

## “Buried Alive”: Experience, Memory, and the Interwar Publishing of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in Postwar Britain, 1915-1939

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Volume 23, numéro 2, 2012

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1015794ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1015794ar>

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### Éditeur(s)

The Canadian Historical Association / La Société historique du Canada

### ISSN

0847-4478 (imprimé)

1712-6274 (numérique)

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### Citer cet article

Fantauzzo, J. (2012). “Buried Alive”: Experience, Memory, and the Interwar Publishing of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in Postwar Britain, 1915-1939. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, 23(2), 212–250. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1015794ar>

### Résumé de l'article

Plus de 450 000 soldats britanniques ont participé à la force expéditionnaire égyptienne durant la Première Guerre mondiale. Entre 1915 et 1918, ils ont combattu dans la péninsule du Sinaï, puis envahi le sud de la Palestine, conquis Jérusalem et défait l'armée turque, ce qui a mené à la reddition de l'Empire ottoman en octobre 1918. Malgré les nombreuses victoires remportées par les soldats britanniques, les campagnes d'Égypte et de Palestine n'ont pas marqué l'imagination populaire en Grande-Bretagne, pas plus qu'elles n'ont retenu l'attention des historiens de la Grande Guerre. L'attention sporadique que ces campagnes ont obtenue durant la guerre ainsi que la censure expliquent le peu de connaissances des Britanniques par rapport à ces campagnes. De plus, les nouvelles du front européen étant omniprésentes durant la guerre, les exploits des soldats en Égypte et en Palestine sont passés inaperçus en Grande-Bretagne. Cet article soutient que les soldats ayant participé à ces campagnes ont utilisé des livres de guerre pour réhabiliter l'image publique de ces campagnes et pour renégocier la signification du service militaire dans la Grande-Bretagne de l'entre-deux-guerres. Devant lutter contre la croyance populaire voulant que la campagne égyptienne n'avait guère été active avant la conquête de Jérusalem, les soldats britanniques se sont dépeints comme des travailleurs militaires ayant pavé la voie vers Jérusalem et construit la machine de guerre britannique. L'augmentation du nombre d'offensives militaires leur a permis d'utiliser le passé pour donner un sens au présent. La campagne a souvent été présentée comme une croisade dont la valeur morale se comparait à celle ayant justifié la campagne de libération de la Belgique.

# “Buried Alive”: Experience, Memory, and the Interwar Publishing of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in Postwar Britain, 1915-1939

JUSTIN FANTAUZZO

## *Abstract*

*Over 450,000 British soldiers fought as part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force during the First World War. Between 1915-1918, they fought their way across the Sinai Peninsula, into southern Palestine, captured Jerusalem, and overran the Turkish Army, leading to the surrender of the Ottoman Empire in October 1918. Despite being the war's most successful sideshow, the Egypt and Palestine campaign struggled to gain popular attention and has largely been excluded from First World War scholarship. This article argues that returning soldiers used war books to rehabilitate the campaign's public profile and to renegotiate the meaning of wartime service in interwar Britain. The result of sporadic press attention and censorship during the war, the British public's understanding of the campaign was poor. Periodic access to home front news meant that most soldiers likely learnt of their absence from Britain's war narrative during the war years. Confronting the belief that the campaign, prior to the capture of Jerusalem, was an inactive theatre of war, British soldiers refashioned themselves as military labourers, paving the road to Jerusalem and building the British war machine. As offensive action intensified, soldiers could look to the past to provide meaning to the present. Allusions to the campaign as a crusade were frequently made and used to compete with the moral righteousness of the liberation of Belgium.*

## *Résumé*

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Writing in the postwar period, Egyptian Expeditionary Force (hereafter EEF) soldiers were consistently haunted by the fear that their wartime participation had gone unnoticed – that their sacrifice had been perceived as bloodless. In 1919, less than one year after the end of World War I, Antony Bluett published his retrospective account of the Egypt and Palestine campaign, titled *With Our Army in Palestine*. Writing of the second failed attempt to capture Gaza in April 1917, he recalled the feelings of isolation and abandonment felt by the men of the EEF during the war, “We used to wonder sometimes whether people at home knew there was an army at all in Egypt and Palestine.” An army, he continued, “longing wistfully for the merest crumb from the table of appreciation, just to show that our ‘bit’ was known and recognized.”<sup>1</sup> During World War I, an extraordinary amount of societal pressure was concentrated on

British men and their contribution to the defence of Europe from Prussian militarism. Savile Lumley's infamous recruitment poster, "Daddy, what did You do in the Great War?," challenged British men not in uniform to enlist and avoid the risk of familial embarrassment. It encapsulated the sentiment that the war was being fought not only to evict the rapacious Hun from Belgium, but also the moral obligation of able-bodied males to safeguard British domesticity.<sup>2</sup> The increasing popularity of daily newspapers also made the war an inescapable feature of everyday life.<sup>3</sup> As the majority of British soldiers were stationed on the Western Front, the battles over France and Flanders dominated popular war coverage, pushing the sideshows in Salonika, Mesopotamia, and, for the purposes of this discussion, Egypt and Palestine, deep into the nation's psychological background.

Setting the foundation for future interpretations of World War I's cultural and intellectual impact, Paul Fussell's seminal study, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, "correctly or not," recognized the centrality of the Western Front in postwar reconstructions. Amongst others, Lynne Hanley and Jonathan F. Vance have raised doubts over Fussell's source base and geographic concentration, questioning his reliance on literary-inclined upper-class Britons serving on the Western Front.<sup>4</sup> More recently, Janet Watson's *Fighting Different Wars* has exposed the temporal conflation of postwar disillusionment with wartime enthusiasm, asserting that the postwar story of shattered nerves and emotional instability was largely a product of retrospection. Even Siegfried Sassoon, notes Watson, recognized that disenchantment with the war was a "post war phenomena."<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Brian Bond has suggested that taken as a genre, the war literature of the 1920s was not overtly pacifistic.<sup>6</sup>

Despite these methodological warnings, many historians have continued to sidestep the war's peripheral theatres. Samuel Hynes, focusing exclusively on the Western Front, described the years leading up to the mid 1920s as a period of "imaginative silence," devoid of any prosaic contributions to war literature. Either the result of a misinformed sense of etiquette, as Osbert Sitwell suggested, or Herbert Read's conviction in a short-term historical amnesia, most of the 1920s had not seen the war imagined "in any form." It was not until

the General Strike of 1926 that the “great period of English prose-writing” emerged, centred on the horrors of trench warfare and ranging from the works of Ford Madox Ford’s *A Man Could Stand Up* in 1926 to Vera Britain’s *Testament of Youth* in 1933, including along the way the usual suspects of the war canon: Blunden, Cummings, Aldington, Graves, Hemingway, Jünger, Sassoon, and Wilfred Owen.<sup>7</sup> More recently, Susan Kingsley Kent’s *Aftershocks* has viewed the arrival of war books as part of a cultural catharsis and process of national healing. As with Hynes, Kingsley Kent has fixed the starting point of postwar literature to the late 1920s.<sup>8</sup> Though the belated entrance of soldier writings and works of disillusionment meshes well with the history of a decade fraught with imperial and domestic turmoil, the existence of a broad and diverse set of writings from the Egypt and Palestine campaign suggests a messier chronology.<sup>9</sup>

This article argues that EEF soldiers, attempting to elevate the Egypt and Palestine campaign’s public profile, produced war books to affirm their status as soldiers and to connect their individual contribution to the wider British war effort. As a self-reflexive activity that afforded them a public space, war books constituted the most direct medium for EEF soldiers to insert their campaign into the national war narrative.<sup>10</sup> By viewing the postwar writings of EEF soldiers as in competition with those of the Western Front and, furthermore, engaged in a battle over the representation of the Egypt and Palestine campaign and their personal contribution to the British war effort, this cultural context alters the way that we think about their motivations for writing, the importance of public acknowledgment, their selection of content, and their self-image. In augmenting the interwar soldiers’ story, defined by the experience of the Western Front, with the war’s largest and most successful sideshow, a more nuanced and complex appreciation of the interwar debate on war service, experience, and memory can also be achieved. Furthermore, by highlighting the difficulty of EEF soldiers to integrate their story into the national war narrative, this study also touches on the relationship between power and national belonging.<sup>11</sup> As ex-servicemen, the authors were inviting the uninitiated reader to become part of the soldiers’ construction of wartime reality, and if comrades were reading, their shared memories reignited the bond of martial brotherhood.<sup>12</sup>

The first section is concerned with the public profile of the Egypt and Palestine campaign and the extent to which soldiers knew of their popular news coverage or lack thereof. A result of government censorship and sporadic press attention, which intensified only with the capture of Jerusalem in December 1917 and again during the thunderous march to Aleppo in September 1918, the British public's understanding of the campaign was shrouded by the fog of war. It was not until the arrival of Lowell Thomas' travelogue in September 1919 that the campaign received greater awareness. Familial connections in Britain, broken and inconsistent as they were, worked to inform soldiers of their place in the emerging national narrative during the war, fuelling wartime grievances and fomenting feelings of neglect.

Section two explores the retrospective construction of soldier identity. Through the publication of war books, EEF soldiers were able to mold their wartime story as they saw fit. Threatening the legitimacy of their wartime experience, the public profile of the Egypt and Palestine campaign hinged on the belief that prior to the surrender of Jerusalem in December 1917, EEF troops were doing little, if anything, to warrant their military service to the Empire.<sup>13</sup> This period of perceived inactivity coincided with the command of General Sir Archibald Murray, 1916-1917, and formed part of a retrospective dichotomy that separated the soldiers' experience under Murray from the later successes of General Sir Edmund Allenby, 1917-1918. To rationalize periods of martial inactivity, that is, portions of the campaign spent on infrastructural development and regimental reorganization under Murray, EEF soldiers presented themselves as military labourers.

To promote a martial image, soldiers could also link themselves to the medieval crusades. This occurred most frequently when detailing Allenby's command and the victories from the Third Battle of Gaza in November 1917 to Turkey's surrender in October 1918. Not simply the result of economic motivation or a desire for commercial success, soldiers appropriated the medieval analogy as part of a mnemonic process, aimed at investing their wartime actions with meaning and historical continuity. Soldiers also promoted the EEF as a liberating army, freeing the Holy Land from the clutches of

Ottoman despotism. Mirroring the language used about Belgium on the Western Front, references to the campaign as a crusade were often appropriating the rhetoric of British liberalism, and not, strictly speaking, holy war.

By the end of the war in Egypt and Palestine in October 1918, over 450,000 British soldiers had fought in the EEF. Like their comrades on the Western front, they, too, wrote in numbers of their experiences after the war.<sup>14</sup> Many of these soldiers also saw action in France, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, or Salonika. However, soldiers who had spent only brief periods of time on other fronts composed the majority of postwar EEF writings. Their experiences in France or Gallipoli could be used to provide comparative points, but they did not dominate their memory of the war or feature prominently in their writings. Before we can address why EEF soldiers were writing and how they positioned their stories into the national war narrative, we must follow in the footsteps of Antony Bluett and ask where British soldiers acquired the sense of having been forgotten.

### **Public Profile and Soldier Access**

Initial debate on the campaign was centred on the political battle in London over the war's strategic direction. Under the government of Liberal Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith, tension grew between civilian and military policy makers as the two sides jockeyed for strategic influence. Proponents of an eastern, peripheral approach to the war's prosecution included Secretary of State for War, David Lloyd George, Lord Kitchener, and then First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill. In opposition, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir William Robertson, and General Sir Douglas Haig, amongst others, contended that the decisive blow would come in France and, appreciating Britain's need to protect its imperial possessions, would only support defensive actions outside the Western Front. With the ascendancy of Lloyd George to Prime Minister in December 1916, British war policy underwent a dramatic revision. Positioning Britain for a long war, Lloyd George actively sought alternatives to the deadlock in France by seeking victories in Salonika, Mesopotamia, and Palestine. Whether Lloyd George's

eastward push was part of a prevailing political pessimism, driving British war policy toward a compromise peace, or a conciliatory gesture done to placate the British public's desire for territorial spoils, the debate was, certainly, centred on power.<sup>15</sup> Distrustful of Haig, suspicious of Robertson, and fearing that Britain would be unable to sustain another Somme offensive, Lloyd George, as Matthew Hughes rightly proposes, was attempting to shift the burden in France to others. Until Robertson's removal in February 1918, British war policy remained a divided and schizophrenic affair.<sup>16</sup>

Echoing the political division in Whitehall, *The Times* became a battleground for public debate on British war strategy. Central to the discussion was the contention that Britain's peripheral theaters depleted the Western Front of men and materiel. Only weeks after Lloyd George's election and on the eve of the EEF's success at Rafah on 9 January 1917, an anonymous editorial affirmed "but one way to peace," the "German armies must be broken up, captured, or destroyed." "We must run no risks," warned the author, "by dissipating our efforts."<sup>17</sup> In February 1917, an unnamed military correspondent impressed the importance of numerical superiority on the Western Front. "To beat the enemy in France we must have the men." Unless Britain stationed every available man in the trenches of France and Flanders, "we have no right to expect to win the war."<sup>18</sup> Indeed, as late as September 1918, the Egypt and Palestine campaign polarized public opinion. Following the destruction of the Turkish Army in northern Palestine, an anonymous *Times* leader suggested, "people are still far from understanding its relevance." While the Western Front was, unquestionably, "the decisive theatre of war," the author failed to understand the prejudice against the Near Eastern campaign. "To suppose that it is inconsistent or competitive with the view that looks to the West for the main military sentiment," the author argued, "betrays a ridiculous lack of a sense of proportion."<sup>19</sup> The public, it seemed, was as divided about Britain's strategy as the policy makers in London.

Damaging the Egypt and Palestine campaign's public image as an active and important theatre of war, casualty statistics, often reprinted in newspapers, exposed a considerable discrepancy between other fronts and Palestine. Of the war's major theatres, including

France, Mesopotamia, the Dardanelles, and Salonika, the campaign in Egypt and Palestine sustained the lowest percentage of “battle casualties.” Fewer than 7 percent of the total number of men employed in the EEF were killed, wounded, or officially listed as missing. In comparison, France suffered a casualty rate of nearly 56 percent. Compared to the peripheral theatres outside western Europe, Egypt and Palestine fared little better. The failed invasion of the Gallipoli peninsula produced a casualty rate of nearly 23 percent; in Mesopotamia, 15 percent of combatants became casualties; even Salonika, a front that witnessed little offensive engagement until the war’s closing stages, approached 9 percent.<sup>20</sup> Casualty tables, such as those found in the War Office’s *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire During the Great War*, released in 1922, could also be found in popular newspapers during the war. In January 1916, for example, the Prime Minister’s office released official casualty figures following a public request by Liberal MP Percy Molteno. While the majority of newspapers, such as the *Manchester Guardian*, published the cumulative total of British casualties on all fronts, *The Times* segregated their table by theatre of war.<sup>21</sup> To the average Briton scouring the dailies for war news, the long casualty lists from the Western Front gave the impression that the men in France were shouldering a disproportionate burden of the war.

Operating within an economy of sacrifice, physical loss became the market’s preferred currency. Disease and death by sickness, in contrast, held little social value. Indeed, disease and sickness rates demonstrated that the EEF were far from immune to the perils of war. Over 650,000 men were admitted to hospitals for disease throughout the Egypt and Palestine campaign. 42 percent of total deaths in the Egypt and Palestine campaign were the result of sickness. In comparison only 9 percent of the British Expeditionary Force in France died of disease, occurring mostly throughout 1919 and early 1920 as the influenza pandemic spread across Europe. Quantitatively, only the campaigns in Mesopotamia and France produced more sickness-related deaths.<sup>22</sup> Joanna Bourke has explored the cultural fixation with the male body and the corresponding alteration of physical masculinity during the war. Bodily disfigurement and the memorialization of death all assumed new modes of representing the male figure.

Increasing preoccupation with the male body and gendered responsibility eventually infiltrated the debate on civic participation. The loss of an arm or leg represented a visible marker of wartime service. Unlike limblessness, the internal biology of a disease-ravaged soldier could not be publicly verified.<sup>23</sup> To die in a field hospital in southern Palestine or the Jordan Valley from malaria, or to languish in convalescence at Cairo, stricken with typhus, did not match the social impact of a death or disfigurement by battle.

The British public also heard less about and less from the men fighting in Egypt and Palestine. Aside from the temporary, but sizeable, increase in popular attention that accompanied the EEF's capture of Jerusalem in December 1917, press coverage was generally sporadic. From January 1915, when the first signs of a Turkish invasion of the Sinai became clear, to the announcement of the Armistice, approximately 260 articles on or referring to the Egypt and Palestine campaign were published in *The Times*.<sup>24</sup> Roughly 13 percent related to the capture of Jerusalem. The majority of articles were single column features or regurgitated information from official dispatches. These also included general news articles, bulletins and editorials. In one of *The Times'* more popular features, titled "Letters from the Front," the only submission to come out of the Egypt and Palestine campaign appeared from an artillery officer in early 1915. Constantly disappointed by the lack of action, the soldier expressed optimism at the "prospect of a little business...to relieve the monotony."<sup>25</sup>

Writing in 1916, Leonard Richmond Wheeler encapsulated the loneliness of warring in the Near East and the intense longing for the familiarity of England in verse. "Although a man roams far away, They'd call him back some distant day, Where dawn rolls up across the bay, Out somewhere East of Suez/ I long for Sussex by the sea, For red-roofed Rye or Winchelsea; Some thousand miles I fain would be, Far from the East of Suez."<sup>26</sup> Though whimsically composed on campaign, the satire of a theatre of war located somewhere beyond the Suez Canal largely held true for the British public. Immediately after the war's conclusion the British public, excepting the fall of Jerusalem, were still in the dark. While Edward C. Woodfin is likely correct in suggesting that the "battle-scarred veterans of

Gallipoli,” recuperating in Egypt after the evacuation of the Dardanelles, carried with them to France the perception of an inactive front in Egypt, this does little to address the transmission of a passive theatre to the British public.<sup>27</sup> That the Egypt and Palestine campaign remained poorly understood immediately after the war was confirmed by the war correspondent to London newspapers, W.T. Massey. In the first of three publications about the EEF’s Near Eastern war, *The Desert Campaigns*, published in late 1918, Massey explained the motivation behind the work as a desire “to give our people a better understanding of the really great effort the Army in Egypt has made to serve Imperial interests.” Several months before writing, Massey had received a letter from a colleague on the Western Front, “a thinking man,” who “expressed the hope that the war in Egypt would soon be over, for then ‘the good boys your way will be able to come to France to see what war is.’” Massey was confident that the labours of the EEF, properly told, would dispel the notion that the war was “all honey for a man in the Egyptian Expeditionary Force.” Recounting a conversation with an Australian Brigadier in 1917 at a cinematic news screening in Cairo, he recalled how the Australian, after seeing men and horses struggling through the muddy outskirts of Gaza, turned and said, “We are lucky to be out of that.” Massey assured the reader that “our brave boys in France looking at any true picture of troops in the desert would make precisely the same comment.”<sup>28</sup>

Massey continued to campaign for the EEF in the 1919 release, *How Jerusalem Was Won: Being the Record of Allenby’s Campaign in Palestine*. After declaring the EEF’s capture of Jerusalem as “marking an epoch...second only to that era which saw the birth of Christianity,” he considered the campaign’s historical contribution. Conceding that wartime Britain had failed to see the Egypt and Palestine campaign “in true perspective,” as the destruction of Germany’s eastern ambitions, as time passed, he was confident that the “calm judgment of the historian” would recover the campaign’s significance.<sup>29</sup>

Importantly, Massey identified censorship of the press as a leading cause of the public’s benightedness. Restrictions placed on war correspondents by the Intelligence Branch of the War Office prohibited

the naming of battalion commanders, regiments, or the identification of individual divisions. Though he was permitted to reference loose geographic associations, such as “Lowland” or “Londoners,” Massey felt that the practice of omitting divisional or regimental identifiers was designed “with the object of keeping our people at home in the dark, forbidding them glory in the deeds of their children and brothers.”<sup>30</sup> To the British soldier thousands of miles away in the barren wilderness of the Sinai or the inhospitable hillsides surrounding Jerusalem, the continual absence of their regiment, which, given the strong bonds of regimental loyalty, acted to validate individual wartime participation, contributed to their feeling of neglect.<sup>31</sup> Frank Fox, recalling the cavalry action at Qatia, felt that the Royal Gloucester Hussars had “wiped off old scores and got a name at last.”<sup>32</sup>

The paucity of wartime news coverage meant that the first immersive encounter with the Egypt and Palestine campaign for the British public likely migrated to Britain from the United States. Narrated by the American journalist, Lowell Thomas, *With Allenby in Palestine, including the Capture of Jerusalem and Liberation of Holy Arabia*, opened in London on 7 August 1919. Imported from New York under the patronage of Percy Burton and the English-Speaking Union, the show included official war films and photography in its two-hour-long multimedia blitz on the senses.<sup>33</sup> Thomas’ production was not only “the originating moment of the Lawrence legend,” popularizing the Arabian exploits of T.E. Lawrence, for many, it was also an introduction to the entire campaign.<sup>34</sup> *The Observer* praised Thomas’ show for bringing “home to us...the stirring and romantic incidents of the victorious war in the East.”<sup>35</sup> Explaining the public’s attraction to the show as a product of the campaign’s unfamiliarity, *The Times* wrote:

It is now more than four months since Mr. Lowell Thomas started upon his campaign to dispel some of the fog which hung over the Palestine campaign in this country. Either the fog was very heavy, or the process of dispelling it is very fascinating, for Mr. Thomas is still at work and there is no sign yet of a completion of his labours.

As reviews of *With Allenby in Palestine* make clear, the Egypt and Palestine Campaign's history, despite Massey's attempts, had made little impact on Britain's collective consciousness. Thomas' travelogue, the newspapers asserted, was singularly responsible for relieving the malaise. "During the war," continued *The Times* reviewer, "the London public heard comparatively little about the 'sideshows,' and it naturally appreciates the opportunity of hearing a connected story of the Palestine triumph told by a dispassionate outsider, who was in the campaign but not of it."<sup>36</sup>

Over four million spectators flocked to Thomas' show throughout the British Empire. Despite the show's widespread reception, British soldiers writing in the 1920s consistently promoted the belief that their campaign had been overlooked. As the performance gained popularity and Lawrence's celebrity increased, Thomas eventually included Lawrence's name in the production's title. By September 1919, the Left-wing *Nation* had already chosen to devote the majority of its review to Lawrence, "whose name was hardly known before the war," instead of the familiarity of Allenby.<sup>37</sup> It might be that as the spotlight shone brighter on Lawrence's revolt and less on the exploits of General Allenby and the EEF, soldiers dissociated themselves from the production. If Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen's wartime diary can be taken as representative of soldier attitudes to Lawrence, it is clear that EEF soldiers did not embrace Lawrence or his Arabian campaign. Meinertzhagen was convinced that Lawrence had "an intense desire to be the hero...of the whole war," despite the Arabian revolt "not having the slightest influence on Allenby's main campaign." Assessing Lawrence's tales of train demolitions and cavalry ambushes, Meinertzhagen peppered his diary with phrases such as "bombastic exaggerations" and "preposterous claims."<sup>38</sup> Lawrence's revolt, at least for Meinertzhagen, had little to do with the EEF.

British soldiers in Egypt and Palestine did not have to wait until the war's end to discover their absence from the national war narrative. Several factors contributed to their feelings of isolation and abandonment. As the campaign advanced into the Sinai and southern Palestine, the lack of local infrastructure restricted the availability of mail, fracturing home links that helped sustain morale. Both

Alexander Watson and Michael Roper have noted the acute emotional effect that regular correspondence and contact with the home front had on a soldier's mental state. Correspondence was viewed simultaneously as a "duty to" and a physically verifiable "sign of loved ones."<sup>39</sup> When mail did arrive through dispensatory outlets such as family parcels, packages, and letters, most British soldiers stationed in Egypt or Palestine would have acquired some conception of the campaign's public profile in Britain. As such EEF soldiers were exposed, albeit, intermittently, to British war coverage and were likely aware of their lack of attention almost from the campaign's inception.

Outside of Cairo incoming mail was, at best, irregular. As other studies have revealed, mail from Britain typically arrived in two to three days on the Western Front. Censored letters from France averaged roughly six days to reach their intended destination.<sup>40</sup> By tracking the correspondence dates of letters home and soldiers' records of received mail, it is clear that soldiers in the Egypt and Palestine campaign were experiencing far greater delays and uncertainty with their correspondence. A letter sent from England to a soldier in Egypt or Palestine spent approximately 14 to 24 days in transit, if not longer. Major General P.A. Bainbridge, an officer in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, relayed the inconsistency of correspondence to his son, Robert, writing, "Our mails are erratic. We had a long time without getting any letters over 3 weeks tho one or 2 odd ones got through somehow...now I hear another mail has been lost somewhere so our news is rather broken up."<sup>41</sup> As the troops moved further away from Cairo, mail became increasingly difficult to receive. Forced to modernize the region's infrastructure and transport system, packages and parcels could only travel as far as the railhead. At Khan Yunis, near the border of southern Palestine and the Sinai Peninsula, Dr. William Scott, a Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps, lamented, "We get no war news or newspapers here." Confiding the emotional effects of irregular mail to his diary, he noted "One begins to long for home letters after 3 weeks' silence."<sup>42</sup> As the EEF advanced north of Jerusalem, outpacing its supply system, C.S. Wink, an officer in the 54<sup>th</sup> East Anglian Division, wrote to a family friend, "Mails are now very irregular +

rather difficult to get as they mostly go up to H.Q. + have to be sent down again.”<sup>43</sup> Even in 1918, with the railway double-tracked and extended into Palestine, Private G. Good had “not seen a newspaper for a fortnight.” Stationed near the Jordan Valley at Tell’Asur, the isolation of desert campaigning weighed on his mind, “One feels such a tremendous long way from everywhere out here. In Italy we could get about in civilization, but here we can neither get about nor is there much civilization.”<sup>44</sup>

The absence of mail and the severing of home front ties could lead some soldiers to a state of depression. Bernard Blaser of the London Scottish recalled the arrival of mail as a “red-letter day.” For those who received mail it could act as a “stimulant,” injecting them with optimism and hope. Those who did not receive mail slipped into “disappointment” and “despondency.” In a remarkable passage loaded with the psychological and physical effects of irregular contact, Blaser recalled the mental state of soldiers without regular correspondence:

They felt absolutely forgotten, and the total absence of any possibility of leave home, coupled with the uncertainty as to how long they were to be ‘buried alive,’ often caused them to sink into such a deplorable state of apathy and neglect of their personal cleanliness that in time they fell sick and had to go to hospital.<sup>45</sup>

The psychological effect of irregular correspondence could, as Blaser explained, translate into a physical condition. The arrival of mail clearly formed an integral part not only of soldiers’ wartime experience, but also of their memorial reconstruction of the war years. Their presence in a strange and foreign land only intensified the bonds of home front links. As will be shown when soldiers discovered their absence from British newspapers, the feeling of being “buried alive” was linked to their desire for public recognition and an audience for their actions.

Furthermore, mail frequently arrived out-of-order and it could become difficult to respond directly to specific letters and the content therein. To correct the problem of random mail, Christopher Fautley, of the 2/15<sup>th</sup> London Regiment, devised a notational struc-

ture to identify his writings. Writing to his wife, Em, “I must thank you very much for your nice letter of 14<sup>th</sup> February, which I received on Friday 19 & it must have been mislaid somewhere en route. I think by now, that I have received all your letters...I have mentioned the dates of them so you will know how I stand.”<sup>46</sup> Corporal Oswald Herbert Best, 2<sup>nd</sup> Signal Co., Royal Engineers, notified his mother in May 1918 that letters dated from November and December 1917 had only just arrived.<sup>47</sup>

When soldiers did receive mail, it often included newspapers from the home front. In addition to their function as emotional sustenance, letters and parcels from Britain, through their inclusion of newspapers and popular media, could provide soldiers with an impression, though not always up-to-date, of British war coverage. With nearly 60,000 parcels handled by the British Army every day, the inclusion of newspapers in letter packages sent to soldiers constituted one of their primary networks of information.<sup>48</sup> Writing from Egypt to family in Britain, Lieutenant Colonel Randolph Baker, an officer in the Southern Dorset Yeomanry, marked the arrival of “Times and mails of the UK.”<sup>49</sup> Christopher Fautley received copies of *John Bull* and the *Weekly Mirror* with many of his letters.<sup>50</sup> After nearly three weeks without mail, E.B. Hinde, a Medical Officer in the East Anglian Field Ambulance, received a package at Romani with “12 letters and 14 newspapers.”<sup>51</sup> D.H. Calcutt, 2/16<sup>th</sup> County of London Battalion, seemed particularly well informed. Throughout his wartime diary he recorded the arrival of the *News of the World*, *Sunday Pictorial*, *Daily Herald*, and the *Daily Mirror*.<sup>52</sup>

Captain R.E.C. Adams of the East Surrey Regiment Brigade, in the published account based on his wartime diary, frequently commented on the arrival of newspapers and his discontent over the theatre’s scant coverage. As the EEF were preparing for the Third Battle of Gaza in October 1917, one of the campaign’s bloodiest periods, Adams observed that *The Times* had “devoted three lines to the good moral and health of the troops...otherwise nothing to report on this front.”<sup>53</sup> Adams’ precision is noteworthy. As best they could, many men in the EEF actively tracked the campaign’s public profile. D.P. Appleby found that the capture of Jerusalem was “the topic of conversation in the London newspapers.”<sup>54</sup> A keen observer of news-

papers' content, both D.H. Calcutt and Captain D.F. Heath, of the 1<sup>st</sup> Manchester Regiment, collected old newspapers and "cut out the Palestine references," finding many of them "Very amusing."<sup>55</sup> Even when the Egypt and Palestine campaign did receive media attention, some took exception with its representation. After finding a cache of newspapers misplaced by the post at El Shaulth, C.R. Hennessey wrote, "it amused us to read the War Correspondents' accounts of our activities. These accounts were obviously written by men with a vivid imagination, and we only hoped they achieved their purpose of cheering up the folks at home."<sup>56</sup>

Though unreliable, familial correspondence and British newspapers provided EEF soldiers with access to home front news and the public profile of the Egypt and Palestine campaign. Soldiers could gauge their level of public awareness and, as a result, were likely aware of their enigmatic image during the war. Sidelined in the popular press, their exclusion from the story of wartime Britain would motivate returning soldiers to set the record straight and reestablish their wartime role in Britain's cultural memory. To accomplish this, the men of the EEF turned to publishing and the emerging market of war literature.

### **Somewhere East of Suez**

In their effort to demonstrate to the British public that their participation in the war was as legitimate as those who had fought primarily on the Western Front, British soldiers in the EEF mobilized their discontent. Compiled from diaries and recollections and published in 1926, Edwin C. Axe and Edwin Blackwell used their literary platform to confront images of the Egypt and Palestine campaign as a theatre of relaxation. While acknowledging that the Western Front was of wider importance to the war effort than the operations in Palestine, Axe and Blackwell vigorously defended the EEF's wartime contribution:

But whatever opinion was held or expressed on such larger issues, there was certainly cause for righteous indignation among the troops in Palestine and Egypt when they continually learned from the old country that everyone

regarded this hazy venture as a glorious picnic. War and hardships? Not on your life. They're romping in the sylvan glades of the Holy Land, or lazily languishing on the line of communications somewhere east of the Canal. There *was* a war on, and at times as fierce in intensity as France could show.<sup>57</sup>

Rejecting the misleading representation of the Egypt and Palestine campaign as a "glorious picnic," the authors delegitimized the notion of British soldiers strolling through the picturesque Holy Land, evading the "hardships" of war.

Of course, war books were not the only means of public commemoration and recognition. The construction of war memorials in the interwar period provided collective symbols that could provoke a sensory experience unlike the pages of a war memoir or published diary. As sites of both public and private mourning, they stood as physical testimonials, recognizing the eternality of the war dead's sacrifice and the indebtedness of the bereft.<sup>58</sup> The war was memorialized in nearly every European town and, so, too, was it commemorated in Egypt and Palestine. On the Mount of Olives, at Mount Scopus outside Jerusalem, and in Egypt, war cemeteries were constructed to commemorate the dead.<sup>59</sup> Importantly, though, the logistics and cost of travelling to eastern battlefields limited the number of British pilgrims. Without an official apparatus to coordinate their journey and subsidize the cost, like the YMCA and Salvation Army organized tours of the Western Front, eastbound pilgrims faced the financial burden alone.<sup>60</sup> The working-class family of J.G. Boutel, 1<sup>st</sup> City of London Yeomanry, spent fourteen years saving until they could afford to visit their son's gravesite in Kantara in 1932.<sup>61</sup> The war cemeteries and memorials of the east could, however, experience bumps in attendance. Over 1,000 visitors travelled to the cemetery in Jerusalem between January and April 1930. Despite these occasional spikes, which were commonly the result of an unrelated surge in British tourists to Mandate Palestine, the logistical and financial burden of travel prevented most Britons from journeying east.<sup>62</sup> As such, the war book provided the cheapest and most accessible mode of tapping into the experience of the EEF soldier in World War I.

Military participation, and the equation with publicly recognized participation must be made, formed a key marker of masculinity and an evolving component of interwar citizenship.<sup>63</sup> Unsurprisingly, most postwar EEF writings stated as their literary objective the desire to rectify public ignorance. "LITTLE has been said, and less written," wrote Antony Bluett, "of the campaigns in Egypt and Palestine. This book is an attempt to give those interested some idea of the work and play and, occasionally, the sufferings of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force."<sup>64</sup> What little the public did know, suggested Bluett, centered on the capture of Jerusalem in December 1917 and the subsequent string of victories as the EEF pushed northwards, culminating in the destruction of the Turkish Army in Palestine and the capture of Damascus in September 1918. "Again, as far as most people at home are concerned," he wrote: the Great Crusade began with the taking of Jerusalem and ended when the Turks finally surrendered in the autumn of 1918. This view, entirely erroneous though it be, is not unreasonable, for a thick veil shrouded the doings of the army in Egypt in the early days, and the people at home saw only the splendid results of two years' arduous preparation and self-sacrifice.<sup>65</sup>

The home front, however, was not to blame for their lack of knowledge. It was the British press who had blurred the campaign out of the public's vision. While some EEF writers, such as Edward Thompson, used their war experience to advance a political agenda, most soldiers, like Bluett, wrote to rehabilitate the Egypt and Palestine Campaign's public image.

Lieutenant Colonel Henry Chauvel, commander of the Desert Mounted Corps, felt that R.M.P. Preston's regimental history had "done a service to his country" in bringing attention to a campaign "but little known to the general public."<sup>66</sup> For Robert H. Goodsall, a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery, the object of his book was not simply "to write a war history," but rather, "to portray by pen, brush and camera," the "life of the individual Tommy fighting in the rich plains of Philistia or the difficult hill country of Judea."<sup>67</sup> Goodsall was not only writing to enlighten the British public, he was

also writing to “stir the memory of those who were ‘out East’ in 1917 and 1918.”<sup>68</sup>

Soldiers consciously avoided the tepid prose of official histories, scattering personal anecdotes and vivid geographical descriptions to enliven their accounts. As Edwin Blackwell and Edwin C. Axe explained, to create a “readable narrative” it was necessary to “amplify” their diary entries, “to intersperse banal incident in a piquant manner.”<sup>69</sup> Recourse to an intimate and personal language did have limitations. A disgruntled S.F. Hatton of the Middlesex Imperial Yeomanry charged that Erich Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* “was not a real picture of the War as it only portrayed one aspect.” Mocking the sentimentality of Remarque’s disillusionment, Hatton assured the reader that his story was true, “the men are real,” and “You will find here no ‘nerve-shattered padres,’ no ‘weeping colonels,’ nor do my troopers take away their love-letters to the latrines to read.”<sup>70</sup> Though Hatton’s assault on disillusioned war literature was unique amongst EEF postwar writings, the idea that the British public had an inaccurate and distorted vision of the campaign, if they had one at all, pervaded the majority of soldier writings.<sup>71</sup>

As part of a mnemonic reconstruction of the campaign’s chronology, EEF soldiers transformed the first phase of their campaign, under the command of Archibald Murray, into a period of military labour. During World War I, modern, industrial warfare initiated a cultural process that redefined traditional concepts of warlike qualities and activities. Lengthy casualty lists, incessant shelling, and the muddled trenches of Ypres sector, slowly acquired a cultural dominance that changed Britain’s conception of war.<sup>72</sup>

Before the strategic revision of British war policy enacted under Lloyd George, a program of logistical and infrastructural development characterized the Egypt and Palestine campaign’s military operations. Kristian Coates Ulrichsen has investigated the radical changes in colonial administration and imperial authority exercised by the EEF throughout 1915-1917. The increasing demands of a mobile, modern army conducting industrialized warfare put considerable strain on the pre-war infrastructure of Egypt, and as the EEF advanced through the Sinai desert and into Ottoman Palestine, on

the near non-existent transport system of a neglected territory.<sup>73</sup> As such, the men of the EEF were needed to lay roads, pipelines, construct rail-track, and modernize the infrastructure of British-occupied territory.

Prior to the First and Second Battles of Gaza in March and April 1917, military activities were largely restricted to drilling, outpost duty and advanced reconnaissance. Following Murray's arrival in March 1916, the capriciousness of the War Cabinet in London had left the EEF without a clear operational objective. Other than acting as a strategic reserve for the Western Front and as protection for British shipping routes through the Canal, the EEF could do little more than consolidate its territorial gains and improve defensive fortifications.<sup>74</sup> Major Edward Rowe of the 2<sup>nd</sup> County of London (Westminster Dragoons) Yeomanry recalled that the "routine of drill and stables soon became monotonous."<sup>75</sup> Troops could spend as much as eight weeks undergoing training and drilling exercises, as Captain Alban Bacon of the Hampshire Regiment did in early 1917 at Rafah.<sup>76</sup> Robert H. Goodsall frequently protested that "such inaction" was "directly opposed to all the accepted axioms of war."<sup>77</sup> Rowlands Coldicott, in particular, was apprehensive about the effect of military inaction on his regiment's image. Reminiscing about the British occupation of Latrun and the subsequent period of regimental reorganization, he pleaded with his reader that there was "domesticity even in the life of soldiers on a campaign." "Apollo is not forever bending his bow," quipped Coldicott, and yet, "when pens and cameras and returned warriors have done their best, it is difficult...to convince them that we do not use cold steel daily, or kill men as a matter of course every forenoon before we have our dinner."<sup>78</sup>

Victorian and imperial conceptions of British masculinity had affirmed warfare as an arena for men to display their manhood long before the First World War. Popular conceptions of bravery frequently drew on Victorian traditions that connected warfare with sexual virility and intrepidity.<sup>79</sup> Coupled with a renewed code of Christian conduct, publicly expressed as "muscular Christianity," the absence of these qualities negatively reflected upon a soldiers' ability to satisfy a wartime martial character.<sup>80</sup> Action and restless activity were synonymous with masculinity, while, conversely, inaction and

idleness were gendered as feminine attributes and poisonous to the sound male mind. To the soldiers of the EEF, the fact that they did not daily unsheathe their swords and seek out the dug-in Turk did not mean that they were not contributing to the war effort.

Though Murray's time in charge of the EEF could hardly be described as unproductive, Murray, himself, soon became synonymous with inaction and administrative lassitude. Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen expressed concern that Murray had transformed the EEF into an "inert Army" plagued by a "lethargic sleep."<sup>81</sup> Despite labelling Murray as "one of the most handsomest and most soldier-like" British officers of World War I, Cyril Falls, co-author of the Egypt and Palestine campaign's official history, resigned to tagging him a "misfit" and ultimately responsible for the failed attacks at Gaza in March and April 1917.<sup>82</sup> Edward Thompson, though omitting Murray's name, criticized his decision to station the EEF's headquarters away from the fighting front at Cairo, "A handful of Olympians lived aloof, the administrative staff who flung orders at us from a distance, while we miserable ones were pitch forked together into huge, amorphous messes."<sup>83</sup>

Perhaps the most glaring derision of Murray's command was his conspicuous absence from many postwar writings. H.O. Lock's *The Conquerors of Palestine Through Forty Centuries* failed to mention Murray at all, instead referring to the "British commander" who ordered the retreat at the First Battle of Gaza.<sup>84</sup> In fact, many narratives of the campaign only mention Murray to discuss his deficiencies. Comparing Murray to Allenby, Edward Victor Godrich, of the Queen's Own Worcestershire Hussars, wrote that Murray was nothing more than a "figurehead," while "Allenby was a real live GOC moving about amongst us."<sup>85</sup> The exclusion of Murray by postwar soldier writings was a conscious effort to sanitize the campaign's history by removing a figure associated with inaction and failure.

Despite the laborious efforts of the EEF and the Royal Engineer Corps, the soldiers felt that these activities had gone unnoticed in the public's eye. "The colossal task" of preparing for the waging of war in the Near East, according to Antony Bluett, was one that the "magnitude of which was never imagined by the people at home."<sup>86</sup> The

logistical frustrations of campaigning in a country without a modern infrastructure, confronted by the presence of a well-disciplined and resolute Turkish Army, and compounded by the supply problem of navigating the submarine-infested Mediterranean, compelled Bluett to explain the link between supply and offensive action:

Add to this the facts that a hundred and fifty miles of desert had to be cleared of an enemy who fought with the most bitter determination all the way, that a railway had to be constructed, and an adequate water-supply had to be maintained over the same desert, before an offensive on a large scale could ever be dreamt about, and the connection mentioned above becomes strikingly obvious.<sup>87</sup>

The British advance base at Kantara and defensive outposts constructed in the Sinai, the physical manifestations of the EEF's supposedly dormant energy, provided the answer to the years of 1915-1917:

Those people at home who, from time to time, asked querulously, "What are we doing in Egypt?" should have seen Kantara in 1915, and then again towards the end of 1916. Failing that I would ask them, and also those kindly but myopic souls who said: "What a picnic you are having in Egypt!" to journey awhile with us through Kantara and across the desert of Northern Sinai. For the former there will be a convincing answer to their query; the latter will have an opportunity of revising their notions as to what really constitutes a picnic.<sup>88</sup>

Though not always fighting, Bluett reminded the reader that the men of the EEF were very much active and at work. By inverting the discourse of inactivity and connecting knowledge to experience, Bluett, like other EEF soldiers, expressed his frustrations with a public that did not understand the EEF's wartime contribution. Others, too, found in Kantara and British infrastructural developments the cure for their popularly imagined inactivity. E.V. Godrich wrote that the "wonderful" work of the railway leading from Kantara into the Sinai was not a "simple affair" and had not

“received the notice it deserves in the Home Press.”<sup>89</sup> In Kantara’s completion, conscientious objector Donald McNair, of the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Hampshire Regiment, saw proof of the “British mastery” of the desert.<sup>90</sup> Comparing the British base to a “great city,” Captain A. Douglas Thorburn, of the 2/22<sup>nd</sup> County of London Howitzer Battery, recalled that it was “possibly the largest in the whole British Army.”<sup>91</sup> Published shortly after the war, Gerald B. Hurst correctly prophesized that the “unqualified praise” due to soldiers for their labour works would never materialize. Of the defensive works constructed by the Manchester Regiment in June 1916 at the affectionately named outpost of Ashton-in-Sinai, Hurst conceded that “this particular phase of soldiering has in itself no place in the annals of the Great War.”<sup>92</sup>

War books provided EEF soldiers the opportunity to reshape the memory of their campaign. In defending their role as, essentially, military labourers, the work of the EEF from 1915-1917 may suggest the need to revise our concepts of work and military labour in World War I. Janet Watson has suggested that the war created two categories of experience, work and service, informed primarily by a soldier’s socio-economic background, while others have emphasized the capacity for regional and occupational backgrounds to influence attitudes toward soldiering.<sup>93</sup> What we have encountered in the Egypt and Palestine campaign, in contrast, suggests that soldier identity was circumstantial and often a conscious response to public discourse. Presenting themselves as military labourers, they sought to lend purpose to the wearisome desert days of 1916 and early 1917.<sup>94</sup> Their wartime participation did not start and stop with the capture of Jerusalem.

### **Allenby’s Crusaders**

To overcome the contention that the EEF had led an inactive life under the command of Archibald Murray, EEF soldiers used war books to recast their role in 1916-1917 as military labourers. The second phase of the campaign, beginning with the arrival of General Sir Edmund Allenby in June 1917, transformed them into crusaders. Titles such as *The Modern Crusaders*, *The Romance of the Last Crusade*.

*With Allenby to Jerusalem*, and *With Allenby's Crusaders*, centred the story of the EEF on the leadership of, and relationship to, its Commander-in-Chief.<sup>95</sup> For several postwar recollections, Allenby even composed an introduction, foreword, or preface, endorsing the work's veracity and praising the contribution of the author or his division to the successful outcome in the Near East.<sup>96</sup>

For many, Allenby's arrival signalled the turning point in the campaign's fortunes. Captain R.E.C. Adams of the 74<sup>th</sup> (Meerut) Indian Division felt that "new life" had been "infused into the Expeditionary Force."<sup>97</sup> The renewal of a continual flow of men and supplies to Palestine was directly attributed to Allenby's penchant for organization and planning. Writing in 1926, Bernard Blaser recalled that Allenby had "[realized] the enormity of his task," correlating his arrival to the influx of troops "from France, Macedonia, and India to augment the original force."<sup>98</sup> In his postwar published diary, Oliver Teichmann, of the 1/1 Worcestershire Yeomanry heralded Allenby's coming as the arrival of the "man-power General."<sup>99</sup> One of the first things Allenby "insisted upon" was an "adequate supply of 6-inch Howitzer Batteries" and "some long range guns."<sup>100</sup> Lawrence's revolt east of the Jordan may have been the "romantic fringe" of the war, casting an unfocused spotlight on the British in the Near East, but Allenby had rescued them from a life of inaction.<sup>101</sup> As John More poignantly wrote, he "made our lives worth living."<sup>102</sup>

Importantly, Allenby's command also coincided with the capture of Jerusalem and the retrospective construction of the campaign as a crusade. Eitan Bar-Yosef has sourced the British fascination with the Holy Land and the reclamation of Jerusalem to the early nineteenth century, as one that penetrated the education of British youth. Biblical familiarity, acquired through the Bible, Christian hymns, and Sunday school, engrained a romantic image of the Holy Land onto the British mindset and fashioned a "vernacular biblical culture."<sup>103</sup> More recently, James E. Kitchen's insightful research has expanded on Bar-Yosef's ideological foundation by exploring the wartime origin and pervasiveness of crusading rhetoric amongst British Imperial soldiers. Members of the EEF's religious fringe could believe themselves to be modern crusaders, but more commonly, he argues, they were fascinated by the exoticism and allure of the Near

East and intrigued by Islamic culture. In an important contribution to the understanding of expeditionary identity, Kitchen asserts that instead of the soldiers being seen as the modern reincarnation of holy warriors, they were more appropriately “the region’s first mass tourists.”<sup>104</sup> Kitchen, however, is less convincing when accounting for the popular frequency of crusading rhetoric and its inclusion in postwar writings. Rightly observing that the definition of the campaign as a crusade did not begin exclusively in the postwar period, he suggests that “clear commercial benefits” to the work’s author and, presumably, its publisher, encouraged such references.

Reviews and advertisements of EEF war books, however, tell a different story.<sup>105</sup> Peter Mandler’s passionate caution against the reduction of cultural products to mere text argues for greater emphasis on a source’s historical reality, its diffusion and reception.<sup>106</sup> By exploring how publishers advertised war books and contextualizing the notion of commercial benefits, the sales argument becomes unsellable. Cecil Sommers’ *Temporary Crusaders* was marketed by its publisher, John Lane The Bodley Head, as an “amusing account of campaigning in Palestine and the East.”<sup>107</sup> Heath Cranton’s advertisement for *With Allenby’s Crusaders*, written by Captain John More of the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Royal Welch Fusiliers, made no reference to the campaign as a crusade. R.E.C. Adams’ *The Modern Crusaders* was described as a “slight and ‘chatty’ account” of the EEF’s advance. One of the exceptional features of Adams’ account, as reviewed by *The Times Literary Supplement*, was the revelation, sure to ire ex-EEF soldiers, that he could acquire six oranges in Egypt for one piastre.<sup>108</sup> *The Observer*, reviewing Edward Thompson’s *Crusader’s Coast*, felt the book best described as “a guide to the flora of the Holy Land.” “Those who seek excitement,” warned the reviewer, “may avoid this book.”<sup>109</sup> The absence of overt references to the crusading content of EEF postwar writings suggests that it held little commercial viability. At the very least, they were less remarkable than the promise of a “behind the scenes” glimpse at the privations of British soldiers in the Near East.<sup>110</sup>

If the purchase power of attaching crusade to a war book’s title was commercially bankrupt, we must answer why, then, allusions to the crusades were included at all. One explanation goes beyond

Kitchen's offer of "historical context."<sup>111</sup> If we view the postwar writings of EEF soldiers as not only retrospective memories in text, but also existing as individual histories and the psychological process of evaluating wartime experience, the influence of subjective meaning becomes clearer. Though lacking in popular reception, presenting the Egypt and Palestine campaign, retrospectively, as a crusade, enabled EEF soldiers to compete with the moral value of the war in France and its centrality to the national war narrative.

EEF soldiers, like their counterparts on the Western Front, regularly placed their actions within a martial lineage of conquerors.<sup>112</sup> Bernard Blaser in *Kilts Across the Jordan*, recalled the march with the Second Battalion London Scottish toward Gaza in November 1917:

It was now, as we passed along one of the oldest routes in history, the highway between Egypt and Syria, trodden through the ages 'by Egyptian and Syrian Kings, by Greek and Roman conquerors, by Saracens and Crusaders, and lastly by Napoleon from Egypt and back again,' we began to feel that we, too, were Crusaders engaged upon a task similar to that held so sacred by our gallant predecessors of the Middle Ages.<sup>113</sup>

The EEF, according to Blaser, were an extension of ancient and modern history. Major Vivian Gilbert, reminiscing about the campaign's end, reflected that it was "Strange to think that some of the fiercest battles of the world had taken place there; that Thotmes, Rameses, Sennacherib, Cambyses, Alexander, Pompey, Titus, Saladin, Napoleon and many another led his armies where Allenby led us!"<sup>114</sup> Pointing out that the EEF had traversed the same road used by Egyptian pharaohs to march into southern Palestine, Blackwell and Axe confidently wrote, "Verily, history repeats itself!"<sup>115</sup>

In addition to cataloguing the campaign's martial ancestry, EEF soldiers were keen to point out that the British had succeeded where others had failed. Writing the regimental history of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry, Frank Fox declared that the EEF had achieved a "measure of success" that "had been denied to Napoleon and the armies of the Crusades."<sup>116</sup> Of the EEF's push beyond Gaza toward Jerusalem in November 1917, Captain F.A.M.

Webster proudly informed the reader that Allenby and the EEF had avoided “the fate of the Assyrian, Roman and Crusader Forces” by pursuing the retreating Turks and exploiting their successes.<sup>117</sup> Rowlands Coldicott, like other EEF soldiers, found romance in retracing the historical footsteps of the ancients, “And was this not romantic, to be marching like the Romans to Jerusalem, and nearly to be at the point where marches would end and the expected struggle begin? Did the men of the legions of Titus grouse at the bad going as they tramped up into Judaea?”<sup>118</sup> The chance to re-live history clearly meant something to British soldiers in the Near East, at least retrospectively.

Stefan Goebel has viewed such historicizations as contextual reductions, designed to simplify the complexities of the conflict for a mass audience.<sup>119</sup> The importance of metaphor, however, is missing in this explanation. In his research on the cognitive and self-reflexive constructions of the self, James Olney has advocated the use of metaphor in the construction of meaningful patterns. Without metaphor, Olney stresses, “it is clear that the meaning-pattern is not there in the items or the experiences themselves.” Through the “metaphorizing imagination,” EEF soldiers established patterns and connections to historical analogues, the crusades analogy being the prime example.<sup>120</sup> By establishing a recognizable pattern, one that used history and its cultural worth, soldiers invested their actions with the emotion and power of historical events. As a Christian society versed in Bible lore and Greco-Roman history, EEF soldiers attempted to explain the unknown, the Egypt and Palestine campaign, with the known. This enabled EEF soldiers writing in the postwar era to supply the reader with a tool-belt of knowledge, one that the reader could draw upon to understand the Egypt and Palestine campaign’s importance and, crucially, to discover its meaning.<sup>121</sup> Searching for continuity, not just context, EEF soldiers played to the cultural sentiment of the crusades and attached it to their campaign. Though this failed to generate commercial success, its importance to the men writing should not be underestimated.

The moral imperative of liberation, so central to the Western Front and the freeing of Belgium, also made its way east. Crusading

rhetoric in EEF war books was typically tied to the liberation of the Holy Land. Rowlands Coldicott, remembering the capture of Jerusalem wrote, "That Jerusalem was to be visited by us in the guise of liberators was an idea now handed freely about from man to man."<sup>122</sup> Vivian Gilbert dedicated his war book to the "Mothers of all the boys who fought for the freedom of the Holy Land."<sup>123</sup> Using the language of English liberalism to define their war experience was part of a recuperative process that ascribed meaning and purpose to death. The Western Front, likewise, was often presented as a crusade to rescue European civilization from German *kultur*.<sup>124</sup> In another instance of the importance of metaphor, its constructive and coercive power, as well as its cultural influence, Nicoletta F. Gullace has viewed the "rape of Belgium" as the "central metaphor of the war."<sup>125</sup>

To compete with the liberation of Belgium and to fit into Britain's "moral" war, EEF soldiers promoted the Egypt and Palestine campaign as a cause equal in nobility to the Western Front.<sup>126</sup> Antony Bluett, an officer in the Camel Transport Corps, considered it Britain's "mission" to "free the Holy Land from the ambitions" of a "modern Herod."<sup>127</sup> Gilbert recalled the capture of Jerusalem and the end of "four centuries of Turkish misrule and oppression." He found it difficult to express his emotion on paper, writing, "How totally inadequate are words to tell of such an adventure as this!"<sup>128</sup> Edward Thompson considered the capture of Jerusalem to be the greatest feat of British arms outside of France:

the taking of Jerusalem, inferior as a spectacle of brute energy, and hardly illustrating at all the more devilish developments of modern warfare, can be shown in a clear, hard light, historically and romantically the greatest of all episodes that have flamed on a sudden into public view out of the less regarded spaces of the war.<sup>129</sup>

Some felt even stronger. The feeling that the war in Palestine was imbued with a more honest, ethical foundation heavily influenced the writing of Bernard Blaser. Having seen action on Vimy Ridge at the Battle of Arras, he held little doubt of the moral superiority of campaigning in Palestine over the fields of France and Flanders:

Here in Palestine there could be no empty and fallacious reasons for the war we were waging against the Turks, no selfish aims for commercial supremacy, no “Remember Belgium” and other shibboleths which had so sickened us that they became everyday jokes, but the purest of all motives, which was to restore this land, in which Christ lived and died, to the rule of Christian peoples. Apart from any sense of duty, it seemed to me a privilege to take part in such an undertaking.<sup>130</sup>

That Blaser viewed his role in the campaign as a “privilege,” not an act of compulsion or coercion, dressed the Near East as a stage still playing to the romance of morally compelled action.<sup>131</sup> “To free the Holy Land,” he continued, “from a policy of organized murder, tyranny so awful and despicable as to cause the hearts of the most apathetic to revolt in disgust, was in itself sufficient to urge us to great efforts, to suffer increased hardships without complaint.”<sup>132</sup> As the EEF continued past Gaza and toward Jerusalem, Blaser fondly recalled the friendly disposition of the local population to the advancing British troops, “for they no doubt realized that we had brought to an end the harsh rule of their Ottoman oppressors.” With the EEF’s advance came “the disappearance of the pauperizing exactions and heartless plunder of a Government which has dominated the fortunes of Palestine like a black cloud for over four hundred years.”<sup>133</sup>

The wresting of the Holy Land from the Ottomans and its restoration “to the rule of Christian peoples” was deeply reflective of English-Protestant ideas of the expansion of *Pax Britannica* and the extension of British democracy to politically backward easterners.<sup>134</sup> The liberation of the Holy Land could not only compete with the war to free Belgium, for men such as Blaser, it also seemed to be the only campaign of the war that was worth fighting.

## Conclusion

In his annotated bibliography of war literature, Cyril Falls commented on the deluge of war books, declaring, “The Great War has

resulted in the spilling of floods of ink as well as blood.” Concerned that the disillusioned trench narrative had crystallized as the only authentic war experience, Falls reminded the reader that World War I had birthed a diverse body of writing. There was not “an aspect of it,” he argued, that had not produced a “considerable literature of its own.”<sup>135</sup> Published in 1930, Falls’ plea reverberated the decade-long cries of British soldiers in Egypt and Palestine. Marginalized from the national war narrative, war books provided the men of the EEF a direct avenue to respond to their perceived absence and correct the campaign’s popular image. In doing so, EEF soldiers actively engaged Britain’s war narrative and repositioned their wartime effort as an important contribution to the war’s successful conclusion. This was part of a process of renegotiation; a public collective bargaining that, taken as a whole, tried to use the power of their shared experiences in Egypt and Palestine to redefine their wartime service. Periods of military inaction, defined by the humdrum days of outpost duty and advanced reconnaissance in 1916-1917, could be mitigated by the Herculean efforts of the EEF in modernizing local infrastructure and building Britain’s Near Eastern war machine. To compete with the liberation of Belgium, EEF soldiers turned to the rhetoric of a beneficent Empire, freeing the Holy Land from Ottoman misrule. Investing their martial actions with historical continuity and meaning, soldiers could describe their campaign as a modern crusade, following in the footsteps of medieval knights and antiquity’s conquerors.

Throughout the 1920s, EEF soldiers were anything but silent about their wartime role and their absence from Britain’s postwar national narrative. To suggest that the arrival of war books did not occur until the late 1920s, as Hynes and Kingsley Kent have done, ignores a vibrant and active period of soldier writing. Furthermore, adherence to such a timeline only acts to reinforce the exclusion of non-canonical texts and writings outside the disillusioned school of war poets. By understanding the extent to which the Egypt and Palestine campaign had entered Britain’s cultural memory of the war, we can more effectively place the writings of the EEF as part of the interwar debate on wartime service and national belonging. We must also recognize that British soldiers in Egypt and Palestine, while

greater in number than the expeditionary forces in Salonika and Mesopotamia, were part of a larger network of aggrieved ex-servicemen, desperate to belong to the national mythology of World War I. As we have seen, the retrospective formation of Britain's wartime role was often a process centred on exclusion rather than inclusion. In order to truly understand World War I and its effect on British soldiers, on a generation of men, and women, who fought the world's first industrialized war, their stories must be included in any attempt to dissect and understand the war's social and cultural impact.

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### Endnotes:

- 1 Bluett began the war with 'A' Battery and finished it as part of the Egypt Camel Transport Corps. Antony Bluett, *With Our Army in Palestine* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1919), 144-5.
- 2 Nicoletta F. Gullace, "*The Blood of Our Sons*": *Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 39. Gullace also suspects that ethno-racial concerns contributed to the seriousness of the war's domestic threat.
- 3 For British circulation patterns, see Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).
- 4 Lynne Hanley, *Writing War: Fiction, Gender, and Memory* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press), 1991; Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 6.
- 5 Janet Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press,

- 2004), 2-10. Sassoon had also fought in Palestine in early 1918. For poetry composed by soldiers in Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, and Egypt and Palestine, see Jill Hamilton, *From Gallipoli To Gaza: The Desert Poets of World War One* (East Roseville: Simon and Schuster, 2003).
- 6 Brian Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007 [2002]), 28-35.
  - 7 Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Pimlico, 1992 [1990]), 423-5.
  - 8 Susan Kingsley Kent, *Aftershocks: Politics and Trauma in Britain, 1918-1931* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 7-8.
  - 9 For Britain's decade of crises, see Philip Williamson, *National Crisis and National Government: British politics, the economy and Empire, 1926-1932* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
  - 10 I have made a conscious decision to focus exclusively on British soldiers and to avoid the inclusion of Empire and Dominion forces. Despite their immense contribution to the physical composition of the EEF, to maintain attention on the Egypt and Palestine campaign's interwar legacy in Britain, it was necessary to restrict my source-base. For a thorough study of the Australian Light Horse in the First World War, see Lindsay Baly, *Horseman, Pass by: The Australian Light Horse in World War 1* (London: The History Press, 2004). For cross-cultural interactions between Australians and Egyptians, see Suzanne Brugger, *Australians in Egypt, 1914-1919* (Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1980). The best examination dedicated to New Zealand's participation in the Egypt and Palestine campaign remains the official history. Charles Guy Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine* (Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1922).
  - 11 Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Ch.3 'From spectatorship to participation; From volunteering to compulsion 1914-1916'. Gregory uses this term in reference to the motivational factors that led to enlistment.
  - 12 Kingsley Kent, *Aftershocks*, 8.
  - 13 For a Canadian example of the interplay between inaction and popular identity from the Second World War, see Daniel G. Dancocks, *The D-Day Dodgers: The Canadians in Italy, 1943-1945* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 16-18.
  - 14 Over thirty postwar recollections and memoirs exist from EEF soldiers, ranging in composition from 1918 to the early 1930s.
  - 15 Brock Millman, *Pessimism and British War Policy 1916-1918* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 124. Millman asserts that the ideological impetus for the eastward shift of British war policy was the result of pessimistic

- policy makers. Convinced that the war would extend into the early 1920s and inevitably conclude with a compromise peace, British war policy sought to maintain military parity on the Western front and advance an offensive in the east. The acquisition of eastern territories would provide Britain with bargaining chips at the peace table. See Ch.7 'Strategic Revision' and Ch.8. 'The Drift East: January – November 1918'. David French has advanced a different hypothesis. In reviewing British strategy and war aims, French has concluded that the push eastwards was made for imperial gain. David French, *British Strategy and War Aims, 1914-1916* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986), 82.
- 16 Matthew Hughes, *Allenby and British Strategy in the Middle East 1917-1919* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), Ch. 2 'British Strategy and the Palestine Campaign in 1917'.
  - 17 "The Decisive Front," *The Times*, 8 January 1917, 9.
  - 18 "The Maximum Effort," *The Times*, 16 February 1917, 5.
  - 19 "The Victory in Palestine," *The Times*, 21 September 1918, 7.
  - 20 The War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire During the Great War, 1914-1920* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1922), 248.
  - 21 "Total British Casualties," *Manchester Guardian*, 29 January 1916, 6; "British Losses," *The Times*, 29 January 1916, 9.
  - 22 War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort*, 240-5.
  - 23 Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male. Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion, 1996); War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort*, 240.
  - 24 Of the 260 articles or significant references made to the Egypt and Palestine Campaign, approximately 17-19 focused on the capture of Jerusalem. Excluded are any references and articles made to the British campaign against the Senussi in western Egypt. *The Times*, while an élite newspaper with a smaller circulation than British Sunday papers and dailies, gave greater attention to Empire issues and as such, may have been predisposed to covering the Egypt and Palestine campaign with greater frequency. See Adrian Bingham, *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press 1918-1978* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
  - 25 "Letters from the Front – Awaiting the Turkish – A Night Search for Snipers," *The Times*, 11 February 1915, 6.
  - 26 L. Richmond Wheeler, "Somewhere East of Suez," in *Desert Musings: Verse* (London: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1919), 15.
  - 27 Edward C. Woodfin, *Camp and Combat on the Sinai and Palestine Front: The Experience of the British Empire Soldier, 1916-18* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 9-11.
  - 28 W.T. Massey, *The Desert Campaigns* (London: G.P. Putnam's Sons,

- 1918), vi, 23-4; Woodfin, *Camp and Combat*, 9-11.
- 29 W.T. Massey, *How Jerusalem Was Won: Being the Record of Allenby's Campaign in Palestine* (London: Constable, 1919), v, 2.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 233.
- 31 For group identities and the importance of regimental loyalty, see Denis Winter, *Death's Men: Soldiers of the Great War* (London: Allen Lane, 1978), 51-61.
- 32 Frank Fox, *The History of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry 1898-1922: The Great Cavalry Campaign in Palestine* (London: Philip Allan, 1923), 108.
- 33 As attendance improved in New York and Thomas shifted production to Madison Square Garden. *With Allenby in Palestine* shared its new home with the Barnum and Bailey Circus, enhancing the performance's "Oriental atmosphere." Joel Hodson, "Lowell Thomas, T.E. Lawrence, and the Creation of a Legend," *American History* 35 (2000): 46-7.
- 34 Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British adventure, empire and the imagining of masculinities*. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 168. See also Andrew Rutherford, *The Literature of War: Five Studies in Heroic Virtue* (London: Macmillan, 1978).
- 35 "With Allenby in Palestine," *The Observer*, 17 August 1919, 5.
- 36 "With Allenby in Palestine – Mr. Lowell Thomas's Next Migration," *The Times*, 6 December 1919, 12.
- 37 "Life and Letters – Another of the Race," *The Nation*, 20 September 1919, 728-9.
- 38 Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, Meinertzhagen diary, 10 December 1917; 17 December 1917.
- 39 Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 49; Alexander Watson, *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), 37-9.
- 40 Ilana Bet-El, *Conscripts: Lost Legions of the Great War* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 133.
- 41 Imperial War Museum (hereafter IWM), P.A. Bainbridge, no. 10771 P405, Letter to Robert, 31 January 1918.
- 42 IWM, W.S. Scott, Ms. diary., no. 99/12/1, 23-6 March 1916; 4 April 1917.
- 43 IWM, CS Wink, no. 85/4/1, Letter to Mrs Whiffen, 28 December 1917.
- 44 IWM, G Good, no. 07/83/1, Letter to unknown, 11 May 1918; 29 May 1918.
- 45 Bernard Blaser, *Kilts Across the Jordan: Being Experiences and Impressions with the Second Battalion "London Scottish" in Palestine* (London: H.F.G. Witherby, 1926), 219.

- 46 IWM, Chris Fautley, no. 02/16/1, Letter to Em, 24 March 1918.
- 47 O.H. Best, Ms. Transcript, no. 87/56/1, Letter to Mother, 13 May 1918.
- 48 Roper, *The Secret Battle*, 93; Winter, *Death's Men*, 164. The sending of parcels reached a high point on Christmas 1916, when over four and a half million care packages were dispatched to the soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force in France and other fronts. See also
- 49 IWM, Randolf Baker, no. 85/39/1, Letter to Mother, 5 May 1916.
- 50 IWM, Fautley, no. 02/16/1, Letter to Em, 5 April 1918; 3 March 1918.
- 51 IWM, E.B. Hinde, no. Con Shelf 11178, Ms. diary, 23 August 1916.
- 52 IWM, D.H. Calcutt, no. 78/56/2, Ms. diary, 7 July 1917; 20 March 1917.
- 53 Captain R.E.C. Adams, *The Modern Crusaders* (London: George Routledge and Son, 1920), 12.
- 54 IWM, D.P. Appleby, no. 08/131/1, Ms. diary, 1 January 1918.
- 55 Op. cit., 26 January 1918; IWM, D.F. Heath, Private Papers, no. Documents 10521.
- 56 IWM, C.R. Hennessey, no. 03/31/1, Ts. memoir.
- 57 Axe and Blackwell, *Romford to Beirut*, 100.
- 58 Jay Winter, *Site of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 51, 79-85.
- 59 "New Zealander's War Memorial," *Manchester Guardian*, 25 April 1927, 17; "The War Memorial at Jerusalem," *Manchester Guardian*, 9 May 1927, 10; "British War Graves in Egypt," *The Times*, 21 February 1921, 14.
- 60 David Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada, 1919-1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1998), 95-6.
- 61 Trevor Allen, *The Tracks They Trod: Salonika and the Balkans, Gallipoli, Egypt and Palestine Revisited* (London: Herbert Joseph, 1932), 112.
- 62 Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 97.
- 63 Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2010 [2005]), 13.
- 64 Antony Bluett, *With Our Army in Palestine* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1919), Foreword.
- 65 Ibid., 2.
- 66 R.M.P. Preston, *The Desert Mounted Corps* (London: Constable, 1921), vii.
- 67 Robert H. Goodsall, *Palestine Memories 1917-191-1925* (Canterbury: Cross and Jackman, 1925), 3.
- 68 Ibid., 3.
- 69 Edwin C. Axe and Edwin Blackwell, *Romford to Beirut* (Southcliff: R.W. Humphries, 1926), vii.

- 70 S.F. Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman* (London: Hutchinson, 1930), 13.
- 71 For a wider examination of non-disillusioned British war literature, see Rosa Maria Bracco, *Merchants of Hope: British Middlebrow Writers and the First World War, 1919-1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1993).
- 72 George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 15.
- 73 Coates Ulrichsen argues that the expansion of the campaign in 1915-1916 led to greater governmental intrusion by the British Army and firmer, authoritarian techniques of imperial management. See Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, *The Logistics and Politics of the British Campaigns in the Middle East, 1914-1922* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1-3, Ch.3 'Intensification of Wartime Control, 1917-18'.
- 74 Matthew Hughes, *Allenby and British Strategy in the Middle East 1917-1919* (London: Frank Cass, 1999). See Ch.2 'British Strategy and the Palestine Campaign in 1917.'
- 75 Edward Rowe, *2<sup>nd</sup> County of London (Westminster Dragoons) Yeomanry* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1962), 32.
- 76 Captain Alban F.L. Bacon, *The Wanderings of a Temporary Warrior. A Territorial Officers' Narrative of Service (and Sport) in Three Continents* (London: H.F. and G. Witherby, 1922), 66.
- 77 Goodsall, *Palestine Memories*, 8.
- 78 Coldicott, *London Men in Palestine*, 80.
- 79 George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War* (London: Palgrave, 2002), 35.
- 80 Donald E. Hall, ed., *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- 81 Col. R. Meinertzhagen, *Army Diary 1899-1926* (London: Oliver and Boyd), 219.
- 82 Cyril Falls, *Armageddon 1918: The Final Palestinian Campaign of World War I* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003 [1964]), 4.
- 83 Thompson, *Crusader's Coast*, 4.
- 84 H.O. Lock, *The Conquerors of Palestine Through Forty Centuries* (London: Robert Scott, 1920), 105.
- 85 John Godrich, ed., *Mountains of Moab: The Diary of a Yeoman 1908-1919: Including Gallipoli and Palestine during the Great War* (Privately Published, 2011), 107.
- 86 Bluett, *With Our Army in Palestine*, 44.
- 87 Postwar soldier writings unanimously praised the defensive qualities of the Turkish Army. See Edward J. Erickson, *Ottoman Army Effectiveness in World War I: A Comparative Study* (London: Routledge, 2007), Ch. 4 'Third Gaza-Beersheba, 1917' and Ch. 5 'Megiddo, 1918'; Bluett, *With Our Army in Palestine*, 45.
- 88 Bluett, *With Our Army in Palestine*, 45. The notion of the inactive sol-

- dier in Egypt and Palestine, on vacation from the war, comes very close to the concept of 'shirking' on the Western Front. See Tony Ashworth, *Trench Warfare 1914-1918: The Live and Let Live System* (London: Pan Books, 2000 [1980]), Ch.5 'The Response of the Trench Fighter: The Ritualisation of Aggression.'
- 89 Godrich, *Mountains of Moab*, 81.
- 90 Donald McNair, ed., *A Pacifist at War. Military Memoirs of a Conscientious Objector in Palestine 1917-1918* (Much Hadham: Anastasia Press, 2008), 39.
- 91 A. Douglas Thorburn, *Amateur Gunners: The Adventures of an Amateur Soldier in France, Salonica and Palestine in the Royal Field Artillery recording Some of the Exploits of the 2/22<sup>nd</sup> County of London Howitzer Battery R.F.A. on Active Service* (Liverpool: William Potter, 1934), 75.
- 92 Gerald B. Hurst, *With Manchesters in the East* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1918), 90.
- 93 Keith Grieves, ed., *Sussex in the First World War* (Lewes: Sussex Records Society, 2004); Helen B. McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers: The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and John Bourne, "The British Working Man in Arms," in *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced*, ed. Hugh Cecil and Peter H. Liddle (London: Leo Cooper, 1988), 336-52.
- 94 Nathan Wise, "Dig, dig, dig, until you are safe': constructing the Australian trenches on Gallipoli," *First World War Studies* 3, no. 1 (2012): 51-64; Peter Way, "Rebellion of the Regulars: Working Soldiers and the Mutiny of 1763-1764," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2000): 761-92.
- 95 Adams, *The Modern Crusaders*; Major Vivian Gilbert, *The Romance of the Last Crusade: With Allenby to Jerusalem* (New York: D. Appleton, 1923); John More, *With Allenby's Crusaders* (London: Heath Cranton, 1923).
- 96 C.W. Thompson, *Records of the Dorset Yeomanry (Queen's Own) 1914-1919* (Sherborne: P. Bennett, 1921); Blaser, *Kilts Across the Jordan*; Hatton, *The Yarn of a Yeoman*.
- 97 Adams, *The Modern Crusaders*, vii.
- 98 Blaser, *Kilts Across the Jordan*, 11.
- 99 Captain Oliver Teichmann, *The Diary of a Yeomanry M.O. Egypt, Gallipoli, Palestine and Italy* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1921), 12.
- 100 Webster, *The History of the Fifth Battalion*, 164.
- 101 Herbert Read, *A Coat of Many Colours* (London: Routledge, 1956), 25.
- 102 More, *With Allenby's Crusaders*, 57.
- 103 Eitan Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799-1917: Palestine and the Question of Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 254-60.

- 104 James E. Kitchen, “‘Khaki Crusaders’: crusading rhetoric and the British Imperial soldier during the Egypt and Palestine campaigns, 1916-18,” *First World War Studies* 1, no. 2 (2010): 141-60.
- 105 Kitchen notes that the presentation of the campaign as a crusade for the liberation of the Holy Land, littered with “biblical and historic context” went beyond soldier writings, even appearing in *The Deliverance of Jerusalem* (1918) by Ernest Masterman, the General Secretary of the Palestine Exploration Fund. Op. cit., 143-8.
- 106 Peter Mandler, “The Problem with Cultural History,” *Cultural and Social History* 1, no. 1 (2004): 94-117. Mandler writes that “The best cultural history can bring together a sensitivity to the mechanisms of diffusion and reception with a sensitivity to the nuances of the text in order to produce a real social and cultural history of meaning,” 114.
- 107 “John Lane,” *The Times Literary Supplement*, 3 July 1919, 359.
- 108 “List of New Books and Reprints,” *The Times Literary Supplement*, 22 January 1920, 53.
- 109 “A Poet Looks at Palestine,” *The Observer*, 8 September 1929, 4.
- 110 “Edward Arnold,” *Evening Standard* review, as quoted in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 11 December 1919.
- 111 Kitchen, op. cit., 144.
- 112 Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 83-5.
- 113 Blaser, *Kilts Across the Jordan*, 97. Blaser doesn’t specify the source of his imported quotation.
- 114 Gilbert, *The Romance of the Last Crusade*, 239.
- 115 Axe and Blackwell, *Romford to Beirut*, 55.
- 116 Fox, *The History of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry*, xv.
- 117 Captain F.A.M. Webster, *The History of the Fifth Battalion: the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment (T.A.)* (London: Frederick Warne, 1930), 210.
- 118 Coldicott, *London Men in Palestine*, 103.
- 119 Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory. War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914-1940* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 121.
- 120 James Olney, *Metaphors of Self: the meaning of autobiography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 31. The “metaphorizing imagination,” Olney says, is “how we are able to connect elements so that they establish a pattern.” As mentioned in the body, the progress of life writing or autobiography, of which soldier recollections compose a part, cannot operate without the metaphorizing imagination. In fact, if one extrapolates Olney’s argument, the composition of any self-reflexive work is simply the product of the connective-patterns created by the imagination. See also Regina Gagnier, *Subjectivities: A History of Self-Representation in Britain, 1832-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

- 1991).
- 121 Placing war experience within a martial tradition also occurred in the bereavement language of the Western front. Winter, *Site of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 83-5.
- 122 Coldicott, *London Men in Palestine*, 76.
- 123 Gilbert, *The Romance of the Last Crusade*, 1.
- 124 Gregory, *The Last Great War*, 173-4.
- 125 Gullace, “*The Blood of Our Sons*,” Ch.1 ‘The Rape of Belgium and Wartime Imagination’.
- 126 Ibid.
- 127 Bluett, *With Our Army in Palestine*, 64.
- 128 Gilbert, *The Romance of the Last Crusade*, 152.
- 129 Thompson, *Crusader’s Coast*. Thompson’s comparatively late retrospective offering advanced a Luddite critique of the postwar modernization of Mandate Palestine; “I justify this book to myself by saying that it shows what will not be seen again, the Holy Land as it was when the war ended, before progress had laid hands on it...If there can be an Oxford Preservation Trust...why should there not be a Palestine Preservation Trust, in which the most fervid Zionist might see a friend and not a foe to his people’s advancement.,” vii-viii. Coldicott, *London Men in Palestine*, viii.
- 130 Blaser, *Kilts Across the Jordan*, 97-8. John Grainger has seen such language as part of a wider wartime discourse of “Christian duty.” John Grainger, *The Battle for Palestine, 1917* (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2006), 67.
- 131 Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism: Eastern War Through Western Eyes* (London: Hurst, 2009), Ch.2 ‘Rethinking War and Culture’, subsection ‘War and the Exotic’.
- 132 Blaser, *Kilts Across the Jordan*, 97-8.
- 133 Ibid., 98.
- 134 Christopher Hodgkins, *Reforming Empire: Protestant Colonialism and Conscience in British Literature* (London: University of Missouri Press, 2002); Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). Ch.5 subsections ‘Nationality and Progressive Despotism’ and ‘Civilizing Backward Societies: India and Ireland’.
- 135 Cyril Falls, *War Books: An Annotated Bibliography of Books about the Great War* (London: Greenhill Books, 1989 [1930]), xiii.