, this financial bequest was a final act of caring aimed at preserving the memory of Robertson's cherished brothers for future generations. Taking into account contemporaneous sensitivities, these memorials are unobtrusive, fulfilling Rawnsley's desire to acknowledge the sacrifice of siblings by supporting an ongoing engagement with the landscape.

Family stories

Siblings were motivated to write memorials by the belief that it was best done by those who 'knew' the dead. In his epilogue, Denning ends with a self-effacing exhortation to his readers: 'please remember that it is the Family of whom I wished to tell you. Just to record what we have done in our time.'[51] *The Family Story* is a curious amalgam of autobiography, war memoir and memorial book.[52] Renowned for the simple, narrative style of his legal judgments, Denning spoke 'directly and compellingly' to ordinary people, reflecting his championship of the 'little man'.[53] He displayed equal eloquence in the 'story-telling' of his siblings' wartime experiences. Denning's autobiography exemplifies 'double chronology' life stories: the time being narrated, and the time of writing them down and constructing their story.[54] Yet, as is illustrated by his book's structure and chapter headings, war is the central motif through which Denning tells the story of himself and his four brothers (Figure 9). He exposes the disruption of conflict in the life course of his family in Book One, 'Before the Wars', which includes sections devoted to the First and Second World Wars, each brother having a dedicated subsection with a summary of and commentary on his wartime service. Book Two, 'After the Wars', follows the autobiographical pattern of a successful man, detailing Denning's early childhood years, his marriage and his legal career.

Book One Before the Wars

The Start
1 The background
2 At home
3 The environment
4 Education

The First World War
Introduction
1 Jack the eldest son
2 Reg the second son
3 Gordon the third son
4 Tom the fourth son

Tom's Next Twenty Years
Introduction
1 Marriage
2 At the Bar

The Second World War
Introduction
1 Norman the fifth son
2 Reg continues in service
3 Tom – again in service

Book Two After the Wars

Tom at Home
Introduction
1 Cuckfield
2 Lincoln's Inn
3 Back to Whitchurch

Figure 9 Table of contents from *A Family Story*, 1981.

Pat Campbell's stated reasons for writing combined the personal debt that he owed to Percy with recognition of the broader sacrifice made by his brother's generation:

> I want him to be remembered for as long as I am. He was a very fine young man … He has no children or grandchildren to remember him, but if I can help to keep his name alive, then I shall have repaid some of my debt to him.[55]

Pat observed a generational absence. As Percy left no second-generation cohort, Pat assumed the duty of preserving his brother's memory. In his introduction, Pat created an emotional hierarchy resulting from the 'grandeur of self-sacrifice' made by his brother. First, there was the 'incalculable' loss to the world. Then came the reaction of Percy's intimate circle of family and friends, who 'never got over the sudden shock of his death'. Simultaneously, he accepted that this experience was shared by many families, presenting Percy as an 'everyman', a representative of the heroism and sacrifice made by the casualties of every combatant country. Finally, Pat recorded his own loss: the permanent absence of a brother who 'gave me much while he lived and more after his death'. In his later years, the imperative to ensure that his brother's sacrifice was not forgotten grew stronger. The guilt felt by Pat, the debt he owed his brother, needed to be assuaged. Pat's characterisation of Percy as the 'meaning' of war is an example of the 'synecdochic approach' to the scale of loss whereby a single individual comes to stand for the many.[56] While providing details of mass sacrifice emanates from an overriding desire to bear witness accurately, statistics can have the opposite effect, with numbers confounding rather than sharpening awareness of casualties.[57] Writing from a personal perspective enabled Pat to avoid the 'positive' language of war memorials and death notices. Adverbs, as Moriarty points out, determine the manner of remembrance. Positive rhetoric encourages deaths to be viewed as 'glorious and meaningful rather than painful'.[58] Memoirs were a space for surviving siblings to circumvent these constraints and to speak of loss, anger and regret.

Men used other narrative devices to record memorials to their brothers. In the 1960s, Matthew Wilkinson wrote an unpublished memoir recounting his experiences as a stretcher-bearer and prisoner of war. The last page, entitled 'My Brother Tom', was written in the hope that in the years to come, 'maybe some of his memory will be kept green'. Tom, a bombardier in the Royal Field Artillery, was killed at Ypres on 25 April 1918. In one short paragraph, Matthew encapsulated his sibling's qualities:

> He was the eldest of our family of ten and was a fine upstanding lad being nearly 6 foot tall and built like an ox. He excelled at all sports, boxing, hand-ball and football, and when a school lad he was known as King Kong of the village. I know he had several bare-fist fights and was always the victor. He was known and respected by all his work-mates and older people of the village. The children all knew him and would run after him when they saw him coming. He was dear to me and I cherish his memory as long as I live.[59]

In this fraternal tribute, Mathew successfully incorporated praiseworthy manly values: his brother's physical strength and sporting prowess; the respect he engendered among his peers, elders and youngsters within their local mining community in County Durham; and as a beloved brother. Furthermore, Tom did not shirk his patriotic duty. Compounding the loss of his brother in this way – to his family, his community and his country – Mathew expanded the rings of communities of mourning affected by one death. This structured passage can be usefully compared to the disjointed 'note' that George K. Chesterton wrote in his introduction to his younger brother Cecil's book, *A History of the United States* (1919). Cecil, a private in the Highland Light Infantry, died of nephritis at Wimereux. For George, the emotional challenge of writing about his brother resulted in something 'broken and bemused', the product of a memory composed of 'generalisation and detail'. Chesterton does not attempt a 'full' biographical account of his brother, omitting significant details such as his journalistic writings and political activism. The impossibility of imparting the full loss to both himself and society doubly incapacitated George: 'as a friend he is too near me, and as a hero too far away'.[60]

Capturing 'the importance' of Marc Noble's life, with the few facts available to her, made writing a memorial fraught with difficulty for his sister Marjorie. Twenty years old when he died, Marc was among the elite volunteers who flung themselves into war 'with the happy ardour of a new game'.[61] Assembling fragmentary information about interests and scholarly achievements, Marjorie mourned the arrested possibilities that his life held. Marc had been a 'happy soldier'; war had given him 'freedom and responsibility and command of men'. She wrote of the opportunities that would have been his if he had followed his expected life course and gone to university.[62] Lastly, Marjorie took issue with the implication that Marc, by volunteering to bring help while under heavy bombardment, had thrown his life away. To recognise the heroism behind such hopeless deeds of bravery, Marjorie suggested that 'gave' was 'the truer word', transfiguring the sentiment. Unlike many memorialists, Marjorie believed that, outside of his close circle of intimates and desolate family, her brother's life would be forgotten – a perspective that explains why, despite her awareness of discomfort around the 'sacrifice' of young men, Marjorie still wished to memorialise her brother by the beliefs he had held dear. Lending support to maternal acts of memorialisation stifled the voices of some grieving sisters.

Clare Leighton and Naomi Mitchison assisted their mothers' efforts by typing manuscripts, editing and advising on content.[63] Their authorial silence masked their emotional contribution to familial acts of commemoration.

Given the preponderance of memorialisation in these 'grief narratives', it is unsurprising that men's accounts rarely represent negative fraternal relations. The poet, writer and literary editor, Geoffrey Grigson, provides an uncommon example of a man writing disparagingly about a brother killed in wartime. His brother Claude's death caused him 'little upset'. Claude was closest in age to Geoffrey; two other siblings, Lionel and Kenneth, had already been killed in action. The loss of these 'two firm foundation rocks' deprived Geoffrey of an anticipated lifelong affection. In contrast, Claude provoked in him 'the strongest hatred I have ever had'. Geoffrey offered a number of reasons for this. Claude is presented as an outsider, his 'smugness' deriving from the non-familial traits of athleticism and prowess in sports and field games. Unlike the 'brave' deaths of Lionel and Kenneth, Claude's is depicted pejoratively. Claude, an air cadet, died of pneumonia on 15 October 1918, a fate that Geoffrey ascribed to his 'stupidity and carelessness'. Failing to die a sufficiently heroic death exposed Claude to the vitriolic memories of his surviving sibling. Yet it was Claude's bullying behaviour that stung Geoffrey the most as he recounted the sarcasm, arm-twistings and beatings inflicted on him by his older brother. Contravening the family ethos, Claude brought 'the hardness and horror' of school life into the sacrosanct spaces of the village, the garden and the home.[64] In his condemnation of his sibling's behaviour, Geoffrey adheres to the model of emotional manliness, valuing kind, caring boys[65] – the basis of the tradition of loving kindness exhibited by men on the front line and lauded by loved ones in remembrance.[66]

Casting Claude's behaviour as betrayal enabled Geoffrey to justify his response against the 'sting' of his brother's 'treason'. This is highly emotive language; accusations of 'treachery' were levelled at individuals and groups portrayed as unmanly, unpatriotic and shirking their duty.[67] Falling within this net were diverse groupings, including conscientious objectors; soldiers accused of slacking, malingering, cowardice or desertion; black marketers and profiteers; and trade unionists and workers threatening strike action.[68] Claude is portrayed as a 'traitor' on several levels: by failing his manly and patriotic duty to die a sufficiently heroic death; by failing to abide by the

familial code of good behaviour; and by failing to protect and care for his younger brother. Grigson was known as a robust literary critic; responding to William Empson's accusation of 'rudeness', he replied, 'I attempt to be rude from a moral basis'.[69] Privileging 'truth' over consideration of others' sensibilities provides a partial explanation for Geoffrey's decision not to temper his condemnation.

It is instructive to compare Grigson's account with that of Pat Campbell, who, at times, casts Percy in a less than favourable light.[70] Negative characteristics of his brother: disobedience, apparent lack of seriousness, extravagance with money and gaiety, were not 'Campbell' traits, but were inherited from his mother's side of the family. Pat recalled an occasion when his brother refused to continue on a family walk, traditionally 'one of the particular enjoyments' of their annual holidays. Pat felt that his brother 'had no right to behave in this way, to spoil the afternoon for the rest of us'.[71] Once again, Pat is both affirming his family's values and judging his brother against them. After Percy won a scholarship to Clifton College, his behaviour improved. Retaining his unconventionality, Percy nonetheless became Head of House. Pat professed himself 'startled' when a fellow pupil praised his brother by saying, 'We all think the world of [Percy], there's no one like him. His House is the best in the school, and it's he who has made it the best.' Regarding his brother through a more sceptical fraternal lens, Pat was less effusive: 'Of course I was fond of Percy and looked up to him in some ways, but I did not think the world of him, there was nothing special about him.'[72] This pronouncement should not be taken at face value. By stressing Percy's ordinariness, Pat subtly reinforced his future bravery in battle. This was not a boy cast straight from the heroic mould of masculine behaviour. Unlike Grigson, Pat imparted the 'rough and tumble' of brotherly relations. Sibling behaviour and attitudes may change over time, and in acknowledging this, Pat presented a complex, thoughtful and ultimately affectionate portrait of his brother.

The singularly close bond that Naomi Mitchison enjoyed with her brother Jack did not survive the post-war years. Mitchison felt that her brother was beyond her reach, inside a mask. Casting for a specific cause for their increasingly quarrelsome relationship, Mitchison pinpointed a meeting after her son's death from meningitis. Instead of the anticipated sympathy, Mitchison, plagued with suicidal thoughts, was met with accusations that her absences from home had been a causal factor.[73] Narratives of sibling

empathy and rivalry permeated her published works and she showed compassionate understanding, based on their conversations, of the effect of trench warfare on her brother, likening the shift in his personality to a knock on the head or 'a bad trip' with a powerful drug.[74] Not shying away from difficult aspects of their sibling bond throughout her published works, Mitchison illustrated the inherent push and pull nature of close siblinghood. Despite their differences, Jack remained a significant presence in his sister's life.

Material memories

Rituals of working-class grief, such as the laying out of bodies, can be seen as 'sites for the creation and expression of grief, loss, and adjustment'.[75] Within the 'otherness' of fraternal grief, accounts of brotherly loss provide similar 'sites' of emotional expression. Less visible are the private, intimate acts of memory keeping: preserving letters, records and artefacts of service, displaying photographs and mementoes, visiting graves, marking personal anniversaries such as the births and deaths of brothers and noting their absences at key family occasions. Through men's narratives we see rare glimpses of private fraternal memorials, showing the range of complex and interlinked acts of memory keeping performed by surviving brothers and sisters.

In March 1917, on his appointment as minor canon at St George's Chapel, the Reverend Maurice Foxell moved to Windsor with his wife and young son. His new home and furnishings were a source of pride to Maurice. On first visiting, his father pronounced it a 'gentleman's house', admiring the newly acquired sideboard gracing his son's drawing-room.[76] Three days later Maurice wrote to his brother, Captain Edward Foxell, serving with The Buffs, enclosing sketches of the sideboard to 'amuse' him.[77] That June, Edward died of delayed chloroform poisoning following an operation to remove his appendix. The following month, Maurice took receipt of selected possessions left to him by his brother, listing them carefully:

> 3 good chairs & two others, bureau, chest, two tables, music stand, chest of drawers, wash-stand – all of the beautiful pieces, & some etchings & one jolly nice watercolour of Canterbury & one by Father also.[78]

The aesthetic pleasure that Maurice derived from these objects is apparent. He took pains to record both their material and emotional value – a reflection both of his brother's good taste and standing, and Maurice's pride that the best pieces had been given to him, a testament to his brother's affection. Much of the following day was spent integrating these 'lovely things' into the new household.[79] Maurice's 'display' of his new sideboard demonstrated his consciousness of the 'public' quality of certain rooms, the social spaces in which objects are located, used, stored and displayed.[80] As his father and surviving brothers were frequent visitors, they too would derive pleasure from seeing Edward's possessions on show. Maurice did not create a shrine within his home. Instead, these inherited items formed a constant presence in his daily life, embedded in his everyday routines and practices.[81] By interspersing them within his household, Maurice brought Edward into the present while evoking the gap he had left.[82] Edward's bequest transformed his belongings into a daily reminder of his sacrifice. Maurice believed that his brother 'gave up with not a word of regret because he knew he was taking his part in defending us, he looked at it in that personal way'. Edward's possessions were a bittersweet presence in Maurice's everyday life; not only did they 'bring home to us the fact that [Edward] will never return' but they were a permanent reminder 'of the dear good fellow he was'.

Later that month, Maurice received a more personal memento when his father presented him with Edward's tobacco pouch – a paternal divestment of affective significance for his son. Maurice combined the practical and the emotional when describing his reaction. Having lost his own pouch, he was pleased to receive a 'serviceable thing of leather', 'as nice a thing to have of dear Edward's personal things as I should wish to have'.[83] Retaining an everyday object, a tactile belonging, about his person forged a constant 'series of connections and identifications' between Maurice and the 'past presence' of his dead brother.[84] Maurice's treatment of his dead brother's possessions illustrates the interrelation between material spaces and time, the connections between past and future lives both inhabiting the same domestic space.

Some men actively sought out items to remind them of brothers. Gordon Denning died of tuberculosis in June 1918, six days after his twenty-first birthday. His family believed that the 'stress and strain' of Gordon's service as a midshipman on the HMS *Morris* during the Battle of Jutland was a

contributory factor. Lord Denning mentioned two souvenirs of Gordon kept in his home in Whitchurch, Hampshire.[85] Both were closely related to Gordon's war service and his 'love of the sea', a recurring theme of the diary that his brother maintained during the eighteen months of his illness.[86] The first was a small piece of shell which had narrowly missed Gordon. Denning had this mounted on a piece of wood inscribed with the following words:

> Battle of Jutland 1916
> Piece of German shell which
> fell on HMS *Morris* in which
> Sub-Lieutenant C. G. Denning RN
> was serving.[87]

The second item was the 'fine big brass' ship's bell from the *Morris*, which Denning had obtained when the destroyer was broken up. In preserving these objects, Denning chose items representative of the war generation's service and sacrifice. By actively collecting and curating relics in this way, he bestowed new meanings on them as they became part of his family's story, in the process creating 'a private museum of memory'.[88]

Reminders of his brother's wartime service were incorporated into Denning's household routines. The bell was kept 'bright and polished – as it was when she was in service'.[89] By obliquely acknowledging these actions, Denning underlined the 'investment of time, effort and care' made to ensure that the bell retained its naval 'spit and polish'.[90] There was a clear analogy between the act of keeping this wartime relic free from dust and the act of keeping Gordon's memory alive and untarnished. As its curator, Denning was charged not only with preserving a personal family history 'but also a collective sense of past, a remembrance that is simultaneously both private and communal'.[91]

Emotional 'voices' of remembrance

Sometimes men wanted to arouse an emotional reaction through their memorialisation of soldier-brothers. Kennard Bliss was killed at the Somme on 28 September 1916. His death created a double loss for his composer brother, Arthur. Along with the 'long poignant loss' of a gifted sibling, he was deprived of a creative stimulant, a 'sharp corrective' to his struggles to

find musical expression.[92] In 1929, a year marking the publishing peak of the disillusionment memoir, Arthur commenced work on his choral war symphony, *Morning Heroes*, commissioned by the Norwich Festival. This musical tribute was dedicated to Kennard and other fallen comrades-in-arms. Written in five movements, *Morning Heroes* is a large-scale collective work for orator, chorus and orchestra. During its composition, Bliss was troubled by frequent nightmares evoking horrific memories of his experiences of warfare – wounded at the Somme and gassed at Cambrai. Throughout the 1920s, he had worked intermittently on *Battle Variations*, intended as both a reflection on his experiences and a fraternal memorial. This work was eventually abandoned. Instead, his first act of memory keeping occurred in 1925 when Bliss subtitled the slow movement of his Suite for Piano, *F. K. B. Thiepval, 1916*.[93] Searching for composition marked a troubling failure to 'lay his brother to rest' in a meaningful way, an act symbolically and emotionally important to him.

The emotional labour inherent in acts of sibling memory keeping is seen in the creative stops and starts blocking brothers and sisters engaged with this work. After her father's death in 1955, the realisation that she was now the only living member of her family provoked an 'urgent need' in poet Frances Bellerby to write an account of her early life. This would restore not only the memory of her brother and parents but also her 'dead' but living childhood self.[94] After initial good progress, Bellerby struggled, stalling or breaking off when reaching painful episodes such as her brother Jack's death. She never completed her autobiography. Caution must be exercised when stating, as Kate Kennedy does, that creative works such as Bellerby's poems or Bliss's *Morning Heroes* can be seen as acts of personal and collective therapy.[95] This viewpoint concurs with therapeutic findings that the telling and retelling of stories helps to externalise experiences of war, making them more comprehensible by imposing some sort of order over them.[96] But these assumptions have been challenged, with warnings that veterans may be re-traumatised by the process.[97] Final published works mask the emotional struggle of production; unfinished or abandoned works remain mostly hidden from public view. A volunteer in the Coldstream Guards, Jack Parker was 'blown to pieces' in 1915. Later in life, Bellerby reworked earlier poems inspired by his death. In August 1968 she completely rewrote 'August Night', printed ten years earlier, about the death of her brother on 8 August 1915. Every year at this date, she confided

to a friend, 'that experience goes on happening'. Echoing this discomforting thought, she planned to call the revised poem 'Anniversary', and eventually settled on '1915'. It opened with a line from the original, 'Never mourn the deathless dead'. As a final act of memory keeping, she dedicated her *Selected Poems* (1970) to 'The Brief and everlasting life of my brother',[98] an authorial epitaph honouring her sibling and the act of keeping the memory of loved ones alive. Laying her sibling to rest did not consign him to the past, but retained his memory as a living presence.

By his own account, Bliss found writing *Morning Heroes* cathartic, the culmination of his attempts to 'externalise' his wartime experiences and commemorate Kennard through his music.[99] Bliss's earlier failure to articulate the war experiences of himself and Kennard might partially explain his creative decision to combine poetry by Homer, Walt Whitman, Li Bai, George Chapman, Wilfred Owen and Robert Nicols with his music. Each poem was selected to describe an 'aspect of war common to all ages and all times'.[100] The first four movements deal respectively with the poignancy of the farewell between husband and wife in wartime; the spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice of 'the lost generation'; the thoughts and emotions of a young wife left at home; and heroism in battle.[101] In the last movement, dealing specifically with the Somme, the orator declaims Wilfred Owen's poem 'Spring Offensive'.[102] The composition ends with Robert Nichols' poem, 'Dawn on the Somme'.[103] Bliss's inspiration for his symphony's title came from Nichols' evocation of the resurrection of the dead in the morning mist the day after battle.[104] Both these soldier-poets suffered from neurasthenia. Owen, like Arthur and Kennard, fought at the Somme, and wrote 'Spring Offensive' on his return to the front in August 1918 after receiving treatment for shell shock at Craiglockart Military Hospital. Nichols, a second lieutenant with the Royal Field Artillery, served for a brief period of three weeks, during which he came under bombardment at Loos. Sent home in September 1915 suffering from a 'slight nervous breakdown', he never returned to active service.[105]

What is apparent is Bliss's recognition of the importance of an emotional outlet for himself and his audience. During one rehearsal, members of the orchestra, themselves veterans, 'were too affected for a few minutes to continue'.[106] The audience, Bliss reported in a letter to Wilfred Owen's mother, had been 'profoundly moved' by the recitation of 'Spring Offensive'. The emotional 'punctum' – defined by Roland Barthes as the

ability to wound, bruise or prick – of this work was important to Bliss.[107] Using third-party voices, such as Owen's, gave Bliss the emotional 'voice' that he needed to paint what he termed his 'war canvas'.[108] Interviewed in 1982, his widow, Lady Bliss, confirmed her husband's verbal inability to lay bare 'deep' emotions. The Norwich Festival's commission provided an opportunity 'to express great grief' and, through other men's words, to create 'a requiem' for Kennard.[109] By explicitly referencing the Somme, moving from the universal experience to the personal, or, as he remarked, the 'particular to us', Bliss approached 'more nearly' his memory of Kennard.[110] Through their 'particular' sibling bond we can better understand the reasoning behind his poetic choice. When the poignancy of its lines joins with his music, 'the emotional temperature of an audience rises'.[111]

Lord Denning provides further testimony to the emotive power of Great War poetry and song. In *The Due Process of Law* (1980), he recounts a dinner at Lincoln's Inn, part of the celebrations for his eightieth birthday. After readings, the attendees sang the First World War song 'Roses of Picardy'.[112] Afterwards, Denning gave a speech referring to the war record of each of his brothers, repeating that Jack and Gordon 'were the best of us' and quoting lines from the poem 'For the Fallen' by Robert Laurence Bunyon.[113] Overcome by emotion, Denning's eyes filled with tears, and the poppies he was holding in honour of Remembrance Day slipped from his hand.[114] The flowers had emotional piquancy for Denning, not only as intrinsic to Armistice commemorations but also as a reminder of a visit he made to his brother's grave at Heilly-sur-Somme. Jack's grave was the only one on which any wildflowers were growing. Denning had picked two flowers and sent them home to his father and mother. His parents kept them in the folds of a book 'until they crumbled into dust'.[115] Denning finished his speech by quoting the last stanza of Rudyard Kipling's 'If'.[116] Jack had copied the words of this poem onto the flyleaf of his copy of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*.[117] This best-selling anthology was highly popular among soldiers of all classes.[118] The book was returned to Denning's family after Jack's death, contextualising the poem's emotional significance. Personal memories and private commemoration of brothers were sustained and supported by the wider public discourse surrounding public remembrance. As veterans entered old age, collective acts of remembering and mourning obtained an additional poignancy as men reflected on the length of absence

of lost relatives and comrades in their lives.[119] Despite his efforts to keep the memory of his brothers alive, Denning could never fill the gap left by their deaths.[120]

Conclusion

In April 1919, over a year since the death of her brother Norman, 'five foot ten of a beautiful young Englishman', Joyce Hoskyns wrote in her diary about her loss:

> Never a joke, never a look, never a word more to add to my store of memories. The book is shut up forever & as the years pass I shall remember less & less, till he becomes a vague personality; a stereotyped photograph, comprising the 'Great War Myth'.[121]

In this private record of sibling grief, Hoskyns encapsulated the difficulty of preserving the memory of loved ones. Vague remembrances of a curtailed sibling life, rendered unremarkable by its habitual nature, risked a beloved sibling merging with the anonymous fallen. Although surviving siblings were compelled to record the lives and wartime experiences of the fallen, the brevity of the lives being remembered complicated this task. As the years passed, some memories became well rehearsed, fixed in familial legend; others became harder to pin down. Motivated by the need to ensure that the heroic sacrifice of their siblings was not overlooked or forgotten, and to keep their memory alive, siblings wanted to memorialise their brothers as individuals and to recover their achievements and qualities from the mass of war casualties. Through their complex acts of interpretative labour, they performed a final act of devotion for their brothers. Primarily writing for immediate friends and relatives, siblings were aware they were also writing for future generations of their immediate family and society at large. By sharing their stories, they linked the personal and communal memories of the Great War.

Claire Tylee argues that acts of memory keeping excluded women from the collective memory of the war, creating a silence surrounding their experience, mostly recorded in the privacy of unpublished narratives.[122] The same point can validly be made about brothers' acts of memorialisation. Hidden within the 'soldier's tale' or masked by the label of disillusionment, they were rarely labelled as records of loss and grief. The gendering of 'grief' narratives fed into the public discourse of stoicism. Although the

traditional discourse of glorious and heroic sacrifice often provided a narrative structure, painful emotions crept in as men reflected on the loss sustained by themselves, their families and their wider communities. Grief narratives often straddle the difficult juxtaposition identified by Victoria Stewart: presenting an 'inspiring example', while reminding the reader of the 'price the nation is paying'.[123] As such they form an adjunct to the 'disillusionment' stream of memoirs, marking an attitudinal shift by providing 'testimonies against war'.[124] Guilt, anger and grief intermingle in these narratives, at times resulting in incoherence and discomposure.[125]

Silenced by the trauma of their loss, or simply lacking the language to express their emotions, some men drew on the emerging war literature, particularly its poetry and song. For many veterans, the soldier-poets' words resonated with their own experiences. With the passing of years they added poignancy to collective occasions, unleashing an emotional 'punctum' that pierced stoical masks. Rather than finding such open expressions of emotion discomforting, men appeared to derive comfort and emotional companionship in collective outpourings of grief. When including these deeply personal expressions of grief within public memoirs, men were not necessarily challenging those societal and martial values that were in wide circulation in wartime society. Abiding by these emotional norms was an affirmation of their masculinity and a way of restating the values central to their former lives. While imbuing their life stories with these public standards, they were impelled to chronicle their particular loss – a marker of the depth of intimate bonds. This required a degree of 'emotion work' as men attempted to locate the war within their own life stories and those of their siblings and wider families. As such, their war memoirs can be classed as grief narratives, poignant signifiers of loss. Gill Plain believes that many women wrote war poems as part of their acts of mourning.[126] Broadening the range of writings and applying the same critical analysis to both male and female grief narratives also helps our understanding of how the conventions of grief were subverted through these narratives of loss. Given the prevalence of such authorial acts of fraternal remembrance, we must adjust our perception of male grieving. Brothers were not silent conspirators. They acted to record their emotional response to their siblings' sacrifice.

Notes

1 They were referring to Denning and his two brothers: Vice-Admiral Sir Norman Denning KCB CB (1904–1979) and Lieutenant-General Sir Reginal Denning KCVO KBE CB MC (1894–1990).
2 A. T. Denning, *The Family Story* (London, 1981), p. i.
3 Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 3. Winter is drawing on the earlier review of memory and remembrance which he co-authored with Emmanuel Sivan. J. Winter and E. Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', in J. Winter and E. Sivan (eds), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 6–39.
4 McLoughlin, *Authoring War*, p. 191.
5 Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, pp. 45–46.
6 L. Webb, 'Mythology, Mortality and Memorialization: Animal and Human Endurance in Hughes' Poetry', in M. Wormald et al. (eds), *Ted Hughes: From Cambridge to Collected* (London, 2013), pp. 34, 39.
7 Cearns, *The Love of a Brother*, p. 5.
8 Ibid., p. 4.
9 McLoughlin, *Authoring War*, p. 20.
10 Winter, *The Great War*, p. 304.
11 McLoughlin, *Authoring War*, p. 62.
12 Throughout the nineteenth century 'Tommy Atkins' was the name used by the British army in the specimen forms issued to recruits.
13 Cearns, *The Love of a Brother*, p. 52.
14 S. Evans, *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs. World War I and the Politics of Grief* (Montreal, 2007), pp. 138–147.
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Conclusion

Brothers appear as an 'absent present' in the historiography of war. Possibly the very prevalence of fraternal relationships has made them largely invisible, 'hidden' in plain sight. Despite insightful studies dedicated to sibling relationships, there are surprising omissions in histories of families, masculinities and wartime. Privileging the lateral ties of the 'brotherhood of the trenches' has led to the presence and significance of real-life brothers being overlooked. The all-embracing concept of military comradeship obscured not only differences in class, ethnicity and religion but also the fact that many brothers served alongside or in close proximity to their siblings. The predominance of the 'soldier's tale' is an inversion of the tendency of women's narratives to foreground their roles as sisters and lovers, pushing war work to the periphery.[1] By bringing 'blood' brotherhood to the forefront, *Brothers in the Great War* has widened our perception of wartime and domestic masculinities.

The growing interest in the history of emotions has invoked 'an emotional turn'.[2] Concepts such as William Reddy's 'emotional regimes' and Barbara Rosenwein's 'communities of emotion' provide a useful framework when considering the public and private discourses influencing emotional behaviours and expressions. Too often their theories of emotion are considered in the abstract or as separate analytical tools. As this study has demonstrated, playing close attention to the *intersections* of differing emotional codes reveals the complex acts of navigation undertaken by men and women in responding to the demands of specific situations and valued relationships. The fluidity of Rosenwein's notion of overlapping concentric circles explains how, in times of particularly strong emotional regimes (such as wartime), family values mediated the dominant regimes of patriotic sacrifice and emotional control. Closer scrutiny of communities of emotion shows that a gendered reading of these groups masks the multiplicity of roles that individual members play in both supporting and being supported by each other. Applying a lateral perspective highlights the role of siblings

and generational peers in guiding men and women through the intersections of divergent communities.

Deep affection for siblings is a common motif in personal narratives. *Brothers in the Great War* complements the growing scholarship on fatherhood and romantic love by drawing attention to this neglected aspect of men's emotional development. Brothers present a different masculine role model to younger brothers than fathers do for their sons.[3] The absence of an explicit verbal language of love to represent affectionate sibling relationships must not be equated with an absence of profound feelings.[4]

The engrained family culture of 'felt' values instilled by parents and reinforced by moral instruction strengthened sibling ties. These emphasised kindness, tolerance and unity within domestic relationships – a counterweight to the more rigorous model of manly behaviour espoused by muscular Christianity. Leonore Davidoff usefully cautions us not to dismiss the power of normative expectations. We too often underestimate the cultural force of familial emotional codes and values.[5] Men's accounts strongly suggest that these should be given equal consideration when considering the emotional shifts in society arising from wartime emotional economies. Men's attitudes to military exemptions and their battle-hardened advice to their brothers to avoid military service demonstrate this nuanced weighting of duty to sibling, family and state.

Wartime sources provide a unique insight into these fraternal relationships at the tail end of the 'long family'. For men and women growing up in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, large families were the norm. Most children grew up alongside siblings. Within these sprawling families, a number of factors determined sibling power dynamics including, age, birth order and personality. Cultural representations of children focus on their quality of epitomising childhood. Scholarly attention has shown the dividends of examining their lifelong bonds. The emotional, practical and financial preoccupations of families continued long into adulthood, ebbing and flowing depending on needs and circumstances. Despite the steady contraction of family size, the bonds of siblinghood sustained continuities in men's domestic lives, informing our understanding of the emotional lives of British people in the early twentieth century.

Examining family practices helps us to understand how people 'do' family relationships in their regular, everyday activities.[6] The late Victorian period was characterised by heavily gendered roles, especially in middle-

class families. Focusing on men and women's roles as spouses and parents rather than as siblings presents a skewed account of the lives of working-class families. Experiential evidence moves us away from these prescriptions, in particular the categorisation of 'caring' roles as feminine and of 'breadwinning' as an emblem of manliness. This study's emphasis on family practices has shown a potential missing element in the explanation for inter-generational changes in parenting practice that an over-reliance on expert and popular discourses cannot fully explain. Commonalities in familial values and sibling practices explain why siblings of different classes and genders expressed their bonds in remarkably similar ways.

Brothers in the Great War has called for a realignment of our understanding of wartime masculinities. Although the myth of the 'rush to colours' by eager volunteers has been challenged, retrospective histories of gender published during the centenary of the First World War perpetuate the gendered expectation that 'real' men fight wars.[7] In contrast, the sibling's-eye view of younger brothers demonstrates the underlying trepidation that men experienced before departing for war. Siblings were quick to caution their brothers to 'keep out' of it if possible, or at least to avoid the worse arenas of combat. With so many men, and presumably their dependants, seeing little shame in not fighting, due to their weighty domestic and business responsibilities, a revised image of the non-combatant male begins to emerge. The scarcity of first-hand accounts from non-combatants has clouded our understanding of non-martial masculinity during wartime. This often presents a polarised view of 'true' masculinity embodied in the image of the 'soldier-hero', versus 'unmanly' conscientious objectors, malingerers and profiteers.[8] An over-reliance on elite narratives has exacerbated this: financially secure families had less call to depend on the vital contribution made to household coffers by young adults.

Growing up, men routinely performed caring tasks for younger siblings. Categorising these mundane tasks as 'acts of devotion' expands our appreciation of how their performance forged bonds between brothers and sisters. With its social and cultural focus on brother-brother ties, *Brothers in the Great War* has examined the social and emotional connections bonding male siblings during wartime. Caring and breadwinning duties intertwined and shifted over time. Daily occupations were not merely a means of surviving 'but also a way of relating and valuing'.[9] Family bonds may be

more tender or intense *because* economic relations are critical to mutual survival.[10] Working-class men and women straddled the fine line between breadwinning and dependency in the years between leaving school at fourteen and being officially recognised as adults at twenty-one. Many poorer households were heavily reliant on the additional source of income that they represented. Family good was placed ahead of personal gratification or individual desires and was an engrained value helping to explain why, when faced with conscription, ordinary men strove to maintain these responsibilities, exercising a calculative choice to claim an exemption on domestic grounds. Single men supporting dependent parents and siblings questioned the fairness of their wellbeing and financial security being sacrificed to the military imperative. Brothers and sisters were expected to pool business and familial obligations to free one or more for service. Fraternal decisions were made with an eye to the future, ensuring that returning veterans could pick up their business and personal affairs when the war ended.

Emotional economies of wartime grief have been the subject of much analysis. The seismic casualties of the Great War proved a watershed moment in the culture of mourning and bereavement. Male and sibling grief is often underestimated, sublimated as it was by the anguish felt by bereaved parents, or masked under the cultural weight of stoicism. If, as Jalland suggests, men's defences could not survive the deaths of their closest friends, what does this say about sibling deaths?[11] By demonstrating the prevalence of fraternal loss in men's wartime narratives, *Brothers in the Great War* has called into question the full extent of our understanding of the emergence of a regime of emotional repression during the Second World War. Fraternal support has been subsumed by the centrality of the maternal role as family gatekeeper. By focusing on siblinghood, this study has added to the growing body of evidence advocating for the primacy of domestic ties in the lives of fighting men.[12] Reliance on the indisputable fact that mothers were the main recipients of letters sent home by soldiers on the front has had a reductive effect on interpretations of the range of support offered by siblings. Collections of sustained fraternal correspondence testify to the distinctiveness of these relationships within the family unit. At times, brothers and sisters were the recipients of highly emotional or graphic confidences. In this important way they supplemented the support provided

by mothers while at the same time sharing the filial duty of shielding their mothers.

Filial support to bereaved mothers provides an alternative perspective to Roper's conceptualisation that the 'emotional survival' of soldiers depended in part on the phenomenal practical and emotional efforts made by their mothers. The strain on young men and women of the privileging of maternal loss has not been fully explored. A full understanding of this emotional burden demands an equal focus on lateral and vertical planes of support. Ted Hughes's description of his soldier-brother as an 'absent God' provides a highly evocative image of the all-consuming absence of fighting men within family life.[13] This study has observed a similar intensification of brother–brother bonds to that found between middle-class sisters and their brothers, a significant indication of their emotional ties. Generally, broadening our understanding of the communities of support offered to and by individual family members to combatants counteracts the inevitable privileging of the maternal role.

Fragmented discourses of grief reveal patterns of emotional behaviours following the loss of a loved sibling. Each trope suggests a greater complexity to male wartime grief than has previously been acknowledged. Apart from highlighting the loneliness of this experience for many young serving men, accounts demonstrate the level of compassion offered to bereaved siblings by their comrades. Acts of compassionate kindness were both a response to men's efforts to abide by combatant codes of stoicism and recognition of the emotional pull of blood ties. Witnesses to fraternal loss found it a disquieting experience, prompting calls for a prohibition on brothers serving together. The inherent respect of soldiers for blood ties clashed with the necessary emotional hardening of fighting men in the face of mounting casualties.

Within men's narratives, we see a subversion of codes of silence. Men wrote publicly about the depth of their loss in the following months, years and decades. Silence can be construed as a 'language of memory, a powerful conveyer of meaning'. Yet 'silence-breakers' perform a vital role by breaching family boundaries so as to inform later generations of the personal ravages of war.[14] Some fraternal acts of memory keeping deliberately sought to place intimate loss in the public sphere.

Public memories of the Great War often drown out private, more intimate memories. The scale of casualties is almost unimaginable to comprehend.

Bodies of dead soldiers became 'official' property, buried alongside their comrades in military cemeteries. Individual names became subsumed in the mass of losses. This anonymisation process explains siblings' compulsion to mark the *particular* war stories and sacrifice of brothers, salvaging individual stories from the incomprehension of mass slaughter. Scrutiny of acts of grieving demonstrates that men and women often registered the profundity of their loss in isolation. When including these deeply personal expressions of grief in their public memoirs, men were not necessarily challenging those societal and martial values in wide circulation in wartime society. Abiding by these emotional norms was an affirmation of their masculinity and a way of restating the values central to their former lives. While imbuing their life stories with these public standards, they were impelled to record their particular losses – a marker of the depth of intimate bonds. Undertaking this responsibility required a degree of 'emotion work' as men attempted to locate the war within their own life stories and those of their siblings and wider families. Through these complex acts of interpretative labour, men performed a final act of devotion for their brothers.

Care must be taken not to present an over-sanitised view of sibling ties. Conflict was an unexceptional part of siblinghood, oftentimes transitory but with the capacity to descend into complete breaches.[15] Naturally, there will be less archival material when relationships were distant or marked by disdain or acrimony. Alex King remarks on the 'fundamental assumption' informing commemorative acts: that the dead should be respected and what they did in the war should be valued.[16] This assumption feeds into the reluctance to speak ill of the dead and the tendency to eulogise their qualities. Men would have been mindful of the sensibilities of a specific audience, namely their parents, surviving siblings and close friends. Reflecting on their childhoods, most men and women reported that they had got on well with their siblings. Parental strictures promoting unity appear to have been largely effective in establishing close sibling bonds. The main reasons offered for strongly negative relationships were a 'breach' of family and societal values. If brothers were bullies, or drank too much, or did not pull their weight as breadwinners, they were subject to more direct criticism. Even here, caution must be exercised. Testimonies offered conflicting evidence as men reflected on childhood memories and impressions from the distance of age. Tempering the more eulogistic sibling

portraits are examples of men trying to write honestly or fairly about their brothers, not masking character flaws, nor their dislike for each other. Restoring the particular personality of the individual by presenting a 'true' portrait can be seen as a further attempt to preserve that individual's memory.

The dominance of the 'soldier's tale' has marginalised many other wartime narratives. Fraternal stories are also embedded in narratives of the Great War, informing our understanding of the network of domestic ties sustaining men and of the performance of wartime masculinities. These vital signifiers of sibling 'love' illustrate the breadth and depth of the support, comfort and protection provided to combatants, and the emotional labours to preserve their memory.

Notes

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5 Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, p. 252.
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