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THE HEROIC MANAGER

An Assessment of Sir Douglas Haig's Role as a Military Manager on the Western Front

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**THE HEROIC MANAGER:
An Assessment of Sir Douglas Haig's
Role as a Military Manager on the
Western Front**

Anthony John Hinton Vines

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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King's College London

Abstract

Sir Michael Howard has observed that Douglas Haig was a military manager in the mould of Ulysses S. Grant and Dwight D. Eisenhower rather than one of the “Great Captains” of military legend. Unfortunately, Howard did not elaborate. To date, this crucial aspect of Haig’s role on the Western Front has not been explored.

The contention of this thesis is that Haig was an exceptional military manager who pursued the organising principle of unity-of-effort within the BEF on the Western Front to facilitate the defeat of the German Army in concert with the Allies.

In 1909, Haig established unity-of-effort as the first principle of war organization in *FSR-II*.¹ Haig did not define the precept possibly in the belief that it was a commonplace. However, a study to establish the contemporary understanding has revealed that *unity-of-effort* was, and is, the *raison d’être* of all forms of human organization including the military. It was regarded as a tangible and effective principle and not a mere rhetorical gesture or oratorical flourish. Its nature was immutable, and uniquely *coordinative*. Unity-of-effort found expression in its compound character, which had distinct mental, physical and moral components, specific to each organization. The principle was considered to be a normative ideal, and not an absolute standard.

Haig strove to optimise unity-of-effort by developing operational, organizational and administrative doctrine in pursuit of *unity-of-mental-effort*; by inculcating the teachings of doctrine through progressive training methods to achieve *unity-of-physical-effort*; and by promoting the will to fight through sustained morale and discipline to attain *unity-of-moral-effort*. Haig managed the process to attain unity-of-effort through the coordinative function of the General Staff.

¹ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)*, (London: HMSO, 1909).

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Abbreviations

| | |
|------------|---------------------------------------|
| A&Q | Adjutant and Quartermaster |
| AAR | After Action Report |
| AG | Adjutant General |
| AAG | Assistant Adjutant General |
| AP&SS | Army Printing And Stationery Services |
| AQMG | Assistant Quartermaster-General |
| ASC | Army Service Corps |
| BEF | British Expeditionary Force |
| BGGS | Brigadier-General, General Staff |
| BGRA | Brigadier-General, Royal Artillery |
| <i>BOH</i> | British Official History |
| Brig.-Gen. | Brigadier General |
| Capt. | Captain |
| CIGS | Chief of the Imperial General Staff |
| CO | Commanding Officer |
| Col. | Colonel |
| Cpl. | Corporal |
| CHA | Commander, Heavy Artillery |
| CRA | Commander, Royal Artillery |
| CRE | Commander, Royal Engineers |
| CGS | Chief of the General Staff |
| CS | Chief of Staff |
| CSO | Chief Staff Officer |
| CSM | Company Sergeant-Major |
| DAG | Deputy Adjutant General |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| DAAG | Deputy Assistant Adjutant General |
| DA&QMG | Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster-General |
| DAAG&QMG | Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster-General |
| DCGS | Deputy Chief of the General Staff |
| DGT | Director-General of Transportation |
| DHQ | Divisional Headquarters |
| DMT | Director of Military Training |
| DSD | Director of Staff Duties |
| DSO | Distinguished Service Order |
| DWT | Dead Weight Tonnage |
| FM | Field Marshal |
| <i>FSR-I</i> | <i>Field Service Regulations (Operations), 1909</i> |
| <i>FSR-II</i> | <i>Field Service Regulations (Organization & Administration), 1909</i> |
| GHQ | General Headquarters |
| GOC | General Officer Commanding |
| GOCRA | General Officer Commanding, Royal Artillery |
| <i>GQG</i> | <i>Grand Quartier Général</i> |
| GS | General Staff |
| GSO | General Staff Officer |
| IGCav | Inspector General of Cavalry |
| IGC | Inspector General of Communications |
| IGT | Inspector General of Training |
| Lieut.-Gen. | Lieutenant General |
| IT | Inspectorate of Training |
| IWM | Imperial War Museum, London |
| KCL | King's College London |
| LHCMA | Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Maj. | Major |
| Maj.-Gen. | Major General |
| MC | Military Cross |
| MGC | Machine Gun Corps |
| MGGS | Major General, General Staff |
| MGRA | Major General, Royal Artillery |
| MI | Mounted Infantry |
| MLR | Main Line of Resistance |
| MM | Military Medal |
| MT | Motor Transport |
| NAM | National Army Museum, Chelsea |
| NCO | Non-commissioned Officer |
| NLS | National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh |
| OC | Officer Commanding |
| POW | Prisoner of War |
| Pte. | Private |
| QMS | Quarter Master Sergeant |
| RA | Royal Artillery |
| RAF | Royal Air Force |
| RASC | Royal Army Service Corps |
| RE | Royal Engineers |
| RFA | Royal Field Artillery |
| RFC | Royal Flying Corps |
| RGA | Royal Garrison Artillery |
| SDB | Staff Duties Branch at GHQ, France |
| Sgt. | Sergeant |
| S/Maj. | Sergeant Major |

| | |
|--------|----------------------------|
| S/Sgt. | Staff Sergeant |
| SO | Staff Officer |
| TB | Training Branch |
| TC | Tank Corps |
| TF | Territorial Force |
| TNA | The National Archives, Kew |
| VC | Victoria Cross |
| 2/Lt. | Second Lieutenant |

1. Introduction

Sir Douglas Haig is the single most controversial figure, in the most controversial war in British History.² The question is, why is it that Haig remains such an enigma?³ Gary Sheffield provided a simple explanation that ‘can be summed up in one word: casualties’.⁴ This focus feeds directly into a more nuanced rationale from Stephen Heathorn, who was surely right to argue that Haig has become a ‘*lieu de mémoire*’ for the ‘perceived futility and tragedy of the British effort’.⁵ Military historians, with some notable exceptions including John Terraine and Gary Sheffield, have largely been responsible for creating this metonym by bearing down, almost exclusively, on Haig’s character and personality, the impact of his agency particularly on casualties, and questions of leadership. They have failed to lift their gaze in any sustained way to consider his role within the context of ‘a host of structural factors – technological, logistical, political, economic, cultural, [and] demographic’. In particular, fixated by the ‘accretions of meaning attached to Haig’s name’ little attempt has been made to consider Haig’s role in what Michael Howard calls ‘*Total War Mk I*’⁶ Here ‘the entire resources of the state were mobilised to sustain armies in the field whose only formula for victory was attrition, and whose commanders were military managers’. In this scenario, heavy casualties were

² Preface pp. ix, Douglas Haig, *Douglas Haig: War Diaries and Letters, 1914-1918*, ed. G. D. Sheffield and J. M. Bourne (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005).

³ Brian Holden Reid, " Douglas Haig, 1861-1928," *The International History Review* 12, no. 1 (February 1991) p. 150.

⁴ Gary Sheffield, *The Chief: Douglas Haig and the British Army* (London: Aurum Press Limited, 2011) p. 372.

⁵ Stephen Heathorn, *Haig and Kitchener in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013). p. 147.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 148.

inevitable, and victory could only be secured by the most outstanding military manager, rather than the most brilliant “Great Captain” of military legend.⁷

The contention of this thesis is that Haig was a highly competent military manager, with a natural flair for military organization and administration. Moreover, he used his managerial talent and pre-war experience to optimise unity-of-effort in the BEF. By reaching out for this supreme managerial challenge, Haig delivered the *military means* to obtain the *military end* of assisting the Allies to defeat the main German army on the Western Front in 1918.

This thesis will demonstrate that under Haig’s close supervision, the British army was given a doctrine for both operations, and organization and administration in the shape of the *FSR, 1909*.⁸ Furthermore, in respect to the latter, Haig established ‘*unity-of-effort directed with energy and determination towards a definite object*’ as the first principle of military organization.⁹ Unfortunately, he did not define this precept possibly in the belief that it was a commonplace. However, from a study that determined the contemporary understanding, it will be shown that unity-of-effort was considered the *raison d’être* of all forms of human organization including the military. It was thought of as a tangible and effective maxim and not merely a rhetorical gesture or oratorical flourish. Its nature was believed to be immutable and uniquely *coordinative*. Unity-of-effort found expression in its compound character, which had distinct *mental, physical* and *moral* components, specific to each type of organization. It was considered a normative ideal and not an absolute standard.

⁷ Michael Howard, "How Much Can Technology Change Warfare," in *The Revolution in Military Affairs* (Carlisle P.A.: USAWC Strategic Studies Institute, 1994) p. 2.

⁸ *Field Service Regulations, Part I (Operations)*, (London: HMSO, 1909). Henceforth *FSR-I* by date. *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)*. Henceforth *FSR-II* by date.

⁹ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)* p. 22. (Emphasis in original).

Paraphrasing Marshal Foch, Haig gave the BEF a common manner of thought, action and belief.¹⁰ The tactical doctrine set-out in *FSR-I* was adapted and evolved during the war driving *unity-of-mental-effort*. Haig ensured that these principles and best practices were inculcated into his armies through progressive training, thereby building *unity-of-physical-effort*. In turn, by promoting morale underpinned by discipline he engendered *unity-of-moral-effort*, giving his armies the will to fight. Haig may not have been a ‘heroic warrior’ conforming to the popular stereotype associated with Marlborough, Wellington or Nelson, but this thesis will demonstrate that he was a ‘heroic manager’.

Key Research Questions

Arising from the proposition, five overarching research questions frame and inform this thesis:

1. What are the typical representations of Haig in the relevant British military historiography, and to what extent has his role as a military manager been recognised?
2. What was the magnitude of the management challenge that confronted Haig on the Western Front, as judged by the unprecedented increase in the scale, complexity and plasticity of the BEF’s organization?
3. What was Haig’s understanding of the principle of unity-of-effort?
4. How, and to what extent did Haig achieve unity-of-mental-effort, unity-of-physical-effort and unity-of-morale effort within the BEF?
5. What process of management did Haig deploy in pursuit of unity-of-effort in the BEF?

¹⁰ Marshal Ferdinand Foch, *The Principles of War*, trans. Hilaire Belloc (London: Chapman Hall, 1918) p. 7.

Representations of Haig

A study of the historiography has revealed that there were four common representations of Haig: *The Butcher and Bungler*, where both his stupidity and callousness was directly responsible for the careless deaths of his men. *The Donkey*, where a combination of Haig's military incompetence and poor leadership was rewarded by an anachronistic system of patronage that promoted him beyond his ability resulting in heavy British casualties.¹¹ *The Educated Soldier*, where Haig has been cast as the best soldier of his generation, who overcame great and unforeseen external challenges to lead his army to eventual victory, albeit at a high human cost. Lastly, *The Master of the Field*, where he was depicted as the supreme commander without flaw. Since the war, Haig has not been represented as a military manager in any sustained way by historians.

Haig's historiography is vast. Countless books, articles, and newspaper reports have been written about Britain's engagement on the Western Front. Inevitably these works examine Haig's role as a stereo-typical top field commander. Added to this body are films, television and radio programmes, and even theatre productions. It has not proved practical to review all of these works. However, a sufficiently thorough examination has been made to identify and assess the typical representations of Haig. Only those works with something new or important to contribute have been included in this review. Due to limits of time and space, even within this select group, this study is not exhaustive. Although each of the four representations appear to draw sharp distinctions of Haig, the selected works show wide latitude. Overlap is common, the strength of opinion differs within depictions, and authors are not always consistent in their portrayal of Haig either within specific works or over time.

¹¹ Martin Stephen, *The Price of Pity* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996) p. 57.

The Butcher and Bungler

THE GENERAL

Good-morning; good-morning!' the General said
When we met him last week on our way to the line
Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead
And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine
'He's a cheery old card,' grunted Harry to Jack
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack
But he did for them both by his plan of attack.

Siegfried Sassoon, June 1918.¹²

Sassoon's depiction of the unnamed General, paradoxically published just before the German army was crushed by Haig and Foch, is the poetic centrepiece of the butcher and bungler caricature.¹³ It has promoted the unvarnished myth that 'a generation of young men, their heads full of high abstractions like Honour, Glory, and England went off to war to make the world a safer place for democracy. They were slaughtered in stupid battles planned by stupid generals'.¹⁴

Following the war, Lloyd George gave this representation its impetus and political legitimacy when he mounted a 'sustained and embittered attack on all the soldiers except Foch', focusing his ire on Haig.¹⁵ In the foreword to his abridged *War Memoirs*, the former Prime Minister made his position plain:

I aim to tell the naked truth about the war as I saw it from the conning-tower at Downing Street. I saw how the incredible heroism of the common man was being squandered to repair the incompetence of the trained inexperts (for they were actually trained not to be experts in mastering the actualities of modern warfare) in the production of equipment, in

¹² Siegfried Sassoon, *Counter Attack and Other Poems* (London: William Heinemann, 1918) p. 26.

¹³ The unnamed General is believed to be either Generals Gough or Haking.

¹⁴ Samuel Haynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Bodley Head, 1990) p. x.

¹⁵ H.M. Stannard, "Mr. Lloyd George and the Soldiers", *TLS* 26/09/1936. p. 755.

transport, in tackling the submarine menace, in the narrow, selfish and unimaginative strategy and in the ghastly butchery of a succession of vain and insane offensives. The last great struggle revealed not only the horrid and squalid aspects of war but its muddles; its futilities; its chanciness; its precariousness; its wastefulness of the lives, the treasure and the virtues of mankind.¹⁶

The Passchendaele chapters of the *War Memoirs* ‘probably did as much as any single source to stigmatise indelibly in popular memory the role of the military elite in the war’.¹⁷

With the aim of avoiding any responsibility for British casualties on the Western Front, Lloyd George attempted to salvage his reputation by savaging Haig’s. He characterised Haig as being ‘abnormally stubborn’, ‘incapable of changing plans’, ‘failing to grasp the military situation’, of being wilfully deceitful and wasting his own fighting men and reserves at the rate of five to three of the enemy.¹⁸ Lloyd George vilified Haig as having a ‘ridiculous cavalry obsession’, described him as a ‘second rate commander’, lacking the qualities of a Generalissimo. He criticised him for his lamentable choice of associates, accused him of under-handed intrigues, and blamed him for the disaster in March 1918.¹⁹ Finally, Lloyd George was reported to have said, Haig was ‘brilliant to the top of his army boots’.²⁰ Despite this apparent shortcoming, after resorting to ‘deviousness on a magisterial scale’, the former Prime

¹⁶ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*, II vols, (London: Oldhams Press Limited, 1938). New Foreword, pp. v-vi.

¹⁷ George W. Egerton, "The Lloyd George War Memoirs: A Study in the Politics of Memory" *The Journal of Modern History* 60, no. 1 (March 1988) p. 90.

¹⁸ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (1917)*, VI vols, vol. IV (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1934) pp. 508-509;531; 595;383-384;527.

¹⁹ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (1918)*, VI vols, vol. VI (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1937). Index. pp. 401.

²⁰ J. H. Boraston, ed., *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches : (December 1915-April 1919)*. Foreword by John Terraine. (London: Dent, 1979) p. vi.

Minister did not have the courage to sack Haig, which potentially would have consolidated his strategic control over the BEF in France.²¹

Following World War II, the butcher and bungler caricature, largely framed by Lloyd George, gained fresh momentum from military historians. In 1963, A.J.P. Taylor, wrote a typically pithy description of the Somme offensive that observed: 'brave helpless soldiers; blundering obstinate generals; nothing achieved'.²² Elaborating further he angrily asserted:

Third Ypres was the blindest slaughter of a blind war. Haig bore the greatest responsibility. Some of the Flanders mud sticks also to Lloyd George, the man who lacked the supreme authority to forbid the battle.²³

Other historians followed in Taylor's wake, most notably John Laffin and Denis Winter. The title of Laffin's book *British Butchers and Bunglers of World War One* was brutally uncompromising. He rationalised:

I have concluded that some British generals were bunglers and butchers. The two went together because, under the conditions of warfare, butchery was the result of bungling. I am referring not to the butchery of enemy soldiers – this is the legitimate if deplorable business of war – but to the wholesale slaughter of British and Empire troops.²⁴

Haig and other British Generals must be indicted not for incomprehension but for wilful blunders and wicked butchery. However stupid they might have been, however much they were the product of the system which obstructed

²¹ Keith Grieves, "Haig and the Government, 1916-1918," in *Haig: A Reappraisal 70 Years On*, ed. Brian Bond and Nigel Cave (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1999) p. 111.

²² A.J.P. Taylor, *The First World War: An Illustrated History* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963) p. 105.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 148.

²⁴ John Laffin, *British Butchers and Bunglers of World War One* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, 1992) p. 6.

enterprise, they knew what they were doing. There can never be forgiveness.²⁵

As Brian Bond observed, Laffin was ‘almost apoplectic’ in his attack on Haig and British generalship, ‘repeatedly’ charging him with ‘criminal negligence’.²⁶

Laffin found support for his thesis from Denis Winter, author of *Haig's Command; A Reassessment*. Winter asserted that ‘British generals [were] an uninspiring collection; [and] Douglas Haig was the most uninspiring – and disastrous – of the lot’.²⁷ According to him, Haig ‘looked on at Mons, walked away at Le Cateau and panicked at Landrecies.’²⁸ Neuve Chapelle was a ‘fiasco’ where Haig had deployed ‘48 battalions [as] useless cannon-fodder.’²⁹ At Loos, Haig blundered; the Germans ceased firing after being nauseated by the sight of ‘the field of [British] corpses’.³⁰ Winter further asserted that the French were not severely weakened at Verdun. He insisted Haig’s defence that the Somme had been imposed on him was ‘complete poppycock’.³¹ He speculated that the ‘fatal results on 1 July [1916]’ of the British forces under Haig’s command were caused by an ‘utter lack of concern with [artillery] accuracy’.³² Winter claimed that the instructions issued by Haig ‘on the eve of the Somme...would kill thousands in July’.³³ For Winter, Third Ypres was the ‘culmination of horror’, comparing Haig’s deficiencies ‘with ‘Marshal de Saxe’s mules, which campaigned often and learned little’.³⁴ According to him the net result of the Passchendaele campaign was that the British army suffered approximately a

²⁵ Ibid. p. 168.

²⁶ Brian Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp. 78-79.

²⁷ Michael Dockrill, " Haig's Command. A Reassessment," *The English Historical Review* 109, no. 432 (June 1994) p. 789.

²⁸ Denis Winter, *Haig's Command: A Reassessment* (London: Viking, 1991) p. 36.

²⁹ Ibid. p. 38.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 41.

³¹ Ibid. p. 50.

³² Ibid. pp. 60.

³³ Ibid. p. 61.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 157.

third more casualties than the enemy.³⁵ In 11 pages, Winter gave the victorious Hundred Days campaign short-shrift. In so doing he had Foch making the decision to end the war in 1918; Haig ‘sabotaging Foch’s battle’ at Amiens’,³⁶ Haig ‘attack[ing] as little as he could, with as little force as he could get away with, and as much complaint as possible’. Winter concluded that ‘since March 1918, Haig had merely been the tea boy to Foch’s managing director’. Thus, despite Haig’s ‘mulishness or bloody-mindedness’, Foch won the war for the Allies.³⁷

Upon examination the evidence base of these writers has proved to be very slight indeed. Sassoon and other literary writers, who in the main were junior officers and men, reflected on their narrow personal experiences without attempting to address some of the intractable problems of the war. ‘Could the war have been stopped? Were the endless offensives necessary?’ Sassoon, Graves, Aldington, and Maddox Ford had little to say on these matters.³⁸ Lloyd George rarely cited his sources. In his criticism of Haig there is no traceable evidence for his assertions. Notwithstanding Taylor’s celebrity as an eminent historian, he too provided little tangible evidence to support his arguments. Basically he synthesised Lloyd George’s memoirs and those of others, and neglected archival research. This approach led Taylor to make the serious accusation that on March 26th 1918 Haig was going to ‘surrender in open field’.³⁹ Perhaps, in keeping with some of his picture captions, he intended this wild and unsubstantiated assertion to be a joke. John Laffin also shied away from attending the archives and his citations lacked any semblance of illumination. The only evidence he offered to support his arguments was the empty

³⁵ Ibid. p. 111.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 199.

³⁷ Ibid. pp. 209-210.

³⁸ Correlli Barnett, "A Military Historian's View of the Great War," in *Essays by Divers Hands*, ed. Mary Stocks (London: Oxford University Press, 1970) p. 15.

³⁹ A.J.P. Taylor, *The First World War: An Illustrated History* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963) p. 167.

and self satisfied claim that 'I have studied millions of words in memoirs, official histories and dispatches concerning the war'.⁴⁰

By contrast, Winter did cite his sources. After consulting the National Archives in Britain, Canberra, Ottawa and Washington, he concluded that the British records including Haig's personal wartime diaries were falsified on a 'considerable scale'.⁴¹

Michael Dockrill persuasively dismissed this assertion:

[Winter] alleges...an elaborate cover-up by successive British governments down to 1940. One wonders what conceivably could have motivated successive Prime Ministers such as David Lloyd George, Ramsay Macdonald and Neville Chamberlain to help sustain the myth of Haig's omnipotence? Nor are Winter's various explanations for this conspiracy convincing.⁴²

Winter challenged Haig's account of his command during the war by comparing and contrasting the generally accepted record with his newly found evidence. In doing so, Winter was highly selective in the use of Haig's diary and papers. He also went well beyond the evidence where necessary and made frequent assertions and allegations to build his arguments without citing his sources. As Dockrill observed, this is where 'one begins to lose one's confidence in the author's judgement'.⁴³ John Ferris agreed, commenting that Winter's conclusions were 'demonstrable nonsense'.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Laffin, *British Butchers and Bunglers of World War One*. p. 5.

⁴¹ Winter, *Haig's Command: A Reassessment*. p. 3.

⁴² Dockrill, "Haig's Command: A Reassessment" *The English Historical Review* (1994) p.789.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 789.

⁴⁴ John Ferris, "Haig's Command: A Reassessment" *The Journal of Military History* (1992) p. 512.

As is evident, Haig's representation as the butcher and bungler has largely been discredited by revisionist military historians.⁴⁵ However, it is this caricature that still grips the public's imagination mesmerised by casualties and exploited feverishly by the media. On November 6th 1998, coinciding with Remembrance Day, *The Daily Express* fuelled popular public sentiment by shamelessly subverting the truth when using its front page to declare:

*Eighty years after Armistice Day we ask if Earl Haig, the man who led a million men to their deaths, should still be overlooking Whitehall.*⁴⁶

In 2011, Mark Bostridge writing in the *New Statesman* alleged that 'Haig is etched on the popular imagination as the most villainous of generals of the First World War'.⁴⁷ In the same year, Nigel Jones in the *Telegraph* ranked Haig as 'arguably the most reviled man in British history'.⁴⁸ In the *TLS* Brian Bond rightly cautioned, 'Douglas Haig is one of those historical characters whose name can unleash paroxysms of unreason'.⁴⁹

The Donkey

Ludendorff: "The English fight like lions".

Hoffman: "True. But don't we know that they are lions led by donkeys".

FALKENHAYN: *Memoirs*⁵⁰

Published in 1961, Alan Clark's work *The Donkeys* cemented the 'bloody fools' representation of Haig's generalship and gave the school its epigraph.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Brian Bond, "Mud Blood and Poppycock (Gordon Corrigan)," *The Times Literary Supplement*, 22 August 2003.

⁴⁶ "Why do we let this man cast a shadow over our war dead?," *Daily Express*, 6th November 1998. (Emphasis in original).

⁴⁷ Mark Bostridge, "The Chief: Douglas Haig and the British Army by Gary Sheffield," *New Statesman* 24/08/2011.

⁴⁸ Nigel Jones, "The Chief: Douglas Haig and the British Army," *The Daily Telegraph* 11/08/2011.

⁴⁹ Brian Bond, "Douglas Haig: War Diaries and Letters (Gary Sheffield and John Bourne)," *The Sunday Times*, 16th September 2005.

⁵⁰ Alan Clark, *The Donkeys* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1961). Frontispiece.

Nonetheless, Michael Howard was right to observe that Clark's work was 'entertainment and not history'.⁵²

While the butchers and bunglers school charged Haig with murder, colleagues in the donkeys school dammed him on virtually the same grounds, albeit with the lesser charge of corporate manslaughter. The central proposition of the donkeys school was that constrained by internal factors including deficiencies in intellect, personality, and the doctrine and personalised structure of the pre-war officer corps, Haig, the donkey-in-chief, was grossly inept and failed to adapt to the conditions of mass industrialised warfare. This led him to engage in overly ambitious and extended offensives at Loos, on the Somme and at Passchendaele resulting in high British casualties that were disproportionate to the lower losses of the enemy.

The donkeys school drew its membership from a broad church. Following Haig's death in 1928, and in the light of Lloyd George's *Memoirs*, senior soldiers became emboldened, finding their own public voice. Perhaps the most of influential of these men, 'who dominated the inter-war scene' were the two celebrated military thinkers Maj.-Gen. J.F.C. Fuller and Capt. B.H. Liddell Hart.⁵³ Fuller in his study *Generalship: Its Diseases and their Cure* was highly critical of top-ranking British generals on the Western Front as a class, although he did not single out Haig for special treatment. Fuller indicted these leaders on the basis of old age. Leaning on Napoleon for support, he declared that 'no general of over forty-five years of age should be allotted an active command in the field'.⁵⁴ Fuller argued that advanced age deprived generalship of its powers of command in the physical, mental and moral

⁵¹ Keith Simpson, "The Reputation of Sir Douglas Haig," in *The First World War and British Military History*, ed. Brian Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) p. 153.

⁵² Cited from Dan Todman, *The Great War, Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005) pp. 101.

⁵³ Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History*. p. 45.

⁵⁴ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and their Cure - A Study of the Personal Factor in Command*, First ed. (London: Faber And Faber Limited, 1933) p. 70.

spheres. Fuller's criticism was challenged by Brig.-Gen J.E. Edmonds who observed that 'the volume is a hasty and unconvincing piece of writing. General Fuller has not put his finger on the disease, although he is probably right in thinking there is one'.⁵⁵

By contrast, Liddell Hart, while convalescing from wounds received on the Somme in July 1916, wrote a 'fulsome eulogy of the British high command and staff'.⁵⁶ However, in the early 1930's he was appointed by Lloyd George to act as military adviser for his *Memoirs*. He was not only flattered by this engagement but became sympathetic to his paymaster's ideas.⁵⁷ Consequently, he vented his spleen on Haig. According to John Mearsheimer, Liddell Hart confided to his diary his reversed opinion of Haig:

He was a man of supreme egoism and utter lack of scruple – who, to his overweening ambition sacrificed thousands of men. A man who betrayed even his most devoted assistants as well as the Government which he served. A man who gained his ends by trickery of a kind that was not merely immoral but criminal.⁵⁸

By this time Liddell Hart had convinced himself that during the war the military leadership had been grossly incompetent. His overriding concern was that as many of these officers had remained in-post after the war, they would repeat the same mistakes in any future continental conflict. Thus, according to Liddell Hart's lights, 'every piece of evidence pointing to misconduct in the Great War served to condemn the interwar leaders' in the eyes of his primary political audience.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Brig.-Gen. J.E. Edmonds, "Generalship. Its Diseases and their Cure by Maj.-Gen. J.F.C. Fuller," *TLS*, 23 February 1933. p. 117.

⁵⁶ Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History*. p. 45.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 58.

⁵⁸ John Mearsheimer, *Liddle Hart and the Weight of History* (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1988) p. 60.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 54.

Following a quiet Second World War, the donkeys school rediscovered itself in the ‘turbulent decade’ of the 1960s revitalising and rebuilding its membership.⁶⁰ In 1959, Leon Wolff’s poignant study of Passchendaele *In Flanders Field* was published.⁶¹ With ‘its highly developed dramatic sense’ the book was ‘a prototype and a portent’ of the works to come.⁶² In 1961, the writer Charles Chilton encouraged the donkeys school with pure entertainment. His radio production of *The Long, Long Trail*, a satirical BBC musical parodying Haig’s generalship was well received.⁶³ This work formed the basis of Joan Littlewoods’s ‘most memorable’ Theatre Workshop play *Oh! What a Lovely War*.⁶⁴ In 1969, Richard Attenborough directed a film version of this production with what appeared to be the support of the entire British acting profession. In 1989, John Lloyd presented his iconic and hugely popular BBC Television series *Blackadder Goes Forth*. This production recruited a new generation of supporters to the donkeys school. On average, 11.7 million viewers watched the six episodes.⁶⁵ These enterprises were ‘arguably the most important then and since’ in sustaining the donkeys myth.⁶⁶

In 1983, now Professor Gerard De Groot produced an in-depth study of Haig’s early life up to 1914. Following exhaustive and painstaking research, De Groot concluded that ‘the Boer War was the terminus of Haig’s development as a soldier; his strategical and tactical beliefs underwent no significant change after 1902’.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History*, p. 51.

⁶¹ Leon Wolff, *In Flanders Fields - The 1917 Campaign* (New York: Viking Press, 1958).

⁶² Alex Danchev, "Bunking and Debunking: The Controversies of the 1960s," in *The First World War and British Military History*, ed. Brian Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) p. 265.

⁶³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-15691707> (02/12/2015).

⁶⁴ Danchev, "Bunking and Debunking: The Controversies of the 1960s." p. 264.

⁶⁵ Emma Hanna, *The Great War on the Small Screen* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009) p. 31, note 40, citing source BBC Written Archives Centre, 10/12/2008).

⁶⁶ Danchev, "Bunking and Debunking: The Controversies of the 1960s." p. 264.

⁶⁷ Gerard J. DeGroot, "The Pre-War Life and Military Career of Douglas Haig" (Edinburgh, 1983) p. 2.

Support for De Groot's thesis can be found in *The Killing Ground* written by Tim Travers who was one of Haig's most formidable critics. In his influential study, Travers delivered a well-argued case against the pre-1914 GS where he singled out Haig for particular criticism.⁶⁸ His central theme was that the GS, nominally the 'brain of the army', placed an 'overwhelming emphasis on human solutions to modern firepower' in preference to corresponding technological solutions. In evidence he offered the *FSR* which he says Haig 'was responsible for writing'.⁶⁹ At this point Travers invoked the work of Thomas Kuhn who popularised the idea of the 'paradigm shift' to explain scientific discovery as a complex development extended both in time and space, rather than a simple unitary event favoured by historians.⁷⁰ Kuhn's conceptualisation was also helpful to Travers because it fed into the highly charged Military Revolution debate initiated by Michael Roberts in the mid-1950s.⁷¹ Travers depicted what he disparagingly asserts was Haig's qualitative 'Napoleonic' paradigm of warfare as the 'psychological battlefield', in juxtaposition to the Western Front reality, which conformed to what he called the modern quantitative paradigm of the 'technological battlefield'.⁷² Travers concluded a lengthy argument by observing that 'by far the greatest problem was the way in which the late nineteenth-century paradigm failed to come to grips with the twentieth-century

⁶⁸ Edward M. Spiers, "The Killing Ground," *The English Historical Review* 105, no. 416 (July 1990). Robert H. Larsen, "The Killing Ground by Tim Travers," *The North American Conference on British Studies* 20, no. 2 (Summer, 1988).

⁶⁹ Tim Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987) pp. 48-49.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. xix, 78. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962) pp. 10-11.

⁷¹ Clifford J. Rogers, "Military Revolution in History and Historiography," in *The Military Revolution Debate* (Boulder: Westview Press Inc., 1995) p. 2.

⁷² Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918*. p. 77, 96.

paradigm' that embraced the 'technical firepower reality'.⁷³ Consequently, on the Western Front, the needless sacrifice of British troops ensued.⁷⁴

Travers largely blamed Haig for this failure. He argued that 'Haig's personality and understanding of the role of Commander-in-Chief, learned at the Staff College, were so structured as to make change, innovation and suggestions difficult'. He further asserted that the 'crux of Haig's problem' was having 'given his allegiance to the late nineteenth century concept of war...he could not, and never did, transfer his allegiance fully to a twentieth-century image of war'.⁷⁵ Even 'more damaging' was Haig's 'aloof and inner directed personality' which isolated 'Haig and GHQ from the rest of the BEF' resulting in 'group think conformity'; this time invoking a theory promoted by Irving Janis.⁷⁶ According to Travers, the unfortunate combination of these factors created 'a paralysis' or 'a command vacuum' at the top of the BEF that 'prevented change, innovation and rational planning'. This situation 'led to changes in tactics, and ideas and training filtering upwards and sideways to avoid GHQ, rather than downwards from GHQ'.⁷⁷

Travers's depiction of late nineteenth century and twentieth century battlefields as psychological and technological respectively, and his suggestion that a paradigm shift occurred from one to the other, is at least questionable. In respect to the psychological battlefield he appears to conflate the nature of war, with the conduct of warfare on the battlefield. Clausewitz posited 'the condition of the mind has always

⁷³ Ibid. p. 97.

⁷⁴ *How The War Was Won: Command and Technology in the British Army on the Western Front, 1917-1918* (London: Routledge, 1992) pp. 180-181.

⁷⁵ *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918*. p. 89-90.

⁷⁶ Irving Janis (1918-1990) was a research psychologist at Yale University and Professor Emeritus at the University of California. He developed "groupthink" theory which suggests that when making collective decisions, groups make systematic errors.

⁷⁷ Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918*. pp. 107; 111.

the most decisive influence on the forces employed in war'.⁷⁸ By this reckoning, arguably all warfare regardless of time and space was ultimately psychological, and not strictly a late nineteenth century phenomena. Indeed, the latest British military doctrine posits that 'warfare is a human activity and the moral component exerts a decisive influence both individually and collectively'.⁷⁹ Furthermore, 'all historians do agree, however, that a systemic change in the conduct of war was brought about in the nineteenth century by the technical transformations of the industrial age'.⁸⁰ Thus, it can also be argued that on the late nineteenth century battlefield the conduct of warfare was increasingly technological, and not simply a new phenomenon in the twentieth century. As Jonathan Bailey observed, the paradigm shift that did occur on the Western Front in respect to the character of warfare was associated with the technological transformation. For the first time, this allowed fighting in the third dimension through the deployment of aircraft and the advent of indirect artillery fire. Moreover, Bailey posited that this 'discontinuous increase in military capability' amounted to a 'Military Revolution'.⁸¹ This transformation fitted in with Kuhn's conceptualisation of a paradigm shift.

As for Travers's personal criticism of Haig, contradicting himself, he conceded that Haig was not a luddite. In fact, he claimed that Haig was 'desperate to use [tanks] as a breakthrough weapon just as he had been eager to use gas on September 25th 1915 at Loos'.⁸² He might have also added that as early as June 3rd 1916, Haig

⁷⁸ Clausewitz, *On War (Translated by Colonel J.J. Graham)*, vol. I-III (London: N. Trubner & Co, 1873). Book II On the Theory of War, Chapter 1, p. 43.

⁷⁹ "UK Defence Doctrine (JDP 0-01)," (London: Ministry of Defence, 2014) p. 32.

⁸⁰ Howard, "How Much Can Technology Change Warfare." p. 1.

⁸¹ J.B.A. Bailey, *The First World War and the Birth of the Modern Style of Warfare*, Occasional Paper No 22 (Camberley: Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, 1996) p. 3, and note 1.

⁸² Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918*. p. 73.

had developed a policy for strategic air bombing operations behind enemy lines on behalf of the Air Board in London.⁸³

Travers's claim that Haig's style of leadership was aloof and remote is also not supported by the evidence. As shown in Figure 17, (p.72) in the seven month period January to July 1917, during the prelude to the Third Ypres campaign, Haig held 492 meetings with over 1000 people; he entertained 281 visitors at his HQ on 198 separate occasions. As these figures relate to only those recorded in Haig's war diary, it can be assumed that the actual numbers exceed those indicated. It should also be added that during the latter half of 1917 and in 1918 Haig spent little time at his Montreuil HQ; rather he was based at his advanced headquarters where he was in daily contact with his army, corps and divisional commanders conducting operations.

In the final analysis the obvious truth that cannot be ignored is the BEF's role, led by Haig, in the Allied victory. Travers did not directly address this issue in *The Killing Ground*. Five years later in his next major work, *How The War Was Won*, he corrected this omission by conceding, 'it cannot be denied that Haig's wearing-down strategy finally did wear out the German army...through determination, technology, wearing down, sacrifice, and German strategic and tactical errors, the enemy had finally been conquered'.⁸⁴ In the forlorn hope of salvaging his earlier argument, Travers concluded that 'to a considerable extent the German Army defeated itself through its own offensive from March to July'.⁸⁵ To some, this proposition may have

⁸³ TNA/AIR/978/204/5/1137, "Air Board." O.A.D. 432/5 Policy with regard to bombing operations generally behind enemy's lines. 3rd June, 1916.

⁸⁴ Travers, *How The War Was Won: Command and Technology in the British Army on the Western Front, 1917-1918*. p. 182.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 175.

weight and an element of truth; but as observed by John Terraine, Travers was apt to ‘direct and bend...research to “yield the appropriate lessons”’.⁸⁶

With a few notable exceptions, members of the ‘donkeys school’ often used the same secondary sources. This possibly accounts for the high degree of repetition and overlap in these works. In fairness to the early writers, some primary sources, particularly in the Public Records Office, were not opened until the late 1960s, and full access to Haig’s private papers was restricted until 1961 when the documents were placed by the late Earl Haig in the National Library of Scotland. Of the writers identified here, Fuller relied on his first-hand experience and did not cite his sources. As for Liddell Hart, as T.H. Thomas observed, his work ‘stands out by the dialectical skill with which hostile criticism is presented as a narrative of fact’. Thomas wryly claimed that ‘more than once the author’s text is at odds with the sources listed in his impressive bibliography’.⁸⁷ Leon Wolff relied almost entirely on secondary sources and accessed Haig’s diaries through Robert Blake’s edited work.⁸⁸ As Falls observed, ‘though most evidence is relevant, it is selected to prove a case’.⁸⁹ Alan Clark was cavalier in his use of sources. Richard Holmes investigated the veracity of the alleged conversation between Ludendorff and Hoffmann quoted above. He reported that there is no evidence, ‘not a jot or scintilla’ that it ever took place.⁹⁰ In a typically scathing review of De Groot’s book *Douglas Haig 1861-1928*,⁹¹ Terraine observed that De Groot relied on ‘*a priori* judgements, suppression of contrary evidence, and

⁸⁶ John Terraine, "How the War was Won," *The Journal of Military History* 57, no. 2 (April 1993). p. 336. (Emphasis in original).

⁸⁷ T.H. Thomas, "Real War, 1914-1918 by Basil Liddell Hart," *The American Historical Review* 36, no. 3 (1931) p. 600.

⁸⁸ Robert Blake, *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig, 1914-1919* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1952).

⁸⁹ Cyril Falls, "Third Ypres: Book Review of In Flanders Fields by Leon Wolff," *TLS*, 27th February 1959. p. 115.

⁹⁰ Richard Holmes, *War of Words*, <http://www.rsescotlandfoundation.org.uk/media/resources/pdfs/crf/prize03%5B1%5D.pdf>

⁹¹ Gerard J. DeGroot, *Douglas Haig: 1861-1928* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988).

elimination of context...often with a strong dose of malice added'.⁹² As would be expected, Tim Travers engaged closely with primary sources and his assessment of Haig was supported by the usual scholarly apparatus. Although David Woodward judged that this 'fine book [was] only marred by the author's occasional acceptance as evidence of what amounts to hearsay or gossip in the letters and diaries of senior officers'.⁹³

As David French observed 'since 1945, Haig has passed into popular historical mythology as the archetypal "donkey" who created a lost generation of British manhood by his supposedly insensitive and incompetent handling of his forces on the western front'.⁹⁴ Although this note was written in 1985, and despite the tireless work of later revisionist military historians, in the general public's mind at least this appears to be the abiding impression. A recent Leader article in *The Times* claimed that 'the phrase "lions led by donkeys" has become one of the great clichés of schoolroom history'. The tactical failures of the First World War not only tainted the British GS, but ruined the names of several commanders. Even today, Earl Haig is an undeserving monument to ineptitude'.⁹⁵ In June 2014, the popular military historian Dan Snow received hate mail for attempting publicly to debunk this myth.⁹⁶ Nonetheless, revisionist historians have turned to the mass-media in new attempts to balance the record: Max Hastings wrote a feature length article in *The Sunday Times* cogently arguing that Britain's generals including Haig 'were far from donkeys, the bloodshed was no worse than in other wars and the front-line soldier's lot no more

⁹² John Terraine, "Douglas Haig, 1861-1928," *The Journal of Military History* 54, no. 4 (Oct 1990). p. 511.

⁹³ David R. Woodward, "The Killing Ground," *The American Historical Review* 94, no. 2 (April, 1989) p. 451.

⁹⁴ David French, "Sir Douglas Haig's Reputation: A Note," *The Historical Journal* 28, no. 4 (1985). p. 954.

⁹⁵ <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/leaders/article4333132.ece> (02/12/2015)

⁹⁶ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-one/10931918/Historian-Dan-Snow-received-hate-mail-for-debunking-World-War-I-myths.html> (02/12/2015)

terrible'.⁹⁷ The National Archives has run a series of research-based workshops for budding historians, one of which directly addressed the question of 'lions led by donkeys?'⁹⁸ As was reported in *The Times*, when Michael Gove became the Secretary of State for Education in the Coalition Government, he 'let off a fusillade against "Blackadderisation" of the Great War in schools, and against the prevailing idea that this was a war of "lions led by donkeys"'.⁹⁹ What effect these initiatives have had on popular sentiment, only time will tell.

The Educated Soldier

Alike in personal efficiency and professional credentials, Sir Douglas Haig was the first officer of the British Army. He had obtained every qualification, gained every experience and served in every appointment requisite for General Command. He was a Cavalry Officer of social distinction and independent means, whose whole life had been devoted to military study and practice...It is impossible to assemble around any officer a series of appointments and qualifications in any way comparable with [Haig's].

Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis*, 1927.¹⁰⁰

The representations of Haig discussed so far rely for their potency on 'internal factors' or defects in intellect and personality to account for his perceived disastrous and costly role on the Western Front.¹⁰¹ Norman F. Dixon has provided a fulsome diagnosis of these factors in his influential study *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*.¹⁰² In defence of Haig, the educated soldier school juxtaposed these 'internal factors' against the formidable 'external factors' that he overcame to

⁹⁷ Max Hastings, "Oh, What a Lovely Myth," *The Sunday Times*, May 11 2014. News Review pp. 1-3.

⁹⁸ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/greatwar/g4/> (02/12/2015)

⁹⁹ http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/culture/books/non_fiction/article1380033.ece (02/12/2015)

¹⁰⁰ Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis (1916-1918)*, vol. I (London: Thornton Butterworth Limited, 1927) pp. 31-32.

¹⁰¹ Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918*. p. xvii.

¹⁰² Norman F. Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1984) pp. 374-378.

vanquish the German army from France and Belgium.¹⁰³ These external factors are discussed in-depth in the 14 Western Front volumes of *The Official History of the Great War (1914-1918)* compiled by Brig.-Gen J.E. Edmonds.¹⁰⁴ These tomes, the first of which was published in 1922 and the last in 1947, have had their detractors including Liddell Hart, Winter and Travers. One of their principal objections was that Edmonds appeared determined to protect the reputations of Haig and his most senior commanders. There may be some truth in this sentiment, but following a thorough investigation of how Edmonds personally and professionally approached his task historian Andrew Green concluded:

Edmonds in fact took his historical responsibilities extremely seriously and was determined to publish a true and accurate account of the operations of which he wrote. He was not blindly supportive of Haig and where he did see shortcomings he was prepared to detail these in his official works.¹⁰⁵

It was John Terraine in his refreshing study *Douglas Haig – The Educated Soldier* who first characterised Haig in this way, relying upon external factors for his defence of Haig.¹⁰⁶ Alex Danchev provided a masterly summary of Terraine's thesis:

First, that it was necessary to fight and beat the Germans on the Western Front; second, that this involved a protracted war of attrition to accomplish the 'wearing out' process of the enemy forces which was an essential precondition of a favourable and decisive outcome; third, that in the absence of obliging German offensives the requisite attrition could only be achieved by British ones; fourth, that there was no

¹⁰³ Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918*. p. xviii.

¹⁰⁴ *Military Operations: France and Belgium*, ed. Brig.- Gen. J. E. Edmonds, History of the Great War (London: HMSO, 1922-1947).

¹⁰⁵ Andrew Green, *Writing the Great War: Sir James Edmonds and the Official Histories 1915-1948* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003) p. xii.

¹⁰⁶ John Terraine, *Douglas Haig: The Educated Soldier* (London: Hutchinson & Co Ltd, 1963).

alternative to this strategy, costly as it was, and the exceptional constraints on the tactics it imposed, given the prevailing technical and operational conditions; and last, the strategy was a demonstrable success.¹⁰⁷

Terraine's work has been the subject of criticism from a number of highly respected military historians. For example, Brian Bond has observed that there is a pronounced determinism in Terraine's approach, which he deployed in an attempt to deflect criticism away from the conduct of the war that cost so many lives, towards his Panglossian view that, in the circumstances, Haig achieved the best possible outcome.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, 'in book after book (and in numerous articles) Terraine has reiterated his main points'.¹⁰⁹ In a conciliatory tone, Bond did point out that 'Terraine had his limitations and his blind spots, and it would not be surprising if at times he was driven into dogmatic or more extreme positions in fending off his critics'.¹¹⁰ Fifty years on, Terraine's study is still considered to be Haig's standard biography by military historians of all shades of opinion.¹¹¹

In 1999, John Bourne called for a new study of Haig 'which places him in the context of the much changed landscape of Western Front operational historiography'.¹¹² This call was answered by a series of essays written by leading revisionist military historians and published under the title of *Haig: A Reappraisal 70 Years On*. John Hussey pointed out that Haig 'would not tolerate early Victorian methods', and he had an open mind to technology like aircraft, where he and Trenchard created a doctrine for the RFC, which later paved the way for air

¹⁰⁷ Alex Danchev, "Haig Revisited," *JRUSI* Summer(1990) p. 73.

¹⁰⁸ Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History*. p. 73. See also Danchev, "Haig Revisited." p. 71. Theodore Ropp, "Ordeal of Victory," *The Journal of Modern History* 36, no. 3 (Sept. 1964) pp. 364-365.

¹⁰⁹ Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History*. p. 72.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 72.

¹¹¹ Simpson, "The Reputation of Sir Douglas Haig." p. 152.

¹¹² Brian Bond and Nigel Cave, *Haig: A Reappraisal 70 Years On*, ed. Brian Bond and Nigel Cave (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1999) p. 9.

superiority over the British front.¹¹³ J.P. Harris showed that Haig was able to grapple with other new technologies including the tank. Michael Crawshaw went further and argued that:

In Douglas Haig, the British Army in the Great War was fortunate in finding a leader who, contrary to caricature, possessed an openness of mind to technical innovation and the clarity of vision to concentrate on the applications which offered the best prospects of success.¹¹⁴

Peter Simpkins in a lucid and enlightening chapter on *Haig and the Army Commanders*, concluded that as the war progressed, there was a 'detectable 'learning curve' in the command relationships of Haig's BEF, just as there was in its tactics and techniques'.¹¹⁵ This suggested that Haig was able to put lessons learned into practice; even in the narrow sense of interpersonal relationships. Ten years later, *Haig: A Reappraisal 80 Years On* was published.¹¹⁶ It is telling that editors left the text from the original unchanged. Perhaps this showed support for a statement made by Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson, that 'we need no more books devoted exclusively to Sir Douglas Haig'.¹¹⁷

It is apparent that this advice has not been heeded; three new biographies of Haig have appeared revealing little that is new.¹¹⁸ The latest volume, Gary Sheffield's *The Chief: Douglas Haig and the British Army*, has the distinct merit of placing him

¹¹³ John Hussey, "Portrait of a Commander-in-Chief," in *Haig: A Reappraisal 70 Years On*, ed. Brian Bond and Nigel Cave (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1999) p. 24.

¹¹⁴ Michael Crawshaw, "The Impact of Technology on the BEF and its Commander," in *Haig: A Reappraisal 70 Years On*, ed. Brian Bond and Nigel Cave (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1999) p. 156.

¹¹⁵ Peter Simpkins, "Haig And The Army Commanders," in *Haig: A Reappraisal 70 Years On*, ed. Brian Bond and Nigel Cave (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1999) p. 97.

¹¹⁶ Brian Bond and Nigel Cave, *Haig: A Re-appraisal 80 Years On* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pens & Sword Books Ltd, 2009).

¹¹⁷ J. M. Bourne, "Haig and the Historians," in *Haig: A Reappraisal 70 years On*, ed. Brian Bond and Nigel Cave (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1999) p. 2.

¹¹⁸ Walter Reid, *Architect of Victory: Douglas Haig* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 2006). Gary Meade, *The Good Soldier: The Biography of Douglas Haig* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007). J.P. Harris, *Douglas Haig and the First World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

within the context of his time. This approach showed the development of Haig's standout quality as a professional 'in an officer corps dominated by amateurs'.¹¹⁹ In his assessment of Haig, Sheffield advanced on the same lines as Terraine.¹²⁰ However, Sheffield has not been afraid to serve up criticism where he thought this was due. For example, he wrote 'Haig bears a large share of the responsibility for the disaster of 1 July...and likewise Haig deserve[d] censure for the Battle of Third Ypres in 1917 – not so much for his optimism but for neglecting to curb that of his subordinate, Hubert Gough.'¹²¹ Nonetheless, like Terraine, Sheffield found that in the Hundred Days campaign Haig 'won the greatest series of victories in British military history'.¹²²

As would be expected, Sheffield's use of primary evidence and scholarly apparatus is impeccable, and the same applies to J.P. Harris. The other two authors use secondary sources extensively. Unfortunately, Terraine's methods are open to criticism. As Andy Simpson observed, it is a surprising coincidence that nearly half the books used by Terraine formed the majority of books cited by Alan Clark.¹²³ It is also surprising that his biography of Haig suffers from almost a complete lack of source references that 'vitiate[d] much solid research and a quarter of a century's reading'.¹²⁴ This approach was frustrating for scholars, and provided fertile ground for Terraine's critics.

While the caricature of Haig as the educated soldier has had little impact on popular public opinion, it appears that it is now becoming, partially at least, the

¹¹⁹ Sheffield, *The Chief: Douglas Haig and the British Army*. p. 19.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 372-375.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* pp. 369-370.

¹²² *Ibid.* p. 335.

¹²³ Andrew Simpson, "The Operational Role of British Corps Command on the Western Front, 1914-18" (UCL, 2003) p. 11.

¹²⁴ Ropp, "Ordeal of Victory." p. 356.

settled view of the younger generation of revisionist military historians. Jonathan Boff suggested that Haig did not stand aloof and isolated from the proceedings of the Hundred Days campaign but was an active participant.¹²⁵ Andy Simpson credited Haig with having a 'far better' judgement than Ludendorff in the conservation of manpower in the Summer of 1918.¹²⁶ Paul Harris in his recent ground breaking PhD thesis "*The Men Who Planned The War*" discussed in detail Haig's vital role in the pre-war development of the GS.¹²⁷ He also pointed to the two salient external factors overcome by the staff namely 'the vast expansion of the British army and having to fight a continental war of attrition'. In this context Harris suggested Haig 'supported any efforts to improve Staff expertise'.¹²⁸ Simon Robbins acknowledged that internal factors were contributory factors to the mistakes Haig made in 1915-17 including 'poor operational planning'. However, he argued that these were of secondary importance to the presence of formidable external factors, like 'British inexperience of continental warfare, new technology and tenacious German resistance, [which] provide[d] a much more reliable means of understanding the problems faced by the British Army when apportioning blame for the heavy losses of the war'. Robbins argued that 'by mid-1917 the British had a masterplan for winning the war, which saw a shift from a strategy of annihilation to a strategy of attrition [where] the pattern of Haig's methods of attack in 1917-18...were the model of military excellence for Montgomery's style of warfare in 1942-45'.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Jonathan Boff, "British Third Army, the Application of Modern War, and the Defeat of the German Army, August-November 1918" (King's College, London, 2010) pp. 37,38,41-42,45,55, 64,228.

¹²⁶ Andy Simpson, *The Evolution of Victory: British Battles on the western Front 1914-1918* (London: Tom Donovan, 1995) pp. 141-142.

¹²⁷ Paul Harris, "The Men Who Planned the War: A study of the Staff of the British Army on the Western Front" (King's College, London, 2014). Chapter 1. Origins, Duties and Training.

¹²⁸ Ibid. pp. 281, 168.

¹²⁹ Simon Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18: Defeat into Victory* (London: Frank Cass, 2005) pp. 138-139,141.

The Master of the Field

[Haig had] strategic ability, firm will, strength of character, acceptance of responsibility and political insight...By means of these powers he saved France in 1916 and 1918 and pre-eminently on the historical day, 26th March 1918...He really remained MASTER OF THE FIELD.

German Staff Officer.¹³⁰

According to Edmonds, this epigraph was bestowed on Haig by the ‘foremost of German military societies’, the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wehrpolitik und Wehreissenschaft* in its publication *Heerfuhrer des Weltkriegs*.¹³¹ Arguably this representation of Haig was initiated in 1922 by G.A.B. Dewar and Lieut.-Col J.H. Boraston in their two volume *Sir Douglas Haig’s Command 1915-1918*. As an anonymous American book reviewer observed ‘at times it ceases to be an *apologia* and becomes almost an apotheosis’.¹³² Essentially for this reason, this work was dismissed by British critics including Edmonds.¹³³

In 1929, the first unofficial biography *Field Marshal Earl Haig* appeared. Written by John Charteris, this is an intensely personal study based on the author’s close association with Haig over 20 years. Despite this, contemporary commentators found that Charteris’ book contained ‘few surprises’. Nonetheless, the quality of Haig’s professional judgement revealed by Charteris did prove a revelation to some. The Australian Official Historian, C.E.W. Bean, not generally thought to be one of Haig’s supporters, concluded that ‘if he was slow in his thinking, he was extraordinarily sure. Again and again his judgement, and his alone, proved right.’ For evidence Bean cited the German retirement to the Hindenburg Line in 1917; Haig’s

¹³⁰ Arthur Bryant, "Haig, Master of the Field by Major-General Sir John Davidson," *The Illustrated London News*, 18th April 1953. p. 600.

¹³¹ Brig.-Gen. J. E. Edmonds, "On Haig's Staff," *TLS*, 27th March 1953.

¹³² Anon, "Sir Douglas Haig's Command," *The American Historical Review* 29, no. 1 (1923) p. 143.

¹³³ Brig.-Gen. J. E. Edmonds, "Sir D.Haig's Command," *TLS*, 7th December 1922 p. 790.

prediction that the Germans would overreach themselves in the spring of 1918 and that the Allies would find an opportunity for a decisive blow; and last but not least, Haig alone anticipated the end of hostilities in 1918, while the general consensus was that the war would continue in 1919 and even into 1920.¹³⁴ Of course, Bean could have added several other examples of Haig's sound judgement. For instance, Haig was a lone voice in predicting a long war at the first war conference held at Downing Street on 5th August 1914.¹³⁵ Haig also argued against the imposition of onerous peace terms on Germany because he predicted that this type of settlement would only result in a continuation of war within 20 years.¹³⁶

In 1938, Liddell Hart observed that Duff Copper, the author of the official biography, characterised Haig as a 'soldier without flaw'.¹³⁷ Later, Maj.-Gen. Sir John Davidson's volume *Haig: Master of the Field* elaborated upon this theme:

[Haig] fulfilled his task with tenacity, consummate skill and complete success, in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties, and in spite of the fact that, for a long period, Britain was fighting alone. He met every crisis with careful forethought calculated prevision and sound judgement. He gave his allies all the help he could, to tide them over their difficulties and misfortunes...He conducted the final series of battles to victory with masterly proficiency. The strategy was his strategy, adopted by Foch in preference to his own.¹³⁸

Foch's advocates may have refuted these assertions, and even Haig might have found them too effusive. Nonetheless, Davidson's final assertion was an accurate

¹³⁴ C.E.W. Bean, "Leadership of Earl Haig," *The Australian Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (Sept.1929) p. 135

¹³⁵ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)," (1914-1919). Entry: 05/08/1914.

¹³⁶ Terraine, *Douglas Haig: The Educated Soldier*. pp. 479-480.

¹³⁷ B.H. Liddell Hart, "Lord Haig," *TLS*, 3rd October 1935 p. 601.

¹³⁸ Maj.-Gen. Sir John Davidson, *Haig: Master of the Field* (London: Peter Nevill, 1953) p. 137.

reflection of Haig's state of mind as shown in a letter he wrote to Churchill in 1928, and shortly before his death:

In order to enjoy reading your writings it is not, I find, necessary to agree with *all* the opinions you express. As for the criticisms for what I did or did not do, no one knows as well as I do how far short of the ideal my conduct of the 1st Corps & 1st Army was, as well as of the BEF when C-in-C. But I do take credit for this, that it was due to the decisions which I took in August and Sepr 1918 [sic] that the war ended in Nov...¹³⁹

As for the quality of the evidence base used by these biographers, Duff-Cooper alone had unrestricted access to Haig's papers and his personal wartime diaries that run to over 10,000 pages. Of course, this may lead to the justifiable criticism that Duff-Cooper's work was a portrayal of Haig by Haig. Charteris and Davidson made extensive use of their private papers and documents as the former acknowledged:

Almost all the documents to which I referred during the years 1907-1918 passed through my hands, and are now in the official archives. All the conversations which I reported were either in my own presence, or were related to me by Lord Haig. In the preparation of the book I have used all available published data.¹⁴⁰

While Haig's critics may have vehemently disagreed with the analysis, findings and conclusions of the master of the field school, perhaps the source of the evidence of its members, apart from Duff Cooper, is harder to criticise. Although this provenance has not prevented Denis Winter at least from doing so.

¹³⁹ Robin Prior, *Churchill's World Crisis as History*, First ed. (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1983). p. 262. Note 18: Haig to Churchill 13/3/1927, Churchill Papers 8/211. (Emphasis in original).

¹⁴⁰ Brigadier-General John Charteris, *Field-Marshal Earl Haig* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd, 1929) p. xiv.

The Heroic Manager

In 1920, the American military attaché in London, observed ‘there is probably no more complex and complicated organization in the world than the British Army’.¹⁴¹

Col. Oscar Solbert.

Haig’s representation as a military manager has been alluded to, but the case has not been made. In 1991, Hew Strachan foreshadowed this line of enquiry when he posited that ‘Liddell Hart completely failed to understand that the skills demanded in the leadership of mass armies in an industrialized age were more managerial than heroic’.¹⁴² In 1994, Michael Howard made a similar point when he observed that Haig was a military manager comparable to Dwight D. Eisenhower, Georgi K. Zhukov and Gerd von Rundstedt.¹⁴³ In his chapter on Haig, “Portrait of a Commander Chief,” John Hussey, quoted Wavell and declared the ‘matter of administration is the crux of generalship’. He observed that:

[Haig] was thus the principal director of Britain’s newest and greatest corporate enterprise, comparable in size to the administration of the largest city in the Kingdom (with the sole exception of London), the governance of which was the more delicate since it was based within a jealous and suspicious foreign state. To make the BEF run smoothly as it did is an achievement as remarkable as it is under-praised.¹⁴⁴

In a review of J.P. Harris’s *Douglas Haig and the First World War*, Sheffield made a similar observation:

¹⁴¹ John Gooch, "A Particularly Anglo-Saxon Institution: The British General Staff in the Era of Two World Wars," in *The British General Staff: Reform and Innovation*, ed. David French and Brian Holden Reid (London: Frank Cass, 2002) p. 192.

¹⁴² Hew Strachan, "The Real War: Liddell Hart, Cruttwell, and Falls," in *The First World War and British Military History*, ed. Brian Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) pp. 49-50.

¹⁴³ Howard, "How Much Can Technology Change Warfare." n.p.

¹⁴⁴ Hussey, "Portrait of a Commander-in-Chief." pp. 19-20.

This work has some distinct weaknesses...in particular, Haig's critically important role in transforming the BEF during the course of the war – presiding over and actively participating in developments in logistics, organization, technology, tactics and training – is reduced here to a distinctly minor theme when it deserved to be a major one.¹⁴⁵

Fortunately for this writer, Sheffield did not follow his own advice when writing his later biography of Haig. Thus, although Haig's managerial competence has been referred to in passing, it does not appear that his vital role as military manager on the Western Front has been examined in any sustained way.

Thesis Structure and Content

In pursuit of the research objectives, a thematic approach has been adopted for the structure of this thesis. Chapter 2 evidences the unprecedented management challenge which confronted Haig in 1916 by examining the dynamic scale, complexity and plasticity of the BEF's ultimately epic organization. Chapter 3 reveals the results of a study, drawing upon contemporary sources, that investigates the nature of unity-of-effort and its characteristic component parts from common usage. The outcome of this research has allowed the construction of a definition of the principle based firmly upon the contemporary understanding of the term. Most surely, and at the very least, Haig would have been familiar with the embodiment of this definition. Chapter 4 demonstrates how unity-of-mental-effort, utilising the agency of doctrine, evolved under Haig's leadership to overcome the novel tactical challenges experienced on the Western Front. Chapter 5 examines how this doctrine was inculcated into the BEF through the use of progressive training methods and by an organization instituted by Haig with the aim of achieving unity-of-physical-effort.

¹⁴⁵ Gary Sheffield, "Douglas Haig and the First World War by Paul Harris," *English Historical Review* cxxxv(December 2010) p. 1569.

Chapter 6 shows how Haig strove to achieve unity-of-moral-effort by promoting morale underpinned by discipline within the officer corps and ranks of the BEF. Chapter 7 explores Haig's contribution to the establishment of the GS and the role this body played in building unity-of-effort in the BEF through its coordinative function. Chapter 8 draws the research findings together, pointing in conclusion to Haig's exceptional military organizational, administrative and management ability.

2. The Anatomy of the BEF on the Western Front ¹⁴⁶

By the armistice on November 11th 1918, the BEF became the most effective British military organization in the nation's history. During the 'Hundred Days' campaign, with the full cooperation of the French, Belgians and Americans, and spearheaded by Dominion forces, the BEF delivered the resounding defeat of 'the single most powerful military machine in the world'.¹⁴⁷ This chapter will discuss the unprecedented management challenge that confronted Haig in 1916 by examining the scale, complexity and plasticity of the organization of the BEF. Scale will be illustrated by focusing on the dramatic increase in the BEF's manpower, material consumption and firepower. Complexity will be evidenced by the application of three fundamental organising principles: the chain of command, the span of control and the 'sphere of influence'. Plasticity will be demonstrated by the BEF's resilience in the face of huge casualties, its organizational responsiveness exemplified by the reaction to a logistical crisis in 1916, and its ability to adapt to the novel tactical conditions on the Western Front in a manner that initiated modern warfare.

Scale and Scope

Following the 'race to the sea' in December 1914, the Western Front extended from Nieuwport on the Belgian coast to Pforterhouse on the Swiss border, a distance of some 540 miles (Figure 1 below). By September 1918, the length of line held by the Allies was reduced to approximately 311 miles.¹⁴⁸ This contraction was partly due

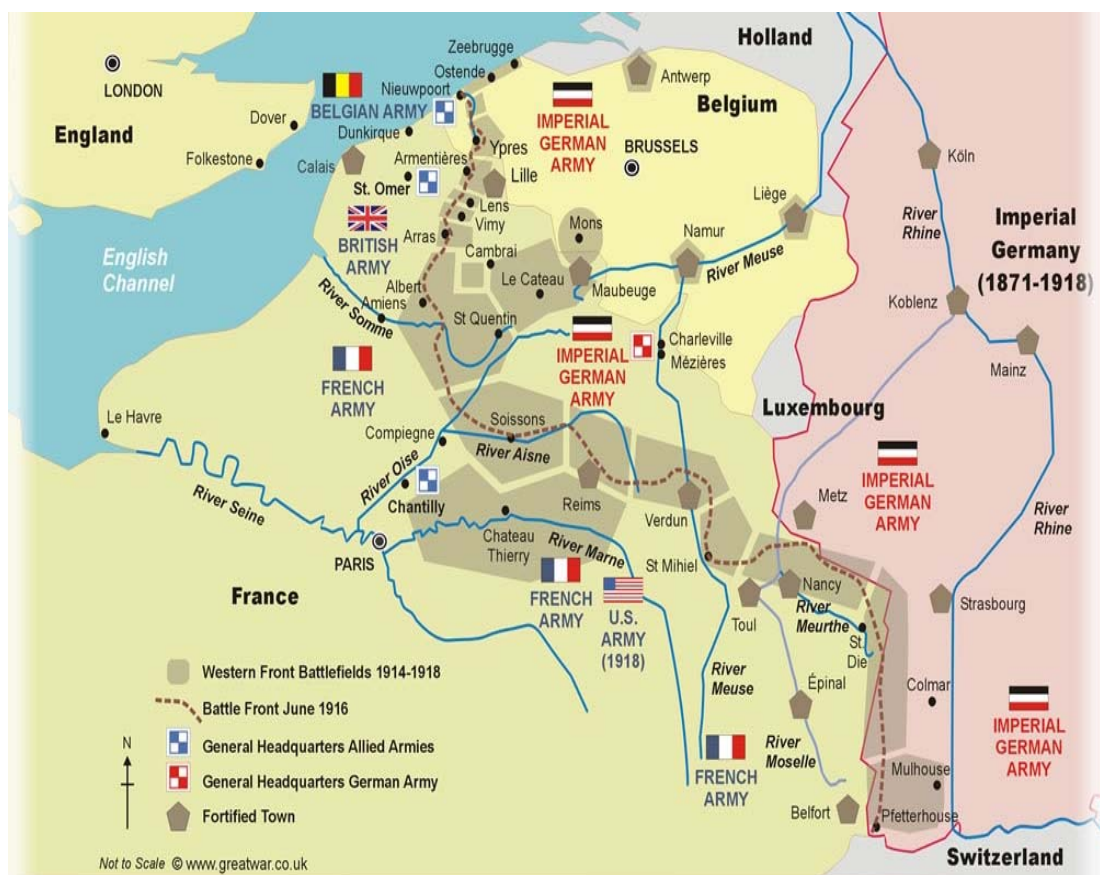
¹⁴⁶ As Professor David French notes elsewhere, the nomenclature used by the British Army can be confusing. For an explanation of the more common terms see David French, *Military Identities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) pp. 7-9.

¹⁴⁷ John Lee, "The British Divisions at Third Ypres," in *Passchendaele In Perspective: The Third Battle of Ypres*, ed. Peter H. Liddle (London: Leo Cooper, 1997) p. 226.

¹⁴⁸ Douglas Haig, *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches, December 1915-April 1919*, ed. by J.H. Boraston (London: J.M. Dent & Co, 1919). Map: General Battle Situation on Western Front on 25th Sept. 1918, p. 378.

to German strategic withdrawal eastwards to the Hindenburg Line in the spring of 1917, and to the enemy's fighting retreat in the autumn of 1918. During the war, the British line averaged 80 miles from the River Somme northwards to the North Sea. The BEF occupied a hinterland of roughly 3,000 square miles encompassing large areas of northern France and Flanders, with arterial supply lines extending back to the Channel ports of Calais, Boulogne and Le Havre.

Figure 1: The BEF Theatre of Operations



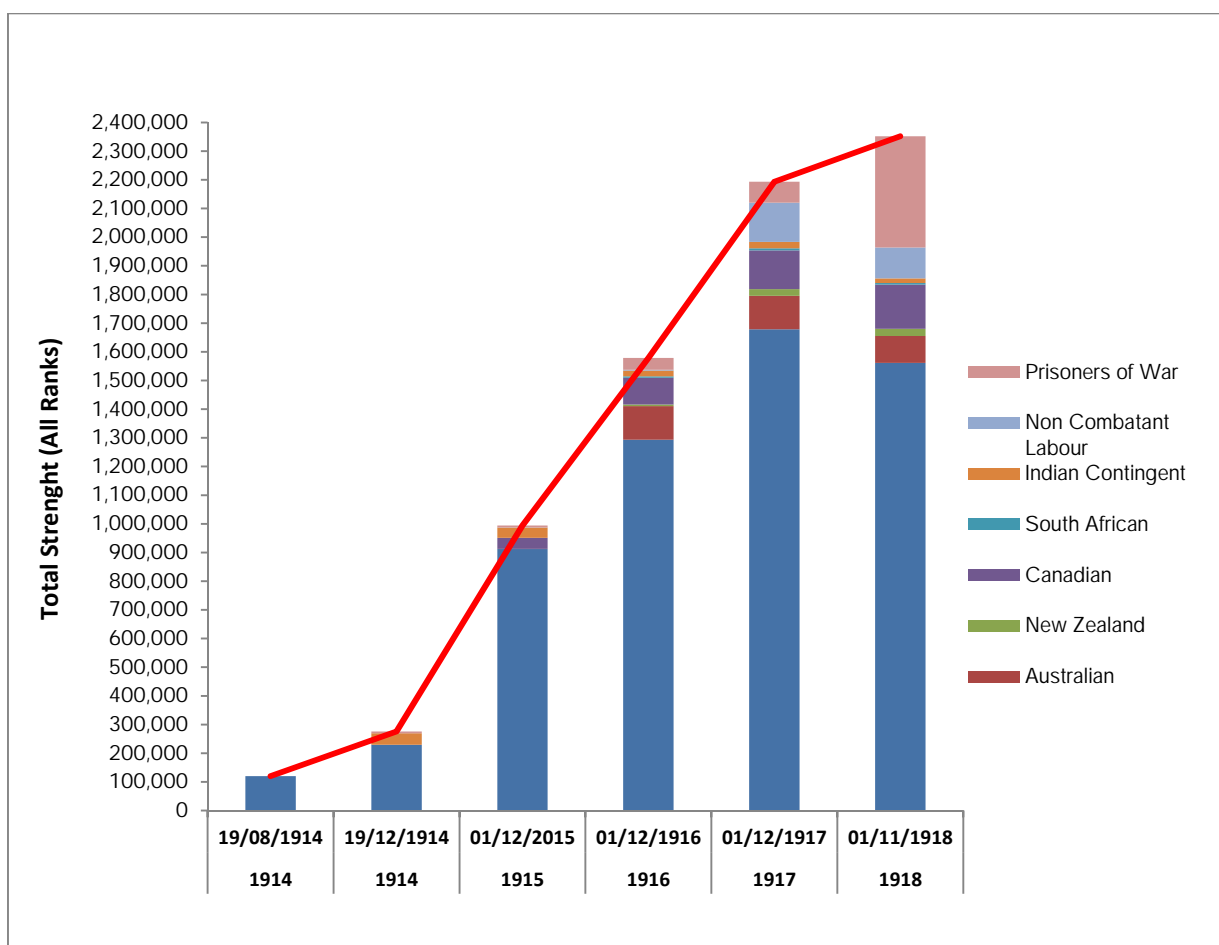
Manpower ¹⁴⁹

The BEF's manpower growth during the war was exponential. In August 1914, the force comprised 126,309 men of all ranks. During the course of hostilities,

¹⁴⁹ The statistics cited in this section are extracted from the following sources unless stated otherwise: *Statistics Of The Military Effort Of The British Empire During The Great War: 1914-1920*, (London: HMSO, 1922). Major T.J. Mitchell, *Medical Services: Casualties and Medical Statistics*, Official History of the War (London: HMSO, 1931). [Cmd.1193], "General Annual Reports of the British Army (1913-1919)," (London: HMSO, 1921).

5,146,998 British troops embarked for France from home ports.¹⁵⁰ This figure included men returning to the front after medical treatment. Figure 2 shows that on November 1st 1918, the ration strength of British officers and men on the Western Front was 1,561,370. Relative to the BEF's original strength this indicates a growth multiple of over 12 fold.

Figure 2: Estimated Ration Strength of BEF in France (1914-1918)



A closer examination of these figures shows that when the BEF embarked for the Western Front from August 9th to the 11th, 1914 the force had a total strength of 6,061 officers and 120,248 NCOs and men. The force proceeded to France with four infantry divisions (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th) assembled into two Army Corps. I Corp

¹⁵⁰ The definition available in the Statistical Abstracts is silent on this point. However, 4,970,902 British men were recruited by the Regular Army and Territorial Force between 04/08/1914 and 11/11/1918. As there was a significant reservoir of men held in Britain and others were posted to other theatres it is likely that the figure for embarkations includes those soldiers returning to France after medical treatment. "General Annual Reports of the British Army (1913-1919)." p. 60.

was commanded by Haig. Following the untimely death of Lieut.-Gen Sir James Grierson on August 17th, II Corps was led by Lieut.-Gen. Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien. These formations were supported by a Cavalry Division under Maj-Gen. Edmund Allenby, plus the independent 5th Cavalry Brigade.¹⁵¹ The infantry divisions were based upon the large Indian Army pattern, comprising three infantry brigades of four battalions organised into the new four company formation.¹⁵²

Each division had an establishment of 18,073 men of all-ranks and specialisations including divisional mounted troops, artillery, engineers, signal service, supply and transport train, and field ambulances. Of these, 12,165 were infantrymen supported by 24 machine guns and 3,928 artillerymen equipped with 76 guns (54x18-pdrs, 18x4.5-inch howitzers and four 60-pdrs).¹⁵³ The artillery was organised into three brigades of three batteries – the latter with six field guns or howitzers each, and one battery of four heavy guns. The Cavalry Division comprised four brigades of three regiments; plus cavalry divisional troops, consisting of artillery, engineers, signal service and medical units. The total strength was approximately 9,269 men of all ranks, 9,815 horses, 24 mobile machine guns and 24x13-pdr field guns.¹⁵⁴ The total ration strength of military forces in Britain immediately prior to hostilities was approximately 120,000 men, excluding reserves.¹⁵⁵ By contrast the French mobilised 3,781,000 men between August 2nd and 18th; while in ten days the Germans carried 1,500,000 men by train to the French

¹⁵¹ Brig.-Gen. J. E. Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1914*, 2 vols, vol, 1, Official History of the War (London: Macmillan, 1926) p. 49. See also Andrew Rawson, *The British Army 1914-1918* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2014) pp. 15-16.

¹⁵² Edward M. Spiers, *Haldane: An Army Reformer* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1980). pp. 82-83. In the Boer War (1899-1902), a British division comprised approximately 8,000 men. Ashley Jackson, "The Evolution of the Division in British Military History," *JRUSI* 152:6(2007) p. 78.

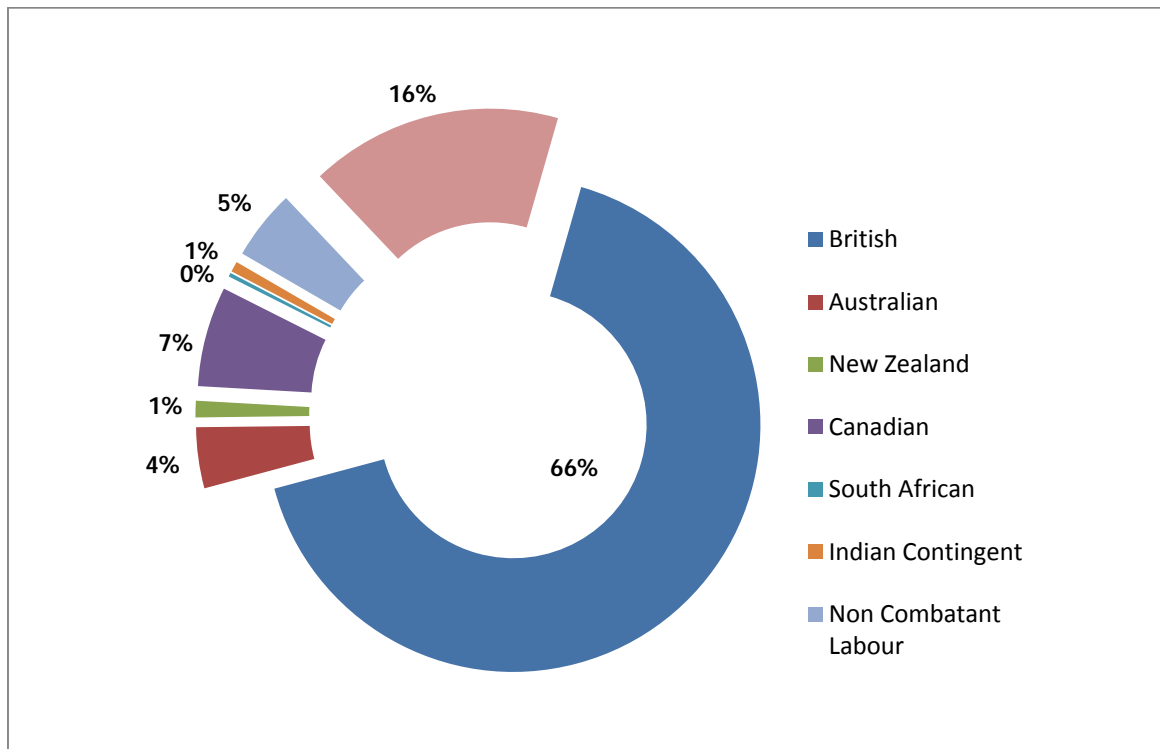
¹⁵³ Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1914*, 1.Appendix 2. pp. 486- 487.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 486.

¹⁵⁵ *Statistics Of The Military Effort Of The British Empire During The Great War: 1914-1920*. Appendices to Part XXXII, Appendix I, p. 877. See also Rawson, *The British Army 1914-1918*. pp. 159-165.

frontier to ‘launch the most massive offensive seen in history to that date.’¹⁵⁶ Given the huge weight of French and German forces coalescing in northern France and Belgium, the influence of the small British force concentrating around Maubeuge was moral rather than physical.¹⁵⁷

Figure 3: Estimated Ration Strength of the BEF’s British, Dominion and Indian Forces (01/11/1918)



A particularly challenging aspect of the BEF’s massive manpower increase was its multiculturalism. Figure 3 shows that by the end of the war the BEF was a multi-national, multi-cultural organization, catering for the prejudices, habits, diets and various peculiarities of men drawn from a wide variety of European and non-European cultures. These men were engaged in multifarious duties and comprised troops, native labour and camp-followers from every corner of the Empire. Also on

¹⁵⁶ John Terraine, *White Heat : The New Warfare 1914-18* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1982). pp. 22-24.

¹⁵⁷ John Gooch, "A Particularly Anglo-Saxon Institution: The British General Staff in the Era of Two World Wars," in *The British General Staff: Reform and Innovation*, ed. David French and Brian Holden Reid (London: Frank Cass, 2002) p. 202.

the strength were Belgian, French, Portuguese and American liaison officers and soldiers, plus 178,687 enemy prisoners of war. The rapid integration of this rich cultural diversity, without any undue organizational dislocation or administrative disruption, shows the remarkable tolerance and elasticity of the BEF's organization.

The dimension of manpower that most consumed Haig's attention in the latter stages of 1917 up to summer 1918 was the critical condition of the BEFs fighting strength. On August 4th 1914, the BEF was mobilized and 'in all essentials "everything went according to plan"'.¹⁵⁸ This presumes that when the BEF arrived in France its war establishment was complete, except for known shortages of staff officers. As reinforcements arrived the establishment grew peaking in 1917 to 1,851,662 soldiers of all ranks. By comparing this data series with that of effective strength, the official published figures show that the BEF's officer corps was slightly over-strength and its other ranks understrength between 1916 to 1918. Tellingly, at the end of 1917, there was an all-ranks shortage of 161,906 men. Haig's own statistics, prepared by his Adjutant General's Branch and retained in his diary, reported an even greater deficit. The AG estimated that by March 31st 1918 the BEF would suffer a shortage of 248,226 men, reducing average battalion other ranks strength to 542 men, or by approximately 37%.¹⁵⁹ The estimate includes the negative impact of six divisions that Lloyd George dispatched to Italy, and an Australian division that was reformed into a depot division.¹⁶⁰ In January 1918, Haig predicted that without the release of manpower held back at home by Lloyd George, the BEF

¹⁵⁸ Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1914*, 1. p. 30. (Emphasis in original).

¹⁵⁹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Memorandum: *Statement of Receipts and Expenditure in British Infantry Reinforcements for the Period November 1st 1917 to March 31st 1918*. n.p. From 1916 the paper strength of a battalion was circa 1080 officers and men, while the comparable active strength was circa 880. IWM/Maxse-Papers/69/53/13/53/1. Private Notes on a Census of 12 Battalions, February 1916.

¹⁶⁰ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 29/11/17.

would be reduced to approximately 30 divisions by September.¹⁶¹ In the event, seven British divisions were broken up to improve the fighting efficiency of the 44 divisions that remained and brigade strength was reduced from four battalions to three.¹⁶² The flow of reinforcements to the BEF improved after Foch was appointed Generalissimo, and as troops were returned from Italy.¹⁶³ Despite this improvement, by June the BEF had 211,000 fewer bayonets compared to the 12 months previous.¹⁶⁴ This caused Foch to accuse Lloyd George to his face of having done nothing to avoid this shortfall – an accusation that the Prime Minister hotly denied.¹⁶⁵

Nonetheless, in June Haig advised the WO that based on the number of British infantry effectives available, and to maximise tactical efficiency, he proposed maintaining 39 divisions in the field comprising 29 British and 10 Dominion formations. Each division was to consist of three brigades, with a total per division of 10 battalions comprising a minimum of 900 men each.¹⁶⁶ With the needed weight of the British military presence at the armistice conference table in mind, the Army Council was ‘most strongly opposed to any reduction in the number of divisions while operations [were] in progress’. Haig was advised that ‘every endeavour [would] be made to keep 59 divisions [including Dominion forces] in the field’. This included a proposal to effectively dismantle the Cavalry Corps in France and redistribute the men released to machine gun and tank units with any remainder deployed as reinforcements to the infantry.¹⁶⁷ Haig balked against this advice on the

¹⁶¹ Ibid. 29/01/1918.

¹⁶² TNA/WO/106/411, "Reorganization and reduction of British divisions contemplated as a result of German offensives," (1918). See this file for details of the new organization of the infantry battalion.

¹⁶³ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Memo: Statement of British Infantry, 15/05/1918. n.p.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. Entry: 16/06/1918. Bayonets 16th June 1918 was 543,000 versus 754,000 in July 1917.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. Entry 01/06/1918.

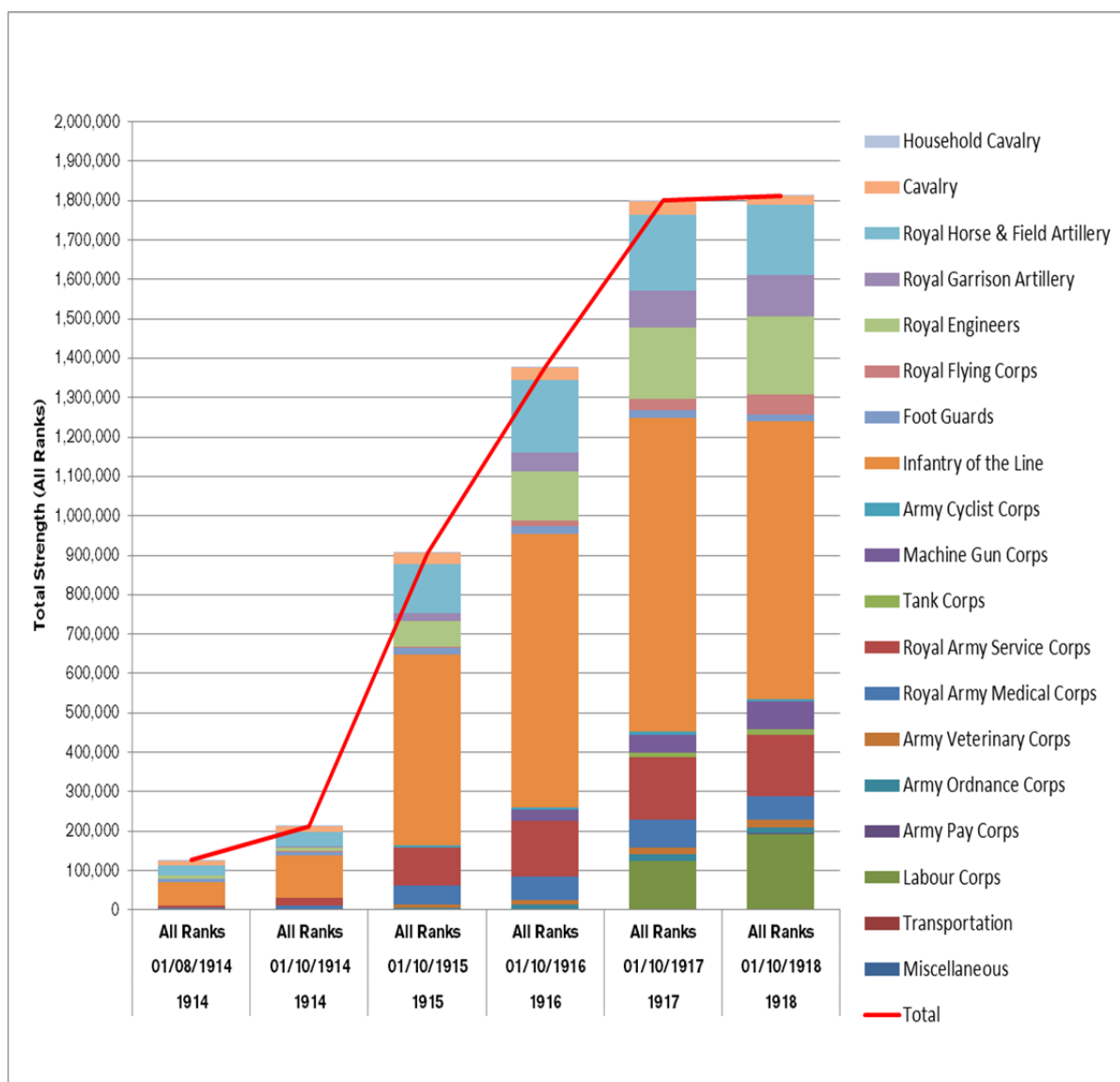
¹⁶⁶ TNA/WO/106/411, "Reorganization and Reduction of British Divisions Contemplated as a Result of German Offensives." Letter: Haig to WO 12/06/1918.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. Letter: WO to Haig 21/07/1918.

grounds of tactical efficiency, fighting effectiveness and the continued value of the cavalry.¹⁶⁸ On November 9th, the WO urged Haig to maintain 51 British and 10 Colonial divisions concluding:

I am therefore to request you to ensure that in case of an armistice all divisional cadres are filled, even if infantry battalions are considerably reduced below an establishment of 900 other ranks.¹⁶⁹

Figure 4: British Regimental Strength of the BEF including TF (1914-1918)

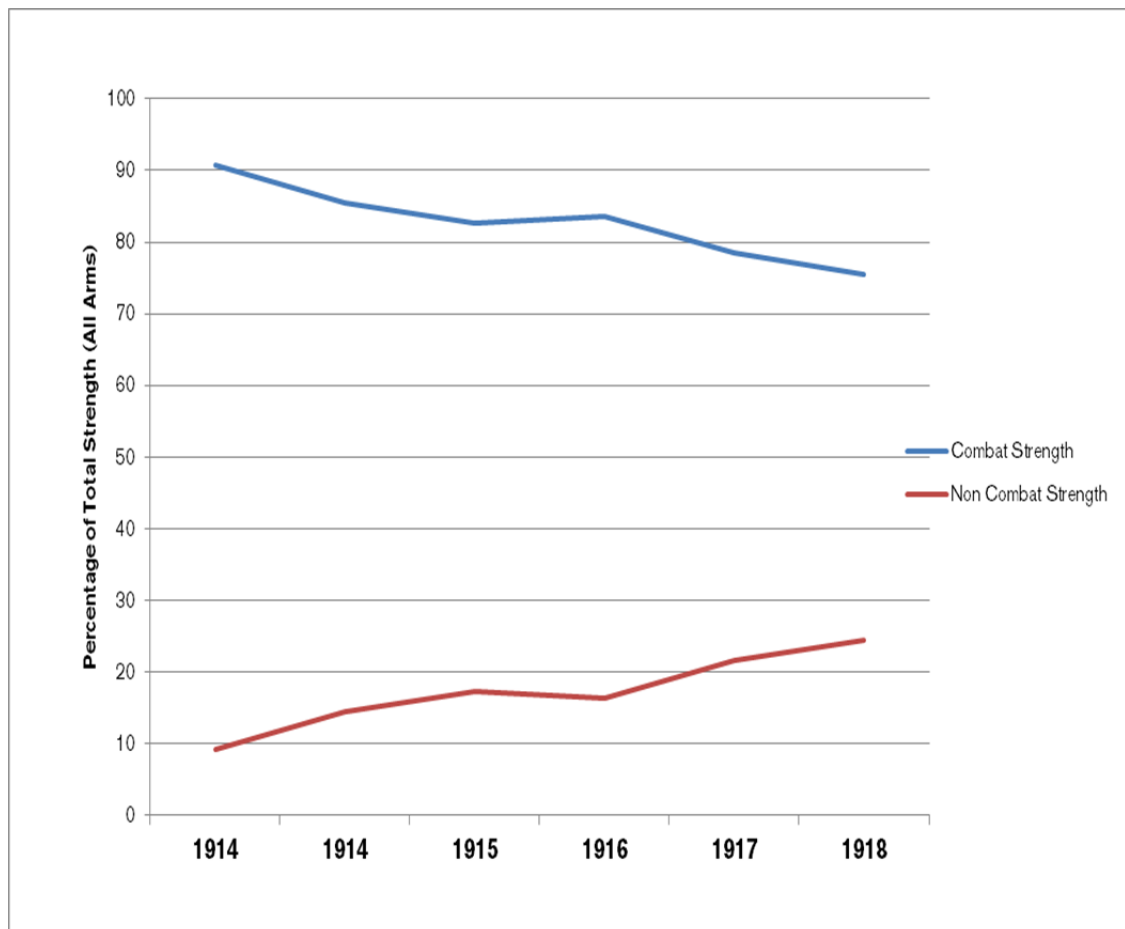


¹⁶⁸ Ibid. Letter: Haig to WO 28/07/1918.

¹⁶⁹ "Reorganization and reduction of British Divisions contemplated as a result of German offensives.": Note: WO to Haig 09/11/1918.

The analysis of combat strength of the BEF's regimental troops (Figure 4 above), clearly shows the rapid increase in 'mechanicalisation'.¹⁷⁰ Excluding the Royal Engineers, the proportion of the new mechanised arms including the artillery, RFC the MGC and the TC nearly doubled between 1914 and 1918 from 21% to 36% respectively. As will be shown below, this trajectory increased the firepower of the BEF on an exponential basis. The impact of 'mechanicalisation' (Figure 5) produced a commensurate rise in the proportion of non-combat to combat troops (9% in 1914 vs. 24% in 1918). These non-combat troops, including over 100,000 non-white labourers, were required to support the logistical infrastructure, systems and processes vital to this transformation.

Figure 5: Comparing Combat to Non-Combat Strength of BEF in France (1914-1918)



¹⁷⁰ Col. J.F.C. Fuller, "Progress in the Mechanicalisation of Modern Armies," *JRUSI* 70:477(1924).

Matériel

The BEF's enormous growth in manpower was matched by its equally huge consumption of supplies and war-like stores. In total, 438,997 vehicles of all types including 15,889 guns and carriages, 27,466 trench guns and bomb throwers, 610 locomotives, 19,858 railway trucks and 59,898 motor vehicles were shipped to France for use by the BEF.¹⁷¹ As shown in Figure 6, the shipment of stores, including 4,959,236 DWT of ammunition, amounted to 27,256,179 DWT.¹⁷² The BEF in France consumed approximately between 80% and over 95% of all stores and supplies shipped abroad. Hidden from view within this tonnage were approximately 136,396,000 socks, 57,421,000 shirts and 46,973,000 boots.¹⁷³

Figure 6: Distribution of Men and Material in and to British Theatres

| Theatre/Matériel | France/Belgium | Italy | Egypt | Salonika | Mesopotamia | East Africa | Total |
|---|----------------|--------|---------|----------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Strength of Expeditionary Forces on 01/11/1918 (All ranks excl. Natives other than Troops) | 1,859,246 | 80,283 | 305,967 | 158,707 | 222,399 | 33,666 | 2,660,268 |
| | 69.9% | 3.0% | 11.5% | 6.0% | 8.4% | 1.3% | 100.0% |
| No. Guns & Howitzers in Theatre (01/10/1918) | 10,153 | 523 | 445 | 833 | 549 | 23 | 12,526 |
| | 81.1% | 4.2% | 3.6% | 6.7% | 4.4% | 0.2% | 100.0% |
| Approx. Gun & Trench Warfare Ammo. Tonnage Shipped to Theatre During War (DWT) | 4,959,236 | 32,718 | | 137,511 | | 803 | 5,130,268 |
| | 96.7% | 0.6% | | 2.7% | | 0.0% | 100.0% |
| Shipment of Stores from All Ports from 09/08/1914 to 26/03/1920 (DWT) | 22,296,943 | 10,304 | | | 144,995 | | 22,452,242 |
| | 99.3% | 0.0% | | | 0.6% | | 100.0% |
| No. Aeroplanes Employed on Each Front (week ending 30/11/1918) | 1,397 | 70 | 234 | 58 | 51 | 0 | 1,810 |
| | 77.2% | 3.9% | 12.9% | 3.2% | 2.8% | 0.0% | 100.0% |

Sources:

Strength of Expeditionary Forces: Statistics Table (ii) p.p. 64 iii, vi, ix, xv,xii.

Guns & Howitzers: Statistics Table xxi p. 451

Tonnage of Gun & Trench Warfare Ammunition: Statistics Table 10 p. 484

Shipment of Stores excl. Ammunition: Statistics p.p. 521-524

In respect to food supplies, the entire output of meat from Australia and New Zealand was put at the disposal of the Army, together with all frozen meat from the

¹⁷¹ *Statistics Of The Military Effort Of The British Empire During The Great War: 1914-1920*, p. 520.

¹⁷² *Ibid.* p. 521.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* p. 869.

Plate (Argentina). Additional supplies had to be obtained from the United States, Canada, Brazil, Patagonia and South Africa.¹⁷⁴ It might be a surprise to learn that in France, 'a large proportion of the daily fresh [vegetable] requirements of the British armies was grown by the troops themselves' to free up shipping space. Furthermore, '20,000 acres of cereals, which otherwise would have been left derelict, were harvested'.¹⁷⁵

While these statistics are impressive and demonstrate the sheer scale of the behind-the-lines operations, perhaps there is nothing more astonishing than the total cost to the British nation of the BEF in France. As shown in Figure 7 (below), in the 1913-14 fiscal year the British Army cost the taxpayer £32.13 million.¹⁷⁶ This figure rose to £974 million in 1918-19.¹⁷⁷ Of this total, it is estimated that £779 million can be attributed to the BEF.¹⁷⁸ The total wartime cost of the BEF is estimated at £2.6 billion. This equates to approximately £855 billion in current (2011) prices.¹⁷⁹ To produce the quantity of stores and supplies required in France, the entire British economy was mobilised at a ruinous cost to public finances. By 1917, GDP rose to £5,108 million where defence spending equated to 47.1% of this amount. To fund this and later expenditure, National Debt increased to £8,078.20 million in 1919-20 or 135% of GDP. As GDP fell in the immediate post-war period, this percentage continued to increase reaching a potentially bankrupting 182% of GDP in 1923-24. This compares to 89% in 2015 and a record low of 31% in 1991.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 842.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 583.

¹⁷⁶ (87), "Army Appropriation Account 1913-1914," (London: HMSO, 1914-16) p. 4.

¹⁷⁷ (41), "Army Appropriation Account 1918-1919," (London: HMSO, 1920) p. 6.

¹⁷⁸ A factor of 80% has been applied. This roughly equates to the total number of men and tonnage of matériel sent to France as opposed to other theatres.

¹⁷⁹ <http://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/> (02/12/2015). This figure of relative values (UK £) has been calculated using a factor derived from the relative labour cost for each year between 1914-1918.

¹⁸⁰ <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/united-kingdom/government-debt-to-gdp>. (02/12/2015).

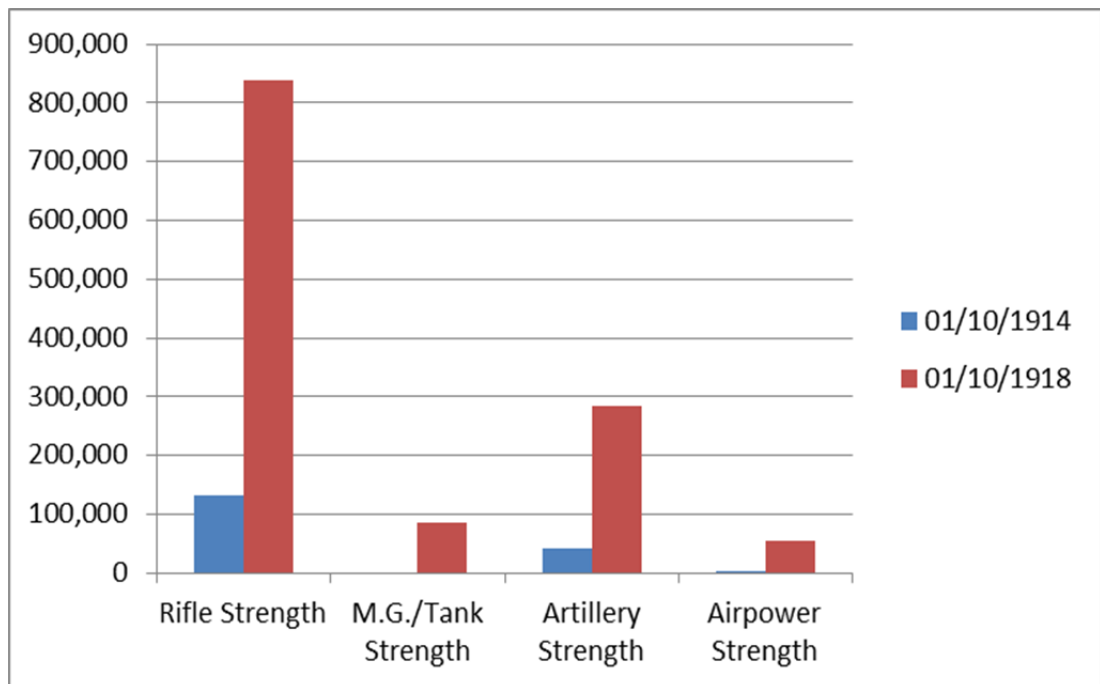
Figure 7: Vital Economic and Financial Statistics of the British War Effort

| Year | GDP | | Defence Spending | | National Debt | | Army Appropriation Account | | VOTE A | | Army Expenditure per Man | | Estimated Total Cost of B.E.F. in France | | | B.E.F. vs NHS Cost | |
|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|--------|-------------------|---------|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| | Current £millions | % GDP | Current £millions | % GDP | Current £millions | % GDP | Current £millions | Index Base 1900 | % Defence Spending | Number Men | Real 1900 £1 | Share of AAA Current £millions | Ammunition Current £millions | Total Current 2011 £millions | Total Current 2011 £millions | Real 2013 £ Multiple | |
| 1900-01 | 1,893 | 6.5 | 571.12 | 30.17 | 95.31 | 100.0 | 77.5 | 430,000 | 143.02 | | | | | | | | |
| 1901-02 | 1,906 | 6.9 | 633.55 | 33.24 | 96.78 | 101.5 | 73.5 | 450,000 | 196.03 | | | | | | | | |
| 1902-03 | 1,881 | 6.1 | 675.66 | 35.92 | 79.36 | 83.3 | 69.6 | 420,000 | 165.59 | | | | | | | | |
| 1903-04 | 1,881 | 4.0 | 715.16 | 38.02 | 43.75 | 45.9 | 58.7 | 235,761 | 145.24 | | | | | | | | |
| 1904-05 | 1,949 | 3.5 | 736.92 | 37.81 | 33.52 | 35.2 | 49.3 | 227,000 | 122.84 | | | | | | | | |
| 1905-06 | 2,033 | 3.2 | 737.78 | 36.29 | 33.37 | 35.0 | 51.9 | 221,300 | 133.71 | | | | | | | | |
| 1906-07 | 2,113 | 2.9 | 727.29 | 34.42 | 33.04 | 34.7 | 54.1 | 204,100 | 145.14 | | | | | | | | |
| 1907-08 | 2,011 | 3.0 | 650.56 | 32.35 | 31.04 | 32.6 | 51.5 | 190,000 | 142.86 | | | | | | | | |
| 1908-09 | 2,052 | 3.0 | 683.32 | 33.30 | 30.83 | 32.3 | 50.8 | 185,000 | 143.24 | | | | | | | | |
| 1909-10 | 2,140 | 3.0 | 693.15 | 32.39 | 30.89 | 32.4 | 47.6 | 183,000 | 144.44 | | | | | | | | |
| 1910-11 | 2,227 | 3.1 | 704.85 | 31.65 | 31.15 | 32.7 | 44.7 | 184,000 | 142.36 | | | | | | | | |
| 1911-12 | 2,327 | 3.1 | 679.95 | 29.22 | 31.09 | 32.6 | 42.8 | 183,200 | 142.28 | | | | | | | | |
| 1912-13 | 2,420 | 3.1 | 660.66 | 27.30 | 31.62 | 33.2 | 42.3 | 184,200 | 138.41 | | | | | | | | |
| 1913-14 | 2,451 | 3.2 | 633.09 | 25.83 | 32.13 | 33.7 | 40.8 | 186,600 | 137.55 | | | | | | | | |
| 1914-15 | 2,943 | 14.9 | 744.58 | 25.30 | 247.62 | 259.8 | 56.36 | 1,336,185 | 164.39 | 198.10 | 105.42 | 303.51 | 91,873.24 | 0.87 | | | |
| 1915-16 | 3,434 | 40.8 | 1,256.50 | 36.59 | 543.19 | 569.9 | 38.77 | 2,480,436 | 162.21 | 434.55 | 94.04 | 528.59 | 155,671.10 | 1.48 | | | |
| 1916-17 | 4,276 | 46.2 | 2,623.75 | 61.36 | 629.86 | 660.9 | 31.89 | 3,353,354 | 117.71 | 503.89 | 194.19 | 698.08 | 189,180.10 | 1.80 | | | |
| 1917-18 | 5,108 | 47.1 | 4,763.21 | 93.25 | 802.99 | 842.5 | 33.40 | 3,938,876 | 105.60 | 642.39 | 327.36 | 969.76 | 231,189.79 | 2.20 | | | |
| 1918-19 | 5,484 | 40.1 | 6,280.28 | 114.52 | 974.03 | 1,022.0 | 44.29 | 3,937,716 | 111.39 | 779.23 | 253.26 | 1,032.49 | 187,190.49 | 1.78 | | | |
| 1919-20 | 5,975 | 11.6 | 8,078.20 | 135.20 | 521.48 | 547.1 | 75.2 | 3,040,584 | 72.86 | | | | | | | | |
| 1920-21 | 4,907 | 6.1 | 6,413.45 | 130.70 | 95.41 | 100.1 | 32.1 | 236,000 | 259.21 | | | | | | | | |
| 1921-22 | 4,458 | 5.0 | 6,865.32 | 154.00 | 131.59 | 138.1 | 59.3 | 201,000 | 141.74 | | | | | | | | |
| 1922-23 | 4,254 | 2.9 | 7,288.38 | 171.33 | 64.22 | 67.4 | 52.1 | 215,000 | 129.82 | | | | | | | | |
| 1923-24 | 4,366 | 2.8 | 7,932.15 | 181.68 | 55.53 | 58.3 | 44.8 | 171,000 | 149.26 | | | | | | | | |
| 1924-25 | 4,508 | 2.7 | 7,875.48 | 174.70 | 54.43 | 57.1 | 45.6 | 161,600 | 146.81 | | | | | | | | |

Firepower

The sheer scale of the BEF's rapid increase in firepower can be demonstrated in two ways. The first builds on earlier references by charting the growth of manpower in the fighting arms. The second way examines the growth of British gun and howitzer ammunition expenditure by amount, type and timing on the Western Front. Figure 8 provides an indication of the increase in firepower expressed by manpower between 1914 and 1918. While the infantry's strength increased by a factor of seven, the combined strength of the artillery, air force, heavy machine gun and tank corps, increased over ten-fold.¹⁸¹ This disparity illustrates the BEF's rising mechanicalisation and its growing dependence on heavy weaponry and airpower.

Figure 8: Increase in Regimental Strength of BEF including TF in France (1914-1918)



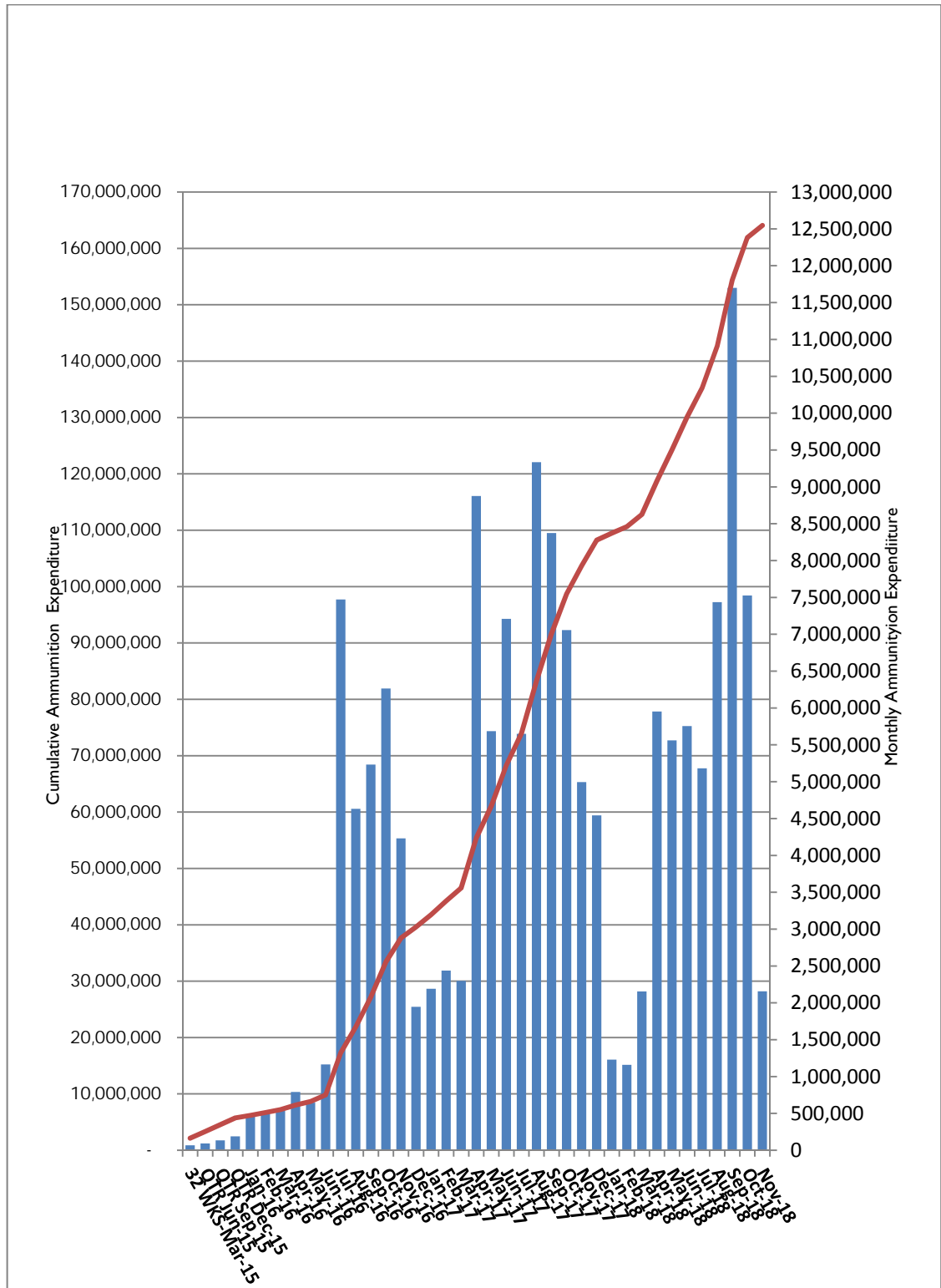
By November 1918, such was the dramatic increase and scale of the BEF's firepower, that 15,889 guns, howitzers and carriages had been shipped to France.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ [Cmd.1193], "General Annual Reports of the British Army (1913-1919)." pp. 52-56.

¹⁸² TNA/WO/394/20, "Statistical Abstract: Armies at Home and Abroad (1914-1920)," (1920) p. 515.

These weapons were used to fire approximately 165 million rounds of high explosive and shrapnel shells of all calibres (Figure 9).

Figure 9: BEF's Expenditure of Gun & Howitzer Ammunition in France (1916-1918)



A macabre interpretation of this statistic is that it required an average of roughly 100 medium to heavy artillery shells to kill or wound one German soldier in the British sector. This calculation excludes the billions of small arms ammunition fired by the British at the Germans.¹⁸³ The peaks and troughs of the bar chart register the disparity between intense periods of fighting approximating to major offensive operations, and the quieter periods in between.

Figure 10: Distribution of Ammunition Expended by Guns & Howitzers (1914-1918)

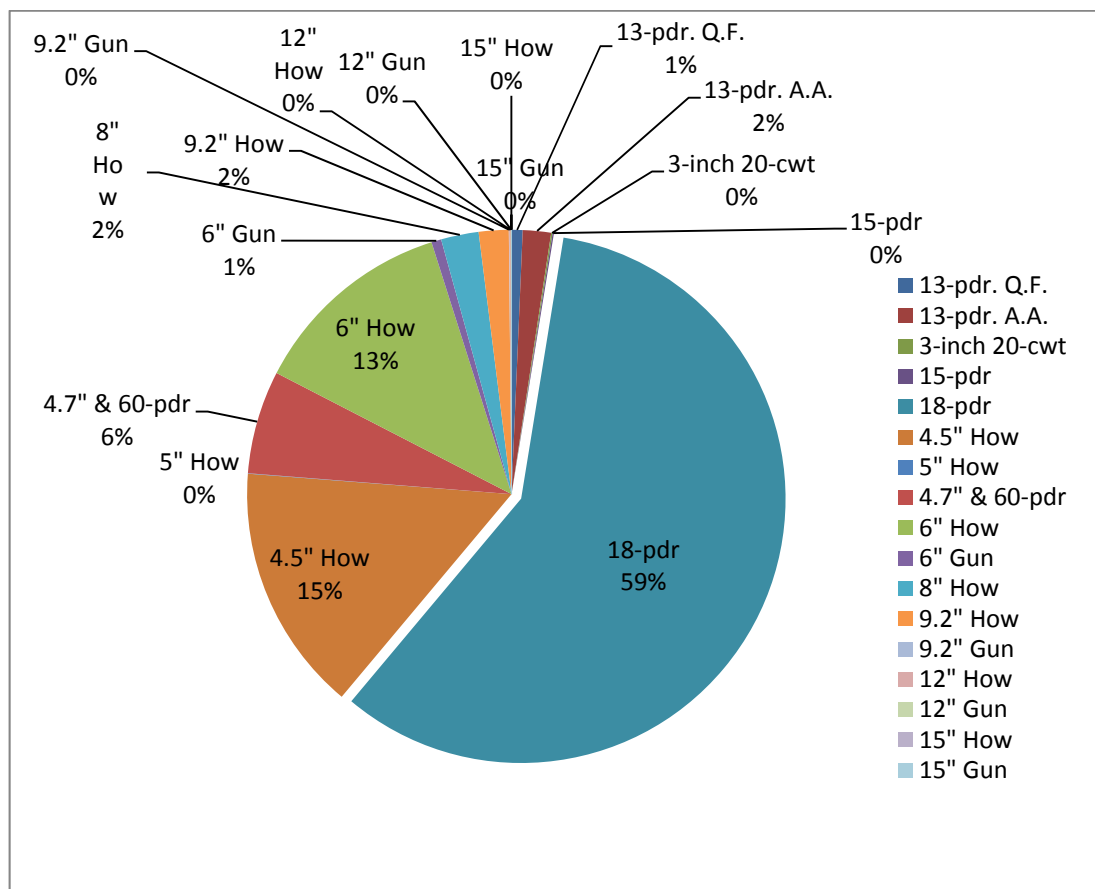


Figure 10 shows the distribution of ammunition expended by weapon calibre. The 18-lb quick firing gun and the 4.5-inch howitzer were the British field artillery’s main weapons of choice. As the war progressed, the growth and reliance on medium

¹⁸³ *Statistics Of The Military Effort Of The British Empire During The Great War: 1914-1920*. Section 7, p. 358. The Official Statistician estimates that between February 1915 to October 1918 inclusive total German casualties on British sectors on the Western Front were 1,680,396.

and heavy guns and howitzers up to calibres of 15-inches became increasingly significant. With greater clarity, this trend is depicted in Figure 11.

Figure 11: BEF's Quarterly Expenditure of Artillery Ammunition (1914-1918)

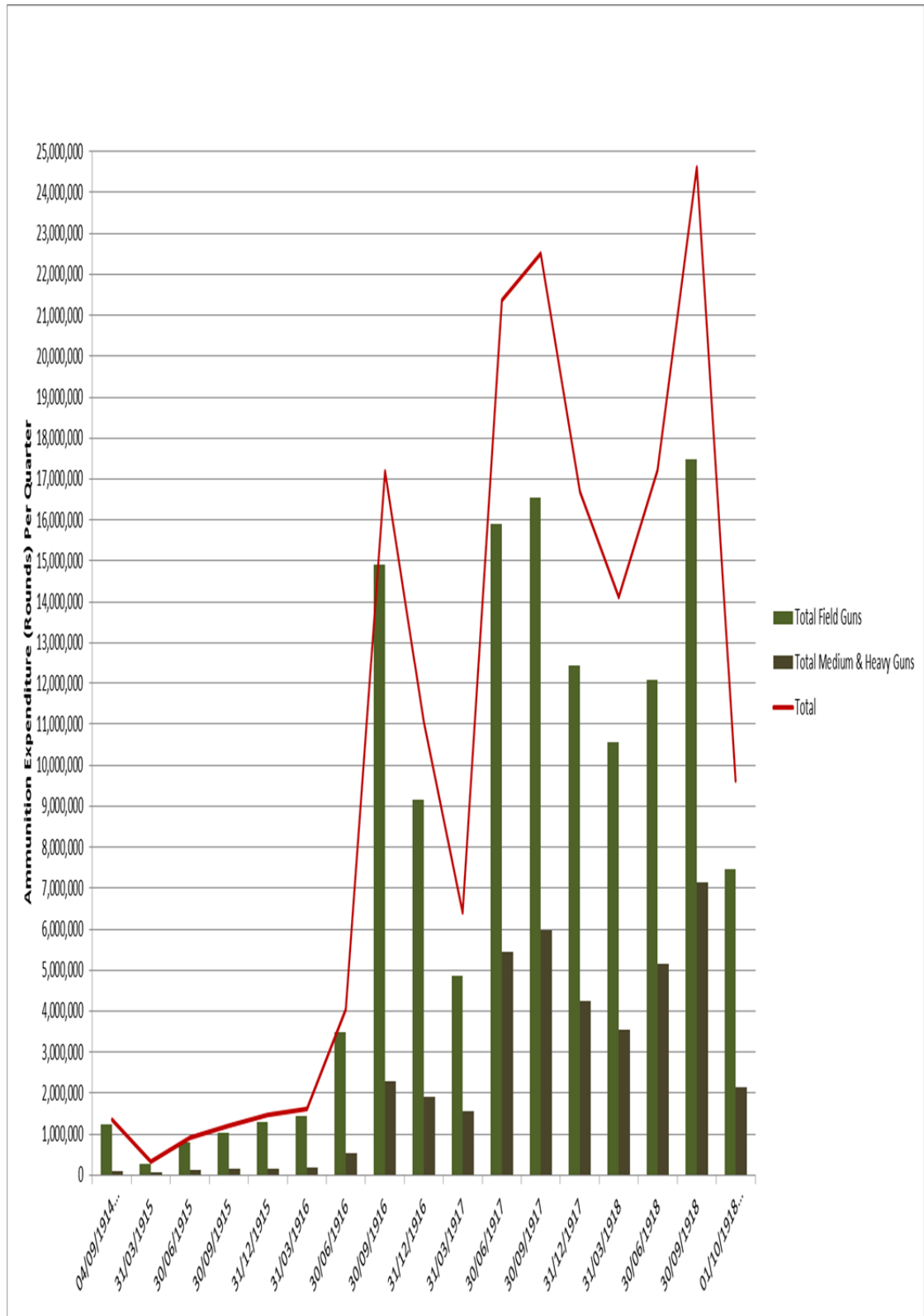


Figure 12 indicates that the proportion of heavy and medium artillery to field artillery increased from 1:9.9 at Neuve Chapelle in 1915 to a high of 1:1.3 at Menin Road in 1917. Clear evidence is also provided of the increasing weight of firepower that the BEF was able to deploy. At Neuve Chapelle the Germans were exposed to 64,466 artillery shells, mainly of light calibre, whereas at the Menin Road 3,500,000 rounds were fired in the 8 day build-up and attack, with a relatively high proportion of shells fired by medium to heavy calibre guns. That said, the concentration of guns at Neuve Chapelle was higher at 3 yards per gun, firing 44 rounds per yard per day. Combined with the element of surprise, this factor probably accounts for the early success of this offensive, when the village was captured by Haig's troops before the inevitable counter-attack was delivered.

Figure 12: Comparison of British Firepower in Evidence at Periods of Intensive Fighting *

| Battles | Preliminary Bombardment inc. First Day | Days | Attack Front | Artillery Pieces | | | Fire No. Rounds | Vital Statistics | | | | |
|----------------|---|------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | | | Total | Field Artillery | Medium & Heavy Artillery | | No. yards per gun | Proportion of Heavy & Medium Artillery to Field Artillery | Rounds per yard | Rounds per day | Rounds per Yard per Day |
| Neuve Chapelle | 10/03/1915 | 1 | 1,450 | 535 | 486 | 49 | 64,466 | 3 | 1 : 9.9 | 44 | 64,466 | 44 |
| Aubers Ridge | 09/05/1915 | 1 | 3,900 | 637 | 570 | 67 | 77,696 | 6 | 1 : 8.5 | 20 | 77,696 | 20 |
| Festubert | 13/05/1915-16/05/1915 | 4 | 5,080 | 637 | 570 | 67 | 83,284 | 8 | 1 : 8.5 | 16 | 20,821 | 4 |
| Loos | 21/09/1915-25/09/1915 | 5 | 11,200 | 871 | 758 | 113 | 384,053 | 13 | 1 : 6.7 | 34 | 76,811 | 7 |
| Somme | 24/06/-01/07/1916 | 8 | 24,640 | 1,437 | 1,010 | 427 | 1,732,873 | 17 | 1 : 2.4 | 70 | 216,609 | 9 |
| Arras | 02/04/1917-09/04/1917 (Vimy) | 8 | 6,160 | 1,100 | 723 | 377 | 898,295 | 6 | 1 : 1.9 | 146 | 112,287 | 18 |
| Messines | 26/05/1917 - 07/06/1917 | 12 | 15,840 | 2,250 | 1,510 | 740 | 3,258,000 | 7 | 1 : 2.0 | 206 | 271,500 | 17 |
| Third Ypres | 15/07/1917-02/08/1917 | 19 | 26,400 | 3,091 | 2,092 | 999 | 4,283,550 | 9 | 1 : 2.1 | 162 | 225,450 | 9 |
| Menin Road | 13/09/1917-20/09/1917 | 8 | 14,080 | 1,295 | 720 | 575 | 3,500,000 | 11 | 1 : 1.3 | 249 | 437,500 | 31 |
| Amiens | 08/08/1918 | 1 | 18,700 | 2,070 | 1,386 | 684 | 448,918 | 9 | 1 : 2.0 | 24 | 448,918 | 24 |

* Note: Statistics for the incidence of rounds expended have not been adjusted for "dud" shells, nor for the impact of the 106 Fuse. This is because the necessary data records have not been located.

Complexity

In relation to the higher organization of the Army, General Sir Ian Hamilton wrote ‘any military organization should conform to certain set principles: (1) power must go with responsibility (2) the average human brain finds its effective scope in handling from three to six other brains’.¹⁸⁴ These two principles adhere respectively to what is commonly known as the *chain of command* and the *span of control*. There was a third principle that Haig put to work which can usefully be referred to as the *sphere of influence*. This principle captures the complex formal and informal methods deployed by top ranking military officers to impose their will on the external and internal stakeholders of the organizations they command. These three principles are essential to *coordination*, the need for which in military organization is ‘overwhelming’.¹⁸⁵ To be clear, in brief, coordination is the process deployed through the agency of management to deliver unity-of-effort.

The chain of command aims at *perpendicular* coordination with its vital ingredients of authority and the delegation of duties. The span of control targets *horizontal* coordination ‘through the universal service of knowledge’.¹⁸⁶ The difference between these two forms of coordination allows us to make the useful distinction in military organizations between ‘*line*’ and ‘*staff*’ functions. Sphere of influence facilitates the improved effectiveness of both types of coordination. The challenges associated with the practical implementation of these principles in operational conditions peculiar to the Western Front is discussed below.

¹⁸⁴ Sir Ian Hamilton, *The Soul and Body of an Army* (London: Edward Arnold & Co, 1921) p. 229. It should be noted it is not claimed here that Hamilton was the author or originator of this principle. In fact, Hamilton suggests that it is a ‘military axiom’, thus its origins are possibly lost in the mist of time. See p. 230.

¹⁸⁵ L. Urwick, "Organization as a Technical Problem," in *Papers on the Science of Administration*, ed. Luther Gulick and L. Urwick (New York: Columbia University, 1937) p. 52

¹⁸⁶ James D. Mooney, "The Principles of Organization," in *Papers on the Science of Administration*, ed. Luther Gulick and L. Urwick (New York: Institute of Public Administration, 1937) pp. 93-95. Mooney and his colleague were leading American contemporary administrative theorists who gained their experience working for General Motors in the 1930's.

Chain of Command

The chain of command is the hierarchical pyramid-like structure imposed on military and other organizations to link the highest authority to the lowest subordinate. The primary object is to secure unity-of-effort by achieving vertical coordination via delegation throughout the entire structure of the organised body.¹⁸⁷ In the military, the chain of command imposes a hierarchy of unambiguous authority and strict discipline on the organization. The intention is to 'ensure that every man in the force acts promptly in response to the will of the Commander'.¹⁸⁸ This authority is expressed down through successive and expanding layers of subordinate commanders until every officer is reached, and every man has his orders:

These orders are founded on the original directions of the Commander-in-Chief, with modifications and details added by each lower authority in the chain, so as to suit the special circumstances of his own Command.

The principle combines unity of control with decentralisation of command and devolution of responsibility. In no other way can ready and effective co-operation of all fractions of the force to a common end be ensured.¹⁸⁹

The principle of *unity of command* is embodied in the effective and efficient operation of the chain of command insisting that each subordinate should only receive orders from one superior.¹⁹⁰

FSR II states that '*the successful issue of military operations depends mainly upon combination and unity of effort directed with energy and determination towards*

¹⁸⁷ John F. Lyndall Urwick, *The Elements of Administration* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd, 1943) pp. 51-52.

¹⁸⁸ Hubert Foster, *Organization: How Armies Are Formed For War (1911)* (London: Hugh Rees, Ltd, 1911) p. 3.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 5-6.

¹⁹⁰ Henri Fayol, *General and Industrial Management*, trans. Constance Storrs (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd, 1961) p. 24, 34.

a definite object'. The chain of command provides the C-in-C 'with the means of exerting the required influence over the work and action of every individual'. It also allows the '*due sub-division of labour and decentralisation of responsibility among subordinates, combined with central control and co-ordination of subordinate parts for the attainment of common objectives...*[which is] *the essence of all efficient organization*'. Within this context, men of average powers could be allotted definite functions that they can perform well. A degree of elasticity was also available 'to meet the varying conditions which may arise and which it is impossible to foresee'.¹⁹¹

While these benefits could be expressed easily enough on paper, in practice they were never fully realised by the BEF due to the formidable complexity of its organization. A combination of factors produced a debilitating effect on the chain of command. These factors included the vast numbers of men dispersed across wide battle fronts; highly congested theatres of operation making messaging and passage to the front line slow and laborious; and the relatively high attrition rates amongst field commanders of all ranks, which generated arbitrary dislocation in the chain of command at critical moments.

To take but one example, The Fourth Army's chain of command in front of Amiens on 8th August 1918 consisted of 441,000 troops of all ranks, comprising one cavalry corps, three infantry corps made up of 15 divisions. This force, together with 100,000 horses and mules, 1,386 field guns and howitzers and 684 heavy artillery pieces, 604 tanks, and 800 aeroplanes was concentrated behind a congested front of 21,000 yards.¹⁹² The final objective for the first day of the offensive at its furthest point was 14,000 yards from the starting line. To achieve this concentration, in

¹⁹¹ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)* pp. 22-23. (Emphasis in original).

¹⁹² Mark Adkin, *The Western Front Companion* (London: Aurum Press Limited, 2013) p. 77; Major General Sir Archibald Montgomery, *The Story of the Fourth Army in the Battles of the Hundred Days, August 8th to November 11th 1918*, II vols, vol I (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919) p. 13.

addition to the ordinary supply trains for food and engineering material, 230 special trains were required for personnel and guns, and upwards of 60 special trains for ammunition.¹⁹³ The cavalry, tanks and a portion of artillery were deployed by road.

Figure 13 (below) attempts to illustrate the complexity of Fourth Army's chain of command. Due to a lack of computing-power, the chart is limited to 891 links in the chain of command down to battalion level.¹⁹⁴ The aim of the drawing is to provide a simplistic, and perhaps some would say naïve impression, of the depth and breadth of the Fourth Army's command and control scheme. Given there were five armies attached to the BEF, the organogram hints at the complexity and overwhelming difficulty that Haig and his commanders had to synchronise the actions of the whole organization towards a common strategic objective.

The most serious obstacle to the effective and efficient operation of the chain of command was the BEF's rudimentary communications system, exemplified by 'the lack of mobile real-time communications'. This was 'the supreme technological deficiency of the 1914-1918 era'.¹⁹⁵ As a result, commanders of all ranks, with the possible exception of platoon and section leaders, became ignorant of battle outcomes immediately after men went 'over-the-top'. Furthermore, when telephonic and telegraphic communications failed, which was a common occurrence, it could take between two to three hours for relays of runners to reach Army HQ from the frontline. 'The confusion that arose from the lack of accurate, 'real-time' information resulted in the loss of initiative and momentum.'¹⁹⁶

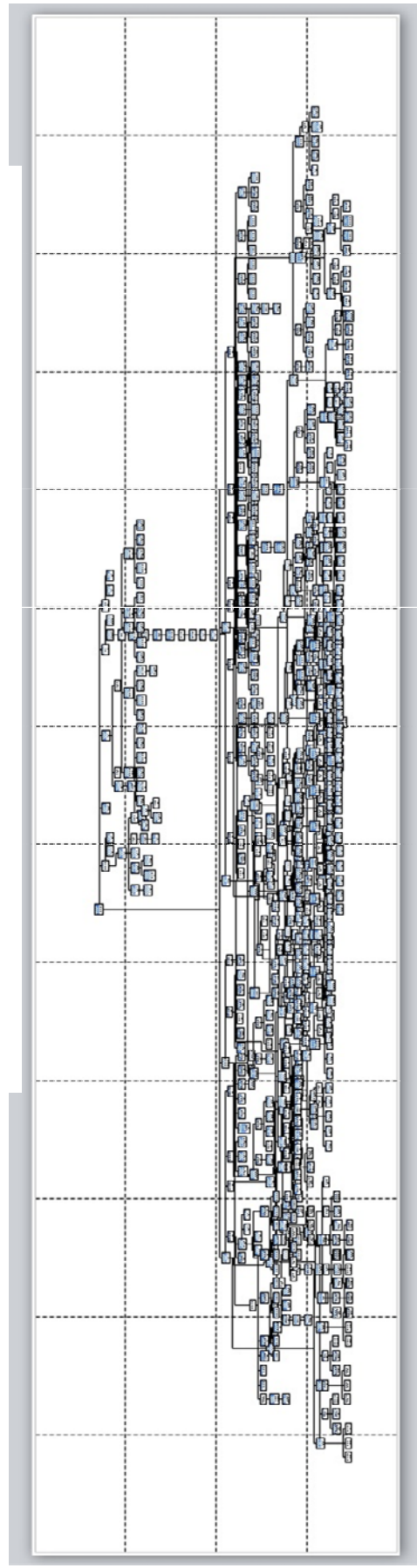
¹⁹³ *The Story of the Fourth Army in the Battles of the Hundred Days, August 8th to November 11th 1918*, 1. p.13, 22.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* Appendix F pp. 301-327.

¹⁹⁵ Crawshaw, "The Impact of Technology on the BEF and its Commander." p.167

¹⁹⁶ Brian N. Hall, "The British Expeditionary Force and Communications on the Western Front" (University of Salford, 2009) p. 166, citing TNA, WO 158/374, 'Report on the Operations of the IVth Army Corps from March 10th to 15th 1915', n.d.

Figure 13: Fourth Army Order of Battle for the 8th August 1918



It must be added that even during static preparatory phases communications continued to present serious problems.¹⁹⁷ Experience showed it could take up to eight hours for divisional orders to reach a platoon commander.¹⁹⁸ Lieut.-Gen. Walter Congreve V.C. went further. He observed that:

When troops are engaged in close contact with the enemy it has been calculated that it takes an average of *at least* 24 hours from the time Divisional Operational Orders are issued before a Platoon Commander in the front line is in a position to carry out his part of the attack.

It is not safe to assume that a message sent from Divisional Headquarters will reach a Platoon Commander in the front line in less than 4 hours.¹⁹⁹

In defence, the situation could sometimes be even worse. 'The upshot of the German offensive on 21st March [1918] was the almost complete paralysis of the B.E.F's command and control system'.²⁰⁰

By 1917 it was standard procedure to allow a lapse of 24 hours between issuing an order and having the expectation that company and platoon commanders would have had sufficient time to respond. At the end of 1918, the time lapse was increased to 36 hours.²⁰¹ Without detracting from the 'organizational, procedural and technical' communication innovations that were introduced, under these conditions it is hardly surprising that the efficiency of the BEF's chain of command was compromised.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ LHCMA:Montgomery-Massingberd:7/3, "Notes on Somme Fighting," (1916). Notes on Experience Gained During Recent Operations, HQ., 2nd Division 16.8.16. p. 1. Here it is recommended that relay staging posts should be placed every 400 to 500 yards along the route.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. Questions relating to an initial attack after lengthy preparation. Que.11.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. XIII Corps, Lessons Deduced; No. 17, Issue of Orders p. 10. (Emphasis in original).

²⁰⁰ Hall, "The British Expeditionary Force and Communications on the Western Front." p. 283.

²⁰¹ "S.S.135: The Division in Attack (November 1918)," (AP&SS) p. 18.

²⁰² "The British Expeditionary Force and Communications on the Western Front." p. 349.

Span of Control

This organizational principle addresses the question of how many subordinates should be controlled by one superior to optimise horizontal coordination. Too few creates opportunities for ‘confusion and undue interference’. Too many produces ‘considerable difficulty in making [men] act together’. Col. J.S. Rothwell, Professor of Staff Duties and Military Administration at the Staff College, Camberley, circa. 1893, believed that in well organised military systems, the number of subordinates controlled by a commander should not be less than four, and not more than eight.²⁰³ Apparently Napoleon stated, presumably in French, “You can’t command more than five units”.²⁰⁴ As mentioned above, Hamilton observed:

The average human brain finds its effective scope in handling three to six other brains.²⁰⁵

The nearer we approach the supreme head of the whole organization, the more we ought to work towards groups of three; the closer we get to the foot of the whole organization (the Infantry of the Line) the more we work towards groups of six.²⁰⁶

This apparent discord between experts is ultimately reconciled by considering three factors: ‘the first, the element of diversification of function; second, the element of time; and third, the element of space’.²⁰⁷ In an organization where the work load is based on a single speciality, where it has been established for a long time and its growth is stable, and where it is located in a single building, the span of

²⁰³ Col. J. S. Rothwell, "Army Organization," ed. Military Society of Ireland (Dublin: Sibley & Co, 1893) p. 5.

²⁰⁴ Lieut.-Gen. Sir H.S.G. Miles, "Army Administration," *JRUSI* 68, no. 469 (1923) p. 24

²⁰⁵ Hamilton, *The Soul and Body of an Army*. p. 229.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.* p. 230.

²⁰⁷ Luther Gulick, "Notes on the Theory of Organization," in *Papers on the Science of Administration*, ed. Luther Gulick and L. Urwick (New York: Institute of Public Administration, 1937) p. 8.

control can be wider than for an organization like the BEF that obviously displayed the opposite of these characteristics.

V.A. Graicunas, a management consultant based in Paris, sought to establish an empirical basis to support this generally accepted military axiom. In 1933, he published his findings in the *Bulletin of the International Management Institute*.²⁰⁸ Graicunas's proof was a set of complex equations that computed the number of direct single, direct group, and cross relationships that occur in groups of one to twelve subordinates.²⁰⁹ John F. Lyndall Urwick M.C., a brigade major on the Western Front provides an accessible introduction to Graicunas's equations:

No superior can supervise directly the work of more than five or, at the most, six subordinates whose work interlocks. The reason for this is simple. What is supervised is not only the individuals, but the permutations and combinations of the relationships between them. And while the former increase in arithmetical progression with the addition of each fresh subordinate, the latter increase by geometrical progression. If a superior adds a sixth to five immediate subordinates he increases his opportunity for delegation by 20 per cent. but he adds over 100 per cent. to the number of relationships he has to take into account. Because ultimately it is based on the limitations imposed by the human span of attention, this principle is called *The Span of Control*.²¹⁰

Graicunas asserted that ignorance of 'this single fact explains many notorious military disasters'.²¹¹ However, he added the proviso that the span of control could exceed this ideal of four subordinates in circumstances where the work of one or

²⁰⁸ Fred Nichols, "The Span of Control and the Formulas of V. A. Graicunas," located at <http://www.nickols.us/graicunas.pdf> (02/12/2015), p. 2.

²⁰⁹ V.A. Graicunas, "Relationships in Organization," in *Papers on the Science of Administration*, ed. Luther Gulick and L. Urwick (Washington: Institute of Public Administration, 1937) pp. 186-187.

²¹⁰ Urwick, *The Elements of Administration*. p. 52-53. (Emphasis in original).

²¹¹ Graicunas, "Relationships in Organization." p. 185.

more subordinates did not interlock, thus significantly reducing the number of cross relationships. Graicunas cited the British divisional commander as a good example who, according to him was assigned six subordinates, three of which, namely the three Brigade commanders, did not share *formal* cross relationships.²¹²

Broadly, the span of control principle was formally acknowledged by *FSR II*, stipulating that:

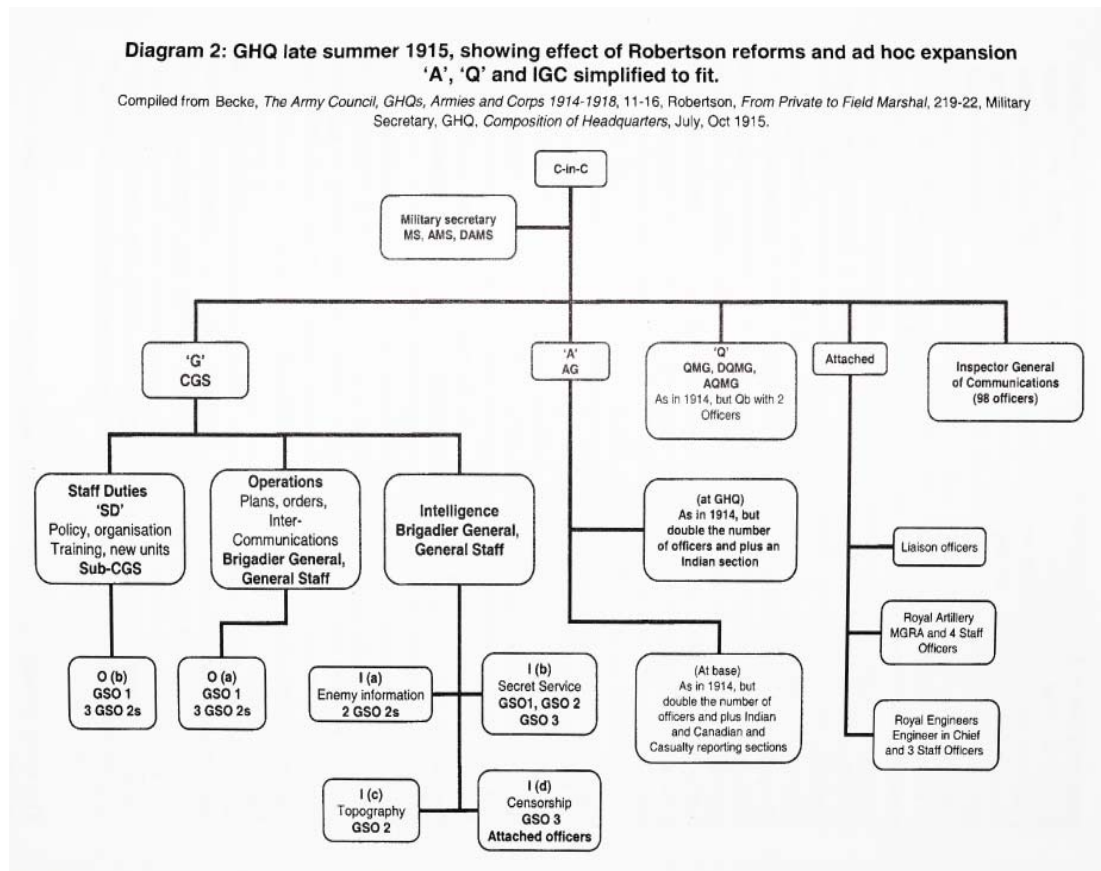
The command of military forces is exercised on the following principles: The C.-in-C., aided by his staff, exerts his authority over a limited number of subordinate commanders. These, aided by their staff and assistants, convey his will to a limited number of subordinates under them, each of whom carries it down still lower, until all ranks are controlled by it.²¹³

As shown in the organogram of GHQ (Figure 14 below), in 1915 the principle of the span of control was respected. Sir John French had four top ranking subordinates reporting directly to him as well as a military secretary and two army commanders whose roles did not formally interlock.

²¹² Ibid. pp. 183-187

²¹³ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)* p. 24.

Figure 14: GHQ Organization (Late Summer 1915) ²¹⁴



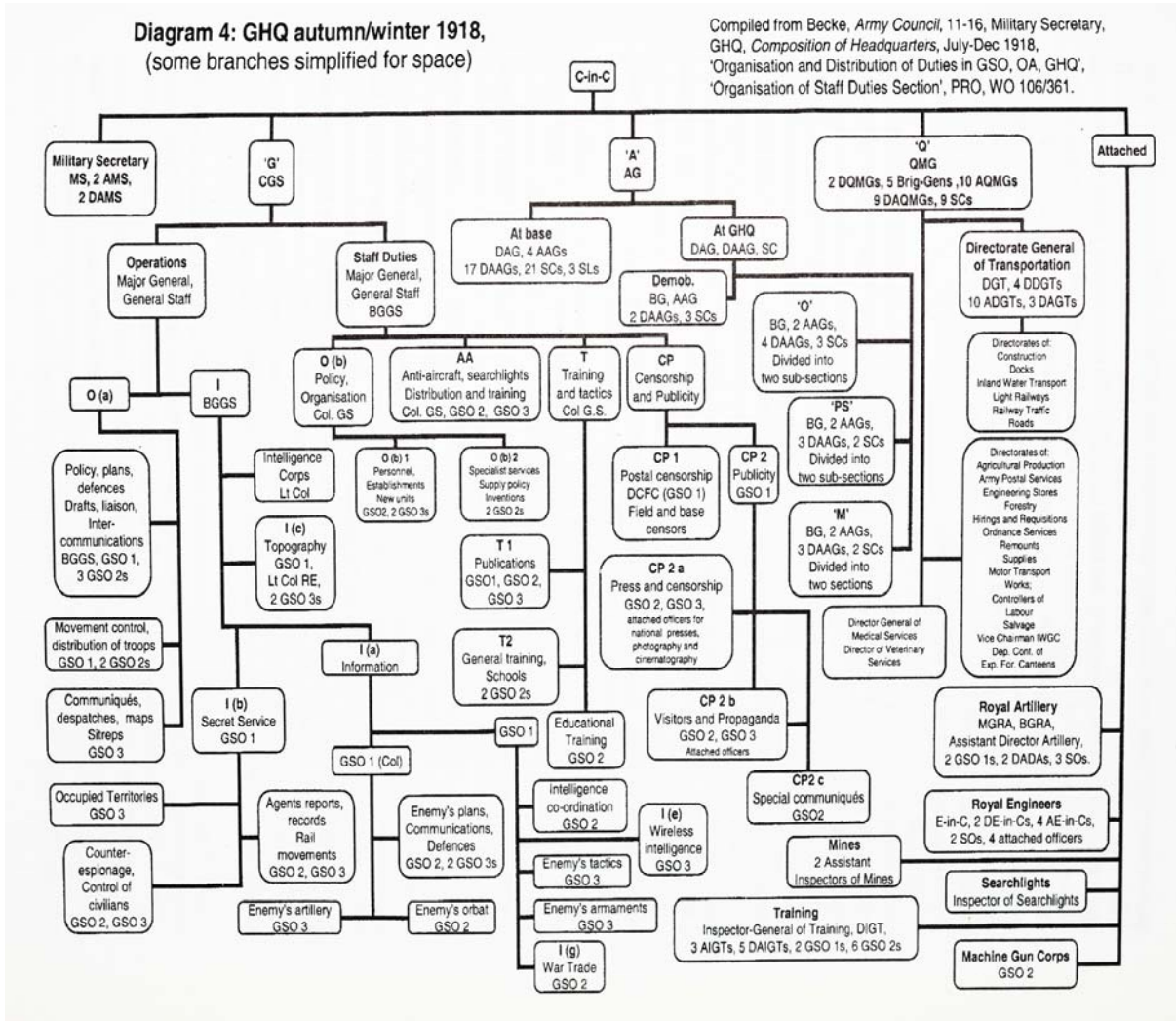
However, as shown in simplified form (Figure 15 below), by 1918 the complexity of the reporting structure at GHQ and its five armies had dramatically changed. When GHQ arrived in France it had a complement of ‘about thirty Staff Officers’.²¹⁵ In 1918 this had risen to approximately 5,000 officers and men. It appears from the diagram that Haig’s span of control was stretched beyond the limit, when the direct reporting relationships of his four army commanders is added to his tally of subordinates. However, what is not shown is the coordinating role of the GS that was devised by Haig between 1907-09 at the WO. As will be described below,

²¹⁴ Dan Todman, "The Grand Lamasery Revisited: General Headquarters on the Western Front 1914-1918," in *Command and Control on the Western Front. The British Army's Experience 1914-1918*, ed. Gary Sheffield and Dan Todman (Staplehurst: Spellmount Limited, 2004) p. 47.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 41.

this body acted to reduce the organizational risks associated with of an over extended span of control.²¹⁶

Figure 15: GHQ Organization (Summer and Autumn 1918)²¹⁷



Sphere of Influence

The sphere of influence is a term borrowed from geopolitics where it is generally used to depict the management of relationships between countries.²¹⁸ Here it serves as a prism to examine the complex methods that Haig deployed to impose his will on the BEF's external and internal stakeholders. All military leaders have

²¹⁶ This aspect is examined in Chapter 7.

²¹⁷ Todman, "The Grand Lamasery Revisited: General Headquarters on the Western Front 1914-1918." p. 61.

²¹⁸ Richard A. D'Aveni, "Corporate Spheres of Influence," *MIT Sloane Management Review* 45, no. 4 (2004).

this opportunity; the vital open question is whether or not they choose to manage their spheres of influence?

In Haig's case and that of the BEF these external stakeholders included the Crown, Parliament, the War Cabinet, the Army Council, the Press, the British and Empire public, and Allied politicians and military leaders. Internal stakeholders included commanders, officers and troops of all ranks. Haig choose to manage his sphere of influence and he did so by formal and informal meetings, visits, media briefings, ceremonies and what today might be called public relations 'stunts'. Haig was motivated by the strong desire to help ensure that the BEF achieved its mission by enhancing its good reputation. To some extent, his motives were also driven by a degree of self-interest to fuel his legacy, and his natural instinct for job preservation.

On Haig's appointment as C-in-C, and in accord with Kitchener's instructions, he immediately turned his attention to 'assist the French and Belgian Governments in driving the German Armies from French and Belgian territory'. Haig knew that the BEF would need the most capable officers, the manpower, and the full technological and material resources of Britain and the Empire to fulfil this task.²¹⁹ To this end, he methodically set about promoting and extending the BEFs 'sphere of influence' among external and internal stakeholders.

An analysis of Haig's daily diary between January 1st and July 31st, 1917 demonstrates how this was achieved. This period has been selected because it was arguably Haig's most testing time on the Western Front due to a combination of political, allied and military factors. Following high casualties on the Somme, the Prime Minister's confidence in Haig's generalship was shaken. Apart from being openly critical of the BEF's performance, Lloyd George subordinated Haig to French

²¹⁹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Secret Document: Kitchener to Haig; 28/12/1915. n.p.

General Nivelle's command for the forthcoming 1917 Allied spring offensive.²²⁰ Much to Prime Minister's chagrin the campaign failed, General Nivelle was sacked, and elements of the French army dissolved into a serious state of indiscipline. Combined with British success at Vimy Ridge, this turmoil strengthened Haig's hand but Lloyd George remained obstructive by curtailing the BEF's manpower and material resources. He diverted men, heavy artillery and ammunition to other theatres that he considered to be more fertile. Confiding to his diary Haig bleakly observed: 'it is too sad at this critical time to have to fight with one's allies and the home Govt., in addition to the enemy in the Field'.²²¹

Before examining the findings, a brief explanation of the data is desirable. Haig recorded only those meetings and persons that he considered were of importance to posterity. Thus, routine meetings with his senior commanders, administrative staff and attached officers go largely unrecorded, understating the number of meetings, visits and contacts.

It has been asserted by some historians that while Haig's men were exposed to the brunt of the fighting he and other commanders were comfortably ensconced in their *châteaux* well behind the lines.²²² The former is true, while the latter is not. Of the 212 days in question, Haig spent only 52 nights at his modest Château Beurepaire situated 2 miles outside the town of Montreuil. The bulk of his time was spent at a temporary advanced HQ located in relatively close proximity to the front line and within heavy artillery and aerial bombing range. While at advanced HQ, the majority of Haig's recorded meetings took place at army, corps, division, brigade and even battalion HQ. Haig typically worked 7 days a week and approximately 12 to 14

²²⁰ Ibid. Entry 15/01/1917; 26/02/1917.

²²¹ Ibid. Entry: 28/02/1917.

²²² Gordon Corrigan, *Mud, Blood and Poppycock: Britain and the First World War* (London: Cassell, 2003). Kindle Loc. 3231. Winter, *Haig's Command: A Reassessment*. p. 304.

hours per day. He generally exercised before breakfast and worked late into the night. After-dinner meetings with visitors and his senior commanders were a common practice. Apart from nine days leave in England, he did not have any days off. During this 'holiday' he enjoyed the odd game of golf with his wife, and as a dutiful father he took his children to the 'West End' of London to be entertained by the 'Bing-Bong Brothers'.²²³ Other than this, he grossed himself in military business.

Figure 16: Methods Haig Employed to Establish and Enhance the BEF's Sphere of Influence (January to July 1917)

| Methods (Number) | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Total |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|
| Meetings | 48 | 58 | 68 | 93 | 78 | 82 | 65 | 492 |
| Persons attending meetings | 152 | 121 | 204 | 148 | 197 | 178 | 184 | 1,184 |
| Visits made to Haig's H.Q. | 35 | 35 | 28 | 24 | 22 | 28 | 26 | 198 |
| Visitors attending Haig's H.Q. | 49 | 52 | 35 | 25 | 34 | 32 | 54 | 281 |
| Briefings made by Haig | 4 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 33 |
| Haig mentions in the press | 1,188 | 1,272 | 1,494 | 1,712 | 1,894 | 1,916 | 1,604 | 11,080 |
| Other activities incl. ceremonies and inspections | 5 | 33 | 10 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 59 |

Source: NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's War Diary (Typed Version).

Haig used all the means at his disposal to secure and extend his own and the BEF's sphere of influence (Figure 16). These included meetings, briefings, attending to guests at his headquarters, press briefings, inspections and ceremonies. In total Haig had 492 meetings where he met 1,184 people, the majority on more than one occasion. This approximated to an average of two meetings with six people per day. He also had to contend with a constant stream of visitors from rich and varied backgrounds including royalty, politicians, Allied soldiers, journalists and civilians. These people ranged from King George V and Queen Mary, the President of France, British and French Prime Ministers and respective members of their war cabinets. In addition, he had to accommodate visiting British, French and Allied top ranking army and naval officers and their staffs, bishops and assorted civilians. While these people were essential to enhancing and protecting the BEF's sphere of influence, for

²²³ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry 07/06/1917.

Haig they were also a source of continuing distraction from the vital business of managing his armies and fighting the Germans.

Figure 17: Methods that Haig Employed to Establish and Enhance the BEF's Sphere of Influence by Location and Type of Stakeholder (January to July 1917)

| Stakeholders | Meetings | Contacts | Visits to BEF | Visitors | Briefings | Ceremonials |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|---------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| HOME | | | | | | |
| Royal Arena | 6 | 6 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 0 |
| Political Arena | 7 | 12 | 13 | 20 | 7 | 0 |
| War Cabinet | 10 | 50 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| War Office | 14 | 28 | 15 | 19 | 14 | 0 |
| Media Arena | 1 | 1 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 0 |
| Total | 38 | 97 | 39 | 57 | 32 | 0 |
| ABROAD | | | | | | |
| French Military Arena | 18 | 53 | 24 | 41 | 0 | 7 |
| French Political Arena | 9 | 42 | 4 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| French Media Arena | 0 | 0 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 0 |
| French Public Arena | | | | | | 1 |
| Total | 27 | 95 | 32 | 63 | 1 | 8 |
| ABROAD | | | | | | |
| Allied Dignitaries & Officers | 5 | 10 | 19 | 36 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 5 | 10 | 19 | 36 | 0 | 1 |
| EMPIRE | | | | | | |
| Military Arena | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Political Arena | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 3 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| WESTERN FRONT | | | | | | |
| Lieut.-Gen. and Above | 167 | 243 | 26 | 26 | 0 | 0 |
| Maj.-Gen. | 154 | 302 | 27 | 28 | 0 | 0 |
| Brig.-Gen. | 41 | 198 | 14 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| Maj. to Col. | 37 | 53 | 13 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| Sub. To Capt. | 2 | 3 | 12 | 23 | 0 | 0 |
| Other Ranks | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Others | 18 | 180 | 13 | 14 | 0 | 47 |
| Total | 419 | 979 | 106 | 120 | 0 | 50 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 492 | 1184 | 198 | 281 | 33 | 59 |

Source: NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's War Diary (Typed Version). Entries: 01/01/1917 to 31/07/1917

Figure 17 provides an analysis of the incidence of methods deployed by Haig to protect and enhance the BEF's sphere of influence by the geographies of stakeholders. The home front presented Haig with his most vitally important and difficult challenge. It was here that the BEF derived its higher strategic direction, manpower and material resources. It was also here that, at best, Haig had a fractious

relationship with Lloyd George. In all, Haig attended the War Cabinet in London on 10 occasions, mainly to defend his planned offensives. As a counterweight to his deteriorating relations with Lloyd George, Haig sought to influence other high ranking politicians, particularly Lord Esher and Lord Derby, the Secretary of State for War. He was also enjoyed a close relationship with the former Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith. It is no accident that Haig's private secretary, Sir Philip Sassoon was an able and influential serving M.P.²²⁴ Haig was not beyond using his patronage to further the careers of politicians and their progeny at the front, provided he considered they were up to the job.²²⁵ Haig also curried favour with King George V whom he met often at Buckingham Palace and in France. During periods of particular difficulty, the King sent his private secretary and emissary, Col. Clive Wigram to Haig's HQ with messages of support. The King was adamant that Haig should not resign in the face of Lloyd George's behaviour and criticism.²²⁶ Haig also ensured that he had the full support of the WO, and in particular the CIGS. He met with senior members of the War Office, including Derby and Robertson on at least 29 occasions.

In France, Haig worked tirelessly to promote the BEF's interests within the French military and political establishment. Unlike his predecessor, Haig had a reasonable fluency in the French language. This allowed him to promote empathy and understanding with his allies including Clemenceau, Foch, Joffre and Pétain. Haig attended meetings, made courtesy calls, exchanged visits with his French

²²⁴ Sassoon was the Member for Hythe from 1912 until his death in 1939, and a prominent member by marriage of the highly influential Rothschild family.

²²⁵ Over lunch on Sunday 7th February 1917, Haig arranged for the son of Lord Balfour of Burleigh, the Scottish Representative in the House of Lords, to secure a commission in the Guards. NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 07/01/1917. In 1915, Haig also placed Churchill in command of a battalion after his services were dispensed with by the Admiralty. It must be said Churchill wanted a brigade, but Haig insisted that he had to prove that 'he could bear responsibility in action as a CO of a Battalion' before he would sanction this promotion. Entry 14/12/1915.

²²⁶ Ibid. Entry: 11/03/1917.

counterparts, brought senior French liaison officers into his confidence, handed out British military awards to French officers and took the salute at their parades with great aplomb.

Allied dignitaries and officers visited HQ quite frequently. This enabled Haig to extend the BEF's sphere of influence to men like the King of the Belgians, the Portuguese Minister of War, and General Pershing, the American C-in-C. Politicians from Canada and Australia also visited Haig's HQ, including the Canadian Prime Minister and two of his ministers. Australian politicians were distinguished by their absence during this period. However, in September 1917, Haig did receive a representation via Keith Murdoch, the Australian journalist, from the Prime Minister Billy Hughes with the demand to organise the five Australian divisions into "an Army", which of course he resisted.²²⁷

Haig's most frequent meetings were with his senior commanders, allowing him to stamp his authority on the organization. He was not a consensual leader, but, despite a reputed lack of fluency in speech and a natural reserve, Haig's first instinct was to meet his commanders face-to-face at their headquarters. Haig used these meetings to weigh-up their immediate plans and methods; to assess the calibre of the commanders, their subordinates and staffs, and to offer congratulations or remonstrations. What is perhaps surprising is that officers of all ranks, and not just general officers, were made welcome at Haig's HQ. These encounters helped him to check the pulse of his officer corps. During major operations it was Haig's habit to inspect on horse-back captured ground and rear areas relatively near to the front lines with members of his personal staff. These inspections allowed Haig to gauge for

²²⁷ Ibid. Entry: 01/06/1917. Murdoch was knighted in 1933 and became one of Australia's most influential newspaper magnates.

himself battlefield conditions from key vantage points, to become familiar with the ground, and to speak to commanders with authority in a manner that gained respect.

Figure 18: Incidence of Haig's Visitors by Month (January to July 1917)

| Contacts and Visitors/ Months 1917 | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Total |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| British Representatives: | | | | | | | | |
| Royal Arena | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 17 |
| Political Arena | 1 | 10 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 32 |
| War Cabinet | 12 | 0 | 14 | 1 | 0 | 24 | 0 | 51 |
| War Office | 8 | 3 | 10 | 5 | 7 | 13 | 1 | 47 |
| Media Arena | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| Total | 25 | 13 | 32 | 9 | 15 | 45 | 15 | 154 |
| French Representatives: | | | | | | | | |
| Military Arena | 16 | 11 | 19 | 14 | 12 | 9 | 13 | 94 |
| Political Arena | 5 | 7 | 13 | 3 | 8 | 0 | 20 | 56 |
| Media Arena | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Total | 21 | 26 | 32 | 17 | 20 | 9 | 33 | 158 |
| Allied Dignitaries and Officers: | | | | | | | | |
| | 13 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 8 | 46 |
| Total | 13 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 8 | 46 |
| Empire Dignitaries and Officers: | | | | | | | | |
| Military Arena | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Political Arena | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 7 |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 8 |
| British Soldiers and Civilians on Western Front: | | | | | | | | |
| Lieut.-Gen. and Above | 18 | 23 | 47 | 53 | 44 | 38 | 46 | 269 |
| Maj.-Gen. | 43 | 32 | 47 | 47 | 61 | 32 | 68 | 330 |
| Brig.-Gen. | 19 | 21 | 31 | 20 | 46 | 26 | 50 | 213 |
| Maj. to Col. | 4 | 23 | 4 | 4 | 13 | 13 | 6 | 67 |
| Sub. to Capt. | 16 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 26 |
| Other Ranks | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Others | 40 | 21 | 21 | 39 | 22 | 23 | 0 | 166 |
| Total | 140 | 121 | 153 | 164 | 187 | 132 | 175 | 1072 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 199 | 173 | 221 | 191 | 230 | 192 | 232 | 1438 |

Source: NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's War Diary (Typed Version). Entries: 01/01/1917 to 31/07/1917

Figure 18 depicts the incidence of Haig's visitors by month. As can be seen, the underlying pattern is dictated by the BEF's major offensive operations. The incidence of civilian and military visitors varies inversely between planning and periods of fighting. The table also shows that British and French politicians made constant demands on Haig's time. In July 1917, immediately before the Third Ypres offensive was launched, Haig had to contend with all the formalities of a ten day visit by King George V and Queen Mary. Haig was also distracted by Lloyd George's

prevarication concerning the formal approval for Third Ypres, belatedly received on July 21st, and the Prime Minister's continuing attempts to divert men and guns to Italy. This made Haig 'anxious for the future'. Both the King and Lord Derby did what they could to personally support Haig. The King knighted him with the Insignia of the Thistle, and Derby offered him a peerage that Haig turned down.²²⁸

Haig also extended the BEF's sphere of influence through a carefully managed press campaign. Haig met and briefed British press barons and British and French war correspondents,²²⁹ in the case of latter, sometimes with unfortunate results.²³⁰ GHQ issued daily communiqués that were censored and filtered to the press via the WO in London. These were syndicated throughout the regional press in Britain and the Empire. In addition, Haig oversaw the preparation of official despatches published in the *London Gazette*. Without disclosing any sensitive information, he ensured that the operations of the BEF were received in the most favourable light.

Figure 19: Newspaper Coverage (1st January to 31 July 1917)

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Total |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| The London Times | 21 | 20 | 16 | 16 | 32 | 30 | 19 | 154 |
| British Regional Newspaper (BL) | 229 | 174 | 145 | 217 | 242 | 258 | 185 | 1,450 |
| Australian Newspapers | 920 | 1,055 | 1,317 | 1,451 | 1,601 | 1,602 | 1,383 | 9,329 |
| The Toronto Star | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 21 |
| The New York Times | 8 | 10 | 6 | 16 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 63 |
| Le Figaro | 3 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 31 |
| La Croix | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 32 |
| TOTAL | 1,188 | 1,272 | 1,494 | 1,712 | 1,894 | 1,916 | 1,604 | 11,080 |

Sources:

<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/advanced>

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>

<http://query.nytimes.com/search/sitesearch/#//>

http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/O/1/1/purl=rc6_TTDA?sw_aep=kings

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k2597779.r=Douglas+Haig.langEN>

Note:

Search phrase "Sir Douglas Haig".

Results = no of articles which include the phrase 'Sir Douglas Haig'.

²²⁸ Ibid. Entry 03/07/1917; 24/06/1917; Letter: Derby to Haig 28/07/1917 ; Letter: Haig to Derby 29/07/1917.

²²⁹ Ibid. Entry 01/06/1916.

²³⁰ Ibid. Entry 01/02/1917. ; 18/02/1917. See pp. 258-259 below.

Figure 19 (above) shows the results of a ‘dipstick’ press clippings survey. This relates specifically to mentions of “Sir Douglas Haig” that appeared in a relatively very small selection of newspapers published in Britain, Canada, America, and France. For Australia, a comprehensive on-line database via the Government’s TROVE portal is available for interrogation. This includes national, regional and local press. The results, heavily skewed by the Australian figures, indicates that between January 1st and July 31st broad-scale awareness was achieved for both Haig and the BEF driven by 11,080 press mentions. Of this figure, 1,751 mentions appeared in the non-Australian press. This awareness of Haig was likely to have been generally positive as the press refrained from negative criticism that probably would undermine the war effort. Had it been possible to properly measure press coverage particularly in Britain and Canada, it is likely that high levels of broad-scale awareness of Haig would have been obtained. Given the extent of press coverage dealing with the war, combined with the huge public interest, it would also have been most odd if Haig and the BEF were not household names with the informed general public in all parts of the Empire and beyond.

To conclude, it appears that Haig’s proactive endeavours to manage, protect and enhance the BEF’s and his own sphere of influence were successful. Throughout the war, the Western Front remained the main British theatre of operations, despite Lloyd George’s determination to do otherwise by fighting in Eastern theatres. Although restrictions were applied to transfers of manpower from home during 1917 and the early months of 1918, the supply of material resources were maintained. Haig’s standing with the King, the British public and with his armies in France remained firm throughout his tenure to the extent that Lloyd George could not sack him without serious risking his own position. It is also true that after the set-back at

Cambrai in November 1917 and the politicization of the Press barons, Haig did lose the unequivocal support of some quarters of the British press.²³¹ Haig's rapport with his French allies was such that when unity of command was established in the spring of 1918, the military coalition was productive. The findings also reveal that for a man infamously inarticulate, deskbound, and supposedly luxuriating in his 'château', Haig did a lot of talking and in periods of intense operations he located himself close to the front lines in comfortable but comparatively sparse quarters.²³²

Plasticity

Recently the Editor of the *Harvard Business Review* commented that 'no business survives over the long term if it can't reinvent itself.' As people within organizations are habitually resistant to change, 'leading change is both absolutely essential and incredibly difficult'.²³³ However, in the present era of disruptive technological innovation, the 'long-term' can be more meaningfully measured in months rather than years. Thus, it is not surprising that change management is one of the most, if not the most vital business topic today.²³⁴ Academics, commentators and practitioners in the business arena would benefit from studying the BEF's ability to reinvent itself successfully under conditions of extraordinary duress and in a matter of months between 1916 and 1918.

Three aspects of the organization's plasticity under Haig's leadership will be examined. The first provides evidence of the BEF's resilience, both in physical and moral terms, to huge casualties. The second shows its responsiveness to a potentially

²³¹ Stephen Badsey, *The British Army in Battle and Its Image 1914-1918* (London: Continuum, 2009). p. 28

²³² Todman, "The Grand Lamasery Revisited: General Headquarters on the Western Front 1914-1918." pp. 51-53.

²³³ John P. Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformations Efforts Fail," *Harvard Business Review*, January (2007) p. 2.

²³⁴ Bernard Brunes, *Managing Change: A Strategic Approach to Organizational Change*, Fifth ed. (London: FT Prentice Hall, 2009) p. 1.

crippling failure of logistics, the highly successful resolution of which underpinned its operational achievements in 1918. The third demonstrates the BEF's ability to harness technological and associated organizational innovation to revolutionise its conduct of fighting within a period of 18 months, ushering in the era of modern three dimensional warfare.

Resilience

Military organizations in the field have to be mentally, physically and, above all, morally resilient in the face of continuous human and material losses. The BEF was no exception. As indicated in Figure 20 (below), on average the force's annual manpower turnover rate was 57.4%, due to permanent losses of officers and men. The rate was slightly higher for officers (59.9%), than other ranks (57.2%). The BEF's turnover rate was highest in 1915 (70.6%), when the force fought with the largely untrained troops of the new Kitchener armies, and when heavy guns and munitions of all calibres were in short supply.²³⁵ (To put these figures into the context of a large scale and complex civilian organization, currently the NHS experiences annual turnover rates of 10% for doctors and 9% for nursing staff).²³⁶

In particular, the importance cannot be overstated of the negative impact of high officer turnover rates on morale, on the preservation of in-theatre training, and on small unit cohesion.²³⁷ This factor, which also manifests itself by showing a lack of training and inexperience in the junior and middle ranks of the officer corps, partially explains away criticism that the BEF's generalship was slow to respond to the realities of modern industrial warfare during 1915 and 1916.

²³⁵ G. D. Sheffield, "Officer-man Relations: Morale and Discipline in the British Army, 1902-22" (University of London, 1994) p. 252.

²³⁶ <http://www.qualitywatch.org.uk/indicator/staff-turnover-nhs> (02/12/2015).

²³⁷ Hew Strachan, "The Morale of the German Army, 1917-18," in *Facing Armageddon*, ed. Hugh Cecil and Peter H. Liddle (London: Leo Cooper, 1996) pp. 383-398.

Figure 20: Analysis of BEF Casualties in France and Flanders (1914-1918)

| Rank | 1,914 | | 1,915 | | 1,916 | | 1,917 | | 1,918 | | Total | |
|---|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % |
| Officers Killed | 1,038 | | 3,032 | | 6,506 | | 7,659 | | 5,111 | | 23,346 | |
| Officers DoTW | 228 | | 745 | | 1,814 | | 2,627 | | 3,044 | | 8,458 | |
| Officers DoFDorI | 12 | | 110 | | 229 | | 271 | | 635 | | 1,257 | |
| Officers M&Pow | 783 | | 802 | | 1,628 | | 2,634 | | 5,066 | | 10,913 | |
| <i>Total Deaths, Missing & Pows</i> | <i>2,061</i> | <i>35.2%</i> | <i>4,689</i> | <i>17.1%</i> | <i>10,177</i> | <i>18.9%</i> | <i>13,191</i> | <i>17.7%</i> | <i>13,856</i> | <i>16.4%</i> | <i>43,974</i> | <i>17.9%</i> |
| Officers Wd | 1,877 | | 7,434 | | 20,345 | | 20,835 | | 25,733 | | 76,224 | |
| Officers S&I | 1,910 | | 15,282 | | 23,187 | | 40,591 | | 45,076 | | 126,046 | |
| <i>Total Officer Casualties</i> | <i>3,787</i> | | <i>22,716</i> | | <i>43,532</i> | | <i>61,426</i> | | <i>70,809</i> | | <i>202,270</i> | |
| <i>Total Officer Deaths, Missing, Pows & Casualties</i> | <i>5,848</i> | <i>3.3%</i> | <i>27,405</i> | <i>3.1%</i> | <i>53,709</i> | <i>4.2%</i> | <i>74,617</i> | <i>4.2%</i> | <i>84,665</i> | <i>4.1%</i> | <i>246,244</i> | |
| O.R. Killed | 11,971 | | 45,572 | | 100,905 | | 124,102 | | 75,365 | | 357,915 | |
| O.R. DoTW | 3,429 | | 14,159 | | 35,065 | | 47,205 | | 43,040 | | 142,898 | |
| O.R. DoFDorI | 496 | | 2,797 | | 5,612 | | 8,151 | | 13,785 | | 30,841 | |
| O.R. M&Pow | 25,728 | | 23,754 | | 42,047 | | 51,160 | | 66,222 | | 308,911 | |
| <i>Total O.R. Deaths, Missing & Pows</i> | <i>41,624</i> | <i>24.3%</i> | <i>86,282</i> | <i>10.0%</i> | <i>183,629</i> | <i>14.9%</i> | <i>230,618</i> | <i>13.4%</i> | <i>198,472</i> | <i>10.0%</i> | <i>840,565</i> | <i>13.9%</i> |
| O.R. Wd | 53,812 | | 217,529 | | 433,352 | | 494,027 | | 552,669 | | 1,751,389 | |
| O.R. S&I | 76,139 | | 561,549 | | 614,893 | | 993,253 | | 1,224,508 | | 3,470,342 | |
| <i>Total O.R. Casualties</i> | <i>129,951</i> | | <i>779,078</i> | | <i>1,048,245</i> | | <i>1,487,280</i> | | <i>1,777,177</i> | | <i>5,221,731</i> | |
| <i>Total O.R. Deaths, Missing, Pows & Casualties</i> | <i>171,575</i> | <i>96.7%</i> | <i>865,360</i> | <i>96.9%</i> | <i>1,231,874</i> | <i>95.8%</i> | <i>1,717,898</i> | <i>95.8%</i> | <i>1,975,589</i> | <i>95.9%</i> | <i>6,062,296</i> | <i>96.1%</i> |
| <i>Total All Ranks Deaths, Missing & Pows</i> | <i>43,685</i> | <i>24.6%</i> | <i>90,971</i> | <i>10.2%</i> | <i>193,806</i> | <i>15.1%</i> | <i>243,809</i> | <i>13.6%</i> | <i>212,268</i> | <i>10.3%</i> | <i>884,539</i> | <i>14.0%</i> |
| <i>Total All Ranks Casualties</i> | <i>133,738</i> | <i>75.4%</i> | <i>801,794</i> | <i>89.8%</i> | <i>1,091,777</i> | <i>84.9%</i> | <i>1,548,706</i> | <i>86.4%</i> | <i>1,847,986</i> | <i>89.7%</i> | <i>5,424,001</i> | <i>86.0%</i> |
| Grand Total All Ranks | 177,423 | | 892,765 | | 1,285,583 | | 1,792,515 | | 2,060,254 | | 6,308,540 | |
| Average Ration Strength | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Officers | 7,600 | 4.0% | 22,312 | 3.6% | 49,599 | 3.8% | 73,449 | 3.9% | 77,421 | 4.2% | 138,236 | 56.1% |
| O.R. | 182,400 | 96.0% | 593,774 | 96.4% | 1,272,476 | 96.2% | 1,821,062 | 96.1% | 1,779,605 | 95.8% | 3,190,678 | 52.6% |
| All Ranks | 190,000 | 100.0% | 616,086 | 100.0% | 1,322,075 | 100.0% | 1,894,511 | 100.0% | 1,857,026 | 100.0% | 3,328,915 | 52.8% |
| Estimated Permanent Losses | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Officers | 3,999 | 68.4% | 14,841 | 54.2% | 31,981 | 59.5% | 40,926 | 54.8% | 46,488 | 54.9% | 138,236 | 56.1% |
| O.R. | 104,048 | 60.6% | 420,059 | 48.5% | 686,895 | 55.8% | 898,136 | 52.3% | 981,541 | 49.7% | 3,190,678 | 52.6% |
| All Ranks | 108,047 | 60.9% | 434,900 | 48.7% | 718,876 | 55.9% | 939,062 | 52.4% | 1,028,029 | 49.9% | 3,328,915 | 52.8% |
| Annual Turnover Rate | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Officers | 52.6% | | 66.5% | | 64.5% | | 55.7% | | 60.0% | | Average | 59.9% |
| O.R. | 57.0% | | 70.7% | | 54.0% | | 49.3% | | 55.2% | | Average | 57.2% |
| All Ranks | 56.9% | | 70.6% | | 54.4% | | 49.6% | | 55.4% | | Average | 57.4% |

Source: Medical Services (Mitchell) p. 12 Table 1: France and Flanders
 Estimated Permanent Losses: 29.40% of wounded men (all ranks) and 67.91% of sick and injured men (all ranks) were returned to duty from hospitals. This equates to permanent losses of 70.06% and 32.09% respectively. Medical Services (Mitchell) p.18, Table 7.

It is not possible to draw a comparison of casualties between the BEF, and the French and German armies because of the lack of relevant and reliable statistical data. However, as will be shown in chapter six, under Haig's command the BEF improved its own trajectory of unity-of-moral-effort throughout the war. Specifically, the BEF did not suffer a moral crisis similar to the one experienced by the French army in 1917, or like the enemy's catastrophic collapse of fighting spirit in 1918.²³⁸

It is clear from this brief analysis that the medical staff succeed admirably in their arduous and debilitating task of manpower conservation on the Western Front. Haig paid a fitting tribute to the Medical Services in his final despatch when he observed that 'there has been no war in which the resources of science have been utilised so generously and successfully for the prevention of disease, or for the quick evacuation and careful tending of the sick and wounded'.²³⁹

Responsiveness

In August 1916, the demands of the Somme campaign stretched British logistical infrastructure to breaking-point. A rupture would have had catastrophic consequences for the BEF's fighting power.²⁴⁰ Under Haig's leadership, and within a period of just eight months, the organization and administration of British logistics was entirely re-engineered. The success was such that this work laid the foundation for the BEF's contribution to the Allied victory in 1918. Moreover, it is a clear demonstration of the organization's ability to respond to a crisis. The result was an impressive managerial achievement given that the required reforms were carried out under the most intense battle conditions. Unfortunately, despite the reforms carried

²³⁸ Sheffield, "Officer-man Relations: Morale and Discipline in the British Army, 1902-22." p. 334.

²³⁹ Douglas Haig, *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches, December 1915-April 1919*, ed. by J.H. Boraston (London: J.M. Dent & Co, 1919) p. 342.

²⁴⁰ William Philpott, *Bloody Victory: The Sacrifice on the Somme and the Making of the Twentieth Century* (London: Little, Brown, 2009) p. 155.

out after the South African War the seeds of the crisis were sown before the BEF arrived in France.

In the light of lessons learned in South Africa, the British system of transport and supply had been modernised, motorised conveyance was introduced, and recognition was given to the principle that supplies had to ‘pushed’ rather ‘pulled’ from the rear to the front. As stated in *FSR-II*, this implied that ‘*troops in action should never have to turn their backs on the enemy to fetch ammunition; what they require should be sent up to them on the initiative of the troops or services in the rear*’.²⁴¹ In addition, not only were the methods of transport revised, but following an intensive study by the WO to examine the supply processes of continental armies the services offered by the ASC were overhauled and thoroughly tested through the use of administrative staff tours. By 1914, the consensus was that these reforms ‘brought the maintenance organization of the field Army abreast of all modern conditions. Moreover, they were susceptible of adaptation to all sorts and conditions of warfare as was subsequently proved in practice’.²⁴² This promising statement by the ASCs official historian, Col. R.H. Beadon, glosses over the fact that in spite of all the improvements that had been made the BEF’s logistical infrastructure, just like that of its manpower and firepower, was grossly under-resourced to meet the demands of modern continental warfare.

There was another vital factor that had severe and unintended consequences for the efficiency of the BEF’s logistics. This was the agreement made during the pre-war Anglo-French staff talks that the French would take responsibility for all British movement by rail. This decision was sensible enough given the fundamental

²⁴¹ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)* pp. 73-74. (Emphasis in original).

²⁴² Colonel R.H. Beadon, *The Royal Army Service Corps: A History of Transport and Supply in the British Army*, 2 vols, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931) p. 61.

differences in policy, operating practices, equipment and track between the two rail networks. When the BEF was mobilized at 4pm on August 4th 1914, orders issued to the IGC, Lieut.-Gen. F.S. Robb, confirmed this arrangement:

The entire railway service is manned and controlled by the French, who undertake the work of construction, repair, traffic management and protection, not only in French territory, but beyond the frontier [into Belgium].²⁴³

However, as will be seen below, the agreement broke down when resources were constrained and priorities became conflicted on the Somme in 1916.

Other problems emerged during the course of 1914 that also undermined the efficiency of the BEF's logistics, some of which had been identified during the 1912 and 1913 Administrative Staff Tours. These issues included the potential for conflicted decision making between the QMG and the IGC on the supply chain. Ironically no action was deemed necessary by Sir John French, then the CIGS. Possibly he had been lulled into a false sense of security by the joint-staffs agreement. This particular problem was patched-up in the field by ad-hocism and pragmatism prior to the crisis in 1916.²⁴⁴

However, in summary, as Col. M.G. Taylor, Assistant Director of Movements observed 'the melancholy truth is that in 1914 our ideas were rudimentary. Our small force of six divisions went to France...with no more than a rudimentary organization for transport'. In all, this contingent comprised a staff of 31 officers.²⁴⁵ By the end of 1915 the ration strength of the BEF reached 1,047,700 men, up nearly 10-fold by comparison to August 1914. In addition, approximately '220,000 animals, 460,000

²⁴³ TNA/WO/33/686, "Instructions to I.G.C. (1914)," (1914) part II, para.1.

²⁴⁴ Ian Malcolm Brown, *British Logistics on the Western Front 1914-1919* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998) See particularly Chapters 1 and 2.

²⁴⁵ M.G. Taylor, "Land Transportation in the Late War," *JRUSI* 66, no. 464 (1921) p. 700.

tons of forage, 305,000 tons of food and 120,000 tons of ammunition and hundreds of thousands of tons of other stores and foods had been landed and moved forward from the base ports to the front'.²⁴⁶ Given that the original Anglo-French agreement was predicated on a British contribution of six infantry and one cavalry division, the fact that the French rail network and the rudimentary BEF logistical capability was able to absorb this huge expansion reflected great credit on the administration of both armies and the French civil authorities.

In October 1915, in a pre-emptive intervention to avert the brewing crisis, Kitchener sent Brig.-Gen. Sir Percy Girouard, a leading authority on military rail transport to investigate. He reported on October 24th proposing that 'in imitation of the French System, the full control of the Railways, the Mechanical Transport and of the Services should be concentrated at Army Headquarters [GHQ]'.²⁴⁷ This proposal was implemented and marked the first step in what would become under Haig's leadership the full integration of the BEF's logistical organization.

When Haig took command of the BEF at noon on Sunday, December 19th 1915 he was well aware of the perilous state of British logistics. For instance, he had been 'striving to get a light railway organization ever since January 1915' built to operate between railheads and the front line. His efforts fell on stony ground.²⁴⁸ This inertia only increased Haig's anxiety. He caustically commented 'those in charge of our railway department [have] been backward in their arrangements to assist the troops at

²⁴⁶ Ian Malcolm Brown "The Evolution of the British Army's Logistical and Administrative Infrastructure and its Influence on GHQ's Operational Decision-Making on the Western Front, 1914-1918" (King's College London, 1996) p. 146.

²⁴⁷ TNA/WO/32/5144, "Report Upon the Rail Transport Arrangements of the British Army on the Continent," (1915). 24th October, 1915, p. 14.

²⁴⁸ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry 12/09/1916.

the front'.²⁴⁹ His deep concern was captured by a stinging remark he made later to Sir Eric Geddes:

Warfare he said, consists of Men, Munitions and Movement.
We have got the men and the munitions, but we seem to have
forgotten the movement.²⁵⁰

Furthermore, French requests for assistance had been dealt with by the British authorities at home with a failure to supply, or at best delay supply of vital personnel, locomotives, rolling stock and track. Naturally, when the British placed increased demands on the French, these requests were met grudgingly instead of urgently. For the BEF, these problems resonated in shipping delays, port congestion and critical rail capacity shortages compounded by 'a lack of engine power, a lack of drivers and a lack of coal'.²⁵¹

To help ameliorate the consequences of these problems, and following a wholesale reshuffle of top ranking officers at GHQ, Haig retained the valuable services of the former administration's QMG, Lieut.-Gen. Sir Ronald Maxwell. Notwithstanding shortages of munitions, Maxwell's adept management lessened the deepening logistical problems early in 1916. However, in the spring and early summer 17 new British divisions arrived, the availability of guns and howitzers increased from 324 pieces in January to 714 pieces in July, munition shortages were overcome and so the full impact of maintaining supplies to front line divisions was felt most particularly on the Somme.²⁵² To put this demand into context, the quantity of imported supplies and stores needed for the offensive totalled approximately 2,200

²⁴⁹ Ibid. Entry: 24/12/1915.

²⁵⁰ Col. A.M. Henniker, *Transportation on the Western Front*, History of the Great War (London: HMSO, 1937) p. 190. (Emphasis in original).

²⁵¹ Taylor, "Land Transportation in the Late War" p. 704.

²⁵² Capt. W. Miles, *Military Operations: France and Belgium: 2nd July 1916 to the end of the Battles of the Somme*, ed. Brig.-Gen. J. E. Edmonds, II vols, vol. II (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1938), 2) p. 565.

tons per mile of front per day. This equated to one full load daily carried by around 440 standard rail trucks containing 1,500 tons of ammunition, 300 tons of supplies and 400 tons of material for road maintenance. This factor alone placed an impossible strain on British logistical infrastructure and the French rail network.²⁵³

Haig firmly believed that it was “only by the most complete understanding and cooperation between the military and civilian elements that we can hope to win”.²⁵⁴ As a result he readily accepted and promoted civilianisation within the top ranks of GHQ. On August 2nd, Haig received a letter from Lloyd George, now the Secretary of State for War, offering him the expert services of Sir Eric Geddes, formerly the General Manager of North-Eastern Railway Company, to investigate the BEF’s transport arrangements (railway, road, canal and docks) both at home and in France.²⁵⁵ On August 4th, Haig sent his reply:

We are all anxious to afford Sir Eric Geddes every possible facility for conducting his enquiry, and I shall be glad to make all arrangements for his visit on hearing from you when to expect him.²⁵⁶

On Geddes’ arrival for a perfunctory two day visit, he gained Haig’s immediate respect, (‘a most pleasant and capable man’) but his presence was not universally well received. For one, Lieut.-Gen. F.T. Clayton, the IGC, was outspoken in his resentment of the civilian’s intrusion into military matters. Haig rebuked him by stating that he ‘was glad to have practical hints from anyone capable of advising’.²⁵⁷

²⁵³ Philpott, *Bloody Victory: The Sacrifice on the Somme and the Making of the Twentieth Century* p. 155.

²⁵⁴ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 11/11/1916 quoting Lloyd George.

²⁵⁵ TNA/WO/32/5163, "Geddes Appointment," (1916). Letter: Lloyd George to Haig 01/08/1916.

²⁵⁶ Ibid. Letter: Haig to Lloyd George 04/08/1916. Sir E. Geddes was formerly head of the North Eastern Railway Company before joining L.G. at the Ministry of Munitions.

²⁵⁷ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 24/08/1916.

On August 30th Geddes returned to GHQ together with his team to commence investigations.²⁵⁸

On September 11th Geddes produced a report that for the first time was based on a scientific assessment of current tonnage capacity set against numerical forecasts of supply and demand. The results pointed to the requirement for ‘a drastic overhaul’ of the British transport system.²⁵⁹ To Haig’s obvious satisfaction, Geddes proposed the installation ‘without delay’ of a light railway network.²⁶⁰ On the following day at GHQ the two men had little trouble in securing the full backing of Lloyd George for what was an ambitious project.

The necessity for 60 centimetre railway was quickly shewn, [sic] and the difficulty of obtaining the plant, the engines etc. was discussed. L.G. promised to help me to the utmost of his power. The total cost will be 3 million pounds, not much in comparison to our other expenses....

It is interesting to note how I have been striving to get a light railway organization since January 1915 when the 1st Army was formed. But it requires a civilian railway expert (Sir E. Geddes) to come on the scene and make a report to convince our Government and War Office that such an organization is a necessity.²⁶¹

On September 24th, Geddes accepted Haig’s offer to join him at GHQ with the title of Director General of Transport and the temporary rank of Major General. Under Geddes, Haig placed the directorates of broad gauge railways, narrow gauge railways, inland water transport, roads and ports.²⁶² While Geddes officially reported

²⁵⁸ Ibid. Entry: 26/08/1916.

²⁵⁹ Henniker, *Transportation on the Western Front*. pp. 184-186.

²⁶⁰ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Memorandum: Light Railway Development on the British Front, France. 11/09/1916. p. 7.

²⁶¹ Ibid. Entry: 12/09/1916.

²⁶² Ibid. Entry: 24/09/1916.

to the QMG, in practice he answered directly to Haig. The responsibility for motor transport remained with the Director of Transport, who in any case reported to the QMG.²⁶³ Geddes' position was immeasurably strengthened when Lloyd George made him the Director General of Military Railways at home. In October, Haig abolished the post of IGC briefly making Geddes the Inspector General of Transportation, before returning to his original title, adding ports to his portfolio.

In November 1916, Geddes told Haig that the French railway network was in a dire condition, struggling to meet the needs of the burgeoning BEF as well as its own. The two men agreed to enlist the support of Lloyd George to provide locomotives, rolling stock and skilled manpower as requested by Joffre.²⁶⁴ The War Committee immediately approved 350 locomotives, 20,000 wagons, 32,000 sleepers and 12,000 railwaymen for France.²⁶⁵ In December, the pre-war railway agreement was terminated. In its place it was agreed that although the overall responsibility for mainline rail traffic remained with the French, the BEF would be expected to take up a much greater share of the burden on other routes.²⁶⁶

By December 11th, and within 'a fortnight after the order was given', Geddes had built his HQ in a hutment camp three miles from GHQ staffed by 100 officers and 600 clerks, batmen and others. Not unsurprisingly this bureaucracy was colloquially named "Geddesburg". 'A wonderful performance' observed Haig.²⁶⁷ It was said that Geddes appointed double the staff he really needed to increase productivity by 30%. 'In this he was successful'; expedient perhaps, but hardly a

²⁶³ TNA/WO/106/358, "Transportation Organization," (1916).

²⁶⁴ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 16/11/1916.

²⁶⁵ Ibid. Entry: 01/12/1916.

²⁶⁶ Henniker, *Transportation on the Western Front*. pp. 13-15; 245-251.

²⁶⁷ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 11/12/1916.

hallmark of efficiency.²⁶⁸ Nonetheless, representatives of the DGT were appointed in every army and corps. 11,000 men of suitable trades were combed out of the BEF. Others were brought from home bringing the full strength up to 76,000 men. In addition, 13 companies of civilian plate-layers from the railways in Britain were engaged on lucrative short-term three month contracts under civilian engineers. This of course caused friction with the standing railway troops and 'further offers of assistance of this kind were declined'.²⁶⁹

In January 1917, Geddes was appointed a member of the Army Council.²⁷⁰ He now had sole responsibility for the complete British military supply chain on both sides of the channel from the factory to the front.²⁷¹ Thereby, the full integration of the BEF's transport service was achieved:

[Geddes] linked up ports to railways, railways to roads, inland waterways to both. He also secured the regulation of sea transport with direct reference to port capacity, and to the possibilities of clearance from the ports inland. He developed ports, railways, and roads by construction until they could reasonably be expected to carry out the work required of them, and he brought the whole under one unified control responsible for co-ordination of effort. He showed what *transport* meant.²⁷²

In May 1917, Geddes returned to an Admiralty appointment in London. His successor was his deputy, another civilian, Sir Philip Nash of the Great Northern and East Indian Railways. Nash later became a member of the *Inter-Allied Transport*

²⁶⁸ Brig.-Gen. J. E. Edmonds, "Introduction," in *Transportation on the Western Front, Official History of the War* (London: HMSO, 1937) p. xiv.

²⁶⁹ Ibid. p. xiv.

²⁷⁰ Keith Grieves, *Sir Eric Geddes: Business and Government in War and Peace* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989) p. 31.

²⁷¹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Letter: Lloyd George to Haig 27/09/1916.

²⁷² Taylor, "Land Transportation in the Late War" p. 705. (Emphasis in original).

Council formed in December 1917 'to deal with the transportation means of the Allies as a whole'.²⁷³ In March 1918, Nash was followed by Maj.-Gen. Sir Sydney Crookshank, an officer of the Royal Engineers and the DGT returned to military control. In May 1918, the QMG was called to a conference in London to discuss placing the DGT under his direct control. Haig strongly opposed this measure because he believed the additional responsibility would overburden an already overstretched branch.²⁷⁴ In this case Haig's objection was overruled. In June the Army Council placed the DGT under the QMG.

During the winter of 1917-18 the development of the BEF's integrated transport network had now reached a state of high efficiency. Although the French maintained overall responsibility for the standard gauge rail network, GHQ exercised control in its own zone of operations. This included rail construction, the work of which had been augmented by 13 battalions of the Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps; road building supported by over 100,000 'native' labourers working under the expert eye of the gifted civilian engineer Sir Henry Maybury, who was credited with saving the road situation in France; and the operation of the light rail, motorised transport, horse drawn transport and waterways.²⁷⁵ Haig was now able to closely align his operations with the capability of transportation services, for which he had high ambition:

I look to the railways to do much more than supply the army's needs. I feel confident that at a certain moment they will give us that mobility which will enable me to out-

²⁷³ Edmonds, "Introduction." p. xv. On the first day of the Conference, Lloyd George left the transport negotiations to the technical experts while he ambushed Haig and Robertson in an attempt to achieve Allied unity of command on the Western Front under a French generalissimo, General Robert Nivelle. After much indignant protest by the soldiers, a compromise was reached whereby Haig agreed to subordinate himself to Nivelle for the duration of the forthcoming major offensive at Arras and on the Aisne.

²⁷⁴ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 23/05/1918.

²⁷⁵ Taylor, "Land Transportation in the Late War." p.p. 715-716.

manoeuvre the enemy, and enable me to bring a superior force of guns and men at the decisive moment to the decisive point before the enemy can take counter measures.²⁷⁶

Unfortunately, the German spring offensive intervened and Haig had to wait until July 1918 before he could realise this ideal. A *Transport Progress Report for the Year 1918* located in Haig's war diary summarised the enemy's impact on the BEF's transportation infrastructure:

The military operations during the year 1918 cast an unprecedented burden upon the Transportation Services. The deep and rapid progress of the enemy advance during April and May resulted in the loss of the lateral line between Amiens and Arras, and made precarious the working of the second lateral from Ypres via Chocques and St. Pol; Amiens and other vital points were seriously threatened, thus throwing the main north and south communication upon the coast line. The territory between the 'front' and the sea had been considerably narrowed by the enemy advance; in consequence considerable congestion arose, and the position was of the utmost gravity.

With the successful counter-offensive of the Allied Armies in August, the position was relieved, but, in order to keep pace with the advancing armies, a vast amount of construction work had to be undertaken upon a greater and more intensive scale than ever before during the war. Owing to the rapidity of our advance, and to the fact that the fighting was very heavy and of a continuous nature all along the British 'front', the traffic problems entailed were very complex and difficult to deal with.

During the year under review the railways and ports were constantly bombed by enemy aircraft, thus adding to the

²⁷⁶ Henniker, *Transportation on the Western Front*. p. 396.

difficulties of operation, besides which the enemy in the course of his retreat, used every modern artifice in the thorough destruction of railways, bridges, roads, etc.²⁷⁷

Although a great deal of damage was caused by the enemy and the retreating British troops to the transport infrastructure during the German offensive, the vital organization and administration at GHQ remained intact. This enabled reconstruction to commence immediately, and on the right lines. By August 1918, when the major Amiens offensive commenced, the BEF's fully integrated transportation network was effectively back in service. As a case in point the number of loaded trains run between July and September reached 23,417, the highest on record. The loaded wagon-kilometres run on broad gauge lines by the British in France and Belgium increased by 145% over 1917. The tonnage carried on the light railway network between April and June increased by 79% relative to the previous year, despite extensive damage during the German offensive.²⁷⁸

The spring offensive provided the German Army with its greatest tactical success on the Western Front thus far. Paradoxically, this outcome led to the greatest strategic failure of the war; attributed principally to the inefficiency of the enemy's supply and transport organization.²⁷⁹ After the British Fifth Army was driven back on the Somme in March, the German high command 'had an unparalleled opportunity for effecting something decisive'.²⁸⁰ Tactically, the German troops had shown their superiority; the challenge that remained was to press home this advantage. The fact that this proved impossible, owed less to the dogged opposition of the British and

²⁷⁷ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)."Report: Transportation Progress Report for the Year 1918, para 1. p. 1.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 6, 7, and 13.

²⁷⁹ Beadon, *The Royal Army Service Corps: A History of Transport and Supply in the British Army*, II. Chapter 5; Maj.-Gen. A. Forbes, *A History of the Army Ordnance Services* (London: Medici Society, 1929). Chapter 7.

²⁸⁰ Beadon, *The Royal Army Service Corps: A History of Transport and Supply in the British Army*, II. pp. 134-135.

French forces, and much more to the failing German logistical capability.²⁸¹ The attacking enemy troops had simply lost their means of support and the impetus of their offensive stalled, allowing the Allies, well supported by their superior logistical capacity, to regain the lost initiative.²⁸²

The ultimate dividend of the BEF's logistics was paid in the Hundred Days campaign. Up to the end of 1916, the BEF's logistical capacity was sufficient to support one major offensive a year (the advance to the Aisne in 1914, Loos in 1915, and the Somme in 1916). In 1917, the improvements made to the transportation network by Geddes under Haig's authority supported three major offensives (Arras—First/Third/Fifth Armies; Third Ypres—Second/Fifth Armies; Cambrai—Third/Fourth Armies). However, as shown in Figure 21 (below), such was the efficiency of British logistics that by the beginning of summer 1918, and within the following four month period, Haig was able to mount ten major offensives. He simultaneously deployed divisions from up to three armies, was able to rapidly change the axis of attack, and ensured that his formations never lost the means to maintain forward momentum across 80 miles of front. 'The German army was unable to match British tempo'.²⁸³ Thus, the BEF's logistical organization was the handmaiden to tactical success on the battlefield, which in turn delivered the strategic success evidenced by the Allied victory. Reflecting on the war years, Geddes described Haig as 'the best chief' and finest gentleman'. As far as his work in France was concerned, he described this as the 'happiest time of my life.'²⁸⁴

²⁸¹ Brown, *British Logistics on the Western Front 1914-1919*, p. 198.

²⁸² NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Notes on the Present Situation. n.p. ; Beadon, *The Royal Army Service Corps: A History of Transport and Supply in the British Army*, II, p.145.

²⁸³ Jonathan Boff, *Winning and Losing on the Western Front; The British Army and the Defeat of Germany in 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) p. 203; p. 226.

²⁸⁴ Grieves, *Sir Eric Geddes: Business and Government in War and Peace*, p. 38.

Figure 2 I: Impact of Logistics During Hundred Days Campaign (August to November 1918)

| Battle | Planning Start Date | Battle Start Date | Lapsed Days | Battle Finish | Lapsed Days Between Battles | Planning Reference | Army | Corps (no) | Infantry Divisions (no) | Cavalry Divisions (no) | Corps | Divisions | Corps | Divisions | Corps | Divisions | Cav Div | | |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------|------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|------------------------|---------|-----------------------|----------|
| Amiens | 16/07/18 | 08/08/18 | 23 | 11/08/18 | - | [3837] | Fourth | 3 | 12 | 3 | III | 12, 18, 47, 58. | Cdn | 1, 2, 3, 4. | Aus | 2, 3, 4, 5. | | 1, 2, 3. | |
| Flanders | 31/07/18 | 18/08/18 | 18 | 06/09/18 | - | 18 OH IV p.428 | Second | 4 | 15 | 0 | II | 14, 34, 35, 49, 30 Am Div. | X | 30, 36. | XV | 9, 29, 31, 40. | XIX | 6, 34, 41, 27 Am Div. | |
| Albert-Bapaume | 12/08/18 | 21/08/18 | 9 | 03/09/18 | - | [4145] | Thrid | 3 | 14 | 2 | IV | 5, 37, 42, 63, NZ. | V | 17, 21, 38. | VI | Gds. 2, 3, 52, 56, 59. | | 1, 2. | |
| | | | 10 | | | | Fourth | 2 | 6 | 0 | III | 18, 47, 58. | Aus | 2, 3, 5. | | | | | |
| Arras (Scarpe) | 15/08/18 | 26/08/18 | 11 | 03/09/18 | - | 18 OH IV p.297 | Thrid | 2 | 5 | 0 | VI | Gds. 62. | XVII | 52, 56, 57. | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | First | 3 | 5 | 0 | VIII | 8. | Cdn. | 2, 3, 51 (Brit). | XXII | 11. | | | |
| Epehy | 12/09/18 | 18/09/18 | 6 | 18/09/18 | 15 | DO (Sim) p.230 | Fourth | 3 | 8 | 0 | III | 12, 18, 58, 74 | IX | 1, 6. | Aus | 1, 4. | | | |
| | | | 15 | | | | Thrid | 2 | 5 | 0 | IV | 5. | V | 17, 21, 33, 38. | | | | | |
| Canal du Nord | 18/09/18 | 27/09/18 | 9 | 01/10/18 | 24 | 18 OH V p.17 | Thrid | 3 | 11 | 1 | IV | 5, 37, 42, NZ. | VI | Gds. 2, 3, 62. | XVII | 52, 57, 63. | | 2. | |
| | | | 24 | | | | First | 2 | 6 | 0 | XXII | 4, 56. | Cdn | 1, 3, 4, 11. (Brit) | | | | | |
| St Quentin Canal | 18/09/18 | 29/09/18 | 11 | 02/10/18 | 11 | DO (Sim) p.230 | Fourth | 4 | 11 | 2 | XIII | 18, 50. | IX | 1, 6, 32, 46. | Aus | 2, 3, 5. | II AM | 27, 30. | 2. |
| Cambrai | 05/11/18 | 08/10/18 | 3 | 09/10/18 | 7 | DO (Sim) p.230 | Thrid | 4 | 7 | 0 | IV | 37, NZ. | V | 17, 21, 33, 38. | VI | | XVII | 57 | 2. |
| | | | 6 | | | | Fourth | 3 | 7 | 2 | IX | 6, 46. | XIII | 25, 50, 66. | II Am | 27, 30. | | | 1, 2, 3. |
| | | | 7 | | | | First | 2 | 3 | 0 | XXII | 56. | Cdn | 2, 3. | | | | | |
| Selle | 11/10/18 | 17/10/18 | 6 | 25/10/18 | 12 | DO (Sim) p.230 | Fourth | 3 | 9 | 0 | IX | 1, 6, 46. | XIII | 18, 25, 50, 66. | II Am | 27, 30. | | | |
| Sambre | 25/10/18 | 01/11/18 | 6 | 04/11/18 | 7 | OH V p. 464 | Fourth | 3 | 8 | 0 | IX | 1, 32, 46. | XIII | 18, 25, 50. | II Am | 27, 30. | | | |
| | | | 22 | | | | Thrid | 4 | 8 | 0 | IV | 37, NZ. | V | 17, 38. | VI | Gds. 62. | XVII | 19, 24. | |
| | | | 22 | | | | First | 5 | 4 | 0 | XXII | 11, 56. | Cdn | 3, 4, 11 (Brit) | | | | | |

Ref:
Order of Battle (Part 4)
Story of Fourth Army Diagram III p. 262

Notes:
OB (Part 4) p. 151 Albert: notes incorrectly that 48th div formed part of III Corps/ Fourth Army for Albert battle. This is a mistake it was 58th Div. In addition, Third Army led this attack.
OB (Part 4) p.236 Arras: immediately prior to the Scarpe, at noon 23/8/18 the Cdn Corps replaced XVII Corps in First Army, and XVII Corps was transferred back (in the line) to the Third Army.
OH 1918 V p.305 Arras - No of Cdn divisions
OB (Part 4) p.77 Arras shows that First Army was participating in the capture of Ghendy Creaters on 24/08/1918.
OB (Part 4) p. 236 Epehy: IX Corps H.Q. arrived on 11/09/18 and took over 1st and 6th Div in the line. For remainder of campaign this corps comprised 1st, 6th, 32nd, and 46th Divisions.
OB (Part 4) p. 107 III Corps handed over in the line to XIII at Noon on 01/10/18. III Corps then moved to Fifth Army.
OB (Part 4) p. 86 Flanders: On 18/08/1918 Second Army (on the left of the B.E.F.) held a 19 mile front, from S. of Veau Berquin to N.E. of Veau Berquin to N.E. of Ypres with XV, X, XIX and II Corps. On 28th Sept., Second Army was placed under the command of the King of Belgium for the final advance.
OH 1918 V p.226 Cambrai - No of Cdn divisions
OH 1918 V p.20 Canal du Nord - No of Cdn divisions
OH 1918 V p.489 Sambre - No of Cdn divisions
OH 1918 V p.492 Sambre - Battle finished on 04/11/18. Pursuit commenced on 5th.

Tactical Adaptation

As the process of the BEF's tactical adaptation to the novel conditions of trench warfare will be assessed at length below, to avoid unnecessary repetition, only a summary focusing on the evolution of combined arms tactics is necessary here.

Dominick Graham persuasively argued that the general limits of political and military policy imposed on the readiness of BEF, ensured that the force 'was ill prepared to fight divisional [combined-arms] battles' at the commencement of hostilities in 1914.²⁸⁵ Nonetheless, *FSR-I* did insist that '*the full power of the army can be exerted only when all its parts act in close combination*'.²⁸⁶ However, in this combination it is true that the role of artillery was visualised as an adjunct to that of the infantry 'breaking down hostile opposition...enabl[ing] it to obtain superiority of fire and to close with the enemy'. While the cavalry's primary role was to 'obtain information and to combine attack and surprise to the best advantage'.²⁸⁷

By 1917-18 the BEF 'had come to rely upon the intelligent combination of all arms to overwhelm the defenders by weight of firepower'.²⁸⁸ By this time the deployment of aircraft had reached the level of technical sophistication where all arms offensives could be combined in three dimensions, revolutionising warfare. In this scenario the artillery conquered, the infantry occupied, fighter planes offered air superiority, and the cavalry was deployed to exploit fleeting tactical opportunities.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ Dominick Graham, "Sans Doctrine: British Army Tactics in the First World War" in *Men at War: Politics, Technology and Innovation in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Timothy Travers and Christon Archer (Chicago: Precedent, 1982) pp.71-76.

²⁸⁶ *Field Service Regulations, Part I (Operations)* p. 12-13.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. 13.

²⁸⁸ David French, "Doctrine and Organization in the British Army 1919-1932," *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 2 (2001) p. 498.

²⁸⁹ David Kenyon, "British Cavalry on the Western Front 1916-1918" (Cranfield University, 2007). pp. 289-293.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made to outline the sheer magnitude and complexity of the organizational and administrative challenge that confronted Haig when he assumed command of the BEF in December 1915. During peace-time, the management task required to transform the BEF from an Imperial police force into a first class army capable of fighting, let alone defeating a first class continental foe, would have been a herculean challenge. Under conditions of intensive warfare, and in the short time available, the degree of managerial difficulty was unprecedented. Moreover, seldom has this potentially crippling management burden fallen directly onto the shoulders of one man. It was within this context that Haig strove to apply and achieve unity-of-effort within the BEF.

3. The Principle of Unity-of-Effort

Unity-of-effort is the *raison d'être* of all human organization,²⁹⁰ including the military.²⁹¹ In 1909, Haig established unity-of-effort as the first principle of war organization. Unfortunately, he did not define the precept possibly because he believed it was a commonplace. Furthermore, despite a thorough investigation, it has not been possible to uncover a contemporary definition at least in the British military context. Therefore, this chapter aims to establish the importance that Haig attached to the principle; to discuss the method and findings of a study conducted to furnish a plausible explanation of his understanding of the term; and finally to examine Haig's early military learning and experience which underpinned his capacity to manage the implementation of unity-of-effort within the BEF.

The Importance Haig Attached to the Principle of Unity-of-Effort

In 1909, Haig established unity-of-effort as the first principle of 'War Organization' in *FSR-II*:

The successful issue of military operations depends mainly upon combination and unity of effort directed with energy and determination towards a definite object.

*Unity of control is essential to unity of effort. This condition can be ensured only by vesting the supreme authority in one man, the C-in-C of the forces in the field; and by providing him with the means of exerting the required influence over the work and action of every individual. The main object of war organization is to provide him with these means.*²⁹²

²⁹⁰ Amitai Etzioni, *Modern Organizations*, Foundations of Modern Sociology (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1964) p. 3 An organization is defined as a 'social unit (or human grouping) deliberately constructed to seek specific goals'.

²⁹¹ Urwick, "The Function of Administration: With special reference to the work of Henri Fayol." p. 123.

²⁹² *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)* p.22. (Emphasis in original).

Fresh evidence is revealed in Chapter 7 which establishes beyond reasonable doubt that Haig was responsible for incorporating the principle of unity-of-effort into *FSR-II* when he was the DSD at the WO between 1908-09. It is not clear when Haig recognised unity-of-effort as a principle of military war organization, although in 1896 he alluded to the maxim in one of his two Staff College strategy notebooks. He observed that 'unity in battle can only be obtained by the various independent units striving for one common object'.²⁹³ An article in *The Times* commenting on the organization of the Cavalry Division later reported that Haig, among other officers, had recommended the re-establishment of the post of Inspector of Cavalry to preserve 'unity of military effort'.²⁹⁴

During and after the war Haig continued to use the term further demonstrating the importance he attached to the principle. On February 27th 1917, Robertson wrote to the War Cabinet stressing that in the forthcoming Nivelle offensive, 'unity of effort' could be 'adequately ensured without absolute unity of command'.²⁹⁵ On March 11th 1917, in a continuation of this exchange, Haig told Robertson in a secret note that he feared the Calais Agreement would 'impair rather than promote unity of effort'.²⁹⁶ On the same day, in a discussion between Haig and the French War Minister, General Lyautey, he drew the distinction between unity of command and unity-of-effort. Haig said the former was 'the means' and the latter was 'the end'.²⁹⁷ A week later Haig stressed to his Army Commanders the importance of working 'cordially with the French,' emphasising that "*Unity of Effort*" was the object...'.²⁹⁸ In 1921, an article in *The Times* reported that Haig stressed the need for soldiers to

²⁹³ NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II," (n.d.). n.p.

²⁹⁴ Military-Correspondent, "The Cavalry Division," *The Times*, 13th September 1909. p.4.

²⁹⁵ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Note by the Chief of the Imperial Staff regarding the Calais Agreement of 27th February 1917. p. 2.

²⁹⁶ Ibid. Secret Note from Haig to Robertson, 11th March 1917.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. Entry: Monday 12th March 1917.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. Entry: Saturday 17th March 1917. (Emphasis in original).

maintain ‘unity of effort’ in peace, as had been done in war.²⁹⁹ He then proceeded to use his *convening power* to help form the British Legion.³⁰⁰

In 1923, *FSR-II* was revised to reflect the recent combat experience, and the tome was reordered as *Vol. I*. The new priority given to this volume was not explained, but perhaps the decision was made in response to the important recognition accorded to organization and administration in the successful outcome of total war. Under the heading ‘*General principles of war organization*’, unity-of-effort was established as the second principle of war organization after mobility.³⁰¹

Research Methodology

Professor Eric Leed encountered and overcame a similar methodological obstacle to the one faced by this research in his study *No Man’s Land – Combat Identity in World War I*.³⁰² At the outset, he readily admitted that ‘in the last analysis, it is difficult for any history to “*prove*” that the events of battle changed the character of participants’. Undaunted, Leed strove to find a method of determining a reliable as opposed to a perfect proof. Drawing on a wide variety of sources he used an indirect ‘strategy of “*boxing in*” the phenomenon of the transformation of human character by events, rather than by attacking the phenomena directly’.³⁰³ In all essentials, the same type of historical investigative approach has been adopted here. Nonetheless, the unvarnished truth remains – while there is certainty of the importance that Haig attached to the principle, there is no absolute surety as to precisely what he understood by the term unity-of-effort or its interpretation.

²⁹⁹ "The Canterbury War Memorial ", *The Times*, 10th October 1921. p. 7

³⁰⁰ This refers to influence that Haig brought to bear to co-opt people of influence in pursuit of a common objective.

³⁰¹ *Field Service Regulations Vol I: Organization and Administration*, (London: HMSO, 1923) p. 5.

³⁰² Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat Identity in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

³⁰³ *Ibid.* p. x. (Emphasis in original).

The method of 'boxing in' has been conducted in three stages: the first stage established what was the general understanding of the term in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This relies on evidence drawn from a historical study of national and provincial newspapers published during this era in Britain where the nature of unity-of-effort has been judged by the context of its usage in news reports, commentaries and articles. The second stage revealed the character of unity-of-effort within the context of the contemporary British Army. Here a process of deductive reasoning has been used, informed by the works of military thinkers known to have influenced Haig, identifying the most likely components comprising military 'effort' that were unified by him in the BEF. Findings from the first two stages allowed a working definition of unity-of-effort to be offered. The third stage examined Haig's pre-war career. This showed that he had the organizational and administrative talent, skills and experience that allowed him to recognise the significance of the principle before 1914, and enabled him to manage its implementation on the Western Front.

The Nature of Unity-of-Effort

To determine the nature of unity-of-effort in its historical context, the *Gale News Vault* database has been interrogated using a delimited search for the phrase "unity of effort".³⁰⁴ This produced 391 instances of usage between the years 1793 and 2007. A sampling interval was chosen to provide a randomised sample of at least 100 instances of usage up to 1928 – the year of Haig's death. Using a digital random-number generator, a sampling start point between one and three was selected. This procedure produced 108 instances of unity-of-effort up to December 1928. This

³⁰⁴ <http://gdc.gale.com/products/gale-newsvault/> 'Gale NewsVault delivers definitive cross-searching experience for exploring Gale's range of historical newspaper collections. Users can simultaneously search or browse across the Times Digital Archive, the 17th and 18th Century Burney Collection, the Financial Times Historical Archive...' <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/product-highlights/general-reference/gale-historical-newspapers/gale-newsvault.aspx> 02/12/2015

sample is sufficient to produce quantitative findings with a satisfactory degree of accuracy within the range of error of +/-5%.³⁰⁵

This survey method is subject to a number of limitations. Due to KCL's limited subscription, it was not possible to access the entire *Gale NewsVault* database. Nonetheless, the publications that were accessible did provide sufficiently broad coverage for the purposes of this study. Of these, only *The Times* and the *Economist* archives cover the twentieth century.³⁰⁶ As the emphasis of this study is on the nineteenth century, this restriction does not have a meaningful impact on the results. Also, a digital search method was employed to identify occurrences of the use of the term unity-of-effort in newspaper articles. This approach is subject to scanning error from two sources: spelling mistakes, and optical character recognition scanning error caused by imperfections in the text digitization process. In an attempt to compensate for both types of error, a method of 'fuzzy searching' was tested.³⁰⁷ However, this routine was discarded because it produced a high incidence of false-positives. Finally, the results produced by subsamples are subject to error beyond the range specified above, and should only be regarded as indicative.

Summary of Findings

The results show that the term unity-of-effort was in common usage throughout the period under consideration. The incidence of usage appeared highest (70%) between 1851 and 1900. The latter part of this time coincided with Haig's formative years at Oxford (1880), Sandhurst (1883), and the Staff College (1896), when he would have been exposed to the expression. Up to 1920, in the vast majority of cases

³⁰⁵ C.A. Moser, *Survey Methods in Social Investigation* (London: Heinemann, 1967) p. 67.

³⁰⁶ Accessible newspapers and periodicals include 17th-18th Century Burney Collection, British Library (parts 1 and 2), 19th Century UK periodicals, Economist Historical Archive, and The Times Digital Archive.

³⁰⁷ http://find.galegroup.com/dvnw/help.do?page=/HelpList.jsp?KEY=FUZZY_SEARCH_HELP&prodId=DVNW. (02/12/2015)

(95%), unity-of-effort was used strictly within an organizational context. In rank order, reference was made to the following types of organization: religious, industrial and commercial, charitable, political and military. The term was generally used in an intra-organizational, rather than an inter-organizational context (73% vs. 22%).³⁰⁸

In the great majority of cases (94% vs. 6%), 'unity of effort' was framed as a tangible and effective organising truth or principle.³⁰⁹ In 1793, Richard Sheridan, debating with Edmund Burke and Charles James Fox over Parliament's support for a war against the French Republic, stated 'a phalanx, whatever its extent, must consist of a united band acting in a body, animated by one soul, and pursuing its object with identity of spirit and unity of effort'.³¹⁰ In 1845, general medical practitioners, qualified as surgeons, were advised to pursue the Crown for a charter of distinct incorporation 'with unity of effort and confidence of eventual success'.³¹¹ In 1861, at a meeting of weavers convened to agree strike action, a Mr Garner told the meeting he 'believed that by perfect unity of effort they might accomplish wonders'.³¹² In 1905, in relation to the Australian Navy, a question was asked 'if unity of effort in action [was] deemed necessary for success, why [was] unity of effort not essential to the preparation of that action?'³¹³ It is also clear that in the spoken word, particularly in political oratory, the term was often used purely as a rhetorical flourish.

Crucially, the findings revealed that within the organizational context, the essence of unity-of-effort was *coordinative*. As this appeared to be the case through time and across organizational types, small and large, this feature can reasonably be

³⁰⁸ In the remaining 5% of instances, the organizational context is not implied.

³⁰⁹ "Signor Orlando on Unity of Effort," *The Times*, 4th October 1918. p. 5

³¹⁰ "British Parliament," *Morning Chronicle*, February 18th 1793. p. 1.

³¹¹ "Leading Article: The Council of the College of Surgeons," *The Times*, 31st January 1845. p. 4.

³¹² "Weavers Meeting," *Preston Guardian*, 23rd March 1861.

³¹³ "Letter to the Editor," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28th June 1905. p. 8. On 10th July 1911, King George V granted the title of Royal Australian Navy to the Commonwealth Naval Forces.

described as the principle's immutable nature. Usage of the principle supported this conclusion:

[1820: Mr Justice Bayley, summing up to the jury in a case of conspiracy. (The King v. Hunt and others).] "Unite and be Free" – If that merely recommended the harmony essential to the enjoyment of freedom, it was harmless; if it meant to insinuate a *unity of effort* to promote an object inconsistent with the spirit of the law, then it was criminal.³¹⁴

[1835: An address by Lord Stanhope to the landlords, agriculturists and deputies from various associations, comprising the Central Agricultural Society.] No person could be more impressed with the advantage which was to be derived from the union of those assembled in their efforts to obviate these distresses than he (Lord Stanhope) was; for he was conscious that from a *unity of effort* alone they could hope for the redress of those grievances and evils under which the agricultural community laboured.³¹⁵

[1882] Nothing is more desirable than there should be an identity of interests between the employers and the employed. If the object for which they are working is common to both, there will be *unity of effort* which never can be attained if their aims are antagonistic.³¹⁶

[1918: Bradford Dyers' Association Annual General Meeting] Unquestionably one of the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of progress has been the absence of *unity of effort*. If Germany, already possessing by far the most powerful and highly organised chemical and colour industry in the world, has felt the need for complete cooperation and

³¹⁴"York Assizes," *Morning Chronicle*, 29th March 1820. n.p.

³¹⁵"Central Agricultural Society," *The Morning Post*, 16th December 1835.

³¹⁶"Miner's Conference," *The Economist*, 2nd September 1882. p. 1086.

co-ordination, how incomparably more urgent is the need for it here...³¹⁷

[1918] Meanwhile we may note the recommendations of Mr House's report. The first insists that the "United States shall exert all their influence to secure entire *unity of effort*, military, naval and economic between themselves and the countries associated with them in war".³¹⁸

[1918] Commenting on the "splendid cooperation of the British and American troops", senator James Hamilton Lewis, Democratic Whip and Leader of the Administration forces in the United States Senate said "...this *unity of effort* is attracting the attention of the world, and is regarded as an assurance of victory".³¹⁹

[1918: A *Times* Correspondent's comment on a Bill in the French Chamber to modify the working of the French railways during the war.] Since the beginning of hostilities military transports have taken precedence on the railways as regards personnel and rolling stock; but the ever-increasing military necessities call now for more perfect concentration and *unity of effort*, if the military and civil need are to be grappled with successfully.³²⁰

[1919] Letter to the Editor lamenting the lack of co-ordination amongst the official, semi-official and voluntary agencies working on behalf of ex officers.] All of this [misery and hardship] can be overcome quickly with *unity of effort*, mutual cooperation, and determination.³²¹

The conclusion drawn from the findings that unity-of-effort was innately coordinative also found support from Messrs J.D. Mooney and A.C. Reiley, two

³¹⁷ "Bradford Dyers' Association," *The Times*, March 1st 1919. p.17.

³¹⁸ "Mr House's Report," *The Times*, 5th January 1918. p. 7. (Col. House, Head of the US Special War Mission).

³¹⁹ "US Confidence in Victory," *The Times*, 26th August 1918. p. 8.

³²⁰ "French Railways to be Taken Over," *The Times*, 12th October 1918. p. 5.

³²¹ "Distressed Ex-Officers: Need for Co-ordination," *The Times*, 23rd August 1919.

leading American management scientists who held top managerial positions at the General Motors Corporation. In 1931 these men posited:

The purpose of all organization is to unify effort, that is co-ordination. This term expresses the principles of organization in toto; nothing less. This does not mean that there are no subordinated principles; it simply means that all the others are contained in this one of co-ordination.³²²

The findings also showed that while the immutable nature of unity-of-effort was uniquely coordinative, this aspect was compound rather than simple in its construction. In this sense, the evidence showed that the principle was conferred with permutations and combinations of human mental, physical and moral components. Generally, the mental component included ideas, professional knowledge, and experience. The physical component comprised the commitment of relevant training, skill and expertise. The moral component had attributes associated with courage, conviction and commitment, all virtues of the human will. The following extracts demonstrate these qualities.

[1848] The extensive ravages of the fire appeared at one time to preclude the possibility of such a concentration or unity of effort by the fire brigade as might lead to its subjection....³²³

[1850: Formation of an Independent Democratic Association in Ireland] ...in future the movement party in both countries [England and Ireland] will be animated by the same principles, and struggle for the same objects. This will of itself produce an identity of feeling and unity of effort amongst them which cannot fail to be a fruitful source of strength to both.³²⁴

³²²James D. Mooney and Alan C. Reiley, *Onward Industry* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1931). cited from Urwick, *The Elements of Administration*. p. 43.

³²³ "Destructive Fire," *Caledonian Mercury*, 3rd January 1848. n.p.

³²⁴ "The People Movement in Ireland," *Northern Star*, 16th March 1850. n.p.

[1855] Letter to the Editor: So this love of man [philanthropy] is diffused from mind to mind, it produces unity of effort and object, and its effects are glorious to behold....³²⁵

[1857] We deem it no unpleasant sight to see 282 teachers of different denominations commingling together, deeply interested in one common movement, with one common aim and end in view. Such unity of effort has seldom, if ever, been manifested in this town [Halifax] before.³²⁶

[1892] The orchestra, composed mainly of the principal members of Sir Charles Halle's band, was a fine combination of instrumental skill, and rendered the orchestral portions of the work with a precision, judiciousness and unity of effort eminently satisfactory.³²⁷

[1897: Lord Provost's speech] The unity of effort between the Sovereign and her advisers, which a sound constitutional Government admits of and fosters, has secured innumerable blessings for the Country.³²⁸

[1899] The French shipbuilding programme bears the impress of unstable policy on the part of the Ministry of Marine. The continuity and unity of effort which have given certitude to this country in the increase of the Navy, being based upon a rational conception of the strategic conditions of defence, have been denied to France ever drifting to and from between the traditional policy which would strive for command of the sea and the views of the school of Admiral Aube which are founded upon the ideas of evasion, commerce destruction, and the local defence of coasts.³²⁹

³²⁵ "Letter to the Editor," *Derby Mercury*, 27th June 1855. p. 2.

³²⁶ "Sunday School Extension Movement," *Leeds Mercury*, 13th August 1857. n.p.

³²⁷ "St. Celia Concert at Blackburn," *Blackburn Standard*, 16th January 1892. p. 6.

³²⁸ "Dundee Celebration – Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee," *Dundee Courier & Argus*, 23rd June 1897. p. 11.

³²⁹ "Naval Construction in France and in Russia," *The Times*, 7th February 1899. p. 13.

[1912: A report commenting on the state of China, and the mistrust that existed between the north and south of the country.] There can be no unity of effort for the regeneration of China while these mutual apprehensions prevail.³³⁰

[1918: Lord Curzon observing the Supreme War Council] There is now a single strategy, single-minded though of a composite mind and unity of effort is applied to the military direction of the war.³³¹

[1918] The Empire's Call – Unity of Effort Desired.³³²

[1921] Lord Haig in his address, referred to the reputation which had been so well maintained by the Buffs and pleaded that the spirit of comradeship and sense of unity of effort shown in the war might be maintained in peace.³³³

The results revealed that the necessity for an essential complement to unity-of-effort was implied in only approximately one third of instances (38%). Moreover, in the majority of cases (64%), unity-of-object was identified as the essential complement to unity-of-effort. This was followed by unity-of-spirit (16%). The remaining cases included an assortment of other factors. It is perhaps surprising that unity-of-command was not specifically mentioned or implied in any case.

Lastly, the research indicated that unity-of-effort was considered a normative ideal rather than an absolute standard. In 1926, an article that appeared in *The Times* under the caption 'UNITY OF EFFORT' bares testimony to this finding:

But we know that perfect unity of effort is an ideal which must be fought for: it does not come to stay by mere wishing. Each day the machine must be "tuned up". We know that unity of effort is not obtained by one will in ultimate control,

³³⁰ "The State of China," *The Times*, 7th June 1912. p. 9.

³³¹ "Debate on the King's Speech," *The Times*, 13th February 1918. p. 10.

³³² "The Empire's Call," *The Argus*, 12th April 1918. p. 7.

³³³ Special Correspondant, "Cavalry Not A "Dead Arm", " *The Times* 1921. p. 7.

but by having the will of every man and women in the Organization set on the same end.³³⁴

The Military Character of Unity-of-Effort

If the coordinative nature of unity-of-effort is immutable, this implies its compound character, comprising mental, physical and moral components, must be capable of adaption to the different and distinctive circumstances of every type of human organization; or in other words its character is 'chameleon-like'. Assuming this is allowed, then the characteristics of unity-of-effort appropriate to the British Army immediately prior to the war can be considered. Three obvious candidates present themselves, all of which ultimately serve to bind the organization's human element into a single collective whole. The first is *doctrine*, which is 'essential to ensure uniformity of thought', facilitating unity-of-mental-effort.³³⁵ The second is *training*, which shaped by doctrine aims, for uniformity of action facilitating unity-of-physical-effort. The third is *morale*, under-pinned by *discipline*, which secures the will to fight across units and formations, facilitating unity-of-moral-effort. In military organizations, these three components combine to promote unity-of-effort.

The urgent question that must be asked is would Haig have concurred with this argument? Without resorting to a séance (as Haig might have done when faced with a similar challenge) this question cannot be answered with certainty.³³⁶ Nonetheless, as discussed above, two avenues pointed the way forward. The first avenue required an assessment of the published works of contemporary military thinkers known to

³³⁴ CALLISTHENES, "Unity of Effort," *The Times*, 1st April 1926. p. 7.

³³⁵ David French, *Raising Churchill's Army: The British Army and the War Against Germany 1919-1945* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2000) p. 12.

³³⁶ Reid, *Architect of Victory: Douglas Haig*. pp. 142-143. On 20th September 1906, Haig attended a séance with his sister Henrietta where he sought advice as to whether the expansion of the Territorial Army would be more satisfactory on a company or battalions basis. He was advised by the spiritualist a Miss McCreadie to adopt the former rather than the latter. Apparently, when Ms McCreadie gave this advice she was under the control of a native girl called 'Sunshine', who had Napoleon by her side. Haig must have found this circumstance most reassuring.

have had a direct impact on the formation of Haig's military thought. The opportunity for this influence was prodigious. As early as 1892, Sir Henry Evelyn Wood VC, then General Officer Commanding at Aldershot, observed that Haig 'was probably the best read officer in the Army'.³³⁷ Thus, the object here was to determine the extent to which these military thinkers recognised that doctrine, training, and morale underpinned by discipline, offered the properties to bind or glue the human resources of an army together into an efficient and effective fighting whole. The second avenue involved the examination of Haig's pre-war career to determine the contribution that he made to the formation of doctrine, the development of training and the promotion of morale within the service arms in which he served. This provided an indication of both his understanding of, and the importance he attached to, these components.

Research Methodology

In pursuit of the contemporary military thinkers known to have influenced Haig, books read by him have been consulted, together with his notebooks compiled at the Staff College. Haig's reading material has been identified by a book catalogue prepared by Christie, Manson and Woods Ltd ahead of an auction on Wednesday 21st December 1977. The 100 listed lots included books, pamphlets and papers, collected and owned by Haig during the course of his pre-war military career. This material, published in English, French and German was 'copiously annotated, underlined and side-lined, [by Haig] indicating [his] thorough study of military affairs'.³³⁸

The catalogue included 49 books published before the war that can be categorised as 'philosophical military works'. The mix of these books by German

³³⁷ Sir Evelyn Wood, *Winnowed Memories* (London: Cassell and Company, Ltd, 1917) p. 127.

³³⁸ *Miscellaneous Printed Books including a Silver Collector's Library*, (London: Christie, Manson & Wood Ltd, 1977) p. 5.

(26), English (14) and French (9) military thinkers demonstrated the broad scope of Haig's investigation. It also indicated that Haig paid greater attention to his future German enemy than to his French ally. Furthermore, it was also apparent that he engaged more closely with empirical works (*Nation in Arms*); than the more theoretical or esoteric works such as J.F.C. Fuller's almost impenetrable volume – *The Foundations of the Science of War* that does not appear to have reached his library.³³⁹ Brian Holden Reid described this work as a 'monument to a failed effort to fuse philosophical, or at any rate, esoteric ideas with the practical demands of soldiering'.³⁴⁰ Those works most relevant to this study in respect to both subject matter and evidence of Haig's close reading are identified in Figure 22 (below).

³³⁹ Col. J.F.C. Fuller, *The Foundations of the Science of War*, First ed. (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1926).

³⁴⁰ Brian Holden Reid, *Studies in British Military Thought* (Lincoln: Univeristy of Nebraska Press, 1998) p. 33.

Figure 22: Thinkers and Mentors that Influenced Haig's Military Thought

| Edition | Author | Title | Christie's Bibliographer's Annotations |
|----------------|---------------|---|---|
| 1873 | Clausewitz | <i>On War</i> | Cited in Haig's Staff College note books. |
| 1876 | Jomini | <i>The Art of War</i> | Cited in Haig's Staff College note books. |
| 1887 | Goltz | <i>A Nation in Arms</i> | Signed on title by Haig, many passages underlined. |
| 1888 | Derrecagaix | <i>Modern War – Part I, Strategy</i> | Signed inside cover by Haig, some MS marginal notes and side-lining. |
| 1895 | Ropes | <i>The Campaign of Waterloo and Military History</i> | Annotated and copiously side-lined by Lord Haig. |
| 1897 | Furse | <i>Military Expeditions Beyond the Seas</i> | Signed on title by Douglas Haig, annotated and underlined throughout. |
| 1902 | Wartenburg | <i>Napoleon as a General</i> | Pencil and underlining. |
| 1903 | James | <i>Modern Strategy</i> | Signed by Haig, some passages underlined in pencil. |
| 1905 | Henderson | <i>The Science of War</i> | Henderson lectured Haig at the Staff College. Haig formed a great respect for Henderson and his work both at the Staff College and during the Boer War. |
| 1905 | Caemmerer | <i>The Development of Strategical Science during the 19th Century</i> | Signed by Haig and with many pp. underlined in pencil. |
| 1918 | Foch | <i>The Principles of War</i> | Inscribed by Foch to Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig on fly leaf. |
| n.d. | Henry | <i>Napoleon's War Maxims</i> | Signed and annotated by Haig. |

The works by Antoine-Henri Jomini, Carl von Clausewitz, and Col. G.F.R. Henderson were not annotated by Haig. However, they are included here because there is sufficient evidence elsewhere that he did reflect on, and absorb the ideas, theories and opinions of these authors.³⁴¹ In a list of books that Haig read and recorded at the end of his 1910 personal diary, he wrote that Clausewitz's *On War* is 'the most profound book on the subject, showing how much there is in it, and still the best guide on *general principles*'.³⁴² Henderson was Haig's professor of military history at the Staff College and both men worked together on a project to reorganise military intelligence during the South Africa War.

In respect to Haig's pre-war career, primary source material has been examined including his personal papers, diaries and letters. These documents are collated in the *Haig Papers* kept at the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Research Findings

The phrase 'unity-of-effort' is notable by its absence in any of the works identified above. Perhaps understandably, it is apparent that these writers generally left aside questions of military organization and administration, concentrating instead on the nature of war, strategy and tactics. However, many of these authorities alluded to the principle in various ways. For example, Henderson posited that 'if there is one principle more than another which is important in war, it is that in unity there is strength'.³⁴³ Von Wartenburg, the author of *Napoleon as a General*, agreed; he quoted

³⁴¹ See Haig's note books, Haig Papers, NLS, Acc. 3155: 17 – 25.

The copy of *On War* in Haig's library and inscribed by the translator to him was the 1909 English edition translated by Miss A.M.E. Maguire, with Notes by Thomas Miller Maguire. However, it is likely that the first English edition, translated by Colonel J.J. Graham in 1873, had the most influence on Haig, as this copy was in circulation while he was at the Staff College. For a full discussion see 'The English Translation of *On War*' Christopher Bassford, *Clausewitz in English: The Reception in Britain and America 1815-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). (Emphasis in original). Chapter 5.

³⁴² Cooper, *Haig*. Vol I, p. 119.

³⁴³ Col. G.F.R. Henderson, *The Science of War: A Collection of Essays and Lectures, 1892 - 1903* (London: Longman's Green, and Co, 1905) p. 118.

General Friedrich von Bülow as stating “...union is strength, division weakness”.³⁴⁴ He continued, ‘Bülow preached this doctrine, Jomini, and Willisen³⁴⁵ concur in it, Napoleon’s actions demonstrates it, and his words confirm it.’³⁴⁶ Goltz added a most important dimension by alluding to unity-of-effort, when he stated:

*The action of the future will demand more of thorough preliminaries, a clearer comprehension of the object to be attained, a more intimate co-operation of all three arms, and the simultaneous employment of all available troops to decide the combat.*³⁴⁷

Derrecagaix elaborated further:

In order that an army may be strong, it is not sufficient that all the officers and soldiers be brave and well equipped. There must still be cohesion, unity and constancy in their efforts.³⁴⁸

A number of authors stressed the importance of ‘unity of action’ to the strength or success of an army; but was a corollary to ‘unity of effort’ rather than a substitute for it.³⁴⁹ Finally, it was recognised that ‘offensive operations cannot be conducted with unity, or directed with precision, unless the object to be gained by them is kept distinctly in view by those who plan and execute the campaign’.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁴ Bülow, *Geist des Neueren Kriegssystems*, Hamburg, 1799. p. 57. Cited in Count Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon as a General*, The Wolsely Series (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co Ltd, 1902) p. 179.

³⁴⁵ Karl Wilhelm von Willisen (1790-1879) was a Lieutenant General in the Prussian Army.

³⁴⁶ Wartenburg, *Napoleon as a General*. Vol 1, p. 170.

³⁴⁷ Lieut.-Col. Baron Von Der Goltz, *The Nation in Arms* (London: W.H. Allen and Company, 1887) p. 272. (Emphasis in original).

³⁴⁸ Gen. V. Derrecagaix, *Modern War: Strategy*, vol. I (Washington: James J. Chapman, 1888) p. 82.

³⁴⁹ Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini, *The Art of War*, trans. G.H. Mendal and W.P. Craighill (West Point) 1862, 1992 ed. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co, 1862); Derrecagaix, *Modern War: Strategy*, I. p. 78 (94); Goltz, *The Nation in Arms*. p. 283; Henderson, *The Science of War: A Collection of Essays and Lectures, 1892 - 1903*. p. 224.

³⁵⁰ Lieut.-Gen. Sir Edward Bruce Hamley, *The Operations of War: Explained and Illustrated* (London: William Black Wood and Sons, 1886) p. 50.

Unity-of-Mental-Effort: Doctrine

Professor Stephen Badsey posited that ‘the idea of what is meant by doctrine was well understood in the British Army of the period, although the term “doctrine” was itself rarely used’. Badsey observed that Haig and his colleagues interpreted doctrine as the ‘principles’ or ‘fundamentals’ of war, following the terminology established by Jomini. Some forms of written doctrine were rejected by the Army, and indeed as will be seen by Haig himself, on the grounds of being overly prescriptive.³⁵¹

Before the Second Boer War, ‘the British Army paid little attention to developing a coherent, unified...doctrine.’³⁵² From the mid-nineteenth century at least this was primarily because the Army specialised in fighting small colonial wars, creating ‘a cult of pragmatism, flexibility and an empirical approach’.³⁵³ Moreover, the adoption of a formal doctrine would most probably have required its precursor, namely the presence of a Capital Staff.³⁵⁴ Throughout the nineteenth century the formation of this body had been eschewed by politicians including Liberals like Campbell-Bannerman who took an anti-militarist stance, by successive C-in-Cs who strenuously objected to any diminution of their power, and by regimental officers who feared being usurped by a GS elite.

In July 1887, Maj.-Gen. Sir Henry Brackenbury, Director of Military Intelligence at the WO recommended the establishment of a GS on the German pattern before a Select Committee to improve the ‘want of economy and efficiency

³⁵¹ Stephen Badsey, *Doctrine and Reform in the British Cavalry 1880-1918*, ed. John Bourne, Birmingham Studies in the First World War (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007) p 3.

³⁵² Captain A.J. Duncan, "Technology, Doctrine and Debate: The Evolution of British Army Doctrine Between the Wars," *Canadian Army Journal* 7, no. 1 (Spring, 2004) p. 24.

³⁵³ Bond, "Douglas Haig: War Diaries and Letters (Gary Sheffield and John Bourne)." p. 165.

³⁵⁴ Dallas D. Irvine, "The Origin of Capital Staffs," *The Journal of Modern History* X, no. 2. (1938).

which to a certain extent exists in our army'.³⁵⁵ In 1890, the Hartington Commission made a broadly similar proposal, all to no avail.³⁵⁶

It was only after the Army's poor showing in the South African War that the political will existed for radical reform. The recommendations of the War Office (Reconstitution) Committee, chaired by Lord Esher, led to the abolition of the post of C-in-C and the establishment of a GS in 1905. The Esher Committee also pointed to the necessity for 'a general work setting forth the accepted principles as regards the training of the Forces for, and their administration in, war'.³⁵⁷ In 1909, this requirement was met by the publication of the *FSR* under Haig's close supervision in his capacity of DSD. Thus, for the first time, the British Army had a set of guiding principles endorsed by the Army Council for operations, and also organization and administration.

This proposition poses an immediate and highly controversial question. Does the *FSR*, constitute a doctrine for the British Army? ³⁵⁸ The nub of the problem fracturing the argument appears to be the lack of 'agreement over what precisely constitutes doctrine'. The result, according to Albert Palazzo is 'that scholars and practitioners approach doctrine largely on an intuitive level [as there] is no single approved definition'.³⁵⁹ Gary Sheffield concurred; he claimed 'military doctrine

³⁵⁵ Spenser Wilkinson, *The Brain of an Army*, New Edition ed. (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co, 1895) p. 39.

³⁵⁶ C.5979, "Hartington Royal Commission Report," ed. War Office (London: HMSO, 1890) p. xxiii

³⁵⁷ [Cd.1932], "Report of War Office (Reconstitution) Committee," ed. War Office (London: HMSO, 1904) p. 23.

³⁵⁸ *For:* Col. John K Dunlop, *The Development of the British Army 1899-1914* (London: Methuen, 1938). Fuller, *The Foundations of the Science of War.... Against:* Albert Palazzo, *Seeking Victory on the Western Front: The British Army and Chemical Warfare in World War I* (University of Nebraska Press, 2002).; "From Moltke to Bin Laden: The relevance of doctrine in the contemporary military environment," (Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, September, 2008)... *Qualified:* Badsey, *Doctrine and Reform in the British Cavalry 1880-1918*. French, "Doctrine and Organization in the British Army 1919-1932."

³⁵⁹ Palazzo, "From Moltke to Bin Laden: The relevance of doctrine in the contemporary military environment." p. 6.

means different things to different people and organizations'.³⁶⁰ The danger of course is that military historians could use this ambiguity to serve their own arguments, one way or the other, or both. For example, Sheffield, argued concurrently that 'the British Army went through the First World War without a doctrine in the modern sense' and 'the [BEF], did, however, have a body of doctrine in the form of *Field Service Regulations*'. To reconcile this obvious contradiction, he added the caveat 'rather than being prescriptive, *FSR* set out broad principles for action', feeding into Badsey's earlier interpretation. Sheffield helpfully added that 'General Sir Douglas Haig was the key figure in the formulation of *FSR 1909*'.³⁶¹

David French was also most careful with his choice of words. He argued that 'in 1914 the British Army had no real operational doctrine, except to take the offensive in almost all circumstances'. This insight was coupled with the objection that *FSR-I* 'placed little emphasis on the need to produce a combined-arms fire plan'. While this is of course true, in mitigation, it can be argued that the operational level of war was not generally recognised in 1914. In fact, according to Lieut.-Gen. Sir John Kiszely, the 'British Military only incorporated this vital link into its doctrine in the 1980s'.³⁶² Moreover, the need for this type of doctrine only emerged during the course of the war, and it was only turned into a practical reality after 'a veritable revolution in artillery techniques' had been realised.³⁶³ J.F.C. Fuller in his primer *Training Soldiers for War*, posited that 'originality of thought is always an asset, but on the modern battle-field unity of action is the essential, and this unity of action is supplied to us by our "Field Service Regulations"'.³⁶⁴ Professor Brian Holden Reid

³⁶⁰ Gary Sheffield, "Doctrine and Command in the British Army: An Historical Overview," in *ADP Land Operations (AC 71819)* (London: MOD, 2005) p. 165.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 170.

³⁶² John Kiszely, "Thinking about the Operational Level," *JRUSI* December(2005) p. 38.

³⁶³ French, "Doctrine and Organization in the British Army 1919-1932." p. 498.

³⁶⁴ Capt. J.F.C. Fuller, *Training Soldiers for War* (London: Hugh Rees Ltd, 1914) p. 45.

observed that ‘in 1914, the British Army had evolved a tactical doctrine aimed at fighting a short war in Europe’.³⁶⁵ Col. John K. Dunlop was unequivocal:

The existence of this series of authoritative manuals [*FSR-I* and *FSR II*] was of the greatest value for the inculcation of one central doctrine, not only in the Regular Army, but also in the Territorial Force, in the Officers’ Training Corps, and as a result of the Imperial Conference, in the Dominion Forces.³⁶⁶

As Brig.-Gen. J.E. Edmonds observed the *FSR* addressed ‘the general principles governing the employment of the army in war’.³⁶⁷ As these principles received official sanction from the Army Council, it can be reasonably concluded that as understood within the contemporary context at least, the *FSR* constituted the first official doctrine for the British Army. Haig agreed: his *Final Despatch* written in 1919 insisted that ‘the principles of command, staff work, and organization elaborated before the war have stood the test imposed upon them and are sound’.³⁶⁸

The Formation of Haig’s Views on the Need for Doctrine

By reading Jomini’s treatise on *The Art of War*, Haig would have been exposed to the compelling idea that good results in warfare can be reduced to the execution of ‘a few simple fundamental principles’ which were immutable, independent of weapon type, time and country.³⁶⁹ For Jomini the two most fundamental principles of all were to operate on interior lines to obtain freedom of movement in the approach to battle and to strike the enemy with overwhelming force at the decisive point.

³⁶⁵ Brian Holden Reid, "War Fighting Doctrine and the British Army," in *A Doctrinal Perspective* (The Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, 1998) p. 14. (Emphasis in original).

³⁶⁶ Dunlop, *The Development of the British Army 1899-1914*. p. 293.

³⁶⁷ Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1914*, 1. p. 8.

³⁶⁸ Haig, *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches, December 1915-April 1919*, ed. by J.H. Boraston. p. 343. For evidence that Haig’s self-congratulatory valediction was not universally shared see French, "Doctrine and Organization in the British Army 1919-1932." p. 500.

³⁶⁹ Jomini, *The Art of War*. p. 344; Peter Paret, *The Cognitive Challenge of War: Prussia 1806* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009) p. 113.

Jomini further advised ‘the whole science of great military combination is comprised of these two fundamental truths’.³⁷⁰ It is significant that the second of these truths found its way into one of Haig’s note books.³⁷¹ Moreover, from Jomini, he would have also learned that the ‘military man who clearly perceives the importance of the truths stated will succeed in acquiring a rapid and accurate *coup-d’oeil*... and will be in no doubt, in real campaigns what he ought to do...even when his enemy attempts sudden and unexpected movements’.³⁷²

When Haig arrived at the Staff College in 1896, he benefited from the tutelage of Henderson, who was ‘a thoughtful student of war, a gifted teacher and an outstanding historian...[who] wielded an enormous intellectual influence in the British Army’.³⁷³ It was chiefly through his lectures that Haig became intimately familiar with the great military minds including Napoleon, Jomini, Clausewitz and Moltke, together with the highly instructive battles of Spicheren, Fredericksburg, Woerth, and those of Stonewall Jackson among others. Henderson, who published what were, and perhaps still are, the standard works on these battles, devised a new method of teaching military history directed at developing military judgement, rather than simply exercising the memories of his students.³⁷⁴ His aim was to ensure that the principles of war revealed by these masters and battles were understood and absorbed in such way that when initiative and judgement was called for in the field, they were produced as ‘a matter of instinct’.³⁷⁵ This approach called attention to the principles and fundamentals of war and substituted at the time for a formal doctrine

³⁷⁰ Jomini, *The Art of War*. pp. 328-329.

³⁷¹ NLS-Acc.3155/19, "Strategy I," (n.d.). n.p.

³⁷² Jomini, *The Art of War*. p. 343-344.

³⁷³ Jay Luvaas, *The Education of an Army: British Military Thought 1815 - 1940* (London: Cassell & Company, 1964) p. 171, 217.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 221.

³⁷⁵ Henderson, *The Science of War: A Collection of Essays and Lectures, 1892 - 1903*. pp. 48-49.

in the sense that this method was intended to elicit from Staff College graduates a commonly recognised intellectual response to strategic and tactical problem solving.

In 1903, Ferdinand Foch placed the value of Henderson's teaching methods into sharp focus for Haig, if indeed this was necessary. The Frenchman examined the question of 'unity of doctrine' in his now famous work *The Principles of War*.³⁷⁶ He posited that 'doctrine...constitute[s] a discipline of the mind common to all' that engendered 'a common manner of seeing, thinking and acting...'³⁷⁷ Furthermore, 'from the same *attitude towards things* will first result *a same way of seeing them*, and from this *common way of seeing* arises a *common way of acting*.'³⁷⁸ With reference to the Franco-Prussian War, Foch stressed that in the era of mass armies, where it was impossible for the C-in-C to exercise personal control over the whole force, it was essential that the 'personal initiative of subordinate chiefs (all working in the same direction and complying with the same doctrine) concur in setting up a complete direction of armies'.³⁷⁹ Foch warned that 'when doctrine ceases, a known doctrine, a doctrine learned from practice, men act on personal lines'.³⁸⁰ Of course, Foch was in distinguished company. For example, Derrecagaix observed:

The skilful organization of the command is one of the prime elements of an army's strength. It rests upon a fundamental principle, *unity in command*, or, using Napoleon's happy expression, *unity of the military thought*.³⁸¹

³⁷⁶ Foch, *The Principles of War*. p. 13. There is no direct evidence from the part of Haig's library auction by Christie's that he read the original French language version of this work, *Des Principes de la Guerre*, first published in 1903. However, given Foch's prominence as a French military thinker, and Haig's deep interest in the principles of war, it would be most surprising if he had not.

³⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 7.

³⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 13. (Emphasis in original).

³⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 290.

³⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 244 .

³⁸¹ Derrecagaix, *Modern War: Strategy*, I. p. 53. (Emphasis in original).

Haig's Contribution to the Development of Army Doctrine Before 1914

A review of Haig's pre-war military career revealed that soon after leaving Sandhurst he took a precocious interest in the development of military doctrine. In 1890, as a junior officer in the 7th Hussars in India, Haig wrote and circulated a pamphlet on cavalry reconnaissance, which was then used as the basis for training exercises at the annual manoeuvres in 1891 and 1892.³⁸² It is evident that Haig believed his ideas could improve this aspect of the cavalry's performance and that by circulating them in printed form they would lead to a common understanding among his brother officers. Brig.-Gen. Harcourt Bengough, commander of the Bangalore Division appreciated the value of Haig's contribution:

I was much interested in your remarks on Cavalry Reconnaissance and in the little pamphlet that you sent me and it would appear to me excellent. If all our...Cavalry officers took as much practical interest in instructing their men, we should soon have our Cavalry which General Luck says it now is "equal to any in Europe". I would prefer to say the best in the world.³⁸³

In 1892, Haig became an early advocate of dismounted cavalry service, circulating his ideas to Brig.-Gen. Sir William Gatacre, who was the Adjutant General of the Bombay Army at Poona.³⁸⁴ Haig firmly believed that the new cavalry carbine,³⁸⁵ which allowed long range, rapid, and – for the first time – smokeless fire, offered the service 'opportunities of increased usefulness and of obtaining results

³⁸² NLS-Acc.3155/32/A, "Reconnaissance Instruction and Exercises," (1890-1892). n.p.

³⁸³ NLS-Acc.3155/6/e, "Letters and Reports," (1891-1894). n.p.. At the time General G. Luck was the Inspector General of Cavalry in India.

³⁸⁴ NLS-Acc.3155/6/a, "Notes by Haig on Dismounted Action of Cavalry," (1892). n.p.

³⁸⁵ Badsey, *Doctrine and Reform in the British Cavalry 1880-1918*, pp. 160-166; The Marquess of Anglesey, *A History of the British Cavalry: 1872-1898*, VIII vols, vol. III London: (Secker & Warburg), 1982) p. 402 and p. 428. This refers to the *Martini-Metford Carbine*, a fast loading breech action that for the first time used smokeless powder and a calibre .303 bullet. In 1896, it was superseded by the bolt action *Lee-Metford Mk.1 Carbine*, fitted with a 5 round .303 magazine. http://www.rememuseum.org.uk/collections_view.aspx?id=76 In 1900, one of Wolseley's last acts as C-in-C was to make the decision that the Cavalry and Yeomanry should make the transition to the Short Magazine Lee-Enfield (SMLE) used by the infantry.

never dreamed of with old fashioned firearms.’ He emphasised that ‘no independent or successful action of large bodies of cavalry is conceivable...unless it is capable of maintaining combat with firearms...’. Haig added the caveat that it was no part of the cavalry’s duty to undertake or be drawn into long fights or cope with the enemy’s infantry.³⁸⁶ He was equally adamant that cavalry should not be recast as MI. In this respect, it appears that Haig was very concerned that as an expedient cost cutting measure, politicians would demand the replacement of the relatively superiorly trained cavalry by the more cheaply trained MI.

In August 1895, prior to joining the Staff College, Haig was asked to complete the latest version of the *Cavalry Drill Manual* left unfinished by Col. John French when he was appointed AAG under the AG, Gen. Sir Redvers Buller VC.³⁸⁷ The new manual ‘encapsulated the reformed Cavalry thinking as endorsed by Wolseley’.³⁸⁸ As Haig was a mere Captain at this time, it is unlikely that he made any significant contribution to the doctrinal value of this work other than to draft its text. However, he was obviously aware that the purpose of the manual was to formally promote unity in British cavalry thought, and to help standardise training exercises. Duff Cooper remarked ‘that such a task should have been entrusted to so junior an officer is evidence of the high opinion generally held of his attainments’.³⁸⁹ The marked improvement of this manual in comparison with its predecessor favourably impressed *The Times*.³⁹⁰

In 1903, just before taking up the post of IGCav in India, Haig did have the opportunity to influence the trajectory of cavalry doctrine. Roberts, then C-in-C,

³⁸⁶ NLS-Acc.3155/6/a, "Notes by Haig on Dismounted Action of Cavalry." n.p.

³⁸⁷ "The New Cavalry Drill Book," *The Times*, 15th February 1896. p. 4.

³⁸⁸ Stephen Badsey, *Doctrine and Reform in the British Cavalry 1880-1918*, ed. John Bourne, Birmingham Studies in the First World War (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007) p. 75.

³⁸⁹ Cooper, *Haig*. p. 46.

³⁹⁰ "The New Cavalry Drill Book." p. 4.

asked Haig to rewrite *Cavalry Training, 1898*, in the light of the experience of the South African War. This he dutifully did, but he refused to endorse the higher training priority given by Army Order 39 to the dismounted tactical use of the rifle versus mounted shock tactics (*armé blanche*). The official aim was to subordinate the sword to the rifle, and abolish the lance. Haig feared that this outcome would lead to the curtailment of cavalry training thereby reducing the arm to little more than mounted infantry thus making it irrelevant as a ‘decisive factor’ in future warfare.³⁹¹

I am a thorough believer in the necessity of training Cavalry to be thoroughly good shots and to act efficiently dismounted, but in view of the fact that we have to train Cavalry here [India] to be ready to fight Russians and savages, I hold that our Cavalry must be thoroughly efficient with the lance and the sword.³⁹²

Consequently, after Haig’s departure to India, Roberts ensured that *Cavalry Training 1904* was revised according to his lights. In the event, the manual was issued only in provisional form.³⁹³

In 1906, following the earlier abolition of Roberts’s post of C-in-C by the Esher Committee, Haig was able to prevail when he was appointed DMT at the WO by Richard Burdon Haldane, the new Secretary of State for War in Asquith’s recently formed Liberal administration. In this post Haig closely supervised the publication of *Cavalry Training, 1907*.³⁹⁴ A close comparison of Haig’s cavalry *Tactics* notebook against the published text revealed that multiple passages from the former had been copied word-for-word into the latter.³⁹⁵ In 1909, the lance was

³⁹¹ Terraine, *Douglas Haig: The Educated Soldier*. p. 34.

³⁹² TNA/WO/32/6782, "Role of the Cavalry - Retention of Lances," (1904). Letter: Haig to Lyttelton, (Simla) 12/05/1904.

³⁹³ *Cavalry Training (Provisional)*, (London: HMSO, 1904).

³⁹⁴ *Cavalry Training*, (London: HMSO, 1907).

³⁹⁵ NLS-Acc.3155/17, "Cavalry Tactics," (n.d.). n.p.

reintroduced.³⁹⁶ General Sir Hubert Gough, who after his dismissal from the BEF in May 1918 was no advocate of Haig's, summed up his contribution to the cavalry:

Haig was a profound student of modern war. His ideas on strategy – on tactics – and on staff duties, were a considerable way ahead of our other generals. In consequence, his influence on cavalry training both in England and afterwards in India, where he went as Chief of the General Staff, was very great.³⁹⁷

On November 9th 1907 Haig was appointed DSD and became responsible for the *FSR*. Later, following the establishment of the Imperial General Staff, whose organization had also been drafted by him, Haig promoted the use of the *FSR* in India, Australia, Canada, South Africa and the Colonies. His aim was to formally unify the doctrine of all military forces in the Empire. To help facilitate this process, Haig enlarged the Staff College at Camberley, reformed the Administrative Staff course at the London School of Economics and helped facilitate the development of the Staff College in India.

In 1909, in the capacity of temporary IGCav, Haig organised two cavalry staff rides in March and in June.³⁹⁸ Gen. Sir George de S. Barrow, then a relatively junior officer whose duty it was to write-up Haig's notes, observed after the war that these exercises 'had the inestimable value of uniting staffs, commanders and regimental officers in community of method and mutual understanding'.³⁹⁹ These exercises,

³⁹⁶ The standard work on this subject is: Badsey, *Doctrine and Reform in the British Cavalry 1880-1918*.

³⁹⁷ Gen. Sir Hubert Gough, *Soldiering On* (London: Arthur Baker Ltd, 1954) p. 95.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 95.

³⁹⁹ General Sir George de S. Barrow, *The Fire of Life*, 1st ed. (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1941). p. 118.

including the mass charge, were practised under Haig's direction 'not so much for their tactical value but for their importance in cultivating a shared doctrine'.⁴⁰⁰

On the October 8th 1909, after having been knighted by the King (KCVO) for services at the WO, Haig sailed for Bombay to take up his post as CGS in India under the C-in-C, Sir Garret O'Moore Creagh VC.⁴⁰¹ Haig hoped that the new post would enable him to establish a GS in India along British lines, and to help increase the efficiency of the India Army on the basis of the *FSR* in preparation for war outside the borders of the sub-continent.⁴⁰² With notable prescience Haig made this plain in a letter to Brig.-Gen. L.E. Kiggell who was his deputy at the Directorate of Staff Duties and who through his patronage, succeeded him:

As regards meeting '*the storm*' [war with Germany] which we all foresee, it seems to me that it will last a long time. We'll win by wearing the enemy out, if we are only allowed 3 more years to prepare and organise the Empire. And it is of vital importance to have the machinery available in India trained as soon as possible, to turn out Staff Officers who may be of use when the time comes, and the resources of that country organized for *Imperial* needs instead of only for India's as at present. It was this idea that made me accept Sir O' Moore's offer and I honestly think I can do more good with him than here over the next three years. He is most anxious to work on sound lines and for the GS here to do its utmost to help him.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰⁰ Badsey, *Doctrine and Reform in the British Cavalry 1880-1918*. p. 202. Ibid. pp. 117-18.

⁴⁰¹ NLS-Acc.3155/2/i, "Haig's Personal Diary," (1909). Entry: 15/04/1909; 03/05/1909; 23/06/1909; 25/09/1909; 08/09/1909.

⁴⁰² LHCMA:Kiggell:1/1-37, "Letters Haig to Kiggell (1909-1914)," in *Kiggell Papers*. Letters: Haig to Kiggell 24/04/1909; 27/04/1909.

⁴⁰³ Ibid. Letter: 27/04/1909. (Emphasis in original).

With the valuable aid of Maj.-Gen. Alexander Hamilton Gordon who became Director of Military Operations,⁴⁰⁴ Haig organised the GS on a similar pattern to that at the WO, except that staff duties and military training were placed under one director.⁴⁰⁵ He used Staff Tours to train higher commanders and staff officers in the application of *FSR-I*. 'Each of these Staff Tours was devoted to a definite phase of fighting against a European enemy': namely, manoeuvring for position, the first clash of battle, the wearing out fight and the decisive blow, in accordance with the principles established in the regulations.⁴⁰⁶ Haig also used the schemes of collective army training, established by his predecessor General Sir Beauchamp Duff, to inculcate *FSR-I* into the line officers. These schemes emphasised the principles in *Chapter VII*, and broadly covered the component parts of the new regulations (marches, protection, night operations, camps and bivouacs).⁴⁰⁷

Haig's tenure in India was not an unmitigated success. His ambition to bring the Indian army up to a high standard of efficiency based on the new regulations was to some extent frustrated. Haig found that while the C-in-C had promised his full support, in the event, he did not have the stomach for reform. Instead of helping Haig to 'oust the rascals', O'Moore Creagh turned out to be one of them.⁴⁰⁸ Haig's problems were compounded by the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, who kept pressing for cuts in the Army estimate. Under the instruction of the pacifist Secretary of State for India, Lord Morley, the Viceroy attempted to frustrate Haig's efforts further by ordering him to destroy a mobilization plan he had carefully prepared for an Indian

⁴⁰⁴ NAM-8704-35-472-475, in *Ellison Papers*. Letter: Haig to Ellison 14/04/1910.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.* Table B, n.p.

⁴⁰⁶ Charteris, *Field-Marshal Earl Haig*. p. 53. Terraine, *Douglas Haig: The Educated Soldier*. pp. 47-48.

⁴⁰⁷ NLS-Acc.3155/89/c, "Memorandum on Army Training in India," (1909-10). Appendix I pp. 1-2.

⁴⁰⁸ DeGroot, "The Pre-War Life and Military Career of Douglas Haig." p. 323, citing Haig's personal diary entry 15th March 1909.

Expeditionary Force.⁴⁰⁹ Fortunately the plan did survive at the WO because it was the subject of the *1911 Staff Tour Report*.⁴¹⁰ Haig's relief came in May when Haldane asked him by wire if he would accept the post of GOC at Aldershot. This was the most prestigious army formation in the British Empire. Haig immediately replied in the affirmative.⁴¹¹ He returned by sea to England in December 1911 after playing a leading role in the organization of the successful Imperial Durbar at Delhi.⁴¹²

At Aldershot, Haig made a significant contribution inculcating the *FSR* into his Army Corps, which consisted of the 1st and 2nd Divisions and the 1st Cavalry Brigade. For the first time in his career, Haig had the opportunity to handle massed regular troops of all-arms, an experience that would prove most valuable on the Western Front. 'The whole of his time at Aldershot was spent perfecting the Army Corps for its future role'.⁴¹³ In September, Haig exercised the whole corps in the complex task of strategic marching at the inter-divisional manoeuvres in accordance with *FSR-I (Chapter III, Marches)*. Here the 1st and 2nd Divisions, complete with divisional transport, marched 'hot foot' upon one road to meet an imaginary enemy. To avoid chaos, this feat required highly trained staff to issue exact orders, perfect marching discipline and systemised transport. Apparently, 'the Command Staff were eminently pleased with the result'. During the exercise, orders were issued by Haig's staff to the Royal Flying Corps for the purpose of aerial reconnaissance. According to the report of an in-bedded *Times* correspondent, these were 'nearly as perfect a vehicle of the General's intentions as is humanly possible'.⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁹ Terraine, *Douglas Haig: The Educated Soldier*. p. 48.

⁴¹⁰ TNA/WO/279/532, "Report of a Staff Tour, 1911," (Simla).

⁴¹¹ NLS-Acc.3155/2/k, "Haig's Personal Diary," (1911). Entry 12/05/1911.

⁴¹² *Ibid.* Entry 23/12/1911.

⁴¹³ Terraine, *Douglas Haig: The Educated Soldier*. p. 50

⁴¹⁴ Special-Correspondent, "Aldershot Command Training," *The Times*, 13th September 1912. p. 4.

On September 16th, at the Annual Army Manoeuvres, the Aldershot Command (Red Force) with Haig in charge was pitted against a scratch formation of similar strength (Blue Force) commanded by Lieut.-Gen. Sir James Grierson.⁴¹⁵ The exercise was directed by French, now the CIGS, with the objects, framed and informed by the principles of the *FSR*:

- i. To afford opportunities to the higher commanders and their staffs of handling troops in the field.
- ii. To train the troops in combined operations in the larger formations.
- iii. To give the administrative services practice in carrying out their duties in the field.⁴¹⁶

Due to an intelligence error caused by one of Haig's staff officer's literal interpretation of an air observer's report, the manoeuvres ended early in a draw. This outcome enabled Haig's critics to make the claim that he proved an incompetent commander, by being 'out-generalled' by Grierson.⁴¹⁷ However, *The Times* military correspondent who witnessed the exercise, did not share this opinion. He wrote that 'the operations of this year have been more interesting and instructive than any other since the war'. Summarising French's post manoeuvre report, the correspondent observed that 'the main defect in the higher leading appeared to be the absence of weight at a decisive point in the concluding engagement'. This was in part due to the strategy of both commanders, which 'was prudent in its broader aspects'. The result was that the commanders ignored both strategic and tactical opportunities on risk grounds.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁵ "The Manoeuvres in East Anglia," *The Times*, 17th September 1912. p. 5.

⁴¹⁶ *Training and Manoeuvre Regulations*, (London: HMSO, 1913) p. 82.

⁴¹⁷ Sheffield, *The Chief: Douglas Haig and the British Army*. pp. 61-62.

⁴¹⁸ Military-Correspondent, "The Army Manoeuvres: Comments and Conclusions," *The Times*, 7th October 1912. p. 6.

Nonetheless, these manoeuvres were not Haig's 'shining hour'.⁴¹⁹ It appears he did not display his characteristic 'sincere desire to engage the enemy'.⁴²⁰ However, the manoeuvres did prove the qualified efficacy of aerial observation. Furthermore, lessons were learned in operations and staff work, and where appropriate the *FSR* were amended accordingly.⁴²¹

Haig cautioned in the Aldershot Command's *Comments on the Training Season, 1913*, that 'good progress has been made towards establishing a uniform doctrine throughout the staffs in the command, but improvement in this respect can still be effected, and special exercises carried out with this end in view'.⁴²² Given that Haig did not extend the context of this comment to include the whole command, this indicates that more broadly in other formations, the inculcation of doctrine was less than satisfactory.⁴²³

In conclusion, Haig's notebooks show that many of his ideas and much of his inspiration came from the contemporary military thinkers indicated above. Thus, it is apparent that in concert with men like Foch, Goltz and Derrecagaix, Haig would have acknowledged that the purpose of doctrine was to provide the basis for a coherent and cohesive foundation for the Army's common understanding of the principles or fundamentals of war. Moreover, the examination of Haig's military career shows that he may have made a greater contribution to the formation and adoption of operational, organizational and administrative doctrine than any other

⁴¹⁹ Terraine, *Douglas Haig: The Educated Soldier*. pp. 53-54.

⁴²⁰ Winston Churchill, *Great Contemporaries* (London: T. Butterworth, Ltd., 1937) p. 226.

⁴²¹ *Field Service Regulations Part I Operations 1909 (Reprint 1912)*, (London: HMSO, 1912).
Field Service Regulations Part I (Operations) 1909 reprinted 1914, (London: HMSO, 1914).
Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration) 1909 reprinted 1914, (London: HMSO, 1914).

⁴²² TNA/WO/270/53, "Aldershot Command: Comments on the Training Season, 1913." p.11 (Staff Duties).

⁴²³ Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) p. 77.

senior soldier of his generation.⁴²⁴ It follows that he recognised and was fully aware of the ultimate purpose of this work, which was to deliver unity-of-mental-effort across the Army.

Unity of Physical Effort: Training

Training delivers unity-of-physical-effort between the man and his weapons; between the man and other men in his arm; and one arm in combination with other arms. Haig's military influencers and mentors, including Jomini, Clausewitz, Colmar von der Goltz and Henderson, promoted this notion. In addition, Haig's practical experience supported it. He was directly involved with the training of officers and men for practically the duration of his pre-war military career.

The Formation of Haig's Ideas on Training

Jomini highlighted the importance of training by making it the subject of three of his twelve essential conditions that 'concur in making a perfect army'. These references related to the high standard and uniform instruction of officers and men; the instruction of the special arms of engineering and artillery; and 'having an organization calculated to advance the theoretical and practical education of its officers,' viz a GS.⁴²⁵ Clausewitz posited that 'the expertness of an army through training...holds the ranks together as if they had been cast in a mould'.⁴²⁶ Goltz declared that unity-of-action 'is guaranteed by a uniform training'.⁴²⁷ In the case of officers, he advised that 'individual and general principles' should be 'grafted into the flesh and blood of the commanders of troops by teaching and training' to ensure

⁴²⁴ Works produced by Haig or under his close supervision include the Cavalry manuals of 1896, 1904 and 1907; FSR-I and FSR-II; and the General Staff Manual, 1911.

⁴²⁵ Jomini, *The Art of War*. pp. 43-44.

⁴²⁶ Clausewitz, *On War (Translated by Colonel J.J. Graham)*, I-III. Chapter IV, p. 93.

⁴²⁷ Goltz, *The Nation in Arms*. p. 139.

unity of action.⁴²⁸ Goltz also stressed the importance of training armies in peace, for war.⁴²⁹ Henderson too signalled the value of training by devoting one chapter to ‘the training of infantry for attack’.⁴³⁰ As Haig’s Staff College notebooks attest, he acknowledged the value of these principles.⁴³¹

Haig’s Training Experience

The evidence suggests that ‘being trained by Haig was no joke’.⁴³² On July 25th 1888, he was appointed Adjutant of the 7th Hussars in India.⁴³³ This gave him the responsibility for regimental administration and training. Sgt.-Maj. H.J. Harrison bore witness and wrote of his methods to Lady Haig:

Your husband dear Lady at that time was obsessed by one item “*Soldiering*” and he ploughed his soldierly furrows in his unique manner. Original he was in most things pertaining to Discipline, Inexorable in its execution. Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and men were all brought under Haig’s intensity of purpose and dealt with by their Wizard Adjutant in a way which compelled awe.

On the drill ground, in the riding school, on the field, and in Camp or barracks, Haig was the same brilliant worker. At all times and in all weathers Haig went about “*Soldiering*”, and Haig’s soldiering was admitted by all who mattered, to be unrelated to ordinary military drills and tactics, but were embellished with a kind of finishing off process exclusively Haig.⁴³⁴

⁴²⁸ Ibid. p. 140.

⁴²⁹ Ibid. p. 13 (29) see also Derrecagaix, *Modern War: Strategy*, I. p. 72. (82)

⁴³⁰ Henderson, *The Science of War: A Collection of Essays and Lectures, 1892 - 1903*. Chapter XII, p. 338-364.

⁴³¹ NLS-Acc.3155/17, "Cavalry Tactics," (n.d.); NLS-Acc.3155/19, "Strategy I," (n.d.); NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II," (n.d.); NLS-Acc.3155/31, "Tactical Notes," (n.d.).

⁴³² Terraine, *Douglas Haig: The Educated Soldier*. p. 35.

⁴³³ C.R.B. Barrett, *The 7th (Queens Own) Hussars*, vol. II (RUSI, 1914). Appendix III, pp. 428-429.

⁴³⁴ NLS-Acc.3155/324/A, "Letters of and to Haig; Letters of and to Lady Haig," (1909-1937). Letter: 17/04/1937 Harrison to Lady Haig, p. 1. (Emphasis in original).

Haig held the post of adjutant until July 24th 1892, the full time span allowed by the regulations. During this period he markedly improved the training efficiency of the 7th Hussars. Lieut.-Col. Harrie Reid, the regimental CO, wrote a glowing letter of thanks to Haig.⁴³⁵

In September 1892, Haig left India in an unsuccessful attempt to gain a place at the Staff College by examination. Undeterred, and at his own initiative and expense, he attended French and German cavalry manoeuvres in Touraine (1893), Limoges (1894) and Berlin (1895). In the last instance, Haig spent two months observing the German cavalry.⁴³⁶ He attended manoeuvres at Templehofer Field, inspected the 1st Guard Uhlans at their depot and dined with the Kaiser at his Schloss who flattered him with a toast.⁴³⁷ Haig was particularly impressed by German cavalry training methods and organization.⁴³⁸ The intelligence reports that Haig had previously prepared and forwarded to the Horse Guards brought him to the attention of Sir Evelyn Wood VC, the Quarter-Master General. In 1895, Wood asked Haig to prepare a report while he was in Berlin on the role of German Officers and NCOs in the training of their men.⁴³⁹ It has been suggested elsewhere that as a result of this paper, Haig was influential in the cavalry's reorganization from eight troops to four squadrons.⁴⁴⁰ This is not correct because this system was adopted on March 1st 1892 while Haig was still in India, and well before this paper was written.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁵ "Post War Letters to Lady Haig." Resume: n.d.; NLS-Acc.3155/6/e, "Letters and Reports." Letter Reid to Haig 05/04/1894. n.p.

⁴³⁶ NLS-MS.28002, "Letters from Haig to Henrietta Jameson," (1892-99). 04/05/1895.

⁴³⁷ Ibid. Letters 19/05/1895; 31/05/1895.

⁴³⁸ NLS-Acc.3155/1/i. Entry: 17/05/1895.

⁴³⁹ NLS-MS.28002, "Letters from Haig to Henrietta Jameson." Letter: 04/07/1895.

⁴⁴⁰ NLS-Acc.3155/324/A, "Letters of and to Haig; Letters of and to Lady Haig." Hand-script note n.d., n.p.

⁴⁴¹ Lieut.-Gen. J.C. Goodenough, *The Army Book for the British Empire* (London: HMSO, 1893). p. 195.

During this period, Haig had the opportunity to extend his practical training experience. In 1894, acting as ADC to General Sir James Keith Fraser, the IGCav, Haig assisted with regimental inspections, officiated at manoeuvres, and practised new methods of reconnaissance. He was also selected by French to be his Staff Officer for the first Staff Ride, which was conducted at Haywards Heath. By the end of 1895, Haig had established himself 'as an authority on the training and organization of modern cavalry'.⁴⁴² For these endeavours Haig was rewarded by the C-in-C, the Duke of Cambridge, with a coveted commendation to the Staff College.

On leaving the Staff College two years later Haig was able to put his training experience into practice in the field. On the January 28th 1898, through the patronage of Wood, Haig joined the Egyptian Army under Kitchener and served in the Sudan. At first, he was assigned no specific post and used his time to assess the state of cavalry training. He concluded that both '*battle training* and *march discipline*' were poor, apportioning blame to the officers rather than the men.⁴⁴³ On March 25th, Haig was appointed CSO to the Egyptian Cavalry Brigade commander, Lieut.-Col. R.A. Broadwood.⁴⁴⁴ On April 5th, while on reconnaissance, this formation was challenged by a strong force of Dervish cavalry and infantry. In the ensuing melee, Haig took control of a rapidly deteriorating situation and prevented a rout. At considerable personal risk, and in the face of the enemy, he also saved the life of a wounded Egyptian NCO. It has been suggested that had the soldier in question been a white man instead of a native, Haig might have won the VC for this action.⁴⁴⁵ On April 8th the Battle of Atbara ensued where victory was assured by a successful cavalry

⁴⁴² DeGroot, "The Pre-War Life and Military Career of Douglas Haig." p. 111.

⁴⁴³ NLS-ACC.3155/6/g: Letter Haig to Wood 15/03/1898. (Emphasis in original).

⁴⁴⁴ NLS-Acc.3155/6/b, "Letters to Henrietta Jameson," (1892-1899). Letter: Haig to Henrietta 01/04/1898.

⁴⁴⁵ Douglas Scott, *The Preparatory Prologue: Douglas Haig Diaries and Letters 1861-1914* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2006) p. 85.

advance which neutralised the opposing horsemen.⁴⁴⁶ Following these operations and on the recommendation of Broadwood, Haig was rewarded with a Brevet Majority by Kitchener.⁴⁴⁷

Following this promotion Broadwood gave Haig a squadron to command which he set about training with characteristic zeal. In a letter to his sister Henrietta he explained:

I have 35 young horses now making 148 in all in my squadron. I have a parade every morning except Friday (which is the Egyptian Sunday). I have the young horses in the afternoon. We have an unlimited drill ground (from here to Suakim). Compare that with Wormwood Scrubs, Hounslow Heath and Wimbledon Common for training Cavalry! So I have grand manoeuvres against men with flags to represent the enemy – Not exactly Dervish tactics, but still if a squadron can keep together at rapid pace one is all right against Dervishes. I also have plenty of dummies (in the ground and on posts), which I make the men thrust at every day. – So they are getting quite handy now.⁴⁴⁸

At Omdurman this rigorous training paid off. Rawlinson, one of Kitchener's two ADCs, observed in his diary that Haig's methods and confident bearing inspired his Fellaheen troopers with such courage that 'for the first time in history, they were able to stand and attack the warlike Dervishes'.⁴⁴⁹ This experience proved to Haig that good organization, training and discipline could have a significant and positive impact on the fighting effectiveness of previously indifferent troops.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁶ NLS-Acc.3155/6/b, "Letters to Henrietta Jameson." Haig to Henrietta 11/04/1898.

⁴⁴⁷ DeGroot, "The Pre-War Life and Military Career of Douglas Haig." p. 157.

⁴⁴⁸ NLS-Acc.3155/6/b, "Letters to Henrietta Jameson." Letter: Haig to Henrietta 07/07/1898.

⁴⁴⁹ Charteris, *Field-Marshal Earl Haig*. cited in * footnote on p. 17.

⁴⁵⁰ DeGroot, "The Pre-War Life and Military Career of Douglas Haig." pp. 174-175.

In September 1898, Haig returned to England where in the following year he was briefly appointed Brigade Major to French who now commanded the Aldershot Cavalry Brigade. In 1899, following the outbreak of war in South Africa, French was given command of the Cavalry Division. Haig accompanied him as his CSO. He had a good war,⁴⁵¹ enhancing his reputation with the effectiveness of his staff work at Elandslaagte, Colesberg, the Relief of Kimberley and the capture of Bloemfontein.⁴⁵² He was rewarded with the Colonelcy of the 17th Lancers. Following the capture of Pretoria, Haig took command of a column before returning to England on September 23rd 1902. 'He had served in every part of South Africa and met success everywhere'.⁴⁵³

On October 30th 1903, following an invitation from Kitchener, Haig arrived in Bombay to take up the post of IGCav in India, a command he held until August 12th 1906.⁴⁵⁴ In accordance with Kitchener's wishes, he set about raising the standard of efficiency of the British and Native cavalry regiments with the express aim of making them '*thoroughly efficient for war, (both against civilised and savage peoples)*'.⁴⁵⁵ Haig also pressed the military authorities to build a Cavalry School. After delays due to funding problems, the school was eventually opened in 1910 at Saugor in north central India along similar lines to that of the cavalry school at Netheravon.⁴⁵⁶ To provide for the higher training of officers, Haig also found support

⁴⁵¹ Ibid. p. 217.

⁴⁵² Ibid. p. 185; 194; 201; 206.

⁴⁵³ Ibid. p. 231.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 235.

⁴⁵⁵ NLS-Acc.3155/MS/28004/9, "Memorandum Giving the Probable Programme for the Inspection of Regiments of British and Native Cavalry by the Inspector-General of Cavalry in India During the Season 1903-04," (India) p. 1. (Emphasis in original).

⁴⁵⁶ Douglas Scott, *The Preparatory Prologue: Douglas Haig Diaries and Letters 1861-1914* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2006). Diary entry 20/08/1910. pp. 293-294. The Marquess of Anglesey, *A History of the British Cavalry: 1899-1913*, VIII vols, vol. IV (London Martin Secker & Warburg Limited, 1986) p. 429

from Kitchener in his determination to establish 'the long overdue' Staff College.⁴⁵⁷ It opened in 1905 first at Deolali before transferring permanently to Quetta in 1907.⁴⁵⁸ It is clear that at this early stage, Haig and Kitchener were anticipating and preparing for a European war. Haig's ambition for regimental training is summed up by an expression he included in a letter of advice to his nephew Hugo, who was a relatively junior cavalry officer, "aim high perchance ye may attain".⁴⁵⁹

A week after his arrival in India, Haig circulated a memorandum to all British and native cavalry regiments setting out in detail his expectations for the programme of inspections. In this way Haig was able to both set the standard and manage the uniformity of training across the cavalry regiments. He made no distinction between British and native units as to his requirements. Haig organised a rigorous combination of regimental inspections, staff rides and manoeuvres. According to one observer Haig's 'instruction was more practical and realistic than anything the cavalry in India had known previously'.⁴⁶⁰ To ensure uniformity with the inspection system at home, Haig kept in close touch with Robert Baden-Powell, the IGCav in England. According to Baden-Powell, Haig was able to give him 'far seeing and practical advice'.⁴⁶¹

In August 1906, at the instigation of Lord Esher, the urging of the King, and the invitation of Haldane, Haig now a substantive Maj.-Gen. was appointed DMT at the WO, a post that included war organization. From the narrow perspective of training, two of Haig's major contributions had far reaching effects: first, he helped Haldane shape and mould the formation of the new second-line Territorial Force in

⁴⁵⁷ Terraine, *Douglas Haig: The Educated Soldier*. p. 36.

⁴⁵⁸ Lieut.-Col F.W. Young, *The Story of the Staff College* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden Ltd, 1958) p. 49.

⁴⁵⁹ Cooper, *Haig*. pp. 90-92.

⁴⁶⁰ Barrow, *The Fire of Life*. pp. 104-105.

⁴⁶¹ Lord Baden-Powell, *Lessons from "The Varsity of Life"* (London: C. Arthur Peason, 1933) p. 261.

all its essential details.⁴⁶² In particular, he devised the training scheme for this new formation.⁴⁶³ To enforce a high standard of training, and following the German pattern, Haig made the divisional and mounted brigade commanders 'solely responsible for the training and efficiency for war of their commands and such other troops as may be placed under them'.⁴⁶⁴ With the aim of ensuring uniformity with the Regular Army, Haig established training units which served to link the Special Reserve with the Territorial Force. In peacetime, the principal functions of these training units distributed throughout the United Kingdom was to train the Special Reserve; to serve generally as a centre for education and instruction of the Territorial Force; and to form a school where officers, non-commissioned offers and specialists could receive higher training. It was intended that the training units would provide 'the establishment, equipment, accommodation and apparatus which would enable them to develop their training possibilities to the highest degree'.⁴⁶⁵

Secondly, in 1908 as DSD, Haig seized the opportunity, under the imprimatur of the new Chief of the General Staff – Sir William Nicholson, to expand the staff organization to embrace India and the Dominions, creating the Imperial General Staff.⁴⁶⁶ This initiative had already been promoted by Haldane accompanied by Haig at the Colonial Conference staged in London the previous April of 1907.⁴⁶⁷ The new Staff organization was realised at the Imperial Conference in 1909.⁴⁶⁸ From the perspective of training, this was an important development. Not only did the new

⁴⁶² Richard Burdon Haldane, *Lord Haldane's Autobiography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1929) p. 199.

⁴⁶³ [Cd.3515], "Principles to be Kept in View in Training the Territorial Force and Special Contingent," ed. War Office (London: HMSO, 1907).

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 6.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 4.

⁴⁶⁶ Haldane, *Lord Haldane's Autobiography*. p. 200.

⁴⁶⁷ [Cd.3404], "Published Proceedings and Precis of the Colonial Conference 15th to 26th April," (London: HMSO, 1907) p. 20.

⁴⁶⁸ NLS-Acc.3155/6/d, "Letters to Henrietta Jameson," (1903). Letter: Haig to Henrietta 21/04/1907. [Cd.4948], "Imperial Conference," (London: HMSO, 1909) p. 29

body ensure that the training of GSOs was standardised throughout the Empire, but it was also agreed that the *FSR* and training manuals issued in Great Britain would form the basis of training as far as it proved practical.⁴⁶⁹ This measure had the great potential to establish common standards and bring uniformity to training methods in India and throughout the Dominions with those at home.

In 1910, Haig took the opportunity in India to instruct and train GSOs at GHQ and those at divisional HQs in the practical problems of war.⁴⁷⁰ As briefly mentioned, Haig organised three Staff Tours, scheduled to run concurrently over three seasons. It appears that nothing of this scale, duration or intensity had been attempted before. It is clear that Haig was preparing the army in India for a European war which he believed would involve the collective forces of the Empire. Furthermore, the Staff Tours were sequenced to foreshadow the requirements of this type of conflict. The first tour (December 1909 to March 1910) examined the problems of mobilisation in India. The second tour (July to December, 1910) addressed concentration, reinforcement and resupply, defence of lines of communication, organization of supply transport, medical, ordnance services, railways and transport against a backdrop of Indian, Imperial and German organization.⁴⁷¹ The third tour (May to November, 1911) dealt with embarkation, organization of the sea base, the replacement of animal transport by mechanical transport in a theatre where there was a good railway system and metalled roads, strategical deployment, the retreat of a force whose communications were suddenly threatened and its pursuit, and a counter

⁴⁶⁹ "Imperial Conference." p. 29.

⁴⁷⁰ Charteris, *Field-Marshal Earl Haig*. p. 53.

⁴⁷¹ TNA/WO/279/526, "Report on Staff Tour, 1910." pp. 5-6

attack with a large reserve of all-arms.⁴⁷² This last tour foreshadowed British operations in France in 1914 with uncanny accuracy.

On Haig's return from India in 1912 his 'chief interest' was to train the Aldershot Command for war against Germany, which he and other senior officers including French and Wilson believed was inevitable.⁴⁷³ In this respect, Haig 'made an immediate impact'. As one officer observed 'the training of both officers and soldiers has become much more strenuous'.⁴⁷⁴ 'Not only was Haig indefatigable in his study of their training, but he also attempted to form the acquaintance of every officer in his command'.⁴⁷⁵ Ably assisted by Maj.-Gen. John Gough his CS, Haig's aim was to attain the highest pitch of military efficiency; characteristically undeterred by the fact that this was his first active command of a large formation.⁴⁷⁶ In the knowledge that sound organization was the bedrock of military efficiency, Haig's first priority was to put his administrative staff through their paces. In April, an administrative tour was arranged for this purpose. The central idea was an unopposed landing, concentration, and an opposed advance of a force with the strength and organization of the BEF.⁴⁷⁷ Realism was the key. A full season of brigade, divisional and interdivisional training followed, culminating in the Army Manoeuvres in September.⁴⁷⁸ As discussed, Haig did not live up to expectations at the annual army manoeuvres. He proved to be a cautious rather than a bold

⁴⁷² TNA/WO/279/532, "Report of a Staff Tour, 1911." pp. 1-2.

⁴⁷³ Charteris, *Field-Marshal Earl Haig*. pp. 69; 61-62.

⁴⁷⁴ Sheffield, *The Chief: Douglas Haig and the British Army*. p. 61.

⁴⁷⁵ Cooper, *Haig*. Vol I, p. 121.

⁴⁷⁶ Charteris, *Field-Marshal Earl Haig*. p. 62.

⁴⁷⁷ TNA/WO/279/533, "Aldershot Command Staff Tour, April 1912," (London) pp. 3-4.

⁴⁷⁸ "This Year's Army Training Arrangements," *The Times*, 9th May 1912. p. 10.

commander.⁴⁷⁹ *The Times* military correspondent wryly observed; ‘we must stop placing Scotsmen at the head of our armies if we wish such risks to be run’.⁴⁸⁰

In 1913, training exercises for the Aldershot Command followed a similar pattern, but the annual army manoeuvres were novel in a number of respects. For the first time in peace, two army corps each of two divisions and a cavalry division were assembled under one command together with their staffs for a combined arms exercise that included the RFC. The exercise was designed as a test for the staff, including officers, clerks, typists and the signals service, as much it was for the assembled fighting formations. According to leader column of *The Times* salutary lessons were learned:

Our Military Correspondent, while giving full credit to the excellence and efficiency of the field Army...has shown that mass-marching is not yet quite perfect; the aerial reconnaissance...gave no appreciable results; the protective duties of Cavalry were insufficiently performed owing to the absence of divisional Cavalry from our organization in peace; the new system of supply stands in need of reconsideration; the siting and profile of entrenchments in a defended position requires more attention....⁴⁸¹

These defects highlighted the need for large-scale exercises in peace, as the most effective means of preparing the Army for war; a training practice Haig had argued for and pursued in India.

When the BEF spear-headed by the Aldershot Command embarked for Northern France it ‘was incomparably the best trained, best organised, and best

⁴⁷⁹ Military-Correspondent, "The Army Manoeuvres: Comments and Conclusions." *The Times*, 10th October 1912. p. 6.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p. 6.

⁴⁸¹ "Lessons of the Army Exercise," *The Times*, 16th October 1913. p. 2.

equipped British Army which ever went forth to War'.⁴⁸² Perhaps this effusive comment made by Edmonds should not be taken at face value. Tim Bowman and Mark Connelly have made a detailed study of *The Edwardian Army*. They concluded that while the BEF may have been the finest force that Britain sent abroad, in of itself, 'this metric did not set a very high bar' considering that the immediate comparators were the expeditionary forces dispatched to the Crimean and South African wars. However, while cautioning against overlooking the considerable problems of the BEF, the most glaring of which was its small size, the authors acknowledged that the force 'did probably prove itself to be, man for man, the best army in Europe'.⁴⁸³

Unity of Moral Effort: 'Moral' Underpinned by Discipline

Before proceeding with this section it is first necessary to clarify the meaning and usage of the contemporary word 'moral' used by Haig, and the modern term 'morale'. It appears from Haig's Staff College notebooks that his opinion on this matter was shaped and informed mainly by the work of Clausewitz. Haig had two different translations of *On War* in his library, one made by Col. J.J. Graham (1873), and the other by Miss A.E.M. Maguire (1908).⁴⁸⁴ As Michael Howard and Peter Paret opined Clausewitz was 'far from consistent in his terminology, as might be expected of a writer who was less concerned with establishing a formal system or doctrine than with achieving understanding and clarity of expression'.⁴⁸⁵ Clausewitz used the words moral and morale as synonyms, although he rarely used the latter term. In fact,

⁴⁸² Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1914*, 1. p. 10.

⁴⁸³ Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914*, p. 216. (The writer is indebted to Professor David French for directing attention to this work.)

⁴⁸⁴ NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II." Strategical Maxims, no.2. 'the destruction of the Enemy's army must form the objective – Everything else like the occupation of cities or territories, is only of secondary importance'. n.p. General principles of the fight n.p. Fear n.p.; Moral and tactics n.p.

⁴⁸⁵ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) p. xii.

only two references to the expression 'morale' have been found in the earlier edition, perhaps reflecting the personal preferences of the English translator. Nonetheless, following on from Clausewitz and to a lesser extent Henderson, Haig relied almost exclusively on the term 'moral' in his writing. To eliminate any ambiguity, and in keeping with Haig's contemporary usage, the term 'moral' will be adopted in this thesis – apart from in direct quotations accompanied by a citation, or where demanded by the context.

The Formation of Haig's Ideas on 'Moral'

As a plain thinking pragmatist, Haig surely must have found that Clausewitz's interpretation of 'moral' was charged with complexity and ambiguity:

Moral forces...are the spirits which permeate the whole element of war, and which fasten themselves soonest and with the greatest affinity to the will, which puts in motion and guides the whole mass of powers, unite with it as it were in one stream, because it is a moral force itself. Unfortunately, they seek to escape from all book-knowledge, for they will neither be brought into numbers nor into classes, and want only to be seen and felt.⁴⁸⁶

Clausewitz observed that 'the chief moral powers' encapsulate '*the talents of the commander; the military virtue of the army; [and] its national feeling*'.⁴⁸⁷ It appears that for Clausewitz, and his later imitators including Helmuth von Moltke (the elder), Colmar von der Goltz and Rudolf von Caemmerer,⁴⁸⁸ the ingredients or 'crystals of military virtue' as referred to by Clausewitz,⁴⁸⁹ constitute 'intellect', 'will-power', 'courage', 'loyalty', 'daring', 'reliance on good fortune', 'self-reliance', 'coup

⁴⁸⁶ Clausewitz, *On War* (Translated by Colonel J.J. Graham), I-III. p. 91.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid. Book III, Ch. 4, p. 92. (Emphasis in original).

⁴⁸⁸ Michael Howard, "The Influence of Clausewitz," in *On War* (Carl von Clausewitz), ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976) pp. 30-32.

⁴⁸⁹ Clausewitz, *On War* (Translated by Colonel J.J. Graham), I-III. Book III, Chapter V, p. 94.

d'oeil', 'resolution', 'self-confidence', 'hope' and 'enthusiasm for the business of war'.⁴⁹⁰ Clausewitz insisted that 'the military virtue of an army is one of the most important moral powers in war' because it imbues a force with true military spirit.⁴⁹¹

As he recounted:

An army which preserves its usual formations under the heaviest fire, which is never shaken by imaginary fears, and in the face of real danger disputes the ground inch by inch, which, proud in the feelings of its victories, never loses its sense of obedience, its respect for and confidence in its leaders, even under the depressing effects of defeat...Such an Army is imbued with the true military spirit.⁴⁹²

Clausewitz also cautioned against 'confusing the spirit of an army with its temper'. This is a distinction with an important difference. While the temper or humour of an individual, body of troops, or an army can change from hour to hour in response to even trivial stimuli, as suggested above, the spirit of an army is durable. Clausewitz advised that the military spirit of an army 'can only be generated from two sources, and only by these two conjointly: the first is a succession of wars and great victories; and the other is, an activity of the army carried sometimes to the highest pitch. Only by these, does the soldier learn to know his powers'.⁴⁹³

Before the war, Haig could do little to influence the first but, as shown, he did do his utmost to bring units and formations under his command to their highest state of readiness. Alluding to Clausewitz, Haig believed that 'moral force is the result of training and daily efforts having as their objective the inculcation of the sense of

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid. Book 1, Chapter 1 pp. 1; 10-11; Chapter III, p. 25; Book VII, Chapter VII, p. 18. Book VI, Chapter XXV, p. 166. Book III, Chapter IV, p. 93.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid. Book III Chapter V, p. 95 It is important to note that Clausewitz's use of the term 'virtue' has 'nothing to do with ethics.' He made this plain by declaring that 'there is no moral force without the conception of states and law'. In this way, Clausewitz neatly bypasses the thorny questions of morals and morality in relation to war. Ibid. Book I, Chapter 1, p. I.

⁴⁹² Ibid. Book III, Ch. V, p. 94.

⁴⁹³ Ibid. Book III, Ch. V, p. 95.

duty, of the value of discipline, and the spirit of sacrifice'. He wrote 'the successes of Napoleon, Alexander, Hannibal and Caesar are based on these facts.'⁴⁹⁴ He added that all of Napoleon's combinations aimed to 'raise the moral of his own troops and depress those of his enemies'.⁴⁹⁵ He posited: 'one idea seems to inspire all Napoleon's plans of campaign and of battle – that is to break up the enemy's forces morally [by]...threatening his line of retreat and line of supply.'⁴⁹⁶ In respect to the latter, Haig was aware of the fragility of morale, noting that '*nothing reduces and discourages troops more than hunger*'. Continuing this theme he observed that 'the exhaustion of the vanquished troops was doubled and trebled by the *mental depression of defeat*'.⁴⁹⁷ Haig concluded that the 'bedrock on which every *strategical* and *tactical* problem depends is the *moral* of the troops'.⁴⁹⁸ Haig offered his own pithy interpretation of his learning from Clausewitz:

[Moral,] the psychological element with its infinite versatility
 – plays the chief part in war, and there is no end to the study
 of man!⁴⁹⁹

Elaborating upon this theme, Haig observed that 'success in battle depends mainly on 'moral' and a determination to conquer'. In his notebooks he repeated this sentiment in other guises: 'in battle moral factors are of the very greatest importance',⁵⁰⁰ and 'we shall always win by reason of pluck'.⁵⁰¹ Other influential thinkers made similar pronouncements. Goltz declared, 'moral forces...decide

⁴⁹⁴ Douglas Haig, *Cavalry Studies: Strategical and Tactical*, Pall Mall Military Series (London: Hugh Rees Ltd, 1907) pp. 174-5.

⁴⁹⁵ NLS-Acc.3155/19, "Strategy I." n.p.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid. Caption: Methods of making war as pursued by Napoleon. n.p.

⁴⁹⁷ NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II." n.p. (Haig's emphasis)

⁴⁹⁸ Haig, *Cavalry Studies: Strategical and Tactical*. p. 228. (Emphasis in original).

⁴⁹⁹ NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II." n.p.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid. "Fear". (Heading). n.p.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid. n.p.

everything in war.⁵⁰² Col. Ardant du Picq, the celebrated French military theorist and cited by Haig in his notebooks, affirmed: ‘in the last analysis, success in battle is a matter of morale’.⁵⁰³

The Formation of Haig’s Ideas on Discipline

Haig learned the interlocking relationship between morale and discipline and the importance of the latter from military theorists and his mentors. For instance, Clausewitz insisted that if discipline breaks down, military virtue is undermined.⁵⁰⁴ He observed that while ‘strict discipline may keep up military virtue for a long time, but [it] can never create it’.⁵⁰⁵ Jomini also made the value of discipline plain. He posited ‘concert in action makes strength; order produces this concert, and discipline insures order; and without discipline no success is possible’.⁵⁰⁶ However, in reference to a ‘perfect army’ he offered the enlightened advice that it should have ‘a strict but not humiliating discipline, and a spirit of subordination and punctuality, based on conviction rather than on the formalities of service.’⁵⁰⁷ Picq pointed to the adverse consequences of ill discipline: ‘men...without discipline, without solid organization, are vanquished by others less individually valiant, but firmly, jointly and severally combined’.⁵⁰⁸ He concluded, ‘the purpose of discipline is to make men fight, often in spite of themselves’, cementing the relationship between discipline and morale.’⁵⁰⁹

In February 1903, Henderson picked up and elaborated on Jomini when he observed:

⁵⁰² Goltz, *The Nation in Arms*. p. 390.

⁵⁰³ NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II."n.p.; Colonel Ardant du Picq, *Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern Battle* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921) p. 109

⁵⁰⁴ Clausewitz, *On War* (Translated by Colonel J.J. Graham), I-III. Book III, Chapter I, p. 93.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid. Book III Chapter V. p. 95.

⁵⁰⁶ Jomini, *The Art of War*. p. 42.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid. pp. 43-44.

⁵⁰⁸ Picq, *Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern Battle*. pp. 96-97.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 111.

Discipline is of two sorts: the first, mechanical discipline, best illustrated by the solid charge of the two-deep line, the men shoulder to shoulder, dressing on the colours, and the rear rank with ported arms; the second, intelligent discipline, best illustrated, perhaps, by a pack of well-trained hounds, running in good order, but without a straggler, each making good use of his instinct, and following the same objective with relentless perseverance.⁵¹⁰

Henderson used his knowledge of Prussian methods in connection with discipline and the issue of orders to posit that ‘an army cannot be controlled by direct orders from headquarters’; that ‘the man on the spot is the best judge of the situation’; and that ‘intelligent cooperation was of infinitely more value than mechanical obedience.’ Henderson’s ideas were resisted by some British officers precisely because they believed that individuality and initiative were injurious to discipline.⁵¹¹

Haig was not one of these men. He needed little convincing as the following entry in his *Strategy* notebook shows:

A subordinate commander must use his judgement in obeying: must *unite initiative with obedience*.

The Commander of an army cannot, and must not restrict himself to a literal obedience of orders. Indecision on the part of the C-in-C may quickly destroy the powers of the troops and render, in a short time, the whole army unfit for battle.⁵¹²

Haig added ‘having clearly indicated to subordinate leaders their respective missions, we must leave the execution to them.’⁵¹³ This shows that Haig’s intelligent approach to orders and discipline foreshadowed mission command and the principle

⁵¹⁰ Henderson, *The Science of War: A Collection of Essays and Lectures, 1892 - 1903*.p. 410.

⁵¹¹ Ibid. p. 4.

⁵¹² NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II."n.p. (Emphasis in original).

⁵¹³ Ibid. Higher Leadership n.p.

that has become known as the ‘man on the spot’, which in 1909 Haig enshrined in *FSR-I (Operations)*.⁵¹⁴

It is usually dangerous to prescribe to a subordinate at a distance anything that he should better decide on the spot, with a fuller knowledge of local conditions, for any attempt to do so may cramp his initiative in dealing with unforeseen developments.⁵¹⁵

To sum up, and borrowing a quotation from *FSR-I*, it is reasonable to suggest that for Haig morale in the field was characterised by the will to conquer. On the battle field, as expressed in *FSR-I*, this translated into ‘*the determination to press forward at all costs*’.⁵¹⁶ In the final analysis, this grim determination was believed to be activated by discipline.

Conclusion: A Definition of Unity-of-Effort

Now that both the nature and character of unity-of-effort have been explained, it is possible to offer-up a working definition of the principle of unity-of-effort within the context of the contemporary understanding:

Unity-of-effort is the *raison d’être* of all forms of human organization including the military. It is a tangible and effective principle, rather than a mere rhetorical gesture or oratorical flourish. The nature of unity-of-effort is immutable and uniquely *coordinative*. The principle is compound in character and has distinct mental, physical and moral components, specific to each type of organization. It is a normative ideal, as opposed to an absolute standard.

⁵¹⁴ Simpson, "The Operational Role of British Corps Command on the Western Front, 1914-18," p. 26. For the modern British Army’s interpretation of mission command see: "Army Doctrine Publication: Operations," (Shrivenham: Ministry of Defence, 2010). Ch. 6, Sec 6-9 Mission Command.

⁵¹⁵ *Field Service Regulations, Part I (Operations)* p. 23.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.* Sec. 105, para.4, p. 116. (Emphasis in original).

In military organizations, unity-of-effort is optimised by the development of operational, organizational and administrative doctrine to obtain *unity-of-mental-effort*; by inculcating doctrine through progressive training to achieve *unity-of-physical-effort*; and by promoting the will to fight through sustained morale, underpinned by discipline, to attain *unity-of-moral-effort*.

In the British Army, unity-of-effort is created and optimised through the *coordinative function* of the GS, although the ultimate responsibility rests with the C-in-C in the field. This body exercises its role through the process of management, which itself is characterised by forecasting, planning, organising, coordinating, commanding and controlling.

From the findings of the contemporary newspaper study used to determine the nature of unity-of-effort, combined with the evidence drawn from the works of military theorists who influenced Haig and from his own military experience, it can be posited beyond reasonable doubt that he would have recognised this definition of unity-of-effort.

4. Achieving Unity-of-Mental-Effort

The assessment below summarises Haig's doctrinal world-view, largely formed at the Staff College. In addition, the origins and development of *FSR-I* will be discussed and the impact of Haig's world-view on the framing of these regulations will be examined. It will be shown that at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, the BEF's first major offensive in March 1915, Haig as First Army's commander, put *FSR-I* doctrine into practice. Haig's contribution to the continued evolution of British tactical doctrine will also be examined and set within the context of the BEF as a learning organization. Finally, an assessment will be made of the extent to which unity-of-mental-effort was achieved within the BEF by the end of hostilities in 1918.

Haig's World-View of the Conduct of Warfare

Haig's world-view essentially comprised five principles that are discernible, albeit with some difficulty, from the notebooks he maintained at the Staff College. The notes included those he later made to record salient features of his continued reading. The rough jottings made by Haig lack structure, coherence and elaboration. Furthermore, it does not appear that any of the ideas in these notebooks are his own. Rather, they are a reflection of Staff College teachings, the works of contemporary military thinkers studied by Haig, and to a limited extent of his own field experience. A characterisation offered by Brian Holden Reid perhaps typified Haig; he was a serving officer with a passion for reform, who thought deeply about his profession, but used his advancement rather than writing as a means of propagating his ideas.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁷ Holden Reid, *Studies in British Military Thought*. p. 4.

Haig's first and overarching principle of war was that 'in battle moral factors are of the very greatest importance'.⁵¹⁸ He believed that 'the psychological element plays the chief part in war'.⁵¹⁹ This belief, and in Haig's case inspired by Clausewitz, was commonly held by contemporary commanders regardless of nationality or fighting service.

Haig was a staunch advocate of the offensive, and this was the central feature of his second principle. As Holden Reid observed this view was widely accepted in the British Army, and 'its inspiration was the school of Colonels Foch and Grandmaison in the French Army'.⁵²⁰ Churchill famously said that the military characteristic which defined Haig was his 'sincere desire to engage the enemy'.⁵²¹ Thus, it will come as no surprise to learn that Haig believed 'defeat is generally considered the lot of the defensive'.⁵²² He wrote, '*offensive strategy* alone can quickly end a war',⁵²³ where 'the object of giving battle [was] to destroy the enemy's forces on [the] front'.⁵²⁴ To this end, Haig believed that '*the fundamental principle* for bringing an enemy to his knees [was] to concentrate upon one point of the theatre of war and win such a victory that would upset the enemy's equilibrium entirely'.⁵²⁵ Haig took Jomini's idea of concentration at the decisive point, a doctrinal principle he set out in *FSR-I*, and alluded to the thoroughly modern notion of equilibrium that forms the current basis of the British Army's *manoeuvrist* approach.⁵²⁶ This doctrine

⁵¹⁸ NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II." n.p.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid. n.p.

⁵²⁰ Holden Reid, "War Fighting Doctrine and the British Army." p. 15.

⁵²¹ Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*. pp. 226-227.

⁵²² NLS-Acc.3155/19, "Strategy I." n.p.

⁵²³ NLS-Acc.3155/31, "Tactical Notes," (n.d.). n.p.

⁵²⁴ NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II." n.p. (Emphasis in original).

⁵²⁵ NLS-Acc.3155/19, "Strategy I." n.p.

⁵²⁶ *Field Service Regulations, Part I (Operations)*. Section 103, p. 112.

‘emphasise[d] understanding and targeting the conceptual and moral components of an adversary’s fighting power as well as attacking the physical component’.⁵²⁷

Haig’s third principle related to combined-arms operations, where Haig was an early advocate.⁵²⁸ Alluding to unity-of-effort, he was precise:

Unity in battle can only be obtained by the various independent units striving for one common object. The greater will be the results obtained, the more clearly the objective is defined, and the more resolute the command of each of the subordinate formations.⁵²⁹

In pursuit of the ‘belief that battlefield could and should be controlled’, Haig did not think of the offensive battle as a continuum, but rather a progression of discrete steps.⁵³⁰ This notion leads to his fourth principle, that of the staged battle: (1) preparation and manoeuvre for position at the decisive point; (2) ‘wearing out’ to pull in and use up the enemy’s reserves achieving superiority of fire; (3) the decisive assault; (4) exploitation and pursuit.⁵³¹

The fifth principle concerned the defensive. Haig emphasised that ‘an army making an energetic defence should have but one aim to *become the assailant on the first opportunity*, and prepare for [the] frequent renewal of such efforts’.⁵³² All of these principles found full expression in *FSR-I*, which as will be recalled Edmonds claimed governed the employment of the army in war.⁵³³

⁵²⁷ "Army Doctrine Publication: Operations." Ch. 5, Sec. 0502.

⁵²⁸ *Cavalry Training (Provisional)* p. 197.

⁵²⁹ NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II." n.p.

⁵³⁰ Holden Reid, *Studies in British Military Thought*. p. 91.

⁵³¹ NLS-Acc.3155/17, "Cavalry Tactics." n.p.. NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II." n.p.

⁵³² NLS-Acc.3155/19, "Strategy I." n.p. (Emphasis in original).

⁵³³ Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1914*, 1. p. 9.

Haig's Role at the War Office

In February 1906, Lord Esher wrote to Haig in India and told him that Haldane was in urgent need of his services at the WO. Adding weight in a way that Haig could not ignore, Esher emphasised that the King believed that his return to England was 'absolutely necessary'. Furthermore it appears that Haldane was dissatisfied with key members of the GS including General Sir Neville Lyttelton, the CGS, 'who [apparently] was really lamentable'. Esher emphasised to Haig that although Haldane would offer him the lesser post of DMT, the Secretary of State would look to him for 'advice on all points,' adding 'you will have to run the G.S.'⁵³⁴ While Haig was disappointed that Haldane had not offered him the more prestigious post of DSD, he was left in no doubt about the full extent of his power and influence.

Apparently, Esher still held some lingering doubt that Haig's ego required bolstering because in his next letter he amplified his earlier pleadings. He confided that the King believed 'most strongly' that Lyttelton needed guidance because 'defence questions' were in a 'hopeless muddle', progress on the creation of the GS was slow, and what progress there had been was 'not in the right direction'. Esher observed, 'you have no idea...how much your clear common sense is wanted, first in that branch of the GS [Directorate of Training], and later in the branch of the higher education of the army' [Directorate of Staff Duties]. In a final flourish, Esher lamented, 'so you can imagine how desperately you are required', confiding that 'Haldane will not move until you get home', and reassured him that he would be 'of the greatest use'.⁵³⁵

⁵³⁴ NLS-Acc.3155/334/e, "Letters and Papers Concerning Haig's Career 1899-1915," (1899-1915).Letter: Esher to Haig: 15/02/1906.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.Letter: Esher to Haig: 02/03/1906.

On the February 26th 1906, Lyttelton formally wrote to Haig and duly offered him the post of DMT with a pay grade of £1,200 to £1,500 per annum.⁵³⁶ In the event, Haldane ensured that Haig was paid the higher sum. On March 24th, after a months' deliberation, Haig telegraphed his acceptance.⁵³⁷ In response, Haldane's private secretary, Col. Gerald Ellison, told Haig that the Secretary of State was 'building a great deal on having you on hand to help him'.⁵³⁸ Although Haig was formally only one of three Directors of the General Staff, informally he became Haldane's closest confidante and most trusted advisor on all military matters throughout his three year tenure.⁵³⁹ Haldane rightly been given the credit for the success of the great reforms that were made at the WO. However, there can be no doubt that Haig's contribution was decisive because from a military perspective he translated those policies into action.⁵⁴⁰ Ellison claimed that 'Haig's influence and active assistance, both in framing policy and elaborating details of organization, were quite invaluable'.⁵⁴¹ He recorded:

I do say unhesitatingly that, without Haig, Mr Haldane would have been hard put to it to elaborate a practical scheme of reorganization in the first instance, or to drive the scheme through to its logical conclusions.⁵⁴²

The Origins of FSR-I (Operations)

The British Army's experience of the South African War demonstrated the need for a combined arms doctrine. In response, the WO published a provisional

⁵³⁶ Ibid. Letter: Lyttelton to Haig: 26/02/1906.

⁵³⁷ Ibid. Telegram: Haig to Lyttelton: 24/03/1906.

⁵³⁸ Ibid. Letter: Ellison to Haig 23/03/1906.

⁵³⁹ DeGroot, "The Pre-War Life and Military Career of Douglas Haig." p. 284.

⁵⁴⁰ Haldane, *Lord Haldane's Autobiography*. p. 199.

⁵⁴¹ NAM-8704-35-472-475. Notes on Certain Letters Written at Various Times by the Late F.M. Earl Haig to Lieut. General Sir Gerald Ellison. p. 2.

⁵⁴² Ibid. Notes on Certain letters written at various times by the late Field-Marshal Earl Haig by Lieut.-General Sir Gerald Ellison. p. 3.

Combined Training manual in 1902,⁵⁴³ and in final form in 1905.⁵⁴⁴ An amendment was added in 1907.⁵⁴⁵ The 1902 version was issued in provisional form presumably because the South African War was in progress and lessons were still being learned.

The 1905 version is similar to the previous edition in its tone and style, but there are a number of material differences. The most obvious one is in the title. In compliance with a recommendation made by the Esher Committee in 1904, the later version is labelled *Field Service Regulations, Part I, Combined Training*.⁵⁴⁶ In addition, a lengthy but informative chapter (VII) of nearly 50 pages was added concerning 'Training in Peace'. This chapter later formed the basis for the *Training and Manoeuvre Regulations, 1913*.⁵⁴⁷ The other changes made to *Combined Training, 1905* are largely cosmetic. The doctrinal section, 'Part I. Attack and Defence.' is repositioned as *Chapter VI*. Although the text is slightly edited and extended, there are few salient differences between the two versions. In the light of the recent field experience, short sub-sections were added commenting upon wood and bush fighting, mountain and savage warfare, the defence of convoys, and opposed landings and embarkations. *Combined Training, 1905* represented the high watermark of the Army's tactical thought at the beginning of the twentieth century. In this respect, the manual bears close comparison to *S.S.135 The Division in Attack*, published in November 1918. Jim Beech regards this pamphlet as 'a distillation of what GHQ considered to be best practice in the summer of 1918'.⁵⁴⁸ *Part-II* of the 1905 regulations dealt with administration and organization, also recommended by

⁵⁴³ *Combined Training (Provisional)*, (London: HMSO, 1902).

⁵⁴⁴ *Field Service Regulations: Part I. Combined Training*, (London: HMSO, 1905).

⁵⁴⁵ *Amendments to Combined Training, 1905*, (London: HMSO, 1907).

⁵⁴⁶ [Cd.1932], "Report of War Office (Reconstitution) Committee." p. 23.

⁵⁴⁷ *Training and Manoeuvre Regulations*.

⁵⁴⁸ Jim Beach, "Introduction," in *SS135 The Division in Attack - 1918: The Occasional - Number 53* (Strategic & Combat Studies Institute, 2008) p. 5.

the Esher Committee, was the object of persistent internal wrangling at the highest levels of the WO military staff, thus preventing its publication until Haig intervened.

Brig.-Gen. J.E. Edmonds claimed that *Combined Training, 1902* was a product of the work of Col. G.F.R. Henderson who originally prepared the text for a new edition of *Infantry Training* commissioned by FM Lord Roberts. Progress on the latter was interrupted by Henderson's death whereupon a Committee under Maj.-Gen. Sir Frederick Stopford, DAG at Aldershot took the decision to publish the partially completed manual.⁵⁴⁹ It is highly likely that this edition was prepared for print by Lieut.-Col. Walter Adye, p.s.c., who was a DAAG at the WO, a position he had held continuously since 1898 with the brief interruption of the South African War.⁵⁵⁰ In 1899, Adye was ignominiously captured at Nicholson's Nek along with 954 officers and men after carrying the white flag in the company of his commanding officer to surrender to the Boers – 'the most humiliating day in British military history since Majuba'.⁵⁵¹ Adye's personal valour is not in question. He had been recommended for the VC during the Second Afghan War.⁵⁵²

In 1900, Adye returned to his post at the WO. In 1904, after the formation of the GS, Adye was posted to the new Directorate of Staff Duties where he continued his work 'writing, revising and publishing all Works and Regulations relating to the Education of Officers'.⁵⁵³ Adye remained in this post until 1908 when Haig promoted him to GSO, 1st Grade, and placed him in charge of the renamed section S.D.2.

⁵⁴⁹ Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1914*, 1. p. 9; Dunlop, *The Development of the British Army 1899-1914*. pp. 226-227; Luvaas, *The Education of an Army: British Military Thought 1815 - 1940*. p. 245.

⁵⁵⁰ G. K. King, *The War Office List and Administrative Directory* (London: War Office, 1905). pp. 68, 185.

⁵⁵¹ "Sensational Report," *Adelaide Advertiser*, 28th December 1899.
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/2487219?> (02/12/2015)

⁵⁵² http://www.dnw.co.uk/auction-archive/catalogue-archive/lot.php?department=Medals&lot_id=50376. Auction Date: 07/12/2005, Lot 1219. (02/12/2015).

⁵⁵³ King, *The War Office List and Administrative Directory*. p. 68.

(Principles, Co-ordination, and War Organization) with the substantive rank of Colonel. In the reorganization of the Directorate of Military Training and the Directorate of Staff Duties instigated by Haig, Major Hon. A.R. Montagu-Stuart-Wortley took over Adye's drafting responsibilities.⁵⁵⁴ Hence, it is likely that Adye prepared the 1905 edition of *Combined Training* and the early drafts of *FSR-I* and *FSR-II*, while Wortley finalised the later drafts published in 1909. Adye continued in service until 1912, when he retired from the WO.

Apart from extending patronage to Adye, it is also most likely that Haig used his influence to shape the *Amendments to Combined Training, 1905* published in 1907. Two of these changes are substantive. The first bears Haig's hall mark by emphasising: the vital role of independent cavalry for strategical exploration under the instructions of the C-in-C; the role of protective cavalry for providing first line security under the orders of the commander of the force being covered; the role of the divisional cavalry for scouting in connection with an infantry advance, flank, or rear guards or outposts, and its use for intercommunication purposes.⁵⁵⁵ Haig's intervention to promote the cavalry's interests in this way is indicated by the fact that he made exactly the same points and used the same language in his volume *Cavalry Studies*, which was also published in 1907.⁵⁵⁶ The second amendment concerned the possible need for entrenchments during the process of establishing superiority of fire where 'in order to enable hasty cover to be constructed under fire, men should be trained to work lying down'; advice which admittedly is not characteristic of Haig!⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁴ In 1907, Haig reorganised both the Directorate of Military Training and the Directorate of Staff Duties transferring the responsibility for War Organization to the latter branch. E.W.D. Ward, "Office Memorandum No 561: 1st April, 1908," (London: War Office).

⁵⁵⁵ *Amendments to Combined Training, 1905*. p. 9.

⁵⁵⁶ Haig, *Cavalry Studies: Strategical and Tactical*. p. 3.

⁵⁵⁷ *Amendments to Combined Training, 1905*. p. 14.

During Haig's tenure as DSD, *Combined Training, 1905* was entirely revised under his close supervision in the shape of *FSR-I*.⁵⁵⁸ Haig also managed to break the impasse that prevented the publication of *FSR-II* by completely revising its essential content. This volume was formally authorised by the Army Council for publication in 1909.⁵⁵⁹ Unfortunately, little is known about the details of *FSR-I*'s drafting process because the relevant documentary evidence was destroyed by fire during the Second World War. Nonetheless, as will be shown below, it is clear that Haig imposed his world-view of warfare on *FSR-I*.

Haig Doctrinal Influence on FSR-I (Operations), 1909

To establish a basis for comparison, the salient features of the best tactical practice in attack and defence established in *Combined Training, 1905* will first be summarised. In this way Haig's doctrinal influence on *FSR-I* will be crystallised.

FSR- Part I. Combined Training, 1905

Keying off its title, these regulations emphasised the vital interdependence of the various fighting arms in both attack and defence. 'Thus on the offensive, mounted troops and infantry compel[led] the enemy to disclose his position and thereby afford[ed] a target to the artillery, whilst the latter by their fire enable[d] the infantry to approach the hostile position'.⁵⁶⁰ At close quarters (within effective rifle range), the general idea was to bring infantry and field artillery fire, working in 'intimate co-operation', to bear down on the decisive point to gain superiority of fire over the defence. This action allowed the infantry to deliver the decisive blow at

⁵⁵⁸ *Field Service Regulations, Part I (Operations)*. Of particular significance for the development of doctrine is Chapter 7.

⁵⁵⁹ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)*.

⁵⁶⁰ *Field Service Regulations: Part I. Combined Training*. p. 99.

bayonet point.⁵⁶¹ Although the manual emphasised combined arms, the decisive attack was conceived in one dimensional terms in the sense that it was infantry that ultimately conquered and occupied, while field artillery, machine guns and mounted arms were deployed in a supporting role.⁵⁶²

Chapter VI, *Attack and Defence*, formed the doctrinal core of the volume. The chapter opened with ‘general considerations’ where the editorial priority was given to ‘defensive action’ over ‘offensive action’. This subtle yet telling emphasis was reinforced by the ambivalence shown towards the outright endorsement of offensive action where the ‘offensive spirit’ was not even mentioned as a decisive factor in battle. The following passage is typical:

107. Offensive Action

But, whatever may be the advantages that the defensive gains by recent improvements in fire-arms, it is at least open to question whether the force that attacks, provided, as will generally be the case, that it is numerically superior, does not profit in equal measure.

Moral was conspicuous by its absence from the regulations, except in relation to the demoralising effect of a flank attack which threatened the enemy’s line of retreat. As argued, offensive and defensive strategy was advocated almost on equal terms. Control over the offensive battle was seen as a ‘methodical progression from point to point; each successive capture weakening the enemy’s hold on its main position, and paving the way for the infantry’s decisive advance’.⁵⁶³ Thus, the battle was viewed as a continuum rather than as a set of distinct stages. Defensive action was considered ‘undoubtedly a disadvantage’, and the defender was advised to ‘keep in view the

⁵⁶¹ *Infantry Training*, (London: HMSO, 1905). p.135.

⁵⁶² *Field Service Regulations: Part I. Combined Training*, (London: HMSO, 1905). p.120

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.* Sec.107 p. 102; Sec.110, pp. 104-105.

defence of the line of retreat and the preparation of the counter-attack'. Perhaps to Haig's chagrin, the value of 'the passive defence' was recognised.⁵⁶⁴

To Haig's ire, references in key passages were made to mounted troops rather than to the cavalry.⁵⁶⁵ Moreover, while it was advised that wherever possible flanking movements should be covered by cavalry, only the role of independent cavalry was specifically mentioned, and this was qualified by the earlier advice that 'even the most mobile cavalry, unless they have a marked numerical superiority, cannot be relied upon to drive back hostile horsemen'.⁵⁶⁶ By understating the role of cavalry this treatment may have prompted Haig's intervention in drafting the 1907 amendment.

FSR-I (Operations), 1909

FSR-I elevated best practice to principle. The doctrinal core of *FSR-I* is Chapter VII: *The Battle*. It is also clear that Haig imposed his world-view on the principles set out in this chapter. This was in sharp contrast to the best practice espoused in *Combined Training, 1905*. The other eleven chapters of the regulations discuss matters that were largely procedural. There were exceptions. For example, in Chapter II – *Inter-communication of Orders* the famous British military principle was established that local decisions should be deferred to the 'man on the spot'.⁵⁶⁷

The first point to make is that unlike *Combined Training*, *FSR-I* brought to the fore Haig's first principle, namely the decisive role of moral:

Success in war depends more on moral than on physical qualities....The development of the necessary moral qualities is therefore the first of the objects to be attained.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid . pp. 122; 133.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid. pp. 99, 128.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid. Sec. 116, p. 115. Sec. 111, pp. 106 and Sec. 103, p. 99.

⁵⁶⁷ *Field Service Regulations, Part I (Operations)* p. 23.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 11.

Secondly, the new regulations displayed none of the ambivalence or equivocation found in *Combined Training, 1905* regarding the offensive. According to Haig's second principle, the defensive was emphatically subordinated to the offensive. The first sentence of Chapter VII declared: '*Decisive success in battle can only be gained by a vigorous offensive*'.⁵⁶⁹ Elaborating further, and alluding again to moral, *FSR-I* emphasised the need for '*decisive offensive action*',⁵⁷⁰ positing, 'superior numbers on the battlefield are an undoubted advantage, but better skill, better organization, and training and above all, *a firmer determination in all ranks to conquer at any cost, are the chief factors of success*'.⁵⁷¹

According to Haig's third principle, *FSR-I* declared that '*the full power of an army can be exerted only when all of its parts act in close combination*'.⁵⁷² The regulations then explain the contribution that each fighting arm (infantry, cavalry and artillery) made to combined action, stressing in particular that 'the attainment of superiority of fire over the enemy requires the closest cooperation between infantry and artillery'.⁵⁷³

Although in accordance with Haig's fourth principle *FSR-I* did not specifically spell-out the battle in distinct stages, this was implied by the editorial structure of Chapter VII under the sub-headings: the advance to the battlefield; deployment for action; the decisive attack; pursuit, retreat and delaying action.⁵⁷⁴ The regulations emphasised that:

The general principle is that the enemy must be engaged in sufficient strength to pin him to his ground and to wear down

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid. Chapter VII, Section 99, p. 107 (Emphasis in original).

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 108. (Emphasis in original).

⁵⁷¹ Ibid. p. 107. (Emphasis in original).

⁵⁷² Ibid. p. 12. (Emphasis in original).

⁵⁷³ Ibid. p. 115.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid. Chapter VII *The Battle*, pp. 107-135.

*his powers of resistance, while the force allotted to the decisive attack must be as strong as possible.*⁵⁷⁵

Within this context, *FSR-I* stated that ‘*the first object of a commander who seeks to gain the initiative in battle is to develop superiority of fire as a preparation for the delivery of a decisive blow*’.⁵⁷⁶

Reflecting Haig’s fifth principle, defensive operations were characterised merely as an interruption to the offensive:

Both opposing forces may endeavour to seize the initiative, or one may await the attack of the other. In the latter case, if victory is to be won, the defensive attitude must be assumed only in order to await or create a favourable opportunity for *decisive offensive action*.⁵⁷⁷

As has been discussed in Chapter 3, after the publication of *FSR-I*, Haig set about inculcating these principles into the Indian Army when he was CGS and, on his return to England in 1912 when he took command at Aldershot.

This brief assessment of *FSR-I* demonstrates that although it was members of Haig’s staff at the Directorate of Staff Duties who physically drafted the volume, the imprint on the work of his world-view of warfare is clear. Haig was immensely proud of this contribution as he observed (and alluding to Henderson) in a letter dated September 20th 1918 to Henry Wilson, then the CIGS:

We have a surprisingly large number of *very capable* Generals. Thanks to these Gentlemen and to their “sound milit[ary] knowledge built up by study and practice until it has become an instinct”, and to a steady adherence to the

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 113. (Emphasis in original).

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 111. (Emphasis in original).

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 108. (Emphasis in original).

principles of our F.S.R. Part I are our successes to be chiefly attributed.⁵⁷⁸

It must have given Haig satisfaction to know that the key principles he established in *FSR-I* were retained in the revised volume published in 1924. These regulations emphasised that ‘success in war depends more on moral than on physical qualities’; ‘*decisive success in battle can be gained only by the offensive*’; ‘an army depends for success on the combined efforts of its component parts’; the staged battle is implied in the planning of ‘the deliberate attack’ and the pursuit; finally, ‘the defensive, if an offensive spirit inspire[d] its conduct, may effectively create a favourable opportunity for resuming the offensive...’.⁵⁷⁹

Haig’s advocates and critics have generally overlooked his contribution to military doctrine before and during the war. This applies specifically to *FSR-I (Operations)* and the development of the highly influential series of S.S. doctrinal pamphlets published during the war addressed to infantry divisions and to platoons.⁵⁸⁰ John Charteris, Haig’s first biographer, barely mentioned the *FSR*.⁵⁸¹ Duff Cooper the official biographer only mentioned in passing that Haig pushed through the publication of *FSR-II*.⁵⁸² John Terraine made a similar comment on the second volume, but asserted that *FSR-I* ‘constitutes a major, but almost entirely forgotten contribution to later victory’.⁵⁸³ Unfortunately, he provided no further elaboration.

⁵⁷⁸ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Letter: Haig to Wilson, 20/09/1918. Also see Henderson, *The Science of War: A Collection of Essays and Lectures, 1892 - 1903*. pp. 394-395. (Emphasis in original).

⁵⁷⁹ *Field Service Regulations Vol II: (Operations)*, (London: HMSO, 1924). p.2, 37, 40,134-152;153. These principles appeared in the 1920 provisional edition, albeit with different emphasis. *Field Service Regulations Vol II: (Operations) Provisional*, (London: HMSO, 1920). (Emphasis in original).

⁵⁸⁰ Specially these pamphlets are: "S.S.109: Training of Divisions for Offensive Action (8th May 1916)," (AP&SS); "S.S.119: Preliminary Notes on the Tactical Lessons of the Recent Operations (July 1916)," (AP&SS); "S.S.135: Instructions for the Training of Divisions for Offensive Action (December 1916)," (AP&SS); "S.S.198: Tactical Instructions for the Offensive of 1918."; "S.S.210: The Division in Defence (May 1918)," (AP&SS); "S.S.143: Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action (February 1917)," (AP&SS).

⁵⁸¹ Charteris, *Field-Marshal Earl Haig*.

⁵⁸² Cooper, *Haig*. p. 106.

⁵⁸³ Terraine, *Douglas Haig: The Educated Soldier*. p. 43.

Gen. Sir James Marshall-Cornwall asserted incorrectly that the revision of *FSR-I* and *FSR-II* was one of Haig's primary tasks as DMT.⁵⁸⁴ Gary Meade has avoided the subject of the regulations entirely, Walter Reid cited Duff Cooper to make a passing mention, and Gary Sheffield only briefly acknowledged *FSR-II*.⁵⁸⁵

De Groot emphasised that Haig's main achievement in respect to the regulations was 'removing the obstacles in the way of publication.' He incorrectly asserted that the content was the work of Col. Walter Adye begun in 1904. As has been acknowledged, *FSR-I* originated in 1902 and was based on the work of Henderson. De Groot further asserted:

The manual did fill an immense gap in Britain's military preparedness. It was intended to be a guide for the Army's new breed of professional officers, providing them with a manual covering every conceivable contingency which could arise in war.⁵⁸⁶

Five years later, De Groot replaced this obviously erroneous assertion with a riposte from Haig to critics who argued that the regulations were not prescriptive enough:

The critics seem to lose sight of the true nature of war, and of the varied conditions under which the British army may have to take the field. It is neither necessary or desirable that we should go further than what is clearly laid down in our regulations. If we go further, we run the risk of tying ourselves by a doctrine that may not always be applicable and we gain nothing in return.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁴ General Sir James Marshall-Cornwall, *Haig As Military Commander* (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1973) p. 75.

⁵⁸⁵ Reid, *Architect of Victory: Douglas Haig*. p. 144; Sheffield, *The Chief: Douglas Haig and the British Army*. p. 60.

⁵⁸⁶ DeGroot, "The Pre-War Life and Military Career of Douglas Haig." pp. 312-313.

⁵⁸⁷ *Douglas Haig: 1861-1928*. p. 136.

The problem for De Groot is that on the one hand he posited *FSR-I* 'was of significant value during the Great War'.⁵⁸⁸ On the other he argued that Haig was 'closed-minded', suffered from a 'tactical rigidity' and displayed a 'stubborn support for traditional cavalry' arising from 'an inability to understand the progress of military technology'.⁵⁸⁹ Clearly, these defects would have rendered Haig incapable of influencing 'a modern development' like *FSR-I*.⁵⁹⁰ Any recognition otherwise would only serve to undermine De Groot's charges against Haig.

J.P. Harris brushed aside De Groot's thesis acknowledging briefly that Haig 'put much work into the revision of army's manuals' and allowed that he did have a belief in 'intellectual flexibility and pragmatism'.⁵⁹¹ Spencer Jones in a thoroughly good study of the tactical reform of the British Army, 1902-1914, did not consider Haig's contribution to *FSR-I*.⁵⁹² Furthermore, Paddy Griffith, who wrote a chapter on the BEF's doctrine and training in his standard work *Battle Tactics of the Western Front (1916-18)* overlooked specific Haig's contribution.⁵⁹³ However, Jim Beach in an informative and well researched paper, *Doctrine Writing at British GHQ, 1917-1918*, did at least give Haig credit for engaging in the preparation of *S.S.198 Tactical Instructions for the Offensive of 1918*; a pamphlet that was overtaken by the German spring offensive, forcing the BEF onto the defensive.⁵⁹⁴ Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly asserted in reference to *FSR-I* that 'the codification of British practice [was] largely written by Haig while DSD'.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁸⁸ "The Pre-War Life and Military Career of Douglas Haig." p. 313.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 365.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 313.

⁵⁹¹ Harris, *Douglas Haig and the First World War*. pp. 45-46.

⁵⁹² Spencer Jones, *From Boer War to World War* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012).

⁵⁹³ Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack 1916-18* (London: Yale University Press, 1994). Chapter 10, Doctrine and Training.

⁵⁹⁴ Jim Beach, "Issued by the General Staff: Doctrine Writing at British G.H.Q., 1917-18," *War in History* 19, no. (4) (2012) p. 475.

⁵⁹⁵ Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). p. 95

Andy Simpson in his penetrating work *British Corps Command on the Western Front 1914-1918* provided a worthy exception to the rule. He devoted a chapter to show how the principles established in *FSR-I* were applied by Haig to the operations of I Corps and First Army from August 1914 to the end of 1915. Simpson examined a rear-guard action (the Retreat from Mons), a number of offensives (Battles of Aisne, Neuve Chapelle, Aubers Ridge, Festubert and Loos), an encounter battle (First Battle of Ypres) and a defensive operation (First Ypres). He concluded:

Those relatively few occasions upon which [Haig] could be said to have diverged from [FSR-I] seem invariably to have been the result of manpower shortages or his incorrigible optimism when conducting an attack.⁵⁹⁶

This observation is supported below by the findings of a short assessment of Haig's planning of the Neuve Chapelle offensive.

1915: Haig Puts Principle into Practice

At the Battle of Neuve Chapelle (March 10th-13th 1915), the 'first significant British offensive effort of the war', Haig took the opportunity to put the principles espoused in *FSR-I* into practice.⁵⁹⁷ On February 15th 1915, French approved Haig's plan for the offensive. The details demonstrate that he adhered to regulations in the following ways: The guiding rule for planning an attack was that '*the enemy must be engaged in sufficient strength to pin him to his ground, and to wear down his powers of resistance, while the force allotted to the decisive attack must be as strong as possible*' (Sec.104/3). Haig complied by deploying 48 battalions on a front held by

⁵⁹⁶ Andy Simpson, *Directing Operations: British Corps Command on the Western Front 1914-18* (Stroud: Spellmount Limited, 2006) pp. 2-20.

⁵⁹⁷ John Terraine, *Douglas Haig: The Educated Soldier* (London: Leo Cooper, 1990) pp. 139 and 131.

some three German battalions.⁵⁹⁸ He planned to '*str[i]k[e] unexpectedly and in the greatest possible strength*' (Sec.103/3), thereby gaining the initiative at the decisive point located on a lightly held front and support line of 2,000 yards immediately before the village of Neuve Chapelle (Sec.103/1); to develop superiority of fire (Sec.102/3); and to wear out the enemy's powers of resistance by a surprise hurricane artillery bombardment lasting 35 minutes (Sec.103/3). With the enemy thoroughly demoralised, and the wire broken, three infantry brigades (one from the Indian Corps and two of IV Corps) were then to capture the immediate enemy positions, allowing a second 30 minute bombardment to clear the way for the infantry to storm and capture the village (Sec.105/3).⁵⁹⁹ With this objective secured, the infantry was to proceed a short distance to the east of the village, occupying a position identified as the Smith-Dorrien Trench. In concert with subsidiary attacks mounted on both flanks, extending the front to five miles, a strong force of infantry and cavalry (if the circumstances permitted) would then widen and pass through the gap with '*the determination to press forward at all costs*' reaching the Illies-Herlies line and threatening enemy communications from La Bassée to Lille (Sec.105/4).⁶⁰⁰

Haig stressed to his commanders that the 'keynote of all work [was] *offensive action*'.⁶⁰¹ (Sec.99/1, Sec.105/4) Having devised the plan in outline, Haig met with his three corps commanders (Monro – I Corps, Rawlinson – IV Corps, and Willcocks – Indian Corps) and explained precisely 'what each corps would have to do'.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁸ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Special Order to the 1st Army: 9th March, 1915. (Emphasis in original).

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid. Entry: 12/02/15; 05/03/15. (Emphasis in original).

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid. Entry: 12/02/15, 15/02/15. (Emphasis in original).

⁶⁰¹ Ibid. Entry: 05/03/15. (Emphasis in original).

⁶⁰² Ibid. Entry: 05/03/15. See also entry 27/02/15, where Haig explained to Brigadier-General Blackader the necessity for giving each battalion commander 'a definite responsibility' and 'a clearly defined objective'.

(Sec.104/2/i-iv).⁶⁰³ He then left it to his commanders ‘on the spot’ to develop the plan in detail, albeit with his close oversight (Sec.12/2). The day before the battle commenced, Haig ‘urged on both Corps Commanders, [engaged in the initial attack], a *vigorous offensive*’ (Sec.105/4).⁶⁰⁴ Whatever else can be said about Haig’s plan, it cannot be described as a ‘half-hearted measure’ (Sec.99/2).

In the event, the first phase of Haig’s plan was successful to the extent that the village was captured, demonstrating that a break-in was possible. But for a variety of reasons, none of which had specific bearing on the principles established in *FSR-I*, the break-through proved elusive. Crucial French support was withheld three days before the attack,⁶⁰⁵ prompting Haig to advise GHQ that in his opinion the ‘attack would not go far’, and preparations had to be made ‘to organise a new line on suitable ground’.⁶⁰⁶ Haig did not receive the heavy guns he requested, and those that were available suffered from a shortage of ammunition.⁶⁰⁷ New heavy 6-inch (siege) howitzers delivered the day before the attack arrived without anchors, and thus failed to satisfactorily cut enemy wire. Morale in the Indian Corps was low; small groups of Afridis soldiers were deserting to the enemy, and Willcocks, the Corps commander was demoralised to the point of resignation.⁶⁰⁸

Following the capture of the village, artillery observation broke-down leaving the infantry unsupported. ‘Command of the operations became slow and difficult’⁶⁰⁹ and an over-cautious Rawlinson checked IV Corps advance until the early evening.⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰³ *Field Service Regulations, Part I (Operations)*. Sec.104/2/I. p. 132. All future reference will be indicated by text reference only as indicated above.

⁶⁰⁴ "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 09/03/15. (Emphasis in original).

⁶⁰⁵ Brig.-Gen. J. E. Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1915*, 2 vols, vol. 1, Official History of the War (London: Macmillan, 1927) p. 73.

⁶⁰⁶ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)."Entry: 01/03/15.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid. Entry: 01/03/15.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.Entry: 03/03/15; 04/03/15; 08/03/15.

⁶⁰⁹ Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1915*, 1. p. 151.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid. p. 102.

The Indian Corps suffered a similar fate.⁶¹¹ These delays were against Haig's express instructions. However, Haig was also remiss because he should have been aware of the lengthy signalling delays that were bound to occur due to primitive technology. This disrupted the swift receipt and transmission of orders.⁶¹² In fairness to him, prior to the attack, he urged that the advance should be pressed forward with the utmost determination and without delay.⁶¹³ Failure to do so gave the Germans time to call up reinforcements, which consisted of 4,000 rifles within 12 hours and 16,000 rifles by the evening of the second day.⁶¹⁴ Although attempts were made on the following two days to regain momentum, the attack faltered and was drawn to a close by Haig on March 13th. Nonetheless, John Terraine concluded in reference to Neuve Chapelle:

The methods and tactics evolved became the standard pattern for almost every British attack up to the end of 1916, and exercised considerable influence on French and German operations too.⁶¹⁵

1916-1917: The Learning Organization

Between 1916 and 1918, under Haig's leadership, the BEF was transformed into a learning organization, underpinning unity-of-mental-effort. 'Despite its widespread use [today] there is in fact no agreed definition or meaning that can be readily attached to [this] concept'.⁶¹⁶ However, one current and relevant definition is that this type of organization 'facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself and its context'. It holds the promise of being an

⁶¹¹ Ibid. p. 103.

⁶¹² Capt. G.C. Wynne, "The Chain of Command," *The Army Quarterly* XXXVI, no. 1 (April) (1938) pp. 23-25.

⁶¹³ Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1915*, 1. p.77.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 76-77.

⁶¹⁵ Terraine, *Douglas Haig: The Educated Soldier*. p. 139.

⁶¹⁶ David Ashton Paula Raper, Alan Felstead and John Storey, "Towards the Learning Organization? Explaining Current Trends in Training Practice in the UK," *International Journal of Training and Development* Vol 1:1(1997) pp. 9-10.

‘efficient adaptive unit – always at the right place at the right time to take advantage of environmental change’.⁶¹⁷ It has been suggested that organizations, including the military, approach this ideal through three typical stages:

Stage 1: *Surviving* – [Armies] develop basic habits and processes and deal with problems as they arise on a ‘firefighting basis’.

Stage 2: *Adapting* – [Armies] continuously adapt their habits in the light of accurate reading and forecasts of environmental changes.

Stage 3: *Sustaining* – [Armies] create their contexts as much as they are created by them,...achieve a sustainable, though adaptive position, in a symbiotic relationship with their environments.⁶¹⁸

Arguably, the BEF deployed to France in 1914 typified the first stage. During 1916, on the basis of the learning processes established by GHQ under Haig’s leadership, the BEF evolved to the second stage. The process of adaptation continued throughout 1917, the fruits of which were demonstrated in November at the Battle of Cambrai. By 1918, during the successful Hundred Days campaign, the learning process reached its zenith, and the BEF had progressed to the third stage.

The Building Blocks

FSR-II laid the foundation of the BEF’s development as a learning organization by mandating that all field formations and units were required to maintain a daily War Diary.⁶¹⁹ The object was ‘to collect information for future reference with a view to effecting improvements in the organization, education, training, equipment and

⁶¹⁷ John Burgoyne and Tom Boydell Mike Pedler, *The Learning Company: A Strategy for Sustainable Development* (London: The McGraw-Hill Companies, 1996) p. 3.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid. p. 4

⁶¹⁹ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)* p. 128, 137-140, 151.

administration of the army for war'.⁶²⁰ These daily reports were processed up through the organization and eventually forwarded to the relevant base record office.

Immediately after Haig was appointed C-in-C, he added building blocks that facilitated the BEF's transformation into a learning organization.⁶²¹ Before Christmas (1915) he appointed Maj.-Gen. R.K.H. Butler, his former CS at First Army, as his DCGS at GHQ and gave him specific responsibility for operations including the development of doctrine and training.⁶²² In January 1916, Haig established a weekly Army Commanders Conference that included top ranking GHQ and army staff officers. These meetings, held at each Army HQ in rotation, provided a vehicle to coordinate the learning process across the BEF.⁶²³ Haig's initiatives provided the necessary recognition, authority and impetus necessary to drive the BEF's learning organization forward to success.

Following the Somme campaign, Haig recognised that Butler 'was over working himself' and required additional support.⁶²⁴ To this end, on the January 30th 1917 Haig established a TB at GHQ headed by Brig.-Gen. Arthur Solly-Flood who reported directly to the DSD, and ultimately to Butler.⁶²⁵ The role of this branch was 'to enforce uniformity of training throughout the BEF', the keystone of which was the development and dissemination of tactical doctrine.⁶²⁶ Staff officers responsible for the oversight of training were appointed at army and corps level. In May 1917, a further 'step change in the doctrinal process' was marked by the appointment of Capt. Lord Gorell, who was recruited to improve the writing quality of the S.S.

⁶²⁰ Ibid. p. 138.

⁶²¹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 19/12/1915.

⁶²² Ibid. Entry 20/12/1915; see also Entry 19/12/1916.

⁶²³ Ibid. Entry: 08/01/1916.

⁶²⁴ Ibid. Entry 19/12/1916.

⁶²⁵ Major A. F. Becke, *Order of Battle: Part 4*, History of the Great War (London: HMSO, 1945) p. 13.

⁶²⁶ Alistair Geddes, "Solly-Flood, GHQ, and Tactical Training in the B.E.F., 1916-1918" (University of Birmingham, 2007) p. 13.

pamphlets.⁶²⁷ In March 1918, a new publications subsection of the TB was formed, which itself had been absorbed into SDB under Maj.-Gen. Guy Dawnay. Maj. Cuthbert Headlam was drafted in by Dawnay to take charge of the subsection. This was an important decision because Gorell, a battalion adjutant and 'erstwhile brigade-level [staff] learner' was replaced by 'an experienced corps-level staff officer'.⁶²⁸ In July 1918, Haig established the Inspectorate of Training under Lieut.-Gen. Ivor Maxse. Although the TB continued to function at GHQ, Maxse pursued his passion for doctrine writing and published a number of tactical pamphlets mainly for smaller units below brigade thereby duplicating the work being done at GHQ.

Anticipating the scale of the learning process, Haig sanctioned the rapid expansion of the AP&SS prior to the Battle of the Somme. This organization was originally established on August 13th 1914 under the command of Capt. G.S. Partridge,⁶²⁹ who retained his post throughout the war and returned to England with the rank of Colonel.⁶³⁰ Modern machinery was installed at the main facilities and principal plants, and warehousing was established at Le Havre, Boulogne and Rouen. Other centres, out-stations and secondary depots were sited near army and in some cases, corps HQs. Onwards from 1916, the AP&SS had responsibility for printing and disseminating the S.S. (Stationary Service) series of doctrinal pamphlets prepared at GHQ. In fact, this series included all of the doctrinal and training pamphlets printed and distributed by the AP&SS, including material translated from the French and German armies.⁶³¹

⁶²⁷ Beach, "Issued by the General Staff: Doctrine Writing at British G.H.Q., 1917-18." p. 471.

⁶²⁸ Ibid. p. 482.

⁶²⁹ Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack 1916-18*. p. 180.

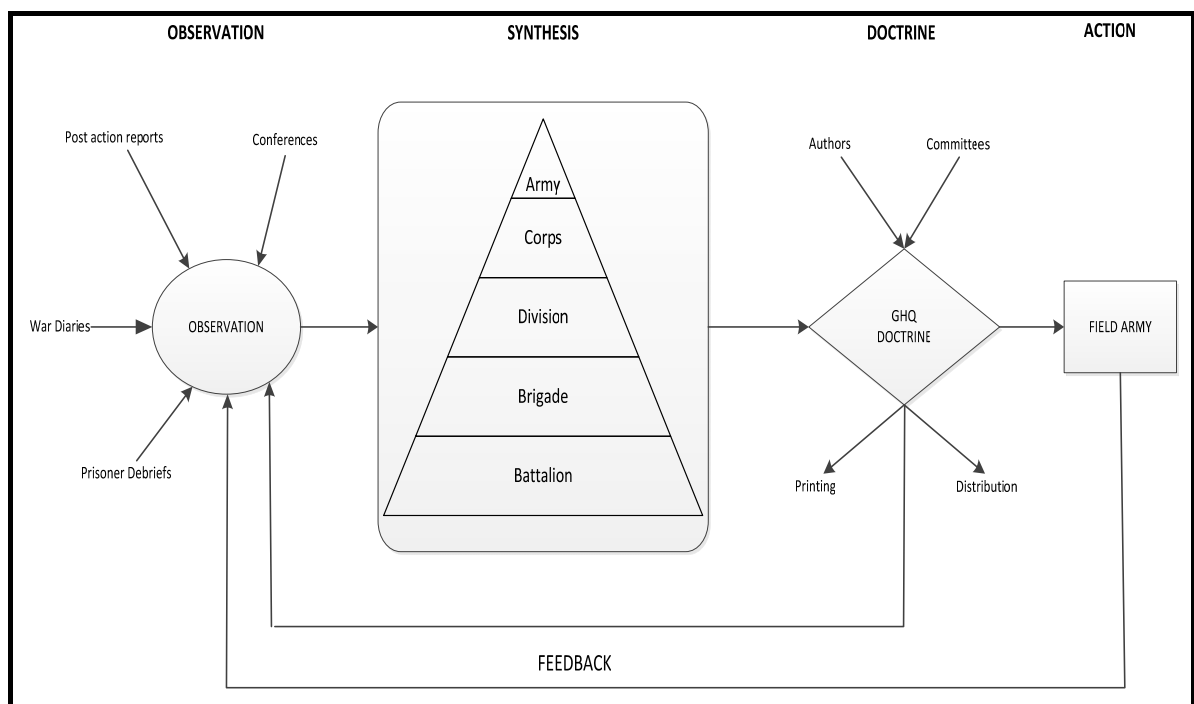
⁶³⁰ TNA/WO/95/81, "Army Printing and Stationery Service War Diary (1914-1918)."

⁶³¹ Ibid. p. 181.

The Learning Process In Theory

A comprehensive record of the formal *doctrinal* learning process implemented by Haig's GHQ remains elusive. However, the papers of Maj.-Gen. Archibald Montgomery-Massingberd, who was CS, Fourth Army, between 1916 and 1919 and later became CIGS (1933-1936), are illuminating as demonstrated by his *Notes on Somme Fighting* prepared in 1916.⁶³²

Figure 23: The BEF's Doctrinal Learning Process (1916-1918)



As reconstructed in Figure 23 these notes reveal that by May 1916 a semi-formalised learning process had been instituted. This incorporated and augmented the daily *War Diaries* mandated by *FSR-II*.⁶³³ It appears that in large formations, in simplified form, the doctrinal learning process comprised four stages: the first stage, 'observation', involved 'bottom-up' information and intelligence gathering activities including post action reports, written and verbal feedback from raids, prisoner interrogation and interpretation of captured documents. In addition, structured and

⁶³² LHCMA:Montgomery-Massingberd:7/3, "Notes on Somme Fighting."

⁶³³ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)*.Sect. 113-114 pp. 137-140.

unstructured information requests were passed down the chain of command. The second stage catered for the progressive 'synthesis' of reports passed up the staff chain of command from battalion adjutants to army chiefs of staff. These reports were edited at each level to 'redact' information irrelevant to the formation above. It is possible that information was judiciously edited during this process to disguise the truth and protect reputations. Divisional commanders' conferences were also organised to share tactical lessons learned from both British and French operations. On receipt of this information and intelligence by army HQ, it was assessed and consolidated, occasionally into formal tactical notes, before being dispatched to the GS at GHQ.⁶³⁴ The third stage commenced when information from all armies was further assessed, synthesised and then translated into 'doctrine'. The resulting pamphlets were printed by the AP&SS before being distributed via army HQ down to battalion level. The fourth stage, 'action', completed the loop. The doctrine so issued formed the basis of training and was proven in the field; whereupon the cycle was repeated.

The Learning Process In Practice

The learning process can be illustrated by drawing on Fourth Army Staff papers prepared in 1916. It is clear that early in the year, the staffs at GHQ and Fourth Army HQ recognised the need to profit by experience and adapt the general principles established in *FSR-I* to address the new tactical conditions.⁶³⁵ To this end Montgomery-Massingberd issued instructions to his equivalent number at corps HQ to report the experience gained and lessons learned as operations progressed.⁶³⁶

⁶³⁴ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Memo: *Policy Regarding Summaries in Corps and Armies, and Regarding the Dissemination of Information Generally*. January 1916 n.p.

⁶³⁵ LHCMA: Montgomery-Massingberd:7/3, "Fourth Army Tactical Notes," (May, 1916) p. 31.

⁶³⁶ Ibid. "Notes on Somme Fighting." IX Corps Notes on information collected from various sources including troops who have been engaged in recent fighting. n.p.

In response, just to take one example, X Corps issued a detailed questionnaire to lower formations, facilitating a degree of standardisation in the information gathering process.⁶³⁷ More typically, corps staff simply transcribed army HQ's request to divisional commanders for onward transmission through brigades down to battalion HQ. To augment the post action reports, officers and men who had participated in raids and operations were interviewed, prisoners interrogated, and reports were filed and passed back up the chain of command. For example, 2nd Division HQ held a conference to deduce lessons from the fighting. Reports from brigades and lower formations were examined to assess the 'causes of failure' and determine 'how they [could] be remedied'.⁶³⁸ It is also clear that senior officers were not afraid to criticise current doctrine.⁶³⁹ Divisional reports were submitted to the respective corps HQs. where they were distilled into a single document before forwarding to Fourth Army HQ.⁶⁴⁰ The corps reports were consolidated and in some cases enhanced by French experience and practice, captured German documents, and prisoner intelligence reports. The final report was then submitted to the SDB branch at GHQ.⁶⁴¹

While this process may appear bureaucratic and time consuming, in fact, as Paddy Griffith believed, it was surprisingly agile.⁶⁴² On May 8th 1916, GHQ issued the doctrinal memorandum *S.S.109 Training of Divisions for Offensive Action* under the signature of the now Lieut.-Gen. L.E. Kiggell, Haig's CGS.⁶⁴³ Later in the month, Fourth Army issued its own set of *Tactical Notes*, building directly on the guidance given in *S.S.109*. In July, presumably based on lessons learned and reported by

⁶³⁷ Ibid. *Questions relating to an initial attack after lengthy preparation*. X Corps, 16/08/1916 n.p.

⁶³⁸ Ibid. n.p.

⁶³⁹ Ibid. 2nd Division Report No, G.S.1001/1/52 from Major General W.J. Walker who criticises the order process established in SS 119, paragraph 15 in *Preliminary Notes and Tactical Lessons of Recent Operations* issued by the General Staff, GHQ, July 1916.n.p.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.n.p. 40.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid. *Fourth Army Tactical Notes, May 1916*, printed by Stationery Service Press. n.p.

⁶⁴² Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack 1916-18*. p. 10.

⁶⁴³ "S.S.109: Training of Divisions for Offensive Action (8th May 1916)."

Fourth Army, GHQ updated *S.S.109* replacing it with *S.S.119 Preliminary Notes on the Tactical Lessons of the Recent Operations*. *S.S.119* confirmed that the general principles set out in *S.S.109* were essentially correct, but needed amplification.⁶⁴⁴ Thus, within the first month of fighting, GHQ issued tactical guidance, lessons were learned by Fourth Army, transmitted up to GHQ where they were assessed and absorbed before being disseminated down to the other armies.

It is also evident that GHQ was quick to respond to changes in enemy tactical doctrine. On July 31st 1917, the first day of Third Ypres, GHQ became aware that the ‘enemy’s “major” system of tactics’ had changed. It was apparent that the Germans delayed their most serious counterattacks until the later stages of a fight. This occurred when the attacking infantry had advanced outside the effective range of artillery cover, were weakened by losses, and had disintegrated into some disorder. GHQ immediately responded to this intelligence by issuing new guidance to army commanders. On August 7th, GHQ advised that in future the depth of each stage of an offensive attack should be calibrated to coincide with the effective range of artillery protection, combined with the fighting-power of the attacking infantry, paying due regard to the state of ground, discipline and training. The idea was to ‘exhaust the enemy as much as possible *and ourselves as little as possible* in the early stages of the fight’, so that when the counter-attack came its potency was blunted, and it was met by troops in a high state of readiness.⁶⁴⁵

This depiction of the learning process may suggest that from the spring of 1916 there existed at GHQ a well-resourced organization. Unfortunately, this was not the practical reality. At the outset, the responsibility for GHQ doctrinal output was given

⁶⁴⁴ "S.S.119: Preliminary Notes on the Tactical Lessons of the Recent Operations (July 1916)."

⁶⁴⁵ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Secret Memorandum to Army Commanders, 7th August, 1917. n.p. (Emphasis in original).

sufficient priority by placing it directly under Butler's charge. However, when comparing the form and content of *S.S.109* and *S.S.119* with Fourth Army's *Tactical Notes*, GHQ's lack of editorial competence and haste is apparent, indicating a lack of appropriate resourcing.⁶⁴⁶ Given the vital importance of these doctrinal documents to the successful prosecution of the Somme campaign, Haig was remiss in allowing this state of affairs to develop. In the circumstances, a far better outcome might have been achieved by simply distributing Fourth Army's *Tactical Notes* under Kiggell's signature, together with any necessary modification. In the event, GHQ did not attain the expected standard of professionalism until the new year when *S.S.135* was published, and after available manpower and other resources had been improved.

Output of the Learning Process

Between 1916 and 1918 the output of S.S. pamphlets and other instructional publications was prolific. According to one list, the numbered series reached over 700 items.⁶⁴⁷ This does not include instances where a particular series was updated as new relevant information became available. A wide range of tactical, technical and other subjects were addressed. Of particular importance was the series directed at the tactical operations of divisions (Figure 24 below) and those that addressed the tactical organization and deployment of platoons depicted in Figure 26. (p. 182).

⁶⁴⁶ When GHQ's first doctrinal offering, *S.S.109*, issued on 8th May 1916, is compared to Fourth Army's *Tactical Notes* published in the same month, it is clear that the latter benefits from a superior standard of professionalism in respect to both form and content. As confirmed by the opening paragraph of *Tactical Notes*, *SS.109* was issued first. This dense, unstructured three page pamphlet creates every impression of being under-resourced and rushed into print in a belated attempt to guide in the most general terms the planning and training contingencies of Fourth Army ahead of the imminent Somme campaign. Clearly, Montgomery-Massingberd thought *SS.109* was inadequate and immediately produced *Tactical Notes* for the guidance of Fourth Army's lower formations. This comprehensive, well considered 32 page pamphlet, plus a diagram of a general scheme of German defence, is what GHQ should have produced in the first place. Although there is a clear read-through of some of the advice offered in *S.S.109*, this pamphlet gives commanders practical advice on what to do and how to do it. GHQ's response was *SS.119* published in July, which admitted that while 'the principles laid down for the training of divisions for offensive action (*S.S. 109*) were correct...the following notes are in amplification...and call attention to certain principles which have in some cases been neglected.' Again it is clear that this document has been influenced both by *Tactical Notes*, and also by some of the lessons learned by Fourth Army during recent operations.

⁶⁴⁷ <https://www.google.co.uk/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=list+of+SS+pamphlets> (02/12/2015)

Figure 24: GHQ Divisional-Level Doctrine Publications (1916-1918) ⁶⁴⁸

| Date | S.S. No | S.S. Title | Comment |
|-------------|-------------------|---|--|
| 1916 | | | |
| May | S.S.109 | <i>Training of Divisions for Offensive Action</i> | Informed by <i>FSR-1</i> . |
| July | S.S.119 | <i>Preliminary Notes on the Tactical Lessons of the Recent Operations</i> | Augmenting content of S.S.109 |
| December | S.S.135 | <i>Instructions for the Training of Divisions for Offensive Action</i> | Reissued in January, amended in May, reprinted in August 1917 |
| 1917 | | | |
| June | S.S.161 | <i>Instructions for Battle</i> | Summary of captured German documents., closely reflecting Haig's world-view. |
| October | S.S.198 | <i>Tactical Instructions for the Offensive of 1918</i> | Briefed by Haig, drafted and proofed, but not issued. |
| 1918 | | | |
| January | S.S.135 | <i>The Training and Employment of Divisions</i> | 2 nd ed. with minor amendments to previous edition. |
| April | S.S.135 App. B | <i>Co-operation between Aircraft and Infantry</i> | O.B./1635 |
| May | S.S.210 | <i>The Division in Defence</i> | Published belatedly, but of value to five divisions facing a concerted German attack on Aisne. |
| November | S.S.135 | <i>The Division in Attack</i> | 3 rd ed., fully revised. Framed and informed by <i>FSR-1</i> . |

Divisional Tactical Doctrine

As Figure 24 shows, in May 1916 GHQ began the development of divisional tactical offensive doctrine with the publication of *S.S.109* and ended in November 1918 with the third edition of *S.S.135*. A number of general observations relevant to the task of establishing unity-of-mental-effort can be made:

⁶⁴⁸ Beach, "Issued by the General Staff: Doctrine Writing at British G.H.Q., 1917-18." p. 476 (with minor amendments).

First, it is clear that Haig's aim with *S.S.109* was to gain unity-of-mental-effort by prescription. Retained in Haig's diary, this foolscap, three page and tightly worded set of instructions left no room for judgement.⁶⁴⁹ This was appropriate for an audience of largely inexperienced divisional commanders who were about to undertake the largest offensive in the history of the British Army. In March 1916, Haig lamented 'I have not got an Army in France really, but a collection of Divisions untrained for the field!⁶⁵⁰ However, by November 1918, Haig was supported by highly experienced and largely very competent men. This is reflected in *S.S.135* of that date, which set out principles for a division in attack, but which relied entirely on the commanders judgement for execution. The following example is typical:

S.S.109: Every attacking unit must be given a limited and clearly defined objective, which it is to capture and consolidate at all costs.⁶⁵¹

S.S.135: Each unit in the leading line of attack must have its objective definitely assigned to it.

Units which follow should be given sufficient latitude in action to admit of their employment to assist in carrying on the advance of the leading units either by means of local outflanking movements, or by direct support, if such support is required. Nothing should be done to hamper the initiative and freedom of manoeuvre of subordinate commanders.⁶⁵²

In this scenario, it can be seen that Haig was relying on the sound judgement of his commanders, rather than prescription to attain unity-of-mental-effort.

Secondly, all pamphlets in this series, to a lesser or greater extent, invoke the principles established in *FSR-I*. For example, *S.S.109* advised that 'special attention

⁶⁴⁹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." *S.S. 109*, 08/05/1916. n.p.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Entry 29/03/1916.

⁶⁵¹ "S.S.109: Training of Divisions for Offensive Action (8th May 1916)." p. 1.

⁶⁵² "S.S.135: The Division in Attack (November 1918)." p. 9.

is directed to Chapter V, VI, VII, and IX, *Field Service Regulations, Part I*.⁶⁵³ In the final edition of *S.S.135* this is most obvious in Chapters 2 (*Plan of Attack*) and 3 (*Preparations for the Attack*), that are framed and informed by the regulations.⁶⁵⁴ As Dawnay pointed out, the GHQ divisional level doctrinal publications offer a ‘striking justification of the principles contained in F.S.R. Part I’ set-out by Haig.⁶⁵⁵ *FSR-I* was reprinted in 1917, but not updated or revised, and remained the Army’s capstone doctrinal manual for the duration of the war. Headlam wrote the final edition of *S.S.135*.⁶⁵⁶ He was originally cynical about the application of ‘certain old shibboleths and axioms of undoubted truths’, but he did acknowledge the value of the pre-war regulations:

We are now engaged upon a colossal work [S.S.135] which I am trying to make revolutionary in character – but its changes are really conservative, because they return to the oldest and most indisputable doctrines of war. [*FSR-I*].⁶⁵⁷

Thirdly, the principal tenets of Haig’s world-view, moral and offensive action, are evident in *S.S.109* and *S.S.135* (Nov 1918). The concluding remark of *S.S.109* emphasised ‘it must be impressed on all ranks that “decisive success in battle can only be gained by a vigorous offensive” (*F.S.R. 99.1*)’. Training is also coupled with high morale.⁶⁵⁸ *S.S.135* emphasised both factors: ‘moral...lies at the root of all achievement and endurance in war’; ‘victory can only be won by offensive action’.⁶⁵⁹

Fourthly, the evolution of tactics and the assimilation of technical innovation into battle planning can be traced by examining the sequence of publications in this

⁶⁵³ "S.S.109: Training of Divisions for Offensive Action (8th May 1916)." p. 3.

⁶⁵⁴ "S.S.135: The Division in Attack (November 1918)." pp. 8-19.

⁶⁵⁵ IWM/Maxse-Papers/69/53/13/54. O.B./2266 Memo: Dawnay to DMO WO, 08/07/1918.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 483.

⁶⁵⁷ C Letter: Cuthbert Headlam to Beatrice 24/07/1918 p. 210.

⁶⁵⁸ "S.S.109: Training of Divisions for Offensive Action (8th May 1916)." p. 3.

⁶⁵⁹ "S.S.135: The Division in Attack (November 1918)." p. 3.

divisional series. Apart from incorporating the developments evident in this series into operational plans, it is also clear that Haig aimed to achieve a common understanding of the strengths and limitations of new technologies. In all, these pamphlets helped facilitate unity-of-mental-effort across his divisional command.

Haig did engage himself in the process of doctrinal evolution described above. This is demonstrated by the role he played in the preparation of *S.S.198 Tactical Instructions for the Offensive of 1918*. Although this pamphlet was only printed in proof form and not issued, it did shed light on Haig's current tactical ideas and his interest in the doctrinal process at GHQ. In September 1917, he hurriedly wrote a note for the guidance of a committee (Kiggell, Solly-Flood and Capt. Lord Gorell) convened for the purpose of producing *S.S.198*. This note was preserved in Gorell's papers, who as mentioned was appointed to improve the quality of writing at the TB:

1st Air supremacy. 2. Dominate hostile artillery. ~~1. When possible the ground~~ The problem. 2 objectives. 1st defeat the hostile advanced troops holding shell holes etc. but this is only a means towards the 2nd objective, viz the subsequent destruction of the enemy's main force which will try & counter attack at ~~favourable~~ a point & moment favourable to the Enemy. These distinct objectives necessitate a division of the attacking troops according to their roles. To make suitable dispositions ~~rapidly~~ to meet tactical situations as they occur and to influence effectively the action of our reserves, the ~~Commanders~~ position of Battalion, Brigade & Div[isiona]l Com[mande]rs is of very great importance. Vide German Instru[ction]s on this. When the strategical situation permits the ~~ground~~ point chosen for attack should be primarily ~~be~~ selected on account of the advantages ~~offered~~ which the ~~ground~~ may be offered by the ground for the advance of our leading detachments by successive steps from ~~defen~~ one

defensive position to another. As soon as the advanced troops have gained a suitable defensive position, it is to be fortified etc. Without delay steps are to be taken to move forward the necessary means for exploiting the success thus gained for parrying such counter strikes as the enemy may make. Fresh troops, M[achine]-guns prepare fire positions etc. field co[mpanie]s – a few field guns etc. Barrage plans to be worked beforehand for further advance.⁶⁶⁰

As shown in Figure 25 (below), a thorough reading of *S.S.198* indicates that Haig's guidance was closely followed by its writer Major Edward Grigg.⁶⁶¹ Of particular importance is the fact that *S.S.198* acknowledged the new German in-depth defence system, and responded by establishing a tactical method based on 'successive steps in a continuous offensive', underpinned by four clearly defined and methodically prepared stages of exploitation.⁶⁶²

⁶⁶⁰ Beach, "Issued by the General Staff: Doctrine Writing at British G.H.Q., 1917-18." p. 478, Note 57: 'Notes by Sir Douglas Haig as to "Tactics in the attack", P[ar]t I, General Principles of German Defence and deductions drawn there from as to modifications required in our methods of attack' [undated], box 8, Gorell papers, BoL

⁶⁶¹ Ibid. p. 475.

⁶⁶² "S.S.198: Tactical Instructions for the Offensive of 1918." p. 1.

Figure 25: Broad Comparison of Haig's Guidance Notes and S.S. 198

| Haig's step by step idea | SS 198: 'Successive steps in the continuous offensive'. | Page Ref |
|---|---|----------|
| Air Supremacy; dominate hostile artillery. | Establish mastery over enemy's aircraft and artillery. | p. 11 |
| Two objectives: (i) defeat advanced forces (ii) as a means destroy enemy's main force on the counter-attack | Objectives: (i) defeat advance forces in a series of attacks, compelling enemy to counter attack, wear out his reserves and weaken his moral. (ii) Launch attack against deeper objectives with the prospect of far reaching strategical results. | p. 12-13 |
| Necessitates division of attacking forces according to their roles. | It is essential that definite parties of troops should be assigned to each objective, and should consolidate it after capturing it. | p. 28 |
| Position of battalion, brigade and divisional commanders is of very great importance to capitalize on tactical opportunities and effective action of reserves. | Not addressed in SS.198. | |
| When strategical situation permits point chosen for attack should provide ground that facilitates a methodical continuous advance in steps from one defensive position to the next. | To select as the intermediate objectives of each attack the lines which will best facilitate the re-organization of infantry for the next stage of advance. | p. 11 |
| As soon as advanced troops have taken the first of these defensive positions, it should be fortified. Without delay bring forward necessary means (fresh troops, machine guns and artillery) to defeat counter attacks and pave the way to the next forward position. | To select as our final objective of each attack a good defensive line well within the physical capacity of our infantry and the zone of effective artillery support. This line will be so chosen as to facilitate the resumption of the attack at the earliest possible date. Advance proceeded by four clearly defined and methodical stages of exploitation. | p. 11 |
| Barrage plans to be worked out beforehand. | Protect advance of infantry by moving barrage. | p. 11 |

Platoon Tactical Doctrine

The second series of tactical publications published for the infantry by the TB at GHQ were *S.S.143* and *S.S.144* shown in Figure 26.

Figure 26: GHQ Platoon-Level Doctrine Publications (1916-1918)

| Date | S.S. No | S.S. Title | Comment |
|-------------|---------|---|--|
| 1917 | | | |
| February | S.S.143 | <i>Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action, 1917</i> | Introduces new platoon organization. |
| February | S.S.144 | <i>The Normal Formation for the Attack, 1917</i> | |
| April | S.S.144 | <i>The Normal Formation for the Attack, 1917</i> | <i>The Organization of an Infantry Battalion</i> (O.B.1919: dated 07/02/1917 and <i>The Normal Formation for the Attack</i> (S.S. 144, February, 1917) – both issued together in April 1917, under 40/WO/3995. ⁶⁶³ |
| 1918 | | | |
| February | S.S.143 | <i>The Training and Employment of Platoons, 1918</i> | 2 nd ed. revised and enlarged edition. |
| n.d. | S.S.143 | <i>Platoon Training</i> | 3 rd revised ed. May have been issued by the IGT in March 1919. ⁶⁶⁴ |

The most significant of these two publications is *S.S.143*, which introduced an entirely new organization for the platoon, dramatically increasing its firepower and tactical flexibility. On February 2nd 1917, Haig witnessed a demonstration of the new unit organised by Solly-Flood at the Third Army Training School. The exercise was carried out by a company of four platoons, each comprising a bombing section, rifle grenade section, a Lewis gun section and a section of scouts and sharpshooters of nine men plus a platoon HQ of three men. Haig was suitably impressed by the new unit and its organiser. The next day Haig approved the organization ‘as the normal

⁶⁶³ "S.S.143: Instructions for the Training and Employment of Platoons (February 1918)," (AP&SS). Front Cover.

⁶⁶⁴ Stuart Mitchell, "An Inter-Disciplinary Study of Learning in the 32nd Division on the Western Front, 1916-1918" (University of Birmingham, 2013) p. 297.

one', and appointed Solly-Flood head up his new Training Branch at GHQ.⁶⁶⁵ At the same time, Haig commissioned the publication of *S.S.144*, where his rationale for doing so is instructive.⁶⁶⁶

The average Officer now does not know enough of tactical principles to enable him to adopt a particular formation to suit the particular situation confronting him. So I decided that a normal attack formation was to be laid down and practised. This can be dispensed with in years to come when our Officers become more educated in military principles!⁶⁶⁷

This statement demonstrates Haig's desire to achieve unity-of-mental-effort at platoon level, and foreshadowed his wish to move from prescription to judgemental decision-making at all command levels. On February 7th, this innovation was formally introduced (O.B./1919) and, Solly-Flood wrote and published *S.S.143*, and *S.S.144* shortly thereafter.

In February 1918 *S.S. 143* was revised when the specialist sections were dissolved. This was because there was some concern that men in the bombing and grenade sections were holding back in the assault and displayed a reluctance to use the bayonet leaving this to the 'specialist' riflemen. The revised platoon was organised as follows:

Except Nos 1 and 2 of the Lewis gun section, every N.C.O. and man in the platoon is first and foremost a rifleman. All men are trained in the use of the bomb, and at least 50 per cent. in the use of the rifle bomb. If opportunity allows, it is desirable that one of the rifle sections should be trained also to act as a bombing team.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁵ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 02/02/1917; 03/02/1917.

⁶⁶⁶ "S.S.144: The Normal Formation for the Attack (1917)," (AP&SS).

⁶⁶⁷ "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 03/02/1917.

⁶⁶⁸ "S.S.143: Instructions for the Training and Employment of Platoons (February 1918)." p. 8.

In June 1918, in view of the manpower shortage, it became necessary to reduce the standard platoon to two rifle sections each with a minimum of one leader and six men, and one double Lewis gun section of one leader and 10 men. Although there was insufficient manpower to fight each gun separately, both weapons could be brought into action to double the firepower against fleeting opportunities.⁶⁶⁹ In 1919, a new edition of *S.S.143* was published where tactical firepower was increased by the introduction of a second Lewis gun section in place of one rifle section.⁶⁷⁰

Conclusion: Attainment of Unity-of-Mental-Effort in the BEF

This chapter opened with the proposition that doctrine provides a military force, regardless of size, with ‘a common manner of seeing, thinking and acting’.⁶⁷¹ ‘When doctrine ceases...men act on personal lines’, and anarchy, and organizational dysfunction ensues.⁶⁷² The bigger the organization, the greater the dysfunction, and in military terms, the more easily an army will be defeated by a similar class of foe. This feature was not lost on Haig. As Sir Evelyn Wood VC acknowledged, before the war he was recognised as one of the leading military practitioners of his era:

Douglas Haig is one of the most highly instructed of our officers...since the death of Sir James Grierson, he probably knows more about our Army than anyone in our Service.⁶⁷³

Haig must have understood the value of doctrine and ensured through study and practice that the principles he espoused were on the right lines.

⁶⁶⁹ TNA/WO/106/411, "Reorganization and reduction of British Divisions contemplated as a result of German offensives." Memorandum "Organization of the Infantry Battalion attached to a letter by Maj.-Gen. G.P. Dawnay to the Army Commanders 14/06/1918.

⁶⁷⁰ "S.S.143: Platoon Training (1919)," (AP&SS).

⁶⁷¹ Foch, *The Principles of War*. p. 7. (18)

⁶⁷² *Ibid.* p. 244.

⁶⁷³ Wood, *Winnowed Memories*. pp. 332-333.

Prior to Haig's arrival at the WO, he contributed to the development of cavalry doctrine, thereby helping to maintain the continued presence of the cavalry as a fighting arm in the face of powerful and highly influential opposition. In 1908, at a General Staff Conference, Haig emphasised the need for uniformity in strategy, tactics, organization and training.⁶⁷⁴ As DSD, he was in the right position at the right time to firmly imprint his doctrinal world-view on *FSR-I*. He then used the agency of staff tours and manoeuvres to test and refine the principles he established in the regulations. This process cemented the acceptance of *FSR-I* within the GS and at the highest levels of command. Haig helped inculcate these principles into the Indian Army when he was CGS. His rigorous training methods facilitated the integration of the Indian Corps HQ into the British staff structure on its arrival on the Western Front in 1914. When Haig arrived to take command at Aldershot it was apparent to the Inspector General of the Forces that each division in the home army still had its own way of thinking. Under Haig's direction, *FSR-I* principles and practices were drilled into the 1st and 2nd Divisions under his command. This meant that when these formations disembarked in France their officers and men benefitted from a high degree of unity-of-mental-effort in the early stages of the war.

At First Army, Haig took the opportunity to put his principles into practice as demonstrated at the battle of Neuve Chappelle. In 1916, under Haig's leadership as C-in-C, the BEF became an increasingly successful learning organization. This progress fuelled the evolution and adaptation of tactical doctrine in response to the novel battle conditions on the Western Front, and the rapid introduction of revolutionary technologies. Lessons were learned, the evolved doctrine was officially disseminated via the S.S. publications, and then inculcated into Haig's five armies by

⁶⁷⁴ TNA/WO/279/18, "Report on a Conference of General Staff Officers at the Staff College 7th to 10th January 1908." p. 47.

a relatively sophisticated training organization. Of course, there is no question that progress towards unity-of-mental-effort was an uneven and a challenging process. As a result it is difficult to determine with any precision the degree to which Haig was able to broadly gain unity-of-mental-effort within the BEF by the end of hostilities.

However, not surprisingly, Haig and the Official Historian suggested that a relatively high degree of unity-of-mental-effort had been achieved. In Haig's *Final Despatch*, and with a degree of self-satisfaction, he insisted that his world-view of warfare impressed on and applied by his armies through *FSR-I* and the relevant S.S. doctrine was vindicated by the BEF's methods and progression to victory.⁶⁷⁵ Edmonds observed that by August 1918, the British armies had all 'picked up the tricks of the trade, they quickly noted and absorbed the tactical lessons, and they fought better as the days passed, whereas the Germans fought worse'.⁶⁷⁶ However, as David French was right to signal, Haig's view was not universally shared by his military colleagues including Robertson and Wilson.⁶⁷⁷

Nonetheless, a number of historians have been inclined to support Edmond's opinion, arguing that by 1918 the British Army was applying 'a coherent all-arms tactical design'.⁶⁷⁸ Prior and Wilson said that this required 'the most thorough co-operation between the various elements' for an attack to 'achieve its maximum effect', which they labelled 'a formula for success'.⁶⁷⁹ This notion finds support from Dan Todman and Gary Sheffield who have suggested that 'from the end of 1916

⁶⁷⁵ Haig, *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches, December 1915-April 1919*, ed. by J.H. Boraston. pp. 325, 343, 345.

⁶⁷⁶ Brig.-Gen. J. E. Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium: 26 September to 11 November 1918 - The Advance to Victory*, ed. Brig.-Gen. J.E. Edmonds, vol. 1918/5, Official History of the War (London: Macmillan, 1947) p. 609.

⁶⁷⁷ French, "Doctrine and Organization in the British Army 1919-1932." p. 500.

⁶⁷⁸ Boff, "British Third Army, the Application of Modern War, and the Defeat of the German Army, August-November 1918." p. 139.

⁶⁷⁹ Robin and Trevor Wilson Prior, *Command on the Western Front* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992) pp. 309, 289.

there does seem to have been an effort to move on from the individualism and confusion of previous years to adopt a more consistent and coherent approach' which 'played an essential part in the weapons system that allowed the BEF to establish dominance over the German army in the last months of the war'.⁶⁸⁰ While Robbins saw Cambrai as 'a blue print, which the British would use to produce stunning results on the Western Front in the second half of 1918'.⁶⁸¹ J.P. Harris and Niall Barr posited 'that the BEF at the beginning of August 1918...was a highly sophisticated army which had developed and adopted a broad range of operational methods and tactics'. During the Hundred Days 'this repertoire was performed with impressive skill'.⁶⁸²

However, these historians cautioned against accepting the appealing notion that the BEF had developed a 'winning formula' demonstrated at Hamel on July 4th 1918 and refined at Amiens on August 8th. This is because some features of these offensives were never repeated. For example, the BEF was never again able to regain 'the same degree of surprise' or achieve the comparative potency of counter-battery fire. The weapon systems also proved a great deal more fallible than Prior and Wilson would allow and the methods used were only 'really applicable to only big set-piece assaults'.⁶⁸³

Research by Jonathan Boff, where he examined 202 opposed attacks launched by Third Army between August and November 1918, lends support to the position of Harris and Barr.⁶⁸⁴ In a thorough and well-argued chapter on British tactics employed during the campaign, Boff demonstrated that although a rich diversity in the combined arms tactics was practised by Third Army, these methods were largely

⁶⁸⁰ *Command and Control on the Western Front*, ed. Dan Todman and Gary Sheffield, First ed. (Staplehurst: Spellmount Limited, 2004) pp. 8-9.

⁶⁸¹ Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18: Defeat into Victory*. p. 137.

⁶⁸² J.P. Harris with Niall Barr, *Amiens to the Armistice* (London: Brassey's, 1998) p. 294.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.* pp. 297, 298-299.

⁶⁸⁴ Boff, "British Third Army, the Application of Modern War, and the Defeat of the German Army, August-November 1918."p. 152.

framed and informed by *FSR-I, S.S.135, S.S.143 and S.S.144*.⁶⁸⁵ He also contributed a valuable understanding of both the internal and external factors that played a major role in driving diversity of the combined arms effort.⁶⁸⁶ In conclusion, and to paraphrase Boff, although the development, dissemination and attainment of unity-of-mental-effort in the BEF under Haig's command was certainly less than perfect, 'it was, however, greater than that of its opponent'.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸⁵ *Winning and Losing on the Western Front; The British Army and the Defeat of Germany in 1918*. pp. 123, 126, 128, 129, 131, 132, 133, 135, 146.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 153-159.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. 246.

5. Achieving Unity-of-Physical-Effort

‘In all armies, and in every war, doctrine is the glue which holds everything together, and training is the instrument through which it is imparted’.⁶⁸⁸ This chapter will examine how Haig evolved that instrument in the BEF from its rudimentary and improvised beginnings in 1914 to become a relatively well resourced and well managed organization in 1918. By this stage both a TB at GHQ and an IT had been established with powers to create doctrine, to standardise methods and build uniformity of training both in France and at home, supported by an inspection regime. Consideration will also be given to the possible reasons Haig delayed the implementation of this high priority process. Finally, an assessment will be made of the extent to which unity-of-physical-effort was achieved by the end of the war.

Before the war there was a formidable array of official and unofficial military training manuals published including that universal panacea *Quick Training for War* written by Lord Baden-Powell, the Chief Scout, which extended to four editions alone in September 1914.⁶⁸⁹ Given this emphasis on the importance of training, it is surprising that historians have tended to overlook the subject in respect to the BEF.⁶⁹⁰ Peter Simkins is one notable exception. He addressed the question at length in his work on Kitchener’s New Armies. Unfortunately, he restricted his focus to the period 1914-1916 and deals only with training in Britain.⁶⁹¹ Simon Robbins provided a competent overview of the BEF’s training regime during the course of the war. He rightly pointed to the collapse in tactical expertise that occurred as a result of the

⁶⁸⁸ John Gooch, "Preface," in *Military Training in the British Army, 1940-1944* (London: Frank Cass, 2000). p.vii.

⁶⁸⁹ Lieut.-General Sir Robert Baden Powell, *Quick Training for War* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1914). K.W. Mitchinson, *The Territorial Force at War, 1914-1916* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) p. 66.

⁶⁹⁰ Geddes, "Solly-Flood, GHQ, and Tactical Training in the B.E.F., 1916-1918." p. 5.

⁶⁹¹ Peter Simkins, *Kitchener's Army: The Raising of the New Armies, 1914 - 1916*, ed. Ian F.W. Beckett, War, Armed Forces and Society (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

destruction of the Regular Army in 1914, and its replacement by hastily trained green troops of the New Armies in 1915. He argued that 'it was not until late 1917...that the British were able to regain standards comparable with 1914'.⁶⁹² Jonathan Boff gave valuable insights arising from his study of the Third Army during the Hundred Days campaign where he concluded that although considerable effort was put into training, uniformity was not achieved, mainly due to external factors, most notably the demands and tempo of the campaign.⁶⁹³ Other historians including Paddy Griffith, Gary Sheffield, Bill Rawling, acknowledged the importance of training, but typically this vital topic has been dealt with piecemeal. Timothy Harrison Place, has produced a finely drawn study of British Army doctrine and training during World War II.⁶⁹⁴ He concluded that little learning was carried through from Haig's experience on the Western Front.⁶⁹⁵

While established historians have yet to devote their full attention to training, support is at hand from a number of capable scholars who have taken an interest in the topic. Paul Harris has devoted a chapter of his PhD thesis to staff training on the Western Front. Stuart Mitchell in his PhD study of the 32nd Division sketched out various aspects of infantry training in France, and finally Alistair Geddes has produced a ground-breaking MA dissertation on the subject: *Solly-Flood, GHQ, and Tactical Training in the BEF, 1916-1918*.⁶⁹⁶ The obvious limitation of this study is its scope and depth, an inherent feature of an MA dissertation. Nonetheless, it must be

⁶⁹² Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18: Defeat into Victory*. p. 97.

⁶⁹³ Boff, *Winning and Losing on the Western Front; The British Army and the Defeat of Germany in 1918*. p. 68.

⁶⁹⁴ Timothy Harrison Place, *Military Training in the British Army 1940 - 1944: From Dunkirk to D-Day*, ed. John Gooch and Brian Holden Reid, *Military History and Policy* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 168-175.

⁶⁹⁶ Harris, "The Men Who Planned the War: A study of the Staff of the British Army on the Western Front." Mitchell, "An Inter-Disciplinary Study of Learning in the 32nd Division on the Western Front, 1916-1918." Geddes, "Solly-Flood, GHQ, and Tactical Training in the B.E.F., 1916-1918."

gratefully acknowledged that Geddes's work has been used in-part to frame and inform the assessment that follows.

Evolution of the BEF's Training Organization

While the WO and the Army emphasised training in peacetime, it appears that much less thought had been given to this vital matter when at war. The 1902 report on officer education and training falls into this category.⁶⁹⁷ The findings of the 1904 Elgin Inquiry into the war in South Africa has made much of the inadequacy of peacetime training and the need for improvement, but little consideration was given to the organization of training during hostilities.⁶⁹⁸ When Haig gave evidence to the Royal Commission he offered suggestions regarding the future training of officers and men. He stressed the need for the training of staff officers through staff tours and said by 'this means uniformity of ideas in staff management and tactics generally would gradually be produced throughout the Army'. He stressed that 'Generals and their staffs should as far as possible be accustomed to work together during times of peace, and general officers should have a free hand in selecting their staff from qualified officers'. He also stated that the chief danger for training in general 'arises from the utterly false usages hitherto practiced and ingrained into...troops at peace manoeuvres; and from these false ideas of war filter to the people of th[e] country, and then are voiced by their representatives in Parliament'. Haig was referring to the false expectations of the Army's state of preparedness created prior to South African War. As a result, following the opening defeats at the hands of Boer farmers, the politicians were wrong-footed and the general public dismayed. Haig emphasised

⁶⁹⁷ [Cd.982], "Report of Committee on Military Education (Akers Douglas)," War Office (London: HMSO, 1902).

⁶⁹⁸ [Cd.1789], "Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Military Preparations and Other matters Connected with the War in South Africa," War Office (London: HMSO, 1904).

that the realism of warfare should be replicated at manoeuvres.⁶⁹⁹ In *FSR-I*, the overarching aspect of training in the field received only passing mention, and this was only within the context of night operations. The *Training and Manoeuvre Regulations, 1913* was also surprisingly silent on the matter.⁷⁰⁰ Thus, when the BEF arrived in France, there were no prior formal plans for in-theatre training.

While specific plans for training in the field were absent, the object of, and the devolved responsibility for, training were absolutely clear. The *Infantry Training, 1914* manual stated that ‘the object to be aimed at in the training of the infantry soldier is to make him, mentally and physically, a better man than his adversary on the field of battle’. Further, ‘all commanders from platoon commanders upwards, are responsible for the training of their commands’. To ensure uniformity of both training methods and standards, ‘superiors, while delegating authority for the training of subordinate units, [were] themselves responsible that the training [was] carried out in accordance with the instructions contained in [the] manual’.⁷⁰¹ This alluded to the notion of inspection. Similar principles applied to manuals of the other fighting arms including the cavalry and artillery.⁷⁰² These manuals implied that prior to 1914 the WO did not envisage that the development of general or specialised training facilities in the field would be necessary, and in any event if training was required beyond those drills specified this became the devolved responsibility of field commanders on the spot.

At a meeting of the War Council on August 5th 1914, Haig advised that ‘Great Britain and Germany would be fighting for their existence’, and that the war ‘was

⁶⁹⁹ [Cd.1791], "Royal Commission on the War in South Africa: Minutes of Evidence," War Office (London: HMSO, 1904) p. 404.

⁷⁰⁰ *Training and Manoeuvre Regulations*.

⁷⁰¹ *Infantry Training Manual: 4-Company Organization*, (London: HMSO, 1914) p. 1, 3.

⁷⁰² *Cavalry Training*, (London: HMSO, 1912).p. 1; *Garrison Artillery Training* vol. 1 (HMSO, 1914) p. 20.

bound to be a long [one], [as] neither side would acknowledge defeat after a short struggle'.⁷⁰³ Later, he told Haldane the war would 'last many months, possibly years'.⁷⁰⁴ Haig's opinion of the war's duration was shared by Kitchener, but according to Churchill, every one else at the War Council meeting expected it to be short including French; in fact the BEF's mobilisation plan was based on the "'short war'" assumption'.⁷⁰⁵ At the meeting, Haig urged that 'Great Britain must at once take in hand the creation of an Army' of at least 'one million' men. He pointed to the fact that the regular army had only a small number of trained officers and NCOs, and stressed that these soldiers must be economised because 'the need for efficient instructors would become at once apparent'. He pleaded that 'a considerable number of officers and NCOs should be withdrawn forthwith from the Expeditionary Force' for future training purposes. Haig's proposal was immediately opposed by French. Consequently only three officers per battalion were retained in England,⁷⁰⁶ resulting in a desperate shortage of qualified instructors which became a very serious handicap for training at home.⁷⁰⁷ This problem was compounded by Kitchener's decision to expand the BEF by the creation of New Armies, employing the traditional recruitment channel of the Regular Army. This route was preferred to Haldane's established mechanism of the Territorial Force's County Associations.⁷⁰⁸ Again Haig's advice was brushed aside, this time by Kitchener.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰³ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 05/08/1914.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid. Letter: Haig to Haldane 04/08/1914.

⁷⁰⁵ Winston S.Churchill, *The World Crisis: (1911-1914)*, VI Vols, Vol. I (London: Thornton Butterworth Limited, 1923) p. 235. Richard Holmes, *Sir John French: The Little Field-Marshal* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981) p.198. Keith Jeffery, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A political Soldier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) p.132.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid. Entry 05/08/1914.

⁷⁰⁷ Simkins, *Kitchener's Army: The Raising of the New Armies, 1914 - 1916*. p. 297.

⁷⁰⁸ TNA/WO/163/21, "Minutes of Proceedings of the Army Council, 11 August 1914."

⁷⁰⁹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 05/08/1914

1914: Training Ad-hocism

When I Corps arrived in its concentration area of Wassigny around August 17th 1914 the force had already been thoroughly trained by Haig for a European war to the highest and most uniform standard of any British formation.⁷¹⁰ Thus, further training was not one of his immediate priorities. Besides, little opportunity presented itself because I Corps was constantly engaged in action, or on the move from the Mons retreat until the closure of the First Ypres campaign in November. It is also apparent that training was not considered a particular priority at GHQ. The GS was divided into two branches, Operations and Intelligence reporting to the CGS via a sub chief (MGGS). As there was no SDB, the formal function of training at GHQ was absent.⁷¹¹ If matters of training policy in the field arose, presumably this was to be dealt with on an ad-hoc basis by the Operations branch. As discussed, local commanders were charged with the responsibility for all training required during the campaign. Gen. Sir George de S. Barrow attached to the staff of the Cavalry Division under Allenby caustically observed: ‘employed in much training, in moving up to positions of readiness to go through the “gap” that never came’.⁷¹²

By the end of 1914, training became a priority for Haig due to a number of converging factors. First, owing to the high number of casualties in officers and men, rapid de-skilling was taking place in I Corps. Secondly, Haig was finding that men who had made good commanders in peacetime did not necessarily perform well on the battlefield. Brig.-Gen. Ivor Maxse of the Guards Brigade, is one example. Haig sent Maxse home (not before promoting him to Maj.-Gen.!) to train a New Army division just before he was sacked by Maj.-Gen. S.H. Lomax, his superior in

⁷¹⁰ Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1914*, 1. p. 10.

⁷¹¹ TNA/WO/279/862, *Staff Manual. War* (London: HMSO, 1912). Table A: Normal Organization of Staff Duties in the Field.

⁷¹² Barrow, *The Fire of Life*. p. 156. (Emphasis in original).

command of 1st Division.⁷¹³ It appears that this decision served both men well. Lomax was released from the onerous task of ‘degumming’ his brigade commander. Maxse returned to France later in command of 18th (Eastern) Division, where he performed his duties well before being promoted to take charge of XVIII Corps. Thirdly, in November, Haig was promoted to full General for distinguished service in the field, and on Christmas Day he was given command of First Army comprising three corps (I Corps, IV Corps and the Indian Corps).⁷¹⁴ The training standards of this greatly expanded formation were mixed, and a degree of re-skilling was vital to achieve uniformity. Finally, changes were about to take place at GHQ, which had an important bearing on the BEF’s future training organization.

1915: Training Improvisation

In January 1915, French appointed, Lieut.-Gen. Sir W.R. Robertson as his new CGS. Robertson knew that the ‘units were coming out from home indifferently trained in their common military duties’ and were completely unprepared for trench warfare. In response, he immediately established a SDB under Col. E.M. Perceval, albeit a relatively junior officer for this task, with specific responsibility for training and other duties not included in the Operations and Intelligence branches. He also elevated the staff branches to report directly to him rather than through a sub-chief.⁷¹⁵ Robertson foresaw a grand vision for the development of training given the slight resources he had allocated to the task at GHQ:

Set up machinery for giving...new arrivals the requisite additional training before they went into the trenches, the machinery to include schools of instruction manned by

⁷¹³ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry 17/09/1914.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid. Telegram: French to WO 14/11/1914; Entry: 25/12/1914.

⁷¹⁵ Field Marshal Sir William Robertson, *From Private to Field Marshal* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1921) pp. 220-221.

officers and non-commissioned officers who were specialists in their business; to make similar arrangements for the training of drafts at the bases; bring formations at the front in closer relation with these drafts and cause them to take a greater interest in them; and inaugurate systematic instruction for regimental officers and non-commissioned officers, whose professional standard had fallen to a low level owing to the number of casualties we had suffered.

Lastly, special means had to be provided for dealing with questions regarding new units such as mining companies, new inventions such as trench mortars, and a host of others relating to new methods of making war in general and trench war in particular.⁷¹⁶

In total the resources available to the SDB were four staff officers who also had to contend with other duties of policy and organization that possibly were more urgent. As Dan Todman observed, although Robertson quickly instituted at GHQ much needed organizational improvements, brought in fresh faces, and attempted to introduce a new attitude within the staff, further progress was slow and improvised due to a lack of trained staff and massive workloads.⁷¹⁷

Meanwhile, Haig and his commanders at the front were soon confronted with the arrival of poorly trained divisions of Kitchener's New Armies. Although these troops had undergone six months basic training, they were challenged by a number of factors. As Peter Simpkins pointed out the 'main problem at the beginning was the military ignorance of the majority of troops and junior officers alike'.⁷¹⁸ While the training syllabus was adequate enough in theory, it proved impossible to implement in practice due to a critical shortage of experienced officers and NCOs in both the

⁷¹⁶ Ibid. p.220.

⁷¹⁷ Todman, "The Grand Lamasery Revisited: General Headquarters on the Western Front 1914-1918." pp. 46-48.

⁷¹⁸ Simpkins, *Kitchener's Army: The Raising of the New Armies, 1914 - 1916*. p. 297

New Armies and the Territorial battalions. 'Even when [the battalions] acquired a reasonable knowledge of drill and discipline, recruits were plagued by shortages of equipment at each successive stage of their training' as Simkins explained:⁷¹⁹

The lack of general supervision and co-ordination of training, the delays in revising existing tactical doctrine, and the consequent over-dependence of commanding officers on out of date manuals all conspired to give field training an air of unreality and amateurishness which began to disappear only when the first New Armies had gone overseas.⁷²⁰

When the Government became aware of the acute problems that were being felt by industry and other vital services due to the unrestricted enlistment of skilled manpower, the measures implemented in mitigation had a serious impact on both the methods and continuity of training for many infantry battalions. In particular, 'the value of training in trench attacks was minimal' for New Army formations. Moreover, due to the demand for troops at the front, the training period was reduced from 14 to 12 weeks, limiting further the time left to season recruits before their arrival in France.⁷²¹

While Robertson was reorganising the staff at GHQ, French turned to Haig for advice to address the immediate training and seasoning problems of the New Armies. Haig recommended that the Regular divisions in France should be reconstituted to combine 'two seasoned Brigades with one new Brigade'.⁷²² This proposal was put forward to Asquith and approved. However, Kitchener was furious that French had approached the Prime Minister directly, and refused to implement the plan because

⁷¹⁹ Ibid. p. 297.

⁷²⁰ Ibid. 307.

⁷²¹ Ibid. pp. 309, 315, 313.

⁷²² NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry 11/01/1915.

he claimed, 'such a use of the New Army would ruin it'.⁷²³ This failure to adopt Haig's recommendation to bolster training and compensate to some extent for the lack of battle experience cost the New Armies many lives.⁷²⁴

Reinforcements arriving from the TF at home, suffered similar problems to those of the New Armies. While DMT, Haig had prepared detailed plans for the training of the TF in which he stipulated that all ranks should undergo six months of post-embodiment training prior to operational deployment. After the controversial question of overseas deployment had been settled, training did proceed, but not according to Haig's plan.

Due to the acute shortage of New Army instructors, many of the regular adjutants and platoon sergeants responsible for TF training were withdrawn shortly after embodiment.⁷²⁵ Equipment was in short supply because it had been diverted to the New Armies. Many of the TF divisions were equipped with obsolete 15 pdr. guns or worn out 4.5" howitzers.⁷²⁶ In an attempt to compensate for these problems, training methods emphasised the make-believe 'conceptual' component of fighting power.⁷²⁷ Furthermore, newly commissioned junior officers responsible for training 'struggled to impart to their platoons the knowledge gleaned from the pages of a manual the night before'.⁷²⁸ In addition to all of their other frustrations including the inclement weather, shortages of kit, clothing and ammunition, the officers and men had to familiarise themselves with the new four, rather than the old eight company battalion organization.⁷²⁹ To compound these problems, the urgent need for

⁷²³ Lieut.-Gen. Sir George Macdonough to Brig.-Gen. Sir James Edmonds, n.d. TNA/CAB/45/120 cited from Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18: Defeat into Victory*. p. 84.

⁷²⁴ *ibid.* p. 85, note 24.

⁷²⁵ Mitchinson, *The Territorial Force at War, 1914-1916*. p. 63.

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 70.

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 66.

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 67.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 68.

reinforcements at the front meant that some units like the 14th London (London Scottish) Regiment were deployed to France a mere six weeks after embodiment.⁷³⁰ It is not surprising that on disembarkation in France, French observed that there are ‘great differences in the comparative standards of various battalions’.⁷³¹

There was another organizational factor that served to undermine the training effort throughout the war. While brigades and battalions assigned to divisions were permanent fixtures, divisions were rotated through army corps, and army corps through armies. This ‘roulement’ made it extremely difficult in practice to establish uniform standards of training. The Canadian Corps was the exception, with a fixed constitution of four Canadian divisions which invariably fought together. Lieut.-Gen. John Monash observed ‘it is impossible to overvalue the advantages which accrued to the Canadian troops from this close and constant association...’.⁷³² This problem was exacerbated by the continual evolution of both German and French tactics, and the British responses to them. Incidentally, the Australians expanded their divisions along lines proposed by Haig, and this measure ultimately resulted in a higher state of training efficiency.⁷³³

During the course of 1915, Robertson’s vision for training started to become a reality. On disembarkation in France, typically at the ports of Le Havre, Harfleur, Rouen, Boulogne and Calais, troops were transferred to massive nearby training camps.⁷³⁴ These establishments included Etaples, infamously known for its ‘bullring’ and a great wilderness of tents and buildings that stretched mile on mile along the

⁷³⁰ Ibid. p. 69.

⁷³¹ Ibid. p. 78.

⁷³² General Sir John Monash, *Australian Victories in France* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1920). pp. 4-9.

⁷³³ C.E.W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18*, XII vols, vol. III (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1929) pp. 32-50.

⁷³⁴ Richard Holmes, *Tommy: The British Soldier on the Western Front 1914-1918* (London Harper Collins, 2004) p. 337.

dunes.⁷³⁵ Before proceeding to the front, soldiers underwent between two weeks to a month of dehumanising battle training where they ‘practised the most efficient ways of killing or avoiding being killed’.⁷³⁶ The troops then moved onto the lines of communication, or behind the lines at St Omer, where further acclimatization took place. This training included digging, wiring and musketry practice before moving up to the front lines. On average the process took 20 days from disembarkation to arrival at the front line.⁷³⁷

Unlike the New Army divisions, TF formations were attached to their Regular counterparts with the idea that the ‘inexperienced TF junior officers and NCOs in particular would learn something of the tactical skills, command and leadership characteristics of the regulars’.⁷³⁸ Further training may have been deemed necessary by a Regular division or brigade commander before a TF formation was given its own section of line to hold. While this description may create the impression of an orderly and regulated process, it must be remembered that training in Regular formations was also being improvised to a variable standard and this had a ‘knock-on’ effect on the TF troops.

As Paddy Griffith observed, ‘an archipelago of training schools did spring up to bring all ranks up to the high standards demanded by modern warfare’. Also, ‘a very great deal of informal training actually did take place in the trenches, on the basis that survival itself depended upon a speedy adjustment to local conditions’.⁷³⁹ At First Army, Haig urged the need for training on his commanders.⁷⁴⁰ In response,

⁷³⁵ Charles Douie, *The Weary Road* (London: John Murray, 1929) p. 38.

⁷³⁶ Holmes, *Tommy: The British Soldier on the Western Front 1914-1918*. p. 342. Citing, Bernard Livermore, *Long ‘Un – A Dammed Bad Soldier* . pp. 46-47.

⁷³⁷ Mitchinson, *The Territorial Force at War, 1914-1916*. p. 78.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 60.

⁷³⁹ Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack 1916-18*. pp. 188-189.

⁷⁴⁰ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry 16/12/1914; 18/12/1914; 19/12/1914; 13/04/1915; 19/05/1915; 25/06/1915; 01/10/1915; 04/10/1915.

divisional schools were established for the training of officers and men in specialist areas. For instance, the 2nd Division established a school for the offensive training of officers, and others for the instruction of grenades, signals, and gas and mortars. These schools were mobile and had permanent staffs and instructors who were periodically returned to their units so as not to lose touch with the practical reality.⁷⁴¹

Organised training took a number of different forms during the campaign season. Before major operations, specific exercises took place. For example, before the battle of Loos, all ranks of the 2nd Division were rehearsed and carefully instructed in their respective roles for a period of three weeks.⁷⁴² When I Corps was taken out of the line for a period of rest, the opportunity was taken for training, particularly in new weaponry like rifle and hand grenades. Exercises were also undertaken in coordinated bomb throwing and bayonet attacks by assaulting parties.⁷⁴³ Men were also trained on the job. For example, when the Bangalore Torpedo was introduced, a party of men in the trenches were given the device, simply shown how it worked, and immediately despatched on a raid to demonstrate their efficiency and effectiveness in the use of the new weapon.⁷⁴⁴

The structure and content of the training courses in 1915 was entirely improvised in both First and Second Army and as required by the regulations, left to the determination of formation or unit commanders. However, these officers did have access to guidance in the shape of *FSR-I* and other material. From about December 1914 the regulations were augmented by a short series of pamphlets (the CDS series) based upon British combat experience in France. This material was prepared and

⁷⁴¹ Everard Wyrall, *The History of the Second Division, 1914-1918* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1921) p. 248.

⁷⁴² *Ibid.* p. 221.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 172.

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 197.

printed in London and distributed by the WO Central Distribution Section to BEF formations;⁷⁴⁵ e.g. *CDS 24 Object and Conditions of Combined Offensive Action (June 1915)*.⁷⁴⁶ The CDS series also included pamphlets translated from relevant French documents.

After the Battle of Loos, and with the campaign season at an end, it is clear that Haig saw the need to move away from the improvisation of the past and to provide strong advice and guidance to his senior commanders for training during the winter months. Hitherto, Haig had relied upon fairly regular training inspections of his divisions, brigades and battalions to monitor their state of training efficiency.⁷⁴⁷ On November 7th, Haig convened a conference at First Army HQ (Hinges), attended by his four corps commanders and 12 GOCs of divisions, whereupon he introduced his ‘system of training to be followed in the coming winter’:

I pointed out that the Division is our real Battle Unit. That therefore the training must be under the personal guidance of GOCs Divisions so that they may be able to inspire the Unit with their own personal energy and fighting spirit. The main role of Commanders of Corps, and myself is to assist and guide the instruction. At the same time certain instruction must be given in a Corps School e.g. Signalling (because it is a Corps organization) and in the Army School e.g. use of mortars, smoke, gas etc. Once detachments are trained, it then devolves on GOC Divisions to train the Divisions in their use. I said that in my opinion the training in Divisions should fall into two parts:

⁷⁴⁵ Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack 1916-18*. p. 181.

⁷⁴⁶ <https://www.google.co.uk/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=list+of+SS+pamphlets> (02/12/2015)

⁷⁴⁷ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 16/12/1914; 19/12/1914; 07/01/1915; 13/04/1915; 31/07/1915.

1. Individual Training.
2. Combined.

and I gave an outline of a syllabus for the various “schools” to follow.

Haig also impressed upon his commanders the importance of keeping their men fit and well in readiness for a spring offensive. He emphasised that:

There must be no policy of “live and let live”. We must be continually active and kill as many Germans as possible. It most vitally important for our ultimate success that every individual become (sic) imbued *now* with the *offensive spirit*.⁷⁴⁸

Unfortunately, while the syllabus that Haig mentions does not appear to have survived, there is not anything particularly new in his training system or in his characteristic attitudes to his troops and the enemy. However, this conference does show that Haig recognised that improvised methods of training could no longer be relied upon, and that it was a vital necessity to impose a common training policy on his army.

1916: Training Development

On taking command of the BEF in December 1915, Haig continued to grip the question of training. He made Butler, his sub-CGS, who was charged with the BEF’s training and training schools.⁷⁴⁹ Hitherto, GHQ had been slow to take the lead in these respects.⁷⁵⁰ To ensure that the BEF’s three armies worked along similar lines, Haig quickly arranged meetings with Sir Herbert Plumer (GOC) and his CGS at Second Army HQ, and Allenby (GOC) at Third Army HQ. He pressed both men to

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid. Entry 07/11/1915.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid. Entry: 19/12/16.

⁷⁵⁰ Geddes, "Solly-Flood, GHQ, and Tactical Training in the B.E.F., 1916-1918." p. 18.

adopt the same training system he had laid down at First Army.⁷⁵¹ At Haig's first weekly Army Commander's Conference on January 8th 1916, he instructed his subordinates to establish training schools at army, corps and divisional levels. In addition, Haig emphasised that uniformity of staff work practices was necessary for all armies. To this end, he ordered that 'the principles laid down in *FSR-II* must not be departed from'.⁷⁵² Judging by the minutes of successive Army Commanders' meetings, it is apparent that Haig used these occasions as a forum to update, monitor and coordinate training.⁷⁵³ Haig also negotiated with Joffre for the use of training grounds where large scale combined arms exercises with two or three divisions could be practised.⁷⁵⁴ To bolster the recruitment of instructors by using good and experienced officers from battalions, as an inducement, Haig changed the regulations to allow higher rank and pay to be put on offer. He also made the necessary provision to enable officers to return to their units without loss of seniority.⁷⁵⁵

In parallel with these initiatives Haig authorised the publication of the *S.S. series* of doctrinal pamphlets which superseded the *CDS series*.⁷⁵⁶ These documents were prepared by either GHQ or the relevant specialist technical service. The former captured the latest tactical lessons as they emerged from battlefield experience; the latter addressed the deployment of new technologies.⁷⁵⁷ These pamphlets were used to keep commanders at all levels abreast of the latest developments, thereby helping them to unify training methods and standards. Where relevant, the content was linked to *FSR-I*. Haig also used his Army Commanders' meetings as a vehicle to ensure that

⁷⁵¹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 19/12/1915; 22/12/1915.

⁷⁵² *Ibid.* O.A.D. 291 08/01/1916.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.* O.A.D. 291 08/01/1916; O.A.D. 291/3, 24/01/1916 ; O.A.D. 291/9, 15/03/1916; O.A.D. 291/11, 01/04/1916; O.A.D. 291/13, 29/04/1916; O.A.D. 291/14 .

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.* O.A.D. 30, Memorandum: Haig to Joffre, 17/01/1916;; O.A.D. 291/3, 24/01/1916; O.A.D. 338 28/01/1916; A.D. 22, November 1916;. Entry: 24/01/1916.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Entry: 08/11/1916.

⁷⁵⁶ TNA/WO/95/81, "Army Printing and Stationery Service War Diary (1914-1918)."

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*: Memorandum on Printing Overseas, p. 2.

S.S. doctrine and training methods was being disseminated down to regimental officers.⁷⁵⁸ To reassure himself that his training instructions were being followed Haig made multiple inspections of formations and units during 1916.⁷⁵⁹ This extended to platoons and sections where Haig was 'anxious to show the importance [he] attached to elementary training by personally inspecting troops engaged in it'.⁷⁶⁰

The proliferation of schools catering for the myriad specialist training needs for all ranks and specialisations continued to develop at GHQ and within the frontline formations. However, there is some suggestion that this growth was piecemeal and reactive. Following an inspection at 29th Division HQ, commanded by Maj.-Gen. Beauvoir De Lisle, Haig records: 'he is short of some good Battalion commanders for training. He recently started a Divisional School [May 1916]. Other Divisions have had them going since November last'.⁷⁶¹ De Lisle had some excuse as the 29th Division had only recently arrived in France from Egypt. Nonetheless, he had taken practical steps to standardise the training of its battalions and lower units. For example, the 29th Division had published *Notes On Minor Tactics Compiled From Lectures To Company Officers*.⁷⁶² This pamphlet dealt with basic training for individuals, sections, platoons, companies and combined formations. Although this tract is undated, judging by the fact that no reference was made to the new platoon organization introduced by Haig in early 1917, it is likely to have been published in 1916, perhaps coinciding with the opening of the new divisional school.⁷⁶³

⁷⁵⁸ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." O.A.D. 291/7, 19/02/1916; 08/05/1916.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid. Entry: 12/05/1916; 18/05/1916.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid. Entry: 21/03/1916.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid. Entry: 10/05/1916.

⁷⁶² Maj.-Gen. Beauvoir De Lisle, "29th Division: Notes on Minor Tactics Compiled from Lectures to Company Officers," (France).

⁷⁶³ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry : 02/02/1917.

While training was a high priority for Haig his expectations of what could be achieved were realistic:

The mere provision and preliminary training of large numbers of recruits does not make an army. The training must be completed. Higher formations must be trained, so that several arms can work in combination. Officers must be trained so that in the emergencies which occur every moment in every fight, they will instantly act correctly. All this requires time. Although the commanders of our higher formations are men of experience and can be relied on to perfect the training of their troops, they cannot do so in a day.⁷⁶⁴

1917: Training Management

During the winter of 1916-17, Haig had time to reflect on the current standard of training and future requirements of his forces in the light of the Somme campaign. It was apparent to him that the standards, uniformity and resourcing applied to training were still inadequate.⁷⁶⁵ Haig was also aware that the quality of recruits at home was deteriorating with the introduction of conscription. This had obvious implications for the duration and thoroughness of training in France.⁷⁶⁶ Moreover, Haig recorded a meeting just before Christmas with Butler who told him that he 'felt anxious least [sic] he was not pulling his weight'. Haig retorted that he was afraid Butler was overworking himself.⁷⁶⁷ While Butler may have been angling for a front line command, which Haig rewarded him with later, the exchange indicates that at the very least, he was under resourced for the task at hand.

A report prepared for Haig summarising the state of training schools in England and in France, at GHQ, army, corps and divisional levels indicated that

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid. Entry: Memorandum on Policy for Press. n.d. p. 2. (May 1916)

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid. Entry 29/03/1916.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid. Memorandum: A.G. (Fowke) to Haig, 25/04/1916.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid. Entry: 19/12/1916.

some progress had been made.⁷⁶⁸ The document shows a wide variety of training needs were being addressed. However, the network of training establishments was not evenly distributed across the BEF, nor was the capacity commensurate with the burgeoning needs of the five armies. It is also clear that while Butler may have had a coherent plan, although the logic is difficult to divine from the report, the implementation remained piecemeal. GHQ had both a senior and junior staff schools at Hesdin. The former provided a six week course for senior appointments in the three branches of the staff (GS, AA and QMG), with a capacity of only 20 officers. While the latter dealt with the same specialities, for the same duration, with a capacity of only 50 officers. GHQ also had schools for machine guns, aerial gunnery, a cadet school for temporary officers and probationers (six week courses with 620 places), and flash observation (30 places) and wireless schools (10 places). All of the armies, with the exception of the newly formed Fifth Army, had established schools for infantry, artillery, trench mortar, and sniping. Signalling schools were located either at army level or at corps or division. Musketry and bombing training were conducted under army, corps or divisional schemes, while anti-gas schools were sited with divisions. Unsurprisingly, every corps had a school for mounted troops. Finally, on the lines of communication, there were two large base training camps at Etaples and others at Calais, Le Havre and Rouen.

In sum, Haig was still dissatisfied with the general standard of troop training and the patchwork of schools. This prompted him to establish the new dedicated TB at GHQ 'for the specific purpose of the supervision of training'.⁷⁶⁹ As discussed, Haig placed Solly-Flood in charge, supported by a GSO2 and a GSO3, and reporting to

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid. Summary of Schools of Training for the British Expeditionary Force, During the Winter 1916-1917. n.p.

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid. Entry: 02/02/1917; "S.S.152: Instructions for the Training of the British Armies in France (Provisional, June 1917)," (AP&SS) p. 8

Butler who had overall responsibility for SD under the CGS.⁷⁷⁰ It is 'clear that Solly-Flood was instructed to enforce uniformity of training throughout the BEF'.⁷⁷¹ His narrow object was 'to co-ordinate policy and systems, and to introduce uniformity of doctrine'.⁷⁷² This initiative promised 'a significant step towards improving the training effort in the BEF'.⁷⁷³

Solly-Flood immediately made his presence felt. Within weeks he had gained Haig's approval to establish a network of GSO1s (Training) and GSO2s (Training) within each army and corps respectively. At army level the GSO1 (Training) assisted by a GSO3 was responsible for coordination between the TB and the commandants, superintendents and advisors of the network of army schools and training camps. The GSO2 (Training) had the same responsibility at corps level, helping to facilitate training in the fighting formations.⁷⁷⁴ This had the practical effect of increasing the resources of the TB to an estimated 31 staff officers, 'making the job of enforcing uniformity of training much more feasible'.⁷⁷⁵ Although Haig's original policy of devolving responsibility for training down to formation and unit commanders was strictly observed.

Solly-Flood overhauled and rationalised the entire school system. A distinction was made between *permanent schools and camps*, and *temporary classes of instruction*. The former, whose primary purpose was the training of *instructors*, were located at GHQ, army and corps and supported by an approved establishment. The latter were organised by divisions and brigades for the purpose of training personnel

⁷⁷⁰ Todman, "The Grand Lamasery Revisited: General Headquarters on the Western Front 1914-1918." p. 55.

⁷⁷¹ Geddes, "Solly-Flood, GHQ, and Tactical Training in the B.E.F., 1916-1918." p. 13

⁷⁷² "S.S.152: Instructions for the Training of the British Armies in France (Provisional, June 1917)." p. 4

⁷⁷³ "Solly-Flood, GHQ, and Tactical Training in the B.E.F., 1916-1918." p. 11.

⁷⁷⁴ "S.S.152: Instructions for the Training of the British Armies in France (January 1918)," (AP&SS).

⁷⁷⁵ "Solly-Flood, GHQ, and Tactical Training in the B.E.F., 1916-1918." p.14.

using instructors obtained as necessary from the schools of the higher formations. These instruction classes extended down to companies, platoons and sections and were conducted when the fighting unit was out of the front line, in support, or in reserve.⁷⁷⁶ Inevitably, there was some overlap between these two distinct classes of instruction. For example, army infantry schools trained both instructors, providing in this case a refresher course, and personnel who were battalion COs, company commanders, company-sergeants-major and sergeants. Corps infantry schools only trained personnel comprising platoon commanders including NCOs.⁷⁷⁷ Further, the new policy provided rules which catered for the movement and rotation of armies and corps, and within them.

Apart from individual training, which was considered ‘the keynote of efficiency’, collective training took place at company, battalion and brigade level. This gave the infantry the opportunity to practise all-arms cooperation with the other services including cavalry, artillery, tanks, engineers and the RFC.⁷⁷⁸

Given the short time and the limited resources available to Solly-Flood at GHQ, the new scheme was remarkably comprehensive, and even at home his presence had the right effect. Brig.-Gen. R.J. Kentish, Commandant of the Senior Officers’ School at Aldershot noted ‘I think Solly-Flood is to be congratulated on having achieved in six weeks what his predecessor [Percival] ought to have achieved nearly two years ago’.⁷⁷⁹

In June 1917, the TB published, *S.S.152 Instructions for the Training of the British Armies in France* in provisional form. This pamphlet formalised the BEF’s

⁷⁷⁶ "S.S.152: Instructions for the Training of the British Armies in France (Provisional, June 1917)."Training in Units; pp. 8 to 15.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid. Appendix I and Appendix II.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 13.

⁷⁷⁹ IWM/Maxse-Papers/69/53/13/53/1. Letter: Kentish to Maxse 27/03/1917.

training policy, organization, and system. It was written by Solly-Flood although Haig's influence is apparent. The policy was based on the same principles that Haig espoused in November 1915 to his commanders at First Army, and framed in virtually identical language; e.g. 'every Commander should inspire his unit with his "personal energy and fighting spirit"'.⁷⁸⁰ The organization of GHQ, army and corps schools was harmonised, their respective roles were clearly defined, and the number of students per course was quantified. The training systems were elaborated by curricula for each class of school, supported by syllabuses for every course utilising the relevant S.S. series of doctrinal and training pamphlets. Refresher courses were advised to ensure instructors kept up with the latest developments. A degree of inspection was also introduced. Visits were made to schools by TB staff and feedback was received from the GSOs (Training) attached to armies and corps. It was Haig's continued hope that this action would bring the requisite organization to the BEF's training scheme, capitalising on previous developments and with the aim of achieving high and consistent standards, combined with uniform methods.

While Haig must be credited with facilitating this scheme's high ambition, like Robertson, he did not provide adequate resources at GHQ to support its effective implementation. In addition, the scheme could be criticised for not going far enough in at least two ways. First, no attempt was made to coordinate training policy at home with that in France. Secondly, the new organization lacked an independent inspection regime to ensure that Haig's desire for a high and uniform standard of training was enforced throughout the BEF. Both of these omissions had been recognised by Kentish in February, 1917. Unfortunately, instead of telling Haig, in an exchange of letters he told his friend Maxse soon after it became known that the latter was being

⁷⁸⁰ "S.S.152: Instructions for the Training of the British Armies in France (Provisional, June 1917)." p. 8.

promoted to take command of XVIII Corps. It is evident from this exchange that Kentish was hoping for Maxse's patronage to help him secure a new post he harboured worthwhile ambitions for, namely an 'Inspector of Schools' in France.⁷⁸¹

On October 15th 1917, Haig rewarded Solly-Flood for his work at GHQ by promoting him to command the 42nd (East Lancashire) Division. In his place Haig appointed Brig.-Gen. Sir Charles Bonham-Carter.⁷⁸² It appears that the business of the TB continued as usual except that the staff under Bonham-Carter was increased to five officers. This allowed him to take on inspection duties to a greater degree, as he described in his autobiography:

Though frequently engaged in special tasks, the normal work of myself and my staff continued. I visited continually Schools of Instruction, Base Depots where reinforcements were held and training carried out, Convalescent Camps where suitable training was given directly [to] patients [who] had recovered sufficiently, and Staff Officers in charge of training and their Commanders, with the object of ensuring that similar principles and methods of training should be adopted throughout the Army.⁷⁸³

It is apparent that Bonham-Carter, still lacked the resources that would have enabled him to implement a broadly based inspection regime with front line formations and units designed to ensure adequate uniformity and standards of training in the BEF.

1918: Training Inspection

On March 14th 1918, following GHQ's reorganization prompted by political pressure arising from the British reversal at Cambrai, Haig appointed Maj.-Gen. G.P.

⁷⁸¹ IWM/Maxse-Papers/69/53/13/53/1 Letter: Kentish to Maxse 21/02/1917; 27/03/1917.

⁷⁸² NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 14/10/1917.

⁷⁸³ Charles Bonham-Carter, typescript copy of autobiography, Chapter 9, Bonham-Carter papers, BHCT 9/2, CAC. (cited from Geddes, "Solly-Flood, GHQ, and Tactical Training in the BEF, 1916-1918." p. 14, note 41.

Dawney to take charge of the SDB with its responsibility for the TB. The capacity of the TB was increased by reorganising it into three dedicated sub-sections (T1) Publications, staffed by a GSO1, GSO2 and a GSO3; (T2) General Training Schools, supported by two GSO2s; and an Educational Training Unit staffed by a GSO2.⁷⁸⁴ Dawney reported directly to the new CGS Lieut.-Gen. Sir Herbert Lawrence, while Butler was promoted by Haig to command III Corps. Bonham-Carter was later replaced by a lower ranking officer, Col. D.J. Bernard.

During the heavy fighting that had taken place during the German offensive, it was found that 'junior officers owing to their inexperience and the want of tactical training [were] usually lacking in initiative and unable to deal with the constantly changing situations of mobile warfare'.⁷⁸⁵ As a consequence, on May 22nd 1918, Bonham-Carter advised the five army commanders that consideration was being given to revise the training policy at army and corps infantry schools. In particular, it was proposed that training would be targeted at company and platoon commanders with the object of improving initiative and raising tactical standards. This approach reflected Haig's opinion of the central importance of platoon commanders in modern warfare, (see p. 305) and was in sharp contrast to the existing courses that had been designed to give officers a general training in their duties.⁷⁸⁶ A week later, at an army commanders' conference, these proposals were approved after a little refinement.⁷⁸⁷

Shortly before Bonham-Carter was transferred from the TB, he prepared a valedictory report on the state of the BEF's training in France.⁷⁸⁸ This illuminating document revealed that robust schemes were in place for the training of individuals

⁷⁸⁴ Todman, "The Grand Lamasery Revisited: General Headquarters on the Western Front 1914-1918." p. 61, Diagram 4.

⁷⁸⁵ IWM/Maxse-Papers/69/53/13/56. Memo: T/1966/X, 22/05/1918.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid: Memo: T/1966/X, 22/05/1918.

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid. Minutes of Conference on Policy of Training and Army Schools, T/1996/X, 29/05/1918.

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid. Report: Training in France 25/06/1918.

(other ranks, NCOs, junior officers and commanding officers), complete units and formations, and the GS. A robust network of GHQ, army and corps schools for instructor training, primarily junior officers and NCO's, had been established where standardised syllabuses were adopted to drive uniformity. Similar schools were used for the artillery. To address specialised tasks, schools had also been established under army control for musketry, scouting, observation and sniping, signalling and anti-gas. Instruction for Lewis guns, bombing and light trench mortars was carried out at corps schools. For GSOs, both 'probationary courses' and advanced GS courses had been instituted. Training for commanding officer took place at conferences held at army schools and at the Senior Officers' School at Aldershot.

Despite this solid foundation, the standard and uniformity of training remained a most difficult challenge for Haig, his army and corps commanders. Reinforcements were still arriving in France with only 14 weeks basic training. It was found that these men rapidly lost their efficiency without continued elementary practice within platoons and companies. For the most part this was not possible because the men were continuously employed in the trenches as a consequence of manpower shortages and the comparative length of the British line.

This situation 'seriously shortened the time available for the training of units and battalions' as it was reckoned that it took at least six weeks of continuous training in a back area to bring a division to a thorough state of efficiency.⁷⁸⁹ During the winter of 1917-18 only half of British divisions went into reserve for some period in a back area. However, only one division, the 55th, which had to be entirely reformed after Cambrai was able to train for the designated six week period. The problem was compounded by a lack of adequate training grounds. This constriction

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid. Report: Training in France 25/06/1918.

arose primarily because the French were understandably anxious to prevent crop destruction and they issued the necessary authorizations only with the greatest reluctance. In one case, permission was granted, then later refused, only for the ground in question to be captured by the Germans!⁷⁹⁰

On June 16th 1918, Haig finally addressed the open question of inspection. He wrote to the WO advising that as ‘a matter of the highest urgency’ it was necessary ‘to improve the efficiency of training throughout the Armies in France’. To this end, Haig told the WO that he intended to appoint an IGT, with the rank of Lieut.-Gen., who would be attached to his staff at GHQ. He rationalised that this officer would be provided with the resources necessary to carry out his duties. The manpower was to include three Assistant Inspectors with the rank of Brig.-Gen., one Deputy Inspector (Artillery), and the necessary support staff. Haig explained that while the IGT would have no executive functions, he would be required report to him through the GS on the efficiency of formations, units and training establishments in France. Moreover, the IGT would be empowered to make impromptu inspections at will with the provision of only 24 hours’ notice. In addition, the new IT would be charged with assisting field commanders on all training matters and with ensuring that training throughout the BEF complied with the *FSR*, official training manuals and *S.S.* doctrine. Moreover, the IT would be given rights of inspection over all training establishments in France and would also become responsible through the WO for coordinating the work of these schools with those at home. Curiously, given that the TB was to continue in operation at GHQ, Haig also told the WO that IT was going to be assigned the task of advising and assisting in the preparation and revision of training publications and syllabuses for issue by the GS at GHQ. Haig possibly

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid. Report: Training in France 25/06/1918.

imagined there would be close cooperation between the two bodies but, as will be seen, this did not turn out to be the case.⁷⁹¹

Alistair Geddes argues that the idea for the IT came from Dawnay.⁷⁹² However, this is unlikely.⁷⁹³ It will be recalled that in 1915 Haig sent Maxse home before he was pushed by Lomax, his superior. Now in command of XVIII Corps, Maxse began to show the same signs of irresolution that he had done under Lomax. Horne, Maxse's First Army commander, personally warned him at a meeting that he would be immediately relieved of his command if he continued in this vein; apparently 'Maxse's tone at once changed!' When Horne told Haig about this incident he was advised 'not to judge Maxse too quickly'. However, Haig also told Horne that he would remove Maxse if he continued to make difficulties.⁷⁹⁴ A little over a month later Haig had dinner with Maxse and spoke to him about the post of IGT.⁷⁹⁵ Five days after this meeting Haig refers to Maxse as his 'Inspector of Training'.⁷⁹⁶ On the July 3rd Maxse's appointment was officially confirmed.⁷⁹⁷ The new IT worked alongside the TB until the end of the war.⁷⁹⁸

On July 5th, Haig briefed the commanders of his five armies, the cavalry, the tank corps and the RAF on the role of the new IGT. Haig prefaced his introduction by a brief homily outlining his general philosophy in respect to moral, its value, and also his method of training. The relevant parts of his personal notes are instructive:

⁷⁹¹ Ibid. Haig to the Secretary at the WO 16/06/1918, O.B./2255.

⁷⁹² Geddes, "Solly-Flood, GHQ, and Tactical Training in the B.E.F., 1916-1918." p. 37 Citing Letter, Dawnay to his wife 14th June 1918, Dawnay Papers 69/21/3, IWM.

⁷⁹³ John Baynes, *Far From A Donkey: The Life of General Sir Ivor Maxse* (London: Brassey's, 1995) p. 209.

⁷⁹⁴ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 14/05/1918.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid. Entry 24/06/1918.

⁷⁹⁶ Ibid. Entry 29/06/1918.

⁷⁹⁷ Becke, *Order of Battle: Part 4*. p. 13.

⁷⁹⁸ Ibid. pp. 12-13.

Success in war depends more on *moral* than on physical qualities. No amount of skill can make up for a lack of courage, energy or determination. But without careful preparation and skilful direction, high moral qualities may not avail:

First objective: develop the necessary moral qualities.

Next: Organization and *discipline*. (Make them qualities to be added and used when required).

Third: Skill in applying the power thus conferred on the troops.

Fundamental principles of war are simple: application of them is difficult and cannot be made subject to rules. *Study* and *practice*.

Haig went on to explain that the IGT's 'preliminary inspections [must] be devoted especially to two points as regards the infantry, namely, (i) the organization of subordinate fighting units; (ii) the training of subordinate fighting units'. Haig concluded by imploring his army commanders 'to do everything possible to assist the Inspector General'.⁷⁹⁹

Maxse, who was still smarting from rumours that he had been 'degummed' as XVIII Corps commander, set about establishing his new post with relish.⁸⁰⁰ It appears that Haig gave him considerable latitude. He first made himself comfortable in a château near Crécy, away from the observing eyes of GHQ. He appointed Maj.-Gen. H.C.C. Uniacke to supervise artillery training, and Brig.-Gens. Dugan, Marshall and

⁷⁹⁹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Notes for C.G.S. 04/07/1918. (Haig's handwritten script at the bottom of the page.). (Emphasis in original).

⁸⁰⁰ Baynes, *Far From A Donkey: The Life of General Sir Ivor Maxse*. p. 210. Rumours that Maxse had been degummed were given added life because Haig dissolved XVIII Corps HQ in a merger with VIII Corps HQ under the command of Lieut.-Gen. Sir S.G. Hunter-Weston. Becke, *Order of Battle: Part 4*. p. 239. Paddy Griffith claims XVIII Corps, under Maxse's command was 'ignominiously destroyed by the Germans' in the spring offensive and he was lucky that Haig knew he was an enthusiast for training and platoon organization and this prevented him from being degummed. Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack 1916-18* (London: Yale University Press, 1994) p.184.

Guggisberg to deal with the infantry and other training aspects. He retained the services of Brig.-Gen. Tom Holland as his CS.⁸⁰¹ A personal letter that Maxse wrote to Henry Wilson two days after the latter's appointment as CIGS gives some indication of his immediate priorities. Maxse complained about his £500 pay reduction and that of his brigadiers by £300 each. Further, to dignify his new post he requested his own promotion to substantive Lieut.-Gen. and the promotion of his Brig.-Gens. to Maj.-Gens. He concluded without much deference:

I trust the whole thing can be announced in one gazette, so as to start everyone in France with the notion that TRAINING is it for 1919.⁸⁰²

Possibly because of Maxse's impertinent tone, the new CIGS did not accede to his requests.⁸⁰³

On July 22nd, Maxse convened a conference of his senior staff at his HQ. At this meeting he removed any doubts about the role of the IT and presented his short-term action plan. In essence, Maxse repeated the advice set out by Haig to the WO, noting that:

1. In France, we represent the C.-in-C., and are out to help the Commanders to train for battle. Our job is to interpret GHQ's doctrine, as regards training, and to inculcate uniformity in the several Armies in France.
2. In England we make representations, either to the WO or C.-in-C., Home Forces, regarding methods which are likely to expand battle training.⁸⁰⁴

⁸⁰¹ Baynes, *Far From A Donkey: The Life of General Sir Ivor Maxse*. p. 210.

⁸⁰² *Ibid.* p. 210-211.

⁸⁰³ "S.S.407: Composition of Headquarters: British Armies in France (December 1918)," (AP&SS). p. 10.

⁸⁰⁴ IWM/Maxse-Papers/69/53/13/53/2. General Summary of Opening Remarks by IGT. 23/07/1918

In accordance with Haig's briefing to his army commanders, Maxse explained that the training of platoons was his first and most important priority, observing that 'at present most platoons are untrained and their commanders cannot train them without assistance'. Maxse advised that August and September would be devoted to platoon training in and out of the trenches, using his "Brown Book," as the guide. This is a primer that he wrote and first issued when in command of 18th Division and then later again at XVIII Corps.⁸⁰⁵ Maxse said that at the beginning of October, he planned to turn his IT's attention to battalion, brigade and divisional training. However, while this declaration was Maxse's public statement of intent, seemingly he harboured far greater ambitions.

Before proceeding, it will be instructive to briefly examine what Dawnay at GHQ, with his responsibility for the TB, believed what the IGT's role was. In a letter to Montgomery-Massingberd at Fourth Army, Dawnay lamented 'fearful tussle today on the schools question, trying to get some order upon the chaos of divergent views'. He closes with the following observation:

There is one point I have not mentioned by the way, and that is that there is no idea of IGT running the schools. IGT is an inspector and general helper, but he has no executive or administrative function whatever and he acts only through the Training Branch here. This will be the same in regard to schools. Nor may I add, has the IGT ever had anything to do with our tactical notes and so on, which are entirely the job of the GS here.⁸⁰⁶

It is clear that Dawnay's conception of the IGT was in accord with the narrow traditional role of an Inspector-General who could inspect and report on the training

⁸⁰⁵ Lieut.-Gen.Sir Ivor Maxse, "Hints on Training (Brown Book)," in *XVIII Corps* (AP&SS, 1918).

⁸⁰⁶ LHCMA:Montgomery-Massingberd:7/32, "Training 1918." Letter: Dawnay to Montgomery. 31/10/1918.

efficiency of troops, but had no executive authority other than within his own organization.⁸⁰⁷

Judging by the contents of a paper that Maxse wrote on 'elementary military education' it is evident that he had other and bigger ideas. The document summarised his proposals for the entire reorganization of courses of instruction within formations, units and training schools in both England and France, based on a highly critical assessment of the status quo. His stated aim was to inculcate in officers and NCOs 'a definite military mind instead of the vague one so often noticed'. Maxse makes no mention of inspection duties. The paper concludes:

In the foregoing paragraphs only the principles upon which it is proposed to reorganise our instructional machinery have been indicated. Detailed proposals for carrying out these principles are in the process of formulation and will be submitted if the principles are adopted.⁸⁰⁸

Clearly, Maxse and Dawnay were at odds over the duties of the IGT and there was some confusion in respect to the functions of the TB and the IT. Maxse also appears to have ignored the work that Bonham-Carter did in May, which was to focus subordinate commander training on the minor tactics of open warfare. Haig was partly if not wholly to blame for this situation because in his earlier submission to the WO there was a lack of clarity and some overlap between the roles of the two bodies. While there may have been much merit in Maxse's proposals, his vision for his IT did not include working in close cooperation with the TB. Obviously this was highly desirable to promote unity-of-physical-effort.

During late July and August, Maxse held a series of what he called 'Inspector General's Conferences' at which he briefed corps and divisional commanders on the

⁸⁰⁷ Robertson, *From Private to Field Marshal*. pp. 186-187.

⁸⁰⁸ IWM/Maxse-Papers/69/53/13/58. Draft No. 4. n.d.

role of his new IT. His explanation gave the IT wide latitude. He announced: ‘we interpret GHQ doctrine as regards training and inculcate uniformity across the British Forces. We propose to be practical men and not clerks’. With no intended irony, Maxse promised his audiences: ‘starting now with intensive inspections, it will take until October to make our infantry organization fool-proof’. He advised that platoon organization was to be the focus of attention at these inspections. According to Maxse, in conformity with the standing regulations, each battalion had to be organised into 16 platoons ‘no more no less’; ‘variations [were] fatal to efficiency’. On closing, Maxse reassured the senior commanders present that he wanted them to consider his inspectors as friends and not to look upon them with suspicion.⁸⁰⁹ As a token of his esteem, he gave his colleagues copies of his *Hints on Training*.

In August, Maxse also sent out the first three of what became a series of 14 training leaflets to army, corps and divisional H.Qs.⁸¹⁰ The quantities issued were as follows:

| | |
|---|--------|
| <i>Sample of a Days Training for a Company</i> | 39,426 |
| <i>Program of Training for a Battalion out of the Line for Ten days</i> | 20,443 |
| <i>Battalion Commander’s Conference</i> | 15,110 |

Towards the end of October, a fourth leaflet was issued, *Attack Formations for Small Units* in a quantity of 41,496 copies.

None of the first three leaflets dealt specifically with Maxse’s stated priority of platoon training. The fourth leaflet, which was published too late to have any material impact on operations, contained six platoon drills based upon various

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid. Printed Memo: Inspector General Conferences; July-August 1918.

⁸¹⁰ IWM/Maxse-Papers/69/53/13/59.

combinations of square or diamond formations incorporating two Lewis guns. No attempt was made to tie the exercises into the doctrine of *S.S.143*.

During September, Maxse made an inspection tour of training schools in England. On September 20th, he addressed a meeting at the WO where he rehearsed the points he made at his IGT's conferences in France. Maxse re-emphasised that his main concern was platoon organization, where any fewer than 16 platoons in a battalion was a 'glaring defect'. He also congratulated himself on issuing 35,000 copies of his 'Brown Book' in France and with a little exaggeration told his audience he had circulated six types of training leaflet. Maxse closed by offering four points on platoon training. He emphasised that officers and cadets had to be given practice every day in the handling of men; the officers and cadets had to be told that they must be the only teachers of their platoons; and these men had to be instructed how to teach without being 'mere parrots'; and finally sections should be trained as fire units with practice in "blob" formations on 200 yard frontages.⁸¹¹ Maxse and his team then inspected Special Reserve and Territorial Reserve brigades, and schools of instruction in England.

On Maxse's return to France in October, he prepared a tour report for Haig and the WO. In this document he concluded that 'much had been accomplished in England. Certain units have reached a high standard of training. Individual training had been standardised and a foundation exist[ed] for all to build upon'. He cautioned that 'the spirit is lacking in some units, and the human touch in a few others'.⁸¹²

So what is to be made of the performance of the IT during the closing stages of the war? Although Maxse claimed to be following the priorities established by Haig, the reality was somewhat different. In July, Maxse's first concern was to dignify his

⁸¹¹ IWM/Maxse-Papers/69/53/13/56. Address on Training in France, 20th September 1918.

⁸¹² IWM/Maxse-Papers/69/53/13/53/2. Notes on Inspections; 11th October, 1918.

office with the appropriate pay and rank for himself and his close colleagues. Next, he was determined to build awareness for the IT by holding conferences with army and corps commanders which, useful in itself, smacks of further self-aggrandisement. During August, it is not apparent from the records the extent to which inspections of subordinate units took place and what the results were. What is known is that three training pamphlets were produced, although useful in themselves the content did elaborate upon *S.S.143* or specifically address the question of platoon training as Haig and Dawnay had expected. During September, Maxse and his entourage toured training brigades and schools in England and Scotland. He must have known this would have no immediate impact on the fighting efficiency of subordinate units in France. On Maxse's return to the BEF in October, one of the first things he did was convene a conference with Monash and the senior commanders of the Australian Corps. Maxse then spent 10 days with the Antipodeans where he and his staff visited each of the five divisions in turn. Why Maxse singled out what was plausibly one of the most operationally effective formations in the BEF for special attention is not recorded. In a report to GHQ dated November 6th, it appears that all Maxse had to show for these efforts was agreement by the Australians that battalion organization as laid down in the regulations (O.B./1919) was 'sound and should be adhered to as far as possible'.⁸¹³

In response to the distribution of training leaflets and Maxse's visits and inspections, he did receive a polite, if not a ringing endorsement of the IT's efforts to establish and improve uniform standards of training. Lieut.-Gen. Cameron Shute (GOC, V Corps) wrote effusively 'you may rely upon me to carry out your principles

⁸¹³ IWM/Maxse-Papers/69/53/13/60. Letter: Maxse to GHQ, 06/11/1918.

entirely'.⁸¹⁴ Lieut.-Gen. Charles Fergusson (GOC, XVII Corps) was less enthusiastic; 'of course, the moment is not very propitious for training propaganda as the immediate question is the amount of M.G. fire coming from the quarry...'.⁸¹⁵ Gen. Henry Horne (GOC, First Army) gave a muted response: 'I think the leaflets are likely to prove most useful and will help inexperienced commanders along the easier path towards efficient training'.⁸¹⁶ Lieut.-Gen. Alexander Godley (GOC, XXII Corps) was not enthused:

I have been so busy Hun hunting, and still are, (sic) that I have not really had time to study your leaflets properly, but...they seem to me excellent. I have never seen anybody of your Training Staff yet, and I am sure it would do them a lot of good to come up here and see all the lessons we have learned during the last month.⁸¹⁷

While reading these letters must have been a salutary experience for Maxse, they did point to the wider challenges and resistance that Haig faced in obtaining unity-of-physical-effort. Training was not the first top priority for a number of commanding officers. It appears the presumption was prevalent that while training imposed from the top down may have been useful for inexperienced commanders, experienced officers could rely on their own methods. There are also signs of an innate chauvinism in the front line formations that resisted the benefits of shared experience emanating from GHQ or indeed from the IT.

Moreover, it is difficult not to conclude that Maxse was more concerned with empire building to support his post war future rather than improving the efficiency of underperforming subordinate units, particularly at platoon level. However, this is not

⁸¹⁴ Ibid.Letter: Shute to Maxse, 30/08/1918.

⁸¹⁵ Ibid. Letter: Fergusson to Maxse, 31/08/18.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid. Letter: Horne to Maxse, 01/09/1918.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid. Letter: Godley to Maxse, 08/09/1918.

a settled opinion; Brian Bond, for one, disagreed. In reference to the tactics adopted by the Germans during their spring offensive, Bond observed ‘what is not generally appreciated...is the speed with which the Allies learned their lesson. This was chiefly due to Haig’s newly appointed Inspector General of Training, General Sir Ivor Maxse...’⁸¹⁸ By contrast, John Baynes, who wrote a generally flattering biography of Maxse posited ‘extensive claims for [the IT’s] influence on the conduct of operations are unrealistic’.⁸¹⁹ Brig.-Gen. J.L. Jack, of the 28th Infantry Brigade, who attended one of Maxse’s conferences was a little more circumspect suggesting that he delivered ‘a very sound address and appear anxious to help’, before concluding that his ideas were entirely sensible in theory but would be difficult to implement in practice because ‘few of the present platoon commanders are professionally fit to instruct their men, and we prefer to educate them first, so that they will teach correctly and not spread false doctrines among their subordinates’.⁸²⁰

Rationale for Haig’s Belated Response to the Training Crisis

When Haig took command of the BEF in December 1915, he was fully aware that the training efficiency across his three armies was inadequate and the general standard continued to deteriorate with the arrival of New Army, TF formations and other reinforcements. This begs the question as to why he did not immediately create and properly resource the necessary training and inspection organization to meet these challenges. For example, Haig could have established the TB in January 1916, instead of a year later. Failing this, from the outset the branch should have been adequately resourced to meet the new challenges ahead. The mandate for a training inspection regime could also have been introduced in 1916 rather than in 1918.

⁸¹⁸ Brian Bond, *Liddell Hart : A Study of his Military Thought* (Aldershot: Gregg Revivals, 1991). p. 25.

⁸¹⁹ Baynes, *Far From A Donkey: The Life of General Sir Ivor Maxse*. p. 214.

⁸²⁰ John Terraine, *General Jack's Diary, 1914-1918* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1964) p. 252.

Given Haig's expert credentials prior to the war in the training arena including those of inspection, and his first-hand knowledge and experience of working with the rapid influx of green troops gained while he was a corps and a army commander, there is no obvious or simple answer to this dilemma. However, there were a number of factors at work that might provide some illumination.

First, as described above, the responsibility for both individual and unit training was devolved by the *FSR* to commanders of the fighting formations and units. Down to brigade level at least, these posts were held by Regular Army officers in all British formations including the New Armies and the TF. These officers may have lacked large-scale operational experience but it would be surprising if they were not well versed in basic training methods. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that, initially at least, Haig took the optimistic view that the development of a training organization at GHQ was not an immediate priority as the function was already in the reasonably capable hands of his commanders.

The second related factor is that according to *FSR-I*, operational responsibility was devolved to the 'man on the spot'. This may have made Haig cautious about imposing a top down training regime on his subordinate commanders for fear that this might make these officers feel less accountable for operational success, or at the very least, provided them with room for excuse in the event of failure.

The third factor, well documented by Boff, was the traditional resistance in the British officer corps to regulation from the centre. He identified four ingredients that may have driven resistance to formal demands for training uniformity emanating from GHQ. First, by 1918 many commanders of the lower formations who were doing the fighting at division, brigade and battalion were 'aggressive and self-sure' men. This predisposed them to offer resistance to what they may have deemed as

meddling and interference from SOs remote from the battlefield at GHQ. Secondly, the army had a 'long tradition of pragmatism and opposition to what were sometimes perceived as theoretical solutions'. It prided itself on flexibility and empirical lessons drawn on experience. Thirdly, similar to all large organizations there was 'a continual, and unresolved tension between the centre and periphery'. Thus, GHQ's attempt to establish a foundation of training best practice, which the hugely expanded and de-skilled army could draw upon, 'remained a necessary but uncongenial expedient to many of the regular army officers' serving at the front. Fourthly, resistance in the form of institutional insubordination had a long and generally accepted tradition in the British army. This came from its strong colonial roots where 'a high degree of self-reliance and improvised adaption to local circumstances' were vital to survival and success.⁸²¹ Thus, ad-hocism continued as a persistent characteristic of the British officer corps.

Of course, Haig as a regimental officer of longstanding and having spent most of his time soldiering in India and Africa would have been alive to the mores of his fellow officers. Indeed, he was a stereotypical example of this tradition himself, as an officer and a gentleman. Hence, the combination of all these factors may have made Haig reticent to impose a training and inspection regime from GHQ that he rightly knew would be treated with suspicion, resentment and resistance. Thus, it appears he was prepared to evolve the training regime he desired gradually; and in the meantime, he was satisfied to settle for 'useful anarchy'.⁸²²

⁸²¹ Boff, *Winning and Losing on the Western Front; The British Army and the Defeat of Germany in 1918*. p. 158.

⁸²² Travers, *How The War Was Won: Command and Technology in the British Army on the Western Front, 1917-1918*. p. 149.

Conclusion: Attainment of Unity-of-Physical-Effort in the BEF

In the three years that Haig was C-in-C, he was directly responsible for the establishment and development of the training organization and administration necessary to drive unity-of-physical-effort in the BEF. Training was given a high priority at GHQ, but it was not supported by adequate resources until July 1918. Nonetheless, under the able leadership of Butler, Solly-Flood, Bonham-Carter, and then Guy Dawnay, the TB did develop a school system to provide instructors and develop specialist technical skills, supported by standardised syllabuses, teaching methods and course content. Training doctrine was developed as tactics evolved and technical innovation advanced. The TB proved that it was able to publish and rapidly update doctrine for offensive and defensive operations that formed the very basis of training. To a degree, the body was able to coordinate the training effort via the dedicated network of the GSOs (Training) stationed at army, corps and divisional HQs. The IT, the essential counter-part to the TB, was established in July 1918, albeit belatedly. This was a well-resourced organization and provided the opportunity for independent inspection in France and to closely coordinate training on both sides of the channel. Unfortunately, in the event, it made little impact in the remaining time available.

Despite these initiatives, uniformity of high training standards and methods were not consistently achieved throughout the BEF by November 1918.⁸²³ In part, this can be attributed to the de-skilling that took place as a result of battlefield casualties. In addition, extensions of the British line coupled with manpower shortages, particularly during the winter of 1917-18, inevitably drew commanders away from opportunities to train.

⁸²³ Geddes, "Solly-Flood, GHQ, and Tactical Training in the B.E.F., 1916-1918." p. 45; Boff, "British Third Army, the Application of Modern War, and the Defeat of the German Army, August-November 1918." p. 286.

Haig can be criticised for being slow to establish a well-resourced training and inspection infrastructure at GHQ, necessary to provide the vital oversight of uniform training efficiency and effectiveness. It might also be added, that Haig did not take the opportunity to put training on the agenda for the Expeditionary Force in the field when he was DMT in 1906, or to include training in the *General Staff Manual 1910*, when he was DSD.⁸²⁴ Given Haig's great experience in matters of training gained throughout his pre-war army career, and his undoubted recognition of its importance, these oversights are surprising.

Nevertheless, the final and fair assessment of the state of unity-of-physical-effort in the autumn of 1918 can be left to Dawnay:

There is no doubt whatever that our training is neither perfectly coordinated nor altogether evenly distributed throughout the armies in France.⁸²⁵

Even though unity-of-physical-effort was not perfectly coordinated or altogether evenly distributed, the standard achieved by Haig was sufficient to attain his goal of driving the German army out of France in 1918.

⁸²⁴ TNA/WO/279/861, *General Staff Manual. War. (Provisional.)* (London: HMSO, 1911) p. 66. The only mention of training is in respect to the selection and training of suitable staff officers to perform as spies!

⁸²⁵ LHCMA:Montgomery-Massingberd: 7/32, "Training 1918." Letter: Dawnay to Montgomery 31/10/1918.

6. Achieving Unity-of-Moral-Effort

During the war the BEF's morale never disintegrated into severe widespread disobedience or a 'military strike' like that experienced by the German and French armies.⁸²⁶ It will be argued below that as a result of Haig's organizational and administrative methods, unity-of-moral-effort was sustained in the BEF for the duration of hostilities. This proposition finds support from evidence of the specific programmes that Haig implemented in the BEF with the aim of sustaining morale underpinned by discipline. This examination will be followed by an assessment of the impact that these initiatives had upon morale, and the extent to which unity-of-moral-effort was attained. Before addressing these topics, Haig's understanding of the principle will be given further consideration.

Haig's Understanding of Unity-of-Moral-Effort

As discussed above, relying on the teachings of Clausewitz and other military thinkers, Haig's understanding of unity-of-moral-effort is captured by his firm belief that the decisive factor in war was an army's dogged determination to win, or at least 'press forward at all costs'.⁸²⁷ This required 'moral', a term he frequently used, and discipline.⁸²⁸ For Haig these two factors were the embodiment of unity-of-moral-effort, characterised by 'pluck' and the 'offensive spirit'. He expressed these sentiments at the Staff College in 1896-97, in the *FSR*, and in his famous 'backs to

⁸²⁶ Strachan, "The Morale of the German Army, 1917-18." p. 386. See also Leonard V. Smith, *Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division during World War I* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁸²⁷ *Field Service Regulations, Part I (Operations)* p. 116.

⁸²⁸ 'Moral' and morale, the term applied in modern usage, are for practical purposes synonymous. Gerald Oram, *Military Executions during World War I* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). p. 71-72.

the wall' Special Order of the Day issued on April 11th 1918.⁸²⁹ Haig believed that the 'moral' of an army was determined by leadership, a sense of duty engendered by a belief in the cause, the welfare of his men, and the support of the home front, all underpinned by firm discipline.⁸³⁰ In respect to smaller formations, typically the regiment or battalion, Haig used the phrase *esprit de corps* to express its 'moral'. On the parade ground, moral was made manifest by the unit's bearing – in itself an inculcation of tradition, smartness, precision of movement and discipline.⁸³¹ To Haig these characteristics provided a vital indication of the unit's determination on the battlefield to press forwards at all costs.

Haig's interpretation of moral finds resonance with the work of modern historians who have tried to understand the reasons for the formidable resilience of British troops in the abysmal conditions of trench warfare on the Western Front.⁸³² Typically, three avenues of research have been pursued. These have embraced the psychology of the individual soldier, military institutional factors, and societal cohesion.⁸³³ Of particular interest are those studies that address institutional factors,

⁸²⁹NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II." n.p. *Field Service Regulations, Part I (Operations)*. See Chapter V11, the Battle, pp. 107-120; NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Special Order of the Day, 11/04/1918.

⁸³⁰ NLS-Acc.3155/17, "Cavalry Tactics." n.p. ; NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II." n.p. ; *ibid.* n.p.; Douglas Haig, *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches, December 1915-April 1919*, ed. by J.H. Boraston (London: J.M. Dent & Co, 1919) pp. 146-147, 357.

⁸³¹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry 25/10/1917.

⁸³² Alexander Watson, *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) p. 2.

⁸³³ PSYCHOLOGY: Lord Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage* (London: Constable, 1945). Watson, *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914-1918*. MILITARY INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS: (Civil-Military Relations) Maj.-Gen. C.E. Callwell, *Experiences of a Dug-Out* (London: Constable & Company, 1920). (Leadership) John Baynes, *Morale: A Study of Men and Courage; The Scottish Rifles at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle 1915* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1967). Timothy Bowman, *Irish Regiments in the Great War: Discipline & Morale* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003). G.D. Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000). (Education) S.P. MacKenzie, *Politics and Military Morale: Current Affairs and Citizens Education in the British Army 1914-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). (Discipline); John Peaty, "Haig and Military Discipline," in *Haig: A Reappraisal 70 Years On*, ed. Brian Bond and Nigel Cave (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1999).; Cathryn Corns and John Hughes Wilson, *Blindfold and Alone: British Military Executions in the Great War* (London: Cassell & Co, 2001). Oram, *Military Executions during World War I*; Christopher Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell: New Zealanders and military Discipline in the First World War* (Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton,

including civil-military relations, leadership, education, welfare and discipline. It is the management and determination of these factors that fall within the remit of a field army C-in-C, to a lesser or greater extent. These relatively diverse studies revealed a number of common threads that are relevant to this assessment.

First, as David French observed 'morale is a problematic concept'.⁸³⁴ Gerard Oram suggested the 'concept of morale is vague'.⁸³⁵ Similarly, J.G. Fuller opined 'morale is an elusive subject'.⁸³⁶ Gary Sheffield agreed and posited that it is an 'imprecise term'.⁸³⁷ Jonathan Fennell went further and observed, 'morale is a complex term that can be defined in many different ways'.⁸³⁸ Thus, 'morale is a nebulous and difficult to define concept'.⁸³⁹ While offering differing interpretations military historians, like Haig, tended to reach back to Clausewitz and determined that morale was typically considered some *mélange* of fighting spirit, combat motivation and resilience.⁸⁴⁰ Modern British Army doctrine writers have agreed and posited limply that morale is 'the will to fight and a confidence in succeeding'.⁸⁴¹ Unexpectedly, some historians whose studies have made an invaluable contribution have remained silent on this thorny problem.⁸⁴²

1991). SOCIETAL COHESION: J.G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

⁸³⁴ David French, "Tommy is No Soldier: The Morale of the Second British Army in Normandy, June-August 1944.," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 19, no. 4 (1996) p. 154.

⁸³⁵ Oram, *Military Executions during World War 1*. p. 71.

⁸³⁶ Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*. p. 21.

⁸³⁷ Sheffield, "Officer-man Relations: Morale and Discipline in the British Army, 1902-22." p. 63.

⁸³⁸ Jonathan Fennell, *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) p. 8.

⁸³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 3.

⁸⁴⁰ Sheffield, "Officer-man Relations: Morale and Discipline in the British Army, 1902-22." pp. 63-67; Oram, *Military Executions during World War 1*. p. 72; Watson, *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914-1918*. p. 141.; Fennell, *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign*. p. 9.

⁸⁴¹ "UK Defence Doctrine (JDP 0-01)." p. 34.

⁸⁴² Baynes, *Morale: A Study of Men and Courage; The Scottish Rifles at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle 1915.*; MacKenzie, *Politics and Military Morale: Current Affairs and Citizens Education in the British Army 1914-1950*.

Secondly, given the lack of a standard definition, it was not surprising to learn that the question of how to build and sustain morale appeared equally diffuse. However, most historians have agreed that high military morale was determined by an amalgam of competent leadership, belief in the cause, regimental loyalty, a sense of duty, officer – other rank relationships, the sound administration of welfare, and strong discipline.⁸⁴³ Moreover, ‘primary group cohesion was a major factor in convincing troops to remain on the battlefield’. When cohesion ‘crumbled because of heavy casualties, morale suffered accordingly’.⁸⁴⁴

Thirdly, it followed that without a commonly agreed definition ‘the problem of how to “measure” morale [has been] a major hurdle for historians’.⁸⁴⁵ This also applied to Haig.⁸⁴⁶ There were no formal qualitative or quantitative methods, statistical or otherwise, developed to measure troop morale in the BEF. This had to wait until the Second World War.⁸⁴⁷ Haig was forced to rely on his own observation and the intuition of his commanders in an attempt to gain a ‘birds eye view’ of the morale of his officers and men. This approach has rarely opened a “window into the minds and feelings of the troops”.⁸⁴⁸ Haig gleaned some insight from postal censorship reports compiled by the AG branch. However, as an indicator of general troop morale, these reports were not reliable because the findings were coloured by the views of the individual complier; subjects considered indicative of morale were

⁸⁴³ Oram, *Military Executions during World War I*. pp. 77-78; Baynes, *Morale: A Study of Men and Courage; The Scottish Rifles at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle 1915*. pp. 253-254; Fennell, *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign*. pp. 9-10.

⁸⁴⁴ French, *Raising Churchill's Army: The British Army and the War Against Germany 1919-1945*. p. 123.

⁸⁴⁵ To some extent, the burden of this issue is eased for researchers of WWII by the retained papers of the *War Office Morale Committee* (1942-1948), and those of Lieut.-Col. J.H.A. Sparrow, the secretary of the committee. TNA/WO/163/161-167, "Morale Committee Papers," (1942-1948).; TNA/WO/32/15772, "Morale in the Army Memorandum by the A.G.," (1942-1945).; TNA/WO/277/16/Sparrow, *Morale, The Second World War 1939-1945: Army* (London: The War Office, 1950).

⁸⁴⁶ Fennell, *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign*. p. 9; Sheffield, "Officer-man Relations: Morale and Discipline in the British Army, 1902-22." p. 67. (Emphasis in original).

⁸⁴⁷ TNA/WO/193/453, "Morale Committee Papers," (1942-1945).

⁸⁴⁸ "Assessment of Morale by Statistical Methods," (1943). p.1

mentioned in only a small number of letters; and the absence of topics that might indicate a state of poor morale may have been suppressed for fear of upsetting the correspondent.⁸⁴⁹ Courts martial statistics have also been used by military historians to provide insights into the state of the BEF's morale. However this method has its weaknesses too. Only a small proportion of all crime led to a court martial; the correlation between crime and morale has not been proven; and the time lag in the trial procedure and publication of these statistics may have introduced bias in the results at specific moments in time.⁸⁵⁰

Fourthly, unsurprisingly a common complaint made by historians was the general lack of primary source material to support studies of the BEF's morale and discipline.⁸⁵¹ There are only a few extant copies of postal censorship reports. Two copies of which have been retained by Haig in his war diary; and a small number of Third Army censorship reports have been located in the papers of Capt. M. Hardie at the IWM.⁸⁵² This lack of evidence has made the process of interpreting the continuing state of morale and discipline within the BEF more hazardous than it might have been. It is a problem that has also hampered other historians.⁸⁵³ Thus, John Baynes studied one battalion during one battle and proceeded to draw broad conclusions embracing the entire BEF for the duration of the war. Alexander Watson relied on 100 letters and diaries for a comparative study of the British and German Armies. Gary Sheffield based his research on the published and unpublished writings of junior officers, NCOs and private soldiers, which he acknowledged was less than

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid. p.2

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid. p.3.

⁸⁵¹ Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*. p. 2.

⁸⁵² IWM/Capt.M.Hardie-Papers/84/46/1. Third Army; Reports on Morale.

⁸⁵³ Peaty, "Haig and Military Discipline." p. 196.

ideal.⁸⁵⁴ This study is no different. It has been dependent for its primary sources mainly on Haig's papers including his War Diary.

To conclude, it can be observed that in their study of morale modern historians face almost the same challenges today as Haig did in his study of 'moral'. The term remains elusive and open to wide interpretation, no standard definition has been agreed, and methods used to build and measure morale, in the BEF at least, do not appear today to be particularly well understood.

Haig's Management of Moral in the BEF

During Haig's tenure as C-in-C of the BEF, he employed leadership, education, and welfare, and his proactive influence of civil-military relations, underpinned by firm discipline, to sustain the 'moral' of his armies.

Leadership

When Haig was appointed C-in-C he was confronted with a largely untrained citizen army expanding on an exponential scale and a dearth of experienced officers of all ranks. He was also challenged by a system of seniority and patronage that did not serve the general officer class well by filling posts with men not necessarily appropriate to the task, according to his lights.⁸⁵⁵ Haig's firm opinion was that 'the present circumstances in which the Army was placed justified the selection of the best and youngest men to fill the highest commands'.⁸⁵⁶ In fact, as early as July 1915 Haig attempted to put this notion into practical effect. At a private meeting at his First Army HQ with Herbert Asquith, the Prime Minister, he emphasised the 'necessity for promoting young Officers to high command. To make room, some old

⁸⁵⁴ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War*. p. xxiii

⁸⁵⁵ Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18: Defeat into Victory*. pp. 51, 53.

⁸⁵⁶ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)."Entry 26/07/1915.

ones must be removed.' Haig went through the *Army List* with the Prime Minister. He stated that 'it [was] important go down low on the list and get capable young officers'.⁸⁵⁷ Haig recommended that Maj.-Gens. Morland, Horne, Gough and Haking should be promoted to command corps and, eventually, armies. He also had concerns about the command of lower formations:

But even if ample guns and ample ammunition etc. be provided progress will be disappointing unless young capable Commanders are brought to the front. Some of the present Captains should be chosen to command Battalions, Majors, Brigades etc.⁸⁵⁸

Thus, Haig's immediate response when he became C-in-C was to move the selection process of commanding general officers away from seniority and patronage, or perhaps more accurately favouritism,⁸⁵⁹ towards what is best characterised by the meritocratic principle; where responsibility was given to people chosen strictly on merit, as opposed to wealth, social class, influence, etc.⁸⁶⁰ Of course, Haig would not have recognised this term, which was only coined in 1958 by the sociologist Michael Young. Nonetheless, he emphatically invoked its organising sentiment.⁸⁶¹ At his first opportunity on December 14th 1915, Haig instructed his Military Secretary, Brig.-Gen. H. Lowther, nominally responsible for higher promotions as follows:

⁸⁵⁷ David French, "Colonel Blimp and the British Army: British Divisional Commanders in the War against German, 1939-1945," *The English Historical Review* 111, no. 444 (Nov.) (1996). See this illuminating article to gauge the response to Haig's sentiment in respect to age and other characteristics of divisional officers in the Second World War.

⁸⁵⁸ *Ibid.* Entry: 25/06/1915.

⁸⁵⁹ French, "Colonel Blimp and the British Army: British Divisional Commanders in the War against German, 1939-1945." p. 1200. French draws the distinction that patronage is not synonymous with favouritism.

⁸⁶⁰ Peter E. Hodgkinson, *British Infantry Battalion Commanders in the First World War* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015). See Chapter 8: The Hundred Days: Meritocracy in Command?

⁸⁶¹ Dr Ansgar Allen, "Michael Young's The Rise of the Meritocracy: A Philosophical Critique," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 59, no. 4 (2011) p. 367.

In my eyes only those who had proved their fitness for advancement should be promoted. I [have] no “friends” when it [comes] to Military promotion and I [will] not tolerate a “job” being done. Lowther fully understood and agreed.⁸⁶²

Moreover, Haig told Lowther that he had ‘only one idea, namely to do [his] utmost to win the war’.⁸⁶³ He was convinced that the fighting effectiveness of a division was dependent on the fighting spirit of its commander.⁸⁶⁴ Up to this time ‘promotion to the high command and staff positions went mainly by seniority in the absence of any operational experience or prowess to help influence decisions.’⁸⁶⁵

At the same meeting Lowther put Haig to the test. He advised him that French wished to give Winston Churchill an infantry brigade. Haig retorted that ‘this was impossible until W. had shewn (sic) that he could bear the responsibility in action as CO of a battalion’.⁸⁶⁶ In this respect Haig was uncompromising, regardless of rank, as has been shown in the case of Maxse. He went on to promote able soldiers even those whom, at a personal level, he had found wanting including Rawlinson and Henry Wilson.⁸⁶⁷ In the event Wilson, when in charge of IV Corps, ‘failed as a commander in the Field’ and was sacked.⁸⁶⁸ By the same token, Haig did not oblige friends when he believed there were more capable men available to fill a post. Maj.-Gen. John Vaughan, a very close friend of Haig’s, was one example.⁸⁶⁹ Vaughan pressed Haig for the command of a cavalry division, but as Haig and Kavanagh, the Cavalry Corps commander, considered he was not up to the job, he

⁸⁶² NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)."Entry: 14/12/15. (Emphasis in original).

⁸⁶³ Ibid. Entry: 14/12/15.

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid. Entry 26/07/1915.

⁸⁶⁵ Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18: Defeat into Victory*. p. 53.

⁸⁶⁶ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry 14/12/1915.

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid. Entry: 12/12/1915; Entry 14/12/1915.

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid. Entry: 27/05/1916.

⁸⁶⁹ Ibid. Entry: 23/05/1918.

had to settle for being put in charge of a scheme to reduce horse rations!⁸⁷⁰ The case of Haig's elder brother Bee is another illustration. He was a transport officer with the 1st Battalion Dorset Regiment where, despite his advanced age, he was employed doing fatiguing night work delivering rations.⁸⁷¹ Haig did not use his influence to alleviate his brother's discomfort. By the same token he was prepared to come to the assistance of men who he believed were capable soldiers. For example, when the WO ordered home Maj.-Gen. Maxwell, French's QMG, Haig pressed to have this decision reversed because he believed he was a highly competent officer.⁸⁷²

When the opportunity arose, Haig was not adverse to directly intervening and rapidly promoting able men. For instance, after inspecting a large hospital accompanied by its commandant Col. Hickson, Haig was so impressed by his 'organising and disciplining faculties' that he advised his Director of the Medical Service, Lieut.-Gen. Sir Arthur Sloggett, to immediately make Hickson a General.⁸⁷³ By contrast, Haig was quick to support his commanders if they wished to dismiss under-performing subordinates, irrespective of their social rank or connections;⁸⁷⁴ a key performance factor in a successful meritocracy.⁸⁷⁵ However, Haig's meritocratic policy did face problems until the end of 1916. This was because there was no deep reservoir of officers with the experience of continental warfare available to support a proper system of promotion based on professional expertise.⁸⁷⁶

Haig expected his subordinate commanders to follow his lead by appointing men of ability to command in their lower formations, including men from the ranks,

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid. Entry 27/01/1918.

⁸⁷¹ Ibid. Entry: 11/05/1916.

⁸⁷² Ibid. Entry: 15/12/1917.

⁸⁷³ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry 09/08/1917.

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid. Entry: 19/06/1916; 08/08/1916; 24/10/1916; 15/05/1917.

⁸⁷⁵ Catherine Burke and Karl Stewart Ian Macdonald, *Systems Leadership: Creating Positive Organizations* (Aldershot: Gower, 2006) p. 62.

⁸⁷⁶ Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18: Defeat into Victory*. p. 53.

even if this breached the principle of seniority.⁸⁷⁷ By contrast, in the German army the decision was taken to stick with this principle, blocking the promotion of able and ambitious officers.⁸⁷⁸

In pursuit of his meritocratic policy of promotion Haig made the internally unpopular but ultimately sensible decision to employ civilians to high ranking posts behind the lines, where capable army officers could not be found.⁸⁷⁹ He observed:

There is a good deal of criticism apparently being made at the appointment of civilians like Geddes [DGT] to an important post on the Head Quarters of an Army in the Field. These critics seem to fail to realise the size of this Army and the amount of work which the Army requires of a civilian nature. The working of the railways, the upkeep of the roads, even the baking of bread and a thousand other industries go on in peace as well as in war! So, with the whole Nation at War our object should be to employ men on the same work in war as they are accustomed to do in peace. Acting on this principle I have got Geddes at the head of all the railways and transportation with the best practical civil and Military engineers under him. At the head of the road directorate is Mr Maybury, head of the road board in England. The Docks, Canals and inland Water Transport are being managed in the same way i.e. by men of practical experience. To put soldiers who have no practical experience of these matters into such positions merely because they are Generals and Colonels, must result in utter failure.⁸⁸⁰

All organizations aspiring to be meritocratic must have the ability to align organizational objectives with performance, and the latter with financial or other

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid. Entry: 17/02/1916; 23/04/1916; 28/04/1916; 09/07/1916.

⁸⁷⁸ Strachan, "The Morale of the German Army, 1917-18." p. 389.

⁸⁷⁹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry 09/11/1916.

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid. Entry 27/10/1916.

rewards. Monetary reward was not in Haig's gift, but he did have substitutes at his disposal including the prospect of rapid promotion, military honours and decorations, and his personal approbation.

The available statistics for British forces show that 2,323 promotions were made from and including the rank of brevet Lieut.-Col. during the war. The large majority of these promotions occurred in France.⁸⁸¹ Excluding 50 officers of general rank that were killed, as a rough measure this indicates that beyond the rapid expansion of the army particularly up to the end of 1915, officers of ability were fast-tracked into key positions of high command.⁸⁸² The galvanising effect on morale of this action is illustrated by diary entries made by a brigade runner, Robert Cude, when Brig.-Gen. W.A. Wood succeeded Brig.-Gen. G.D. Price at 55th Brigade in November 1917:

At first glance he [Wood] suits, for he looks a thorough soldier. The other man [Price] has gone back to England to act as a house-keeper to a Suffragette, at least, that is all he is fit for.

[In March 1918 Cude described Wood as a] 'Grand old man', and an English Gentleman' ... I shall not mind going through Hell itself for him.⁸⁸³

[Winning a MM and bar, Cude possibly did.]

Another study, using figures drawn from the regimental officer ranks, corroborates this finding further down the chain of command. At least '50 officers commissioned into the Army after the outbreak of hostilities were promoted four

⁸⁸¹ *Statistics Of The Military Effort Of The British Empire During The Great War: 1914-1920*. p. 554.

⁸⁸² Frank Davies and Graham Maddocks, *Bloody Red Tabs: General Officer Casualties of the Great War, 1914-1918* (London: Leo Cooper, 1995) pp. 209-215.

⁸⁸³ Robert Cude, "Unpublished Typed Diary Transcript " in *IWM/CON/WPN*. Entry: 13/11/1917; 24-26/03/1918. Cited from Peter Simkins, "The War Experience of a Typical Kitchener Division: the 18th Division, 1914-1918," in *Facing Armageddon*, ed. Hugh Cecil and Peter Liddle (London: Leo Cooper, 1996) p. 306.

grades to the rank of Lieut.-Col., the majority of them to command front line battalions in action'.⁸⁸⁴ In addition, 260 civilians of August 1914, were appointed Lieut.-Cols of infantry battalions.⁸⁸⁵ These numbers may not be remarkable given that 229,316 commissions were granted by December 1st 1918. However, by comparison to the other belligerent armies where 'even two promotions was exceptional', this finding does indicate that officers of ability were more quickly promoted into positions of greater responsibility and that 'dead-wood' was cleared out.⁸⁸⁶

Moreover, it seems reasonable to suggest that quickly putting the right men in the right jobs had a positive impact on morale. However, Haig's drive to promote younger men appears not to have been entirely successful within battalions. Although the average age of COs dropped from 48 to 35, Peter Hodgkinson, who recently completed a through study of British battalion commanders on the Western Front, claimed that this should not be taken as evidence of the meritocracy of youth, but the winnowing effect that physical and mental stress had on older officers.⁸⁸⁷

In Third Army during the Hundred Days campaign, 'the average member of a corps command group had been in place for well over a year'. In a division the comparative figure was nearly a year (358 days), and in a brigade it was 314 days. However, there were wide variations of tenure within the command groups of individual formations. This was caused by promotions, sackings and casualties.⁸⁸⁸ Nonetheless, the implied relative stability of the command group does suggest that by mid-1918, in higher formations at least, the weeding out process had been effective and competent commanders were in post and remained there. Continuity

⁸⁸⁴ A D Harvey, "A Good War: Wartime Officers Who Rose to Command in the First World War," *JRUSI* 153, no. 2 (2008) p. 76.

⁸⁸⁵ Hodgkinson, *British Infantry Battalion Commanders in the First World War*. p. 159.

⁸⁸⁶ Harvey, "A Good War: Wartime Officers Who Rose to Command in the First World War." p. 76.

⁸⁸⁷ Hodgkinson, *British Infantry Battalion Commanders in the First World War*. p. 211.

⁸⁸⁸ Boff, "British Third Army, the Application of Modern War, and the Defeat of the German Army, August-November 1918." pp. 253, 254, 255

like this should also have instilled confidence in the leadership, positively impacting morale amongst the officers and men.

It is perhaps not surprising that in Haig's *Final Despatch* he reported 'promotion had been entirely on merit, and the highest appointments were open to the humblest, provided he had the necessary qualifications of character, skill and knowledge'.⁸⁸⁹ Hodgkinson did not entirely agree with Haig's assessment. He concluded that 'the bias towards the regular soldier and away from the pre-war amateur meant that promotion to CO was always a weighted process, but one in which the unstructured assessment of merit always and increasingly played a part, and, in a temporary sea-change for the British army seniority did not'.⁸⁹⁰

In summary, as Simon Robbins observed:

By 1917-18 a cadre of officers led divisions with a level of competence that allowed them to compete with their German counterparts...This new blood provided a level of competence and professionalism, which made sure that the British Army with a good balance of experience and relative youthfulness, was now, at last, well-run and able to attack with the high level of performance which Continental warfare required.⁸⁹¹

Belief in the Cause

The notion has been advanced that Haig and his field commanders never recognised the link between the morale of their soldiers and their general perception of why the war was being fought. Furthermore, nothing was done to 'convince them that their sacrifices were appreciated and worthwhile both in the immediate and long-

⁸⁸⁹ Haig, *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches, December 1915-April 1919*, ed. by J.H. Boraston. p. 347

⁸⁹⁰ Hodgkinson, *British Infantry Battalion Commanders in the First World War*. p. 206.

⁸⁹¹ Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18: Defeat into Victory*. p. 59.

term'.⁸⁹² This claim has been exaggerated. What was true is that unlike the French troops who could be relied upon to hold highly developed patriotic sentiment, British troops, particularly amongst the civilian volunteers and conscripts, 'had a markedly sceptical attitude towards patriotism'. In respect to morale, to some extent this was compensated for by the security of 'their feelings of national superiority'. Also, 'the bulk of the British Empire armies had no feeling of hatred to their enemies' and in the absence of such feelings troops were more likely to question whether the struggle was worthwhile.⁸⁹³

Under Haig's leadership, 'a coherent and sustained educational effort' was employed by GHQ to shape and inform the patriotic belief of the men.⁸⁹⁴ He wanted his fighting men in particular, to have 'an intelligent appreciation of the magnitude of the issues at stake and a firm belief in the justice of their cause'.⁸⁹⁵ To this end Haig first called upon the clergy for support believing as he did that 'religion and morale [were] closely linked'.⁸⁹⁶ On January 13th 1916, Haig dined with his Deputy Chaplain General, Bishop L.H. Gwynn. He took the opportunity to emphasise 'the importance of sending messages to all [Gwynn's] clergy to preach about the great object of the war viz the freeing of mankind from German tyranny'. Haig also observed that he found many of the clergy too narrow in their views and that 'they must be enthusiasts to do any good'.⁸⁹⁷

⁸⁹² S.P. MacKenzie, "Morale and the Cause: The Campaign to Shape the Outlook of Soldiers in the British Expeditionary Force, 1914-1918," *Canadian Journal of History* 25, no. 2 (1990) p. 216

⁸⁹³ Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, pp. 36-40.

⁸⁹⁴ MacKenzie, *Politics and Military Morale: Current Affairs and Citizens Education in the British Army 1914-1950*, p. 6. "Morale and the Cause: The Campaign to Shape the Outlook of Soldiers in the British Expeditionary Force, 1914-1918." p. 216

⁸⁹⁵ Haig, *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches, December 1915-April 1919*, ed. by J.H. Boraston. Final Despatch: p. 347.

⁸⁹⁶ Sheffield, *The Chief: Douglas Haig and the British Army*, p. 156.

⁸⁹⁷ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 13/01/1916.

Two days later at his weekly army commanders' conference, in no uncertain terms, he called upon these officers to support the work of their chaplains:

Nothing should be neglected which will tend to raise the morale and confidence of our troops. Army commanders must take a personal interest in the work of chaplains, and make sure the lessons they teach deal with the great task which is before us, and which affects the well-being not only of the British Empire but of mankind.⁸⁹⁸

I also called attention to the large number of clergymen who are now being sent to join the Army. Army commanders must look to the efficiency of these as well as to any part of their commands. We must have large minded, sympathetic men as Parsons, who realise *the great cause* for which we are fighting. Men who can imbue their hearers with enthusiasm. Any clergyman who is not fit for this work must be sent home.⁸⁹⁹

Two weeks later at a second meeting with Gwynne, Haig discussed 'plans for improving the nature of teaching by the chaplains and for putting the best men in the most important positions'.⁹⁰⁰

In May, Randall Davidson the Archbishop of Canterbury lunched with Haig at Château Beaurepaire. Haig was forthright in his advice:

I told the Archbishop that I only had two wishes to express...*Firstly* that the Chaplains should preach to the troops about the objects of Great Britain in carrying out this war. We have no selfish motive, but are fighting for the good of humanity. *Secondly*. The Chaplains of the Church of England must cease quarrelling amongst themselves. In the

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid. Army Commander Conference Notes 15/01/1916.

⁸⁹⁹ Ibid. Entry: 15/01/1916. (Emphasis in original).

⁹⁰⁰ Ibid. Entry 03/02/1916.

Field we cannot tolerate any narrow sectarian ideas. We must all be united whether we are clerics or ordinary troops.⁹⁰¹

This meeting had the desired effect because Gwynne later reported to Haig that he had organised a school of instruction for his parsons near St Omer to train them for work with troops in the field and that ‘good results had been obtained’.⁹⁰²

In September 1917 Gwynne recognised that troop morale was beginning to suffer and subversive pamphlets were finding their way to the men in the trenches. In response, the Bishop organised a conference of senior chaplains to discuss and agree countermeasures. This resulted in the publication of a counter-propaganda pamphlet that received Haig’s full support in the preface he wrote.⁹⁰³ In addition, Gwynne launched on an educational scheme to promote patriotism among the troops using his parsons as lecturers.⁹⁰⁴

Coincidentally, Bonham-Carter, Haig’s new Director of Training, was thinking on the same lines as Gwynne but had arrived at a more ambitious scheme to sustain morale. He proposed a programme of current affairs lectures, themed to paint a positive picture of the post-war future. Unbeknown to Haig, Bonham-Carter’s proposal was initially held up by the AG, Lieut.-Gen. G.H. Fowke, on the grounds that the lectures might create unrealistic post-war expectations amongst the men. In the light of the future widespread disillusionment, the AG was most probably right.

In any event, Haig had become aware that informal discussions were taking place among the troops regarding “reconstruction after the war” where ‘sometimes advanced socialistic or anarchical views were expressed’. Haig called in the AG and

⁹⁰¹ Ibid. Entry 21/05/1916. (Emphasis in original).

⁹⁰² Ibid. Entry 19/05/1917.

⁹⁰³ Ibid. Entry: 22/12/1917; MacKenzie, *Politics and Military Morale: Current Affairs and Citizens Education in the British Army 1914-1950*. p. 10.

⁹⁰⁴ *Politics and Military Morale: Current Affairs and Citizens Education in the British Army 1914-1950*. See Chapter 1 for a comprehensive assessment of the origins of the current affairs and citizenship work in the BEF and at the War Office (1914-1919).

told him that 'our policy should be not to stop free discussion but rather to guide it by having really capable men to lecture and control subversive talk'. Haig wisely pointed out that 'it would be wrong to forbid the talk, because the views would then be driven underground, and eventually greater harm would result'.⁹⁰⁵ Later, Haig issued a directive to draw up a scheme of education for the troops, 'the objects of which should be (a) to give men a wider view of their duties as citizens of the British Empire, (b) to help men in their work after the war'.⁹⁰⁶ Fortunately for Bonham-Carter, this scheme was in accord with his earlier proposal and went ahead.

With Haig's approval, a new army education organization was established at GHQ. In addition, full time education officers were appointed, one to each army, division and base HQ. At brigade, a part-time education officer was appointed from the staff to organise classes and talks.⁹⁰⁷ It is worth quoting Col. Lord Gorell's assessment of Haig's contribution:⁹⁰⁸

Thus at the first opportunity presented to him and at a date when his mind must have been engaged in absorbing anxiety as to the imminent launching of the great German onslaught, the generous-hearted, broad minded Field-Marshal could spare time to extend his authoritative support to work outside the directly military sphere because it was obviously for the durable good of the men, and to grasp instinctively the dual nature of that work [education as distinct from training]. It is a remarkable and characteristic incident which deserves to be long remembered.⁹⁰⁹

⁹⁰⁵ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 23/12/1917

⁹⁰⁶ Col. Lord Gorell, *Education and the Army: An Essay in Reconstruction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921) p. 24.

⁹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 25-28.

⁹⁰⁸ Lord Gorell was in charge of publications within GHQ's Training Branch and was later the driving force behind the establishment of the Army Educational Corps in 1920.

⁹⁰⁹ Gorell, *Education and the Army: An Essay in Reconstruction.* pp. 24-25.

Hagiography perhaps; but at the time of writing Gorell was the Deputy-Director of Staff Duties (Education) at the WO and Haig had left the Army, so he had no ulterior motive to write this passage unless it was his sincere belief.

Unfortunately, ‘the source material concerning the impact of educational work [upon morale] is minimal’.⁹¹⁰ However, based on an approach suggested by Professor S.P. Mackenzie, an overview of the raw statistics indicated that this work did not have the full impact that Haig, Gwynne or Bonham-Carter had desired.⁹¹¹ In 1918, the Army Chaplain’s Department had a muster of 3,475 clergymen, which was its full strength.⁹¹² In total, 5,254,351 officers and men comprising drafts, reinforcements and units were sent to France from England during the war and its immediate aftermath.⁹¹³ This meant that at most, each clergyman roughly had a flock of 1,500 men rotating through their ‘parishes’. Even allowing for sermons that could be delivered *en-masse*, where it is known that the attention span diminishes inversely to attendance, the numbers of men inspired by patriotic overtures was always likely to have been relatively small. In addition, only 20% of soldiers had any vital connection with the churches, and in any case the clergy were widely regarded as being ‘remarkably out of touch with their troops.’⁹¹⁴ These results tentatively shows that religion was not a particularly fertile milieu to support morale.

Although in 1918 the secular educational programme was popular amongst the men it does not appear to have realised its full potential in promoting broad-scale morale. In June for instance, 15,957 men attended general lectures and 6,046 were

⁹¹⁰ MacKenzie, *Politics and Military Morale: Current Affairs and Citizens Education in the British Army 1914-1950*. p. 32.

⁹¹¹ Ibid. Chapter 2: The Effect of Army Education, 1917-1919. All the statistics and general conclusions are taken from this chapter unless specifically stated.

⁹¹² Michael Moynihan, *God On Our Side: The British Padre in World War I* (London: Leo Cooper, 1983) p. 12.

⁹¹³ TNA/WO/394/20, “Statistical Abstract: Armies at Home and Abroad (1914-1920).” p. 508.

⁹¹⁴ Moynihan, *God On Our Side: The British Padre in World War I*. p. 13.

enrolled in classes. The programme was hampered by a shortage of lecturers and qualified instructors, by the recalcitrant attitudes of some unit commanders, and by the fact that the trench experience produced amongst junior officers and men 'a yearning after knowledge often as inarticulate as it was intense'.⁹¹⁵ This indicates that overall the educational initiatives both religious and secular had a positive albeit limited influence on morale. However, these schemes were not the 'dismal failure' suffered by a programme of 'patriotic instruction' reported to be deployed in the German Army.⁹¹⁶

Welfare

'*Nothing reduces and discourages troops more than hunger;*' so wrote Haig at the Staff College.⁹¹⁷ He clearly understood that 'food...was central to a soldier's physical and mental well-being', and that there was a causal relationship between the general welfare of his troops and morale.⁹¹⁸ Therefore, it will come as no surprise to learn that Haig personally ensured that his troops were well looked after:

Officers made sure the men under their command got what comforts were available (such as rum rations and cigarettes); food rations were adequate; medical attention was prompt and efficient; shows and sports events were regularly staged when troops were out of the line; and in addition canteens and other amenities were provided by organizations such as the Y.M.C.A. The coercive and supportive elements in maintaining the fortitude of soldiers was therefore quite substantial.⁹¹⁹

⁹¹⁵ Gorell, *Education and the Army: An Essay in Reconstruction*. p. 20.

⁹¹⁶ Strachan, "The Morale of the German Army, 1917-18." p. 387.

⁹¹⁷ NLS-Acc.3155/20, "Strategy Notes II." (Emphasis in original).

⁹¹⁸ Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*. p. 59.

⁹¹⁹ MacKenzie, "Morale and the Cause: The Campaign to Shape the Outlook of Soldiers in the British Expeditionary Force, 1914-1918." p. 217.

During battalion inspections Haig was known to converse with the cooks to assure himself that the men were being well fed.⁹²⁰ He also toured divisional rest camps for the same purpose.⁹²¹

Haig was fortunate that prior to the war rapid progress in mechanical transportation had acted as a catalyst for the modernisation of the RASC along continental lines. This service was largely responsible for the distribution of food and other supplies in the field.⁹²² As discussed, by 1914 the BEF's system of supply was 'abreast of all modern conditions'.⁹²³ One of the most important features of the new system was that it allowed fresh foodstuffs, particularly meat and bread, to be delivered daily to Haig's front line troops. For instance, the highest output of bread on a single day was 1,735,418 lb. loaves delivered fresh to the troops.⁹²⁴ Previously, preserved meats and biscuits formed the basis of the staple diet for British expeditionary forces.⁹²⁵ Also, the dietary requirements of the mixed races and religions had to be strictly observed. Even German prisoners were fed especially baked black bread, albeit at a saving to the Exchequer.⁹²⁶ Another vital aspect of the supply system was the introduction of the precursor to 'just in time' inventory controls; the hallmark of modern logistical systems. The great strength of this new system was its simplicity. It allowed for 'easy and rapid expansion...in most essential respects [it] was unchanged from start to finish' of the war.⁹²⁷

⁹²⁰ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 16/12/1915.

⁹²¹ Ibid.Entry:12/06/1918.

⁹²² Beadon, *The Royal Army Service Corps: A History of Transport and Supply in the British Army*, II. This volume provides a thorough examination of the development of supply prior to the War and its evolution thereafter.

⁹²³ Ibid. p. 61.

⁹²⁴ Ibid. p. 89.

⁹²⁵ Ibid. p. 48.

⁹²⁶ Ibid. p. 9.6

⁹²⁷ Ibid. pp. 84-85.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Haig made a crucial contribution to the evolution of the organization, management and administration of BEF's logistical systems. The impact of these measures was felt most particularly between 1916 and 1918 when ration supplies to the front never faltered. This is not to say that Haig's troops had no complaints. In fact, J.G. Fuller asserted that 'in 1917 food was reported to the War Cabinet as one of the principal causes of troop discontent'.⁹²⁸ It would not have been normal if there were no complaints about both the quantity and quality of food, most particularly on the front line. However, Fuller presses the evidence too far because his allegation referred to a Command Depot at Shoreham, and not the BEF in France. Moreover, the Cabinet meeting to which Fuller referred concluded that the complaint was without foundation.⁹²⁹

By contrast the welfare of German troops deteriorated, and morale with it. In September 1916, intelligence received at GHQ reported that the enemy's meat ration had been cut by 20% due to the weight of the naval blockade. By 1917, rations of bread, meat and vegetables had been further reduced to approximately 40% of the British equivalent.⁹³⁰ It would have been unusual if this significant food reduction did not have a negative impact on troop morale, particularly in the front line.

Rest and Recreation

Contrary to popular belief, troops spent only approximately two fifths of their time in the front line, or in close support; for the balance, men were either detained in billets employed as a brigade reserve or placed in a rest camp as part of the divisional

⁹²⁸ Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*. p. 61.

⁹²⁹ TNA/CAB/23/4, "War Cabinet Minutes: September 12, 1917; Item 12, Alleged Disaffection amongst British Troops at Home."

⁹³⁰ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Pamphlet S.S.474: Reductions in the Scale of Rations in the German Army n.p.; Entry: 30/05/1917.

reserve.⁹³¹ Excepting time spent on training and fatigues, troops out of the line could easily have become bored with corrosive effect on morale. As a prophylactic, Haig lost no time in telling his Army commanders that ‘every effort must be made to raise the “*moral*” of the troops – amusements, games lectures etc. must be organised’.⁹³² One regimental officer who wrote perceptively of his battalion’s experience, indicated that Haig’s advice was taken seriously:

It may be stated at once that apparently trivial ancillary services...grew to be of supreme importance. I do not believe that sufficient attention has been paid to this fact, although such services formed often for long periods the sole recreative [sic] interest of the fighting Divisions. I refer to Divisional Concert Parties, Race Meetings, Horse Shows, Football Matches, Boxing Tournaments and suchlike.⁹³³

J.G. Fuller argued that organised entertainment flourished on its own initiative, rather than in response to the ‘ordination of the General Staff’.⁹³⁴ This was not strictly the case as Haig’s engagement shows. In addition, GHQ was fully aware of the ‘moral’ value of sporting activities and actively encouraged their development. In October 1917, the GS prepared and reissued *S.S.137 Recreational Training*, the original presumably having appeared earlier.⁹³⁵ This 27 page pamphlet offered a comprehensive guide for the organization of popular sports and stressed the need for voluntary participation, inclusiveness, diversity and *esprit de corps*. Officers

⁹³¹ Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, pp. 58-59.

⁹³² NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry:15/01/1916. (Emphasis in original).

⁹³³ Hutchinson, *Warrior*, pp. 172-173. Cited from Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, p. 114.

⁹³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 115.

⁹³⁵ "S.S.137: Recreational Training (Revised Edition, October 1917)," (APSS).

received encouragement to join-in to ensure that inter-unit matches were played in the true sporting spirit and to increase empathy with their men.⁹³⁶

Helpful advice was provided by GHQ in respect to organization, training regimes, area organization (including locations of sports fields, pitches, baths and changing rooms), team competition, championships, and modification of rules to suit local conditions. As prize money was prohibited, GHQ also offered a wide range of trophies, cups and medals at nominal prices, presumably to be paid from out of unit funds. Suitably qualified referees, equipment and kit were also available on request.

Haig gave every encouragement to the promotion of these recreational activities by making personal appearances at divisional theatrical performances and music hall, horse trials and shows, sporting events and other activities. He invariably congratulated the organisers and prize winners, gave short speeches to audiences and generally received loud thanks in return.⁹³⁷

Haig also knew that home leave was an essential factor in troop welfare and well-being. In 1917 he acted promptly when it belatedly came to his attention that 657,820 men had had no home leave for 9 months, including 107,748 who had not been home for over 18 months. Despite the growing manpower problem and the close approach of the Third Ypres offensive, he ordered that at least 5,040 men per day should be sent on home leave with immediate effect.⁹³⁸ When arguing with the War Cabinet against a French demand to extend his front, he told Ministers that this was not acceptable because 'as much leave as possible is necessary for the men [observing] they have earned it and it is a valuable means of keeping them in good

⁹³⁶ Ibid. p. 6.

⁹³⁷ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry:15/05/1916; 14/06/1917; 01/09/1917; 15/09/1917; 08/02/1918 .

⁹³⁸ Ibid. Entry:11/07/1917.

heart'.⁹³⁹ Haig had similar concerns for the working conditions of men behind the lines. He pressed his Army Commanders to allow office workers to have the day off on Sundays.⁹⁴⁰

J.G. Fuller concluded that many contemporary soldier observers thought that the institutions of sport and music played a role in upholding the morale of British and Dominion troops.⁹⁴¹ Furthermore, he persuasively argued that the whole gambit of recreational activities prevented the development on the Western Front of an 'autonomous trench culture' and ensured that ties with the civilian world were never severed. This feeds back into the importance of sustaining morale on the home front most particularly that of friends and family. It is also clear that the WO, perhaps belatedly, recognised the value, in terms of morale, of organised recreational activities. In 1940, the WO set up the Directorate of Army Welfare to organise entertainers drawn from within the ranks of the armed service. The body worked along-side the civilian Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) to provide theatrical and cinema entertainment for the troops.⁹⁴² As the latter organization earned the sobriquet 'Every Night Something Awful', it does not appear to have attained the popular status of entertainments previously offered in France.⁹⁴³

Morale on the Home Front

'Military morale is in a large sense inseparable from civilian morale because each reacts upon the other and both are in large measure based on fidelity to a

⁹³⁹ Ibid. OAD 675:Considerations bearing on the question of taking over more line, 18/10/17.

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid. Entry:03/01/191.7

⁹⁴¹ Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*. p. 114.

⁹⁴² Ibid. pp. 175-179.

⁹⁴³ Andy Merriman, *Grease Paint and Cordite: How ENSA Entertained the Troops in World War II* (London: Aurum, 2013) p. 278.

cause'.⁹⁴⁴ As discussed above, Haig introduced educational measures to promote the belief of his troops in their patriotic duty. He was also aware that to sustain morale effectively it was vital that this work was reinforced by positive public opinion from home.⁹⁴⁵ And, as Haig had learned first-hand from campaigns in the Sudan, he knew that it was essential to obtain the support of the Press because of its hold on public opinion.⁹⁴⁶ A point corroborated by Maj.-Gen. C.E. Callwell, DMO at the WO who acutely observed: 'the most important point of all, however, is that, when journalism and officialdom happen to come into collision, the public in practice only hears the Fourth Estate's side of the story'.⁹⁴⁷

These attitudes fed into the generally held and simplistic 'view that the Press somehow held direct control over the views and voting powers of the new mass electorate'. This was promoted by the 'older belief, that a newspaper report or editorial spoke for an important section of public opinion, [combined] with the fact of mass sales of newspapers...'.⁹⁴⁸ However, this did not prevent Haig from forming a low opinion of military correspondents, and being highly cynical of their work.⁹⁴⁹ He shared his opinion with none other than Field Marshal Wolseley who claimed publically that the 'special correspondent was the curse of the modern army'.⁹⁵⁰

Before discussing the measures taken by Haig to foster Press support aimed at bolstering morale on the home front, to say nothing of his own position and

⁹⁴⁴ Brig.-Gen James A. Ulio, "Military Morale," *American Journal of Sociology* 47, no. 3 (Nov. 1941) p. 321.

⁹⁴⁵ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Memorandum on the Conduct of War: p. 14 para 28.

⁹⁴⁶ NLS-Acc.3155/6/b, "Letters to Henrietta Jameson." Letter: 29/04/1898.

⁹⁴⁷ Callwell, *Experiences of a Dug-Out*. p. 327.

⁹⁴⁸ Badsey, *The British Army in Battle and Its Image in War*. p. 15.

⁹⁴⁹ NLS-Acc.3155/6/b, "Letters to Henrietta Jameson." 29/04/98; 05/06/1898; 10/06/1898; Scott, *The Preparatory Prologue: Douglas Haig Diaries and Letters 1861-1914*. Letter: Haig to Sir Evelyn Wood p. 86.

⁹⁵⁰ Lord Riddell, "The Relations of the Press with the Army in the Field," *JRUSI* 66, no. 463 (1921). p. 386.

reputation, it is necessary to first comment briefly on the wider context of press relations at the WO and in the BEF before he succeeded French.

In 1912, the Admiralty, War Office and Press Committee was established 'with the object of providing liaison between the Navy and the Army on the one hand, and the Press on the other' to protect military secrecy, during a possible continental conflict.⁹⁵¹ Valuable work was reportedly done, and secrecy at the opening stages of hostilities was strictly observed. However, on August 6th 1914 Kitchener, newly appointed Secretary of State for War, acted with characteristic haste. He appointed Mr. F.E. Smith, the future Lord Birkenhead, as the official Press Censor. By the following day this decision had resolved itself into the establishment of the Whitehall Press Bureau. Smith, supported by a scratch staff, had the unenviable task of distributing news pre-censored by officers working under the direct instructions of WO and Admiralty; advising the press; and initiating press prosecutions if members broke any of the censorship rules promulgated under the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) that was passed on August 8th. Later, Smith's role was facilitated by his appointment to the Admiralty, War Office and Press Committee. In effect the Government had 'imposed censorship on all information connected with military affairs'.⁹⁵² It was not surprising that Smith's role was poorly received by the press corps. This animus quickly revived old prejudices at the WO against the Press. For the first nine months of the war the public were poorly served, which undermined the British war effort.⁹⁵³

To compound this dysfunction it appears that before the war little or no thought had been given by the WO to the organization of press relations in the field. In 1914,

⁹⁵¹ Ibid. p. 386.

⁹⁵² Philip Towle, "The Debate on Wartime Censorship in Britain 1902-14," in *War and Society: A Yearbook of Military History*, ed. Brian Bond and Ian Roy (London: Croom Helm, 1975) p.112.

⁹⁵³ Lord Riddell, "The Relations of the Press with the Army in the Field," p. 386.

GHQ's immediate response to the Press reflected prejudices at home, and as a result correspondents were barred by French from the front.⁹⁵⁴ In keeping with tradition, the principal source of news was a twice-weekly column produced by the 'Official Eye Witness', Lieut.-Col. Ernest Swinton, which was forwarded to the WO for a further round of censorship and then on to the Press Bureau for distribution.⁹⁵⁵ The Press responded badly and took matters into its own hands. 'Enterprising reporters proceeded to the theatre of war without permission'.⁹⁵⁶ The effect of this system, dysfunctional as it was, was unfortunate:

The public were deprived of reliable information concerning the war, and misled by statements of a wildly optimistic character.⁹⁵⁷

Every trifling success won by, or credited to, the Allies was hailed as a transcendent triumph and was placarded on misleading posters.⁹⁵⁸

In turn, this exuberance placed a check on recruiting and on the production of war material; an unforeseen and potentially catastrophic outcome.⁹⁵⁹ In May 1915, as a consequence of these shortcomings, the WO reached an accommodation with the Press whereby up to six accredited correspondents were given permission to take up residence at GHQ, an arrangement that remained in place until the end of the war.⁹⁶⁰ These men included Philip Gibbs, Percival Philips of the *Daily Express*, William Beach Thomas of the *Daily Mail* and H. Perry Robinson of *Times*.⁹⁶¹ They wore

⁹⁵⁴ Callwell, *Experiences of a Dug-Out*. p. 312.

⁹⁵⁵ Lieut.-Col E.F. Swinton, *Eye-Witness's Narrative of the War: From the Marne to Neuve Chapelle (September 1914 -March 1915)* (London: Edward Arnold, 1915). Lieut.-Col. E.D. Swinton, *A Year Ago: Eye-Witness's Narrative of the War from March 30th to July 18th 1915*. (London: Edward Arnold., 1916).

⁹⁵⁶ Callwell, *Experiences of a Dug-Out*. p. 312.

⁹⁵⁷ Riddell, "The Relations of the Press with the Army in the Field." p. 386.

⁹⁵⁸ Callwell, *Experiences of a Dug-Out*. p. 313.

⁹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 314.

⁹⁶⁰ Riddell, "The Relations of the Press with the Army in the Field." p. 393.

⁹⁶¹ Badsey, *The British Army in Battle and Its Image in War*. p. 19.

officers' uniforms with green armbands and were dignified with the rank of honorary captain. Swinton, assisted by Captain Earl Percy, continued his activities until mid-July.⁹⁶² This then was the state of press relations, both at home and at the front, that confronted Haig a few months before he replaced French.

In mid-1915, when French's fortunes were in decline, Haig put aside his reservations for the Press and started to build personal relations with correspondents, which, with more than a hint of hypocrisy, he declared was 'my duty to the Army'.⁹⁶³ On June 13th 1915, at luncheon with the special correspondent from the *Daily Telegraph*, Haig agreed that accredited reporters who showed good cause would be allowed to visit previously restricted areas on First Army's front.⁹⁶⁴ Following the well-established convention, Haig also allowed the occasional interview but forbade verbatim reporting.⁹⁶⁵ On July 8th, following a request from the WO, Haig met Repington ('such a dishonest individual') and told him that 'he could go where he liked, and see what he liked and write what he liked' with the proviso that he submitted any tactical criticism to the Censor to prevent any information useful to the enemy from being published.⁹⁶⁶ Repington's private thoughts on this restriction can only be imagined, particularly as he held a poor opinion of Haig's tactical abilities.⁹⁶⁷

In 1916, Haig stepped up the tempo by establishing personal relations with leading press proprietors including Lord Northcliffe owner of *The Times* and the *Daily Mail*, and Lord Burnham of the *Daily Telegraph*. These meetings were orchestrated by his trusted and protective Private Secretary, Sir Philip Sassoon, M.P.;

⁹⁶² Riddell, "The Relations of the Press with the Army in the Field." p. 390.

⁹⁶³ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry 08/07/1915.

⁹⁶⁴ Ibid. Entry; 13/06/1915.

⁹⁶⁵ Badsey, *The British Army in Battle and Its Image in War*. p. 17.

⁹⁶⁶ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry 08/07/1915.

⁹⁶⁷ A.J.A. Morris, ed. *The Letters of Lieutenant-Colonel Repington (1903-1918)* (Stroud: Army Records Society, 1999). Letter: Repington to Andrew Bonar Law 16/11/1915 p. 239-240.

a prominent and well-connected man with acute political sensibilities. Northcliffe and Burnham offered, both personally and through their newspapers, to assist Haig in any way they could.⁹⁶⁸ Later Haig wryly confided to his diary: 'so the *Daily Telegraph* as well as *The Times* is (sic) most anxious to play the game'.⁹⁶⁹ Northcliffe became a frequent visitor to Château Beaurepaire and 'pledged his complete support'.⁹⁷⁰ Haig gave him free rein to 'see *everything* and talk to anyone'.⁹⁷¹ Northcliffe responded by asking Haig to send him a line 'should anything appear in the "*Times*" which was not altogether to [his] liking'.⁹⁷²

While Haig garnered support in what was a symbiotic relationship with the press proprietors, he ensured that the news flow from GHQ was tightly organised and well managed. As the accredited correspondents were formally the organizational responsibility of the Intelligence Department, this required an accompanying establishment of serving 'Conducting Officers' who tended to be experienced and older men, to act as chaperones. Their daily routine was fixed. In the late afternoon, to synchronise with the release of GHQ's official daily communiqué, correspondents' reports were cleared through a 'censorship while you wait' procedure before being released to the WO and then forwarded on to the national daily newspapers. 'As journalists gradually assumed the appearance of pseudo-army officers attached to GHQ, these men were required to undertake the quasi-civilian task of managing the control of the news-flow'.⁹⁷³ The dominant feature of this work

⁹⁶⁸ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." 23/07/1916 ; 25/07/1916.

⁹⁶⁹ Ibid. 25/07/1916.

⁹⁷⁰ J. Lee Thompson, "Fleet Street Colossus: The Rise and Fall of Northcliffe, 1896–1922," *Parliamentary History* 25, no. 1 (2006) p. 129.

⁹⁷¹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry; 21/07/1916. (Emphasis in original).

⁹⁷² Ibid. Entry; 23/07/1916. (Emphasis in original).

⁹⁷³ Keith Grieves, "War Correspondents and Conducting Officers on the Western Front from 1915," in *Facing Armageddon*, ed. Hugh Cecil and Peter H. Liddle (London: Leo Cooper, 1996) pp. 719-720.

was 'the ready espousal of sacrificial values'.⁹⁷⁴ This sentiment was summed up in a *Memorandum on Policy for Press* that Haig prepared ahead of his first accredited correspondents' briefing before the Somme offensive:

To sum up: The lessons which the people of England have to learn are patience, self-sacrifice, and confidence in our ability to win in the long run. The aim for which the war is being waged is the destruction of German militarism. Three years of war and the loss of one-tenth of the manhood of the nations is not too great a price to pay in so great a cause.⁹⁷⁵

This restrictive regime was not entirely welcomed by the reporters who were used to working in open conditions, which allowed free movement and independence of thought. This situation caused much friction with the Conducting Officers, although the reporters did acquiesce for the greater good of the war effort. 'From pariahs in 1914, the correspondents were to emerge from the war as potential knights of the realm for their contribution to victory'.⁹⁷⁶

In June 1916, Lord Esher urged Haig to bring influential French newspapers into his orbit:

You must my dear Douglas stimulate a little Press Propaganda here [Paris] while these great operations are in progress [Somme Campaign]. Some intelligent young fellow should be turned on to the telephone through Maurice's office [DMO at GHQ] every night, giving a resume of operations, which could be passed on before 11 p.m. to the French papers. I can arrange everything at this end, if you can arrange it at yours. Then (2) every two or three days a liaison officers should bring down some rather extended little story

⁹⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 723.

⁹⁷⁵ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Memorandum on Policy for Press, p. 3. See also Badsey, *The British Army in Battle and Its Image in War*. pp. 21-22.

⁹⁷⁶ Grieves, "War Correspondents and Conducting Officers on the Western Front from 1915." p. 720.

which can be deftly used here. For goodness sake, keep the French press in tow. Our people in London are so gloriously futile. There is supposed to be a Press Propaganda War. No one knows where it is, or who has charge of it. Besides, it may at every moment be tainted by views that are not yours.⁹⁷⁷

It is not clear to what extent Haig acted on Esher's advice; but he did start briefing French correspondents at his HQ. As a result, favourable reports on British operations did appear in influential sectors of the French press. Esher reported 'this sort of thing has a mesmeric effect and influences public opinion very materially'.⁹⁷⁸ The French news-flow, recycled through the British press, was having a positive effect on morale within the BEF and in Britain.

However, in February 1917 Haig's cosy relationship with the French press caused him a serious problem at home that nearly cost him his job.⁹⁷⁹ Following a briefing to five French deputies who were also journalists at his HQ, he was later reported to have declared in a characteristically optimistic tone that 'there must be no peace without complete victory'. Apparently this hubris played well in France but when reported back in England it was labelled a 'blazing transgression' into politics. This comment was made by a Labour MP in a parliamentary question addressed to Lloyd George, now the Prime Minister. This complaint quickly placed Haig in an embarrassing and invidious position.⁹⁸⁰

⁹⁷⁷ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Letter: Esher to Haig 28/06/1916.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid. Letter: Esher to Haig 22/07/1916.

⁹⁷⁹ Badsey, *The British Army in Battle and Its Image in War*. See pp. 24-27 for a thorough assessment of this incident.

⁹⁸⁰ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Press Clipping: n.d.

In public at least, Lord Northcliffe came to Haig's aid and publically wrote the intervention off as 'a storm in a teacup'.⁹⁸¹ Lord Derby, the Secretary of State for War, reluctantly sent Haig a mild rebuke with the firm advice to remove Charteris the head of Intelligence at GHQ for allowing the French report to slip through uncensored.⁹⁸² Haig replied in a fit of pique: 'If L.G. has a man in his eye who will run this great Army better than I am doing, let him appoint him without more ado'. Haig of course was relying on the continued support of Northcliffe who had impressed upon him in a series of recent visits his ability to bring Lloyd George's administration down.⁹⁸³ Nonetheless, in a more conciliatory tone, Haig told Derby that for some time he had been thinking about separating the organization of 'intelligence proper' from 'propaganda', but he had not found the right man with experience for the latter role.⁹⁸⁴

In June 1917, such had been the growth and increasing sophistication of GHQ's press activity, a Special Intelligence Section was established within the Intelligence Branch to cope with its expanded role.⁹⁸⁵ By July 1917 this organization comprised four subsections:⁹⁸⁶ I(d) Press, which included units for the British and Allied press, the censor, and photography and cinematography. I(f) Visitors, dealt with visits from WO, Foreign Office, military attachés, and the Americans. This subsection also dealt with propaganda. I(g) War Trade, dealt with information regarding the economic situation in Germany and I(h) Postal and Telegraphic

⁹⁸¹ Ibid. Press Clipping: n.d.; Lieut.-Col. C. á Court Repington, *The First World War: 1914 - 1918*, II vols, vol. I, (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1920). Repington 'deplored' Haig's interview, although he admitted there were different forms of it. pp. 460-462.

⁹⁸² NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Letter: Derby to Haig 20/02/1917.

⁹⁸³ Ibid. Entry 01/01/1917; 04/01/1917; 06/01/1917.

⁹⁸⁴ Ibid. Letter: Haig to Derby 22/02/1917.

⁹⁸⁵ TNA/WO/158/963, "Establishment of the Censorship and Publicity Section at G.H.Q. 1918-1919." Appendix 15: Note: 31/05/1918.

⁹⁸⁶ TNA/WO/106/359, "Diagrams: Organization of G.H.Q.": Organization of Intelligence Staff Section, 23rd July 1917. There was no section (e).

Censorship.⁹⁸⁷ The total war establishment then comprised 61 officers and 269 other ranks.⁹⁸⁸ In February 1918, after a reshuffle of the Intelligence Branch, Haig moved the Special Intelligence section to the SDB, renaming it the Censor and Publicity Section.⁹⁸⁹ In September 1918, representations were made to the WO to increase the war establishment to 481 officers and men.⁹⁹⁰

Unfortunately, following the Cambrai offensive when the press engaged in a 'conscious attempt to boost Haig's popularity [he] lost the support of Northcliffe'.⁹⁹¹ It appears that that he was being out manoeuvred by Lloyd George who recruited Northcliffe and other Press magnates including Beaverbrook and Rothermere into influential governmental positions. Together with changes in Press policy at the WO and GHQ, these developments created an insularity that as Stephen Badsey observed resulted in 'a neglect of the BEF's achievements in 1918'.⁹⁹²

Haig did not rely solely on the Press to shape and mould public opinion. Conforming with convention, twice yearly he oversaw the preparation of a despatch summarising in 'plain and straightforward language' the operations of his armies. These official commentaries appeared in the *London Gazette* and were syndicated to the Press. They were based upon a comprehensive and rigorous daily information gathering system extending from army down to company level, which as Haig commented required a 'high degree of organization and training'.⁹⁹³

On the home front, Haig personally intervened in labour relations to help sustain vital munitions supplies to the BEF. For example, he appealed to 300 trade

⁹⁸⁷ TNA/WO/158/963, "Establishment of the Censorship and Publicity Section at G.H.Q. 1918-1919." Appendix 20A provides a detailed job description of each subsection.

⁹⁸⁸ Ibid. War Establishment Table n.p.

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid. Letter 31/05/1918.

⁹⁹⁰ Ibid. War Establishment Table n.p.

⁹⁹¹ Badsey, *The British Army in Battle and Its Image in War*. p. 28.

⁹⁹² Ibid. p. 29.

⁹⁹³ Boraston, *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches : (December 1915-April 1919)* pp. xi-xii.

union delegates, representing 2,000,000 workers for their support at a War Workers Conference.⁹⁹⁴ He also extended a warm welcome to trade unionist visitors at his HQ:

About 10.30 pm Mr Ben Tillett of the Dockers Union, late revolutionist and anarchist, came to see me. He had come to spend Christmas in the trenches with some of his dock hands. He said that the men were all in splendid spirits – much better even than on his last visit which was in July and the weather was good and trenches dry! He evidently had been dining well, for he found difficulty in coming upstairs to my writing room!⁹⁹⁵

Haig also paid attention to small details of public interest, even in times of great stress. For instance, he sent a telegram of good wishes to a National Mother's Day celebration on the opening day of the Battle of Amiens. With genuine sincerity he told his audience: 'England's greatness too is due to the devotion and loving sacrifice of our mothers'.⁹⁹⁶

A study of news coverage in the columns of *The Times* relating to the first day of the Somme (July 1st 1916), Cambrai (November 20th to December 7th 1917) and the German offensive (March 21st 1918) revealed that exuberant reporting typical of the early stages of the war gave way under Haig to a much more measured and calculated response.⁹⁹⁷ For the first day of the Somme and at Cambrai the bland official communiqués and the more newsworthy correspondents' despatches were sufficiently economical with the truth to give little away to the enemy or the reader. If there was any criticism of the military, albeit discreetly veiled, this could be found

⁹⁹⁴ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Letter:13/07/1916.

⁹⁹⁵ Ibid. Entry: 27/12/15.

⁹⁹⁶ Ibid. Telegram: 06/08/1918.

⁹⁹⁷ "The Day Goes Well," *The Times*, 3 July 1916. "Heavy Enemy Losses," *The Times*, 3rd July 1916. "Forward in the West," *The Times*, 3rd July 1916. "The Glorious Battle of Cambrai," *The Times*, 23rd November 1917. "The Victory: Big Gains Made Good," *The Times*, 23rd November 1917. "British Counter Attacks: Enemy Pushed Back In Places," *The Times*, March 25th 1918.

by the discerning reader in the editor's comment columns.⁹⁹⁸ All of this is exactly what Haig intended. It is noticeable that as the war went on the Editor of *The Times* did become more forthright, but in the three periods examined at least, Haig did not receive any personal criticism that could be construed as a threat to his post. Although as mentioned, at the beginning of 1918, he could not take for granted the support of the Press. Editorial comment in March 1918 left the reader in no doubt that the military situation in France had reached a desperate point of crisis.⁹⁹⁹ But, from a reader's perspective, being deeply worried was not the same thing as suffering poor morale. Given that the whole British press had the same news source it appears reasonable to suggest that these comments could be extended to include other newspapers, although the flavour of editorial comment would obviously differ.

Haig's Management of Discipline in the BEF

Most military commanders link good morale with strong, but not necessarily harsh, discipline.¹⁰⁰⁰ As discussed in Chapter 3, Haig was no exception. However, a close reading of Haig's diaries allows the observation that his approach to discipline functioned on three levels: *Exemplary discipline* (cowardice, desertion and other offenses punishable by death under the *Army Act*); *field discipline* (lesser military infringements, crimes of all types and behaviour that he judged a misdemeanour but were not necessarily governed by military law); and *regimental discipline*, which he closely associated with good leadership and high standards of training (smart turnout, well drilled, and formal behaviour).¹⁰⁰¹

⁹⁹⁸ "A Case for Enquiry," *The Times*, 12th December 1917.

⁹⁹⁹ "A Grave Situation," *The Times*, 25th March 1918.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Oram, *Military Executions during World War I*. p. 169.

¹⁰⁰¹ *Manual of Military Law*, (London: HMSO, 1914). For a succinct overview of the different kinds of courts martial see: French, *Military Identities*. p. 189.

Exemplary Discipline

‘Haig successfully maintained discipline of the British Army on the Western Front. He did so by a judicious use of exemplary punishment’ administered under the *Army Act 1881* and re-enacted annually.¹⁰⁰² Or put bluntly, and to use Wellington’s phrase, soldiers were shot “for the sake of example.”¹⁰⁰³ The primary object of this form of discipline was to act as a deterrent to others, rather than simply punish the soldier concerned.¹⁰⁰⁴ Thus, the death sentence was a means to an end, rather than an end in itself: On September 25th 1914, Haig was required to approve the death sentences of two soldiers (Pte. G. Ward and Cpl. V. Prior of the Royal Berks Regiment) convicted by a Field General Courts Martial for cowardice.¹⁰⁰⁵ He minuted the AG: ‘I am of [the] opinion that it is necessary to make an example in order to prevent cowardice in the face of the enemy as far as is possible’.¹⁰⁰⁶ Haig confirmed the death penalty on Ward, although he commuted the sentence on Prior to two years imprisonment with hard labour. Haig showed leniency in Prior’s case because he had ‘stayed with his company and fought on after pulling back without orders’.¹⁰⁰⁷ Haig’s support for the death penalty as the ultimate sanction remained robust throughout the war as this diary entry for February 1st 1919 shows:

Received telegram from Churchill indicating his disinclination to approve of infliction of death penalty “unless there is serious bloodshed”. He awaits full report. But I have power, by Warrant, to try by Court Martial and shoot in accordance with

¹⁰⁰² Peaty, “Haig and Military Discipline.” p. 221.

¹⁰⁰³ *Ibid.* p. 197.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Julian Putkowski & Julian Sykes, *Shot at Dawn* (London: Leo Cooper, 1989) p. 11.

¹⁰⁰⁵ TNA/WO/71/388, "Ward, G. and Prior, V. Offence: Cowardice."

¹⁰⁰⁶ TNA/WO/ 71/388 cited from Wilson, *Blindfold and Alone: British Military Executions in the Great War*. p. 120.

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p. 120.

the Army Act; and no telegram from S. of S. can affect my right to do what I think is necessary for Army.¹⁰⁰⁸

Between January 1st 1916 and November 11th 1918 when the WO suspended the death penalty for military offences, Haig sanctioned the death by firing squad of three officers, 15 NCO's and 232 private soldiers. In 85% of these cases, the men concerned were executed for desertion and many were repeat offenders.¹⁰⁰⁹ Although this figure (250) appears high, Haig did give offenders a second chance, commuting an estimated nine out of ten capital convictions during his tenure.¹⁰¹⁰ 'It is also notable that death sentences tended to increase in the weeks preceding a major offensive as the military authorities worked to stamp their authority on the troops'.¹⁰¹¹

Haig also wanted to be seen as even handed, ensuring that military law applied equally to both officers and men.¹⁰¹² For instance, on December 6th 1916, Haig sanctioned the death of 2/Lt. Eric Poole who stood convicted of desertion primarily because he believed that 'it is highly important that all ranks should realise that the law is the same for an Officer as a Private'.¹⁰¹³

It is also true that he felt the full weight of responsibility when he was the final arbiter of a man's life.¹⁰¹⁴ However, Haig had the onerous job of assessing the fate of over 70 capital offenders a month. Although Haig's signature was required on the death warrant, given his other commitments, it is most likely that he delegated the detailed work of this unenviable task to Brig.-Gen. J.B. Wroughton, head of the Personnel Services Branch, who was a career soldier and barrister.¹⁰¹⁵

¹⁰⁰⁸ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 01/02/1919.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Sykes, *Shot at Dawn*. pp. 11, 292-297.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 11.

¹⁰¹¹ French, *Military Identities*. p. 190.

¹⁰¹² NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 06/12/1916.

¹⁰¹³ *Ibid.* Entry: 06/12/1916.

¹⁰¹⁴ *Ibid.* Entry: 06/12/1916.

¹⁰¹⁵ Oram, *Military Executions during World War I*. p. 55.

Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Haig placed what he considered was the higher interests of his armies above those of individual men even when there were seemingly mitigating factors, and particularly when judged against today's standards. In the case of Eric Poole, Haig was aware his medical report concluded, that when he offended, he could have been suffering from shell-shock.¹⁰¹⁶ Perhaps a mitigating circumstance today, but at the time this affliction was barely understood by doctors, and was not recognised in Military Law as grounds for leniency.¹⁰¹⁷ After the war, shell shock became an officially recognised battlefield condition, although the use of the term was eliminated from official nomenclature to prevent unfavourable reactions from patients and others.¹⁰¹⁸

Field Discipline

In France, as with other theatres, non-capital military and civilian offences including absence without leave (35,787), drunkenness (33,063), disobedience (11,367), insubordination (10,629), and theft (4,236) were brought to a Field General-Courts Martial.¹⁰¹⁹ In these instances, Haig generally allowed due-process to take its course. To protect unit morale, Haig did intervene by exception in cases where he considered the sentences were unduly harsh, particularly in the light of a soldier's service record. For example, Sir Iain Colquhoun of the Scots Guards was charged and reprimanded for making a truce with the enemy contrary to orders. This penalty could have put a serious career-breaking blemish on that officer's record. However, in the light of Colquhoun's distinguished service and the fact that the orders issued to him by his superior officer were 'somewhat slack' in delivery, Haig

¹⁰¹⁶ Sykes, *Shot at Dawn*. pp. 142-143.

¹⁰¹⁷ *Manual of Military Law*.

¹⁰¹⁸ [Cmd.1734], "Report of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into "Shell-Shock"," (London: HMSO, 1922) p. 190.

¹⁰¹⁹ TNA/WO/394/20, "Statistical Abstract: Armies at Home and Abroad (1914-1920)." p. 667.

confirmed the proceeding, but remitted his sentence so as not to affect the officer's record.¹⁰²⁰ Later, Colquhoun added a bar to his DSO.

In another case, a junior Regimental Medical Officer, Lt. G.N. Kirkwood was charged with gross misconduct for his role in a serious breach of discipline on the front line. He was convicted and penalised with removal from the service. This case was brought to Haig's attention, possibly by his respected colleague Arthur Sloggett who thought Kirkwood was being scapegoated.¹⁰²¹ Despite the fact that the charge and verdict had been ratified by the principal officers of the Reserve Army including its commander, General Gough, Haig concluded that Kirkwood had indeed been unfairly treated for what he described as a 'lamentable incident'. He overturned the sentence and informally censured the Brig.-Gen. and the Brigade Staff concerned.¹⁰²² Apart from the injustice, Haig knew that Kirkwood was a highly respected junior officer within the 11th Border Regiment, and morale would have undoubtedly suffered had the perception been created that this officer has been unfairly cashiered.

Haig intervened in matters where it became apparent that a superior officer had wronged a subordinate. This was the case with Maj.-Gen. F.J. Davies, commander of 8th Division, who after the offensive at Neuve Chapelle was relieved of his command by Rawlinson. Apparently, this was because Davies failed to advance on a timely basis indicating that he was not 'a good commander on the Field of Battle.' It later transpired that in fact Rawlinson was responsible for the delay. Haig immediately reinstated Davies and severely reprimanded Rawlinson for dishonesty and 'disloyalty to a subordinate'. Ever the pragmatist, Haig stopped short of sending Rawlinson home because 'he had many other valuable qualities for a Commander on active

¹⁰²⁰ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry :19/01/1916.

¹⁰²¹ TNA/WO/32/17700, "Lt. G.N. Kirkwood - A case of discipline," (1916). Note (3) Sloggett to A.G.

¹⁰²² Ibid.Memorandum: From A.G., G.HQ to HQ Reserve Army "A".

service'. Haig's intervention boosted Davis' confidence and ensured there was no dip in the morale of his staff.¹⁰²³

Regimental Discipline

At the regimental level, Haig believed 'good old fashioned discipline' gave men a strong *esprit de corps*, which according to his lights was the key to battlefield success.¹⁰²⁴ He associated discipline at this level with basic training characterised by parade ground drill, respect (e.g. saluting officers) and smartness.¹⁰²⁵ At an inspection of the Guards Division in 1917 Haig witnessed the best of these characteristics:

After the inspection, I dismounted and all the Battalion Commanders were presented to me, and I made a short address. I congratulated the Division on what it had accomplished in battle. I complimented them on their discipline and smartness, and fine spirit. It was the spirit of the first Expeditionary Force which lived in our New Army and made us victorious.

Today the turnout was very good; men very clean and smart. The men handled their arms well and marched well. All this reflected the greatest credit on every man in the Division from the G.O.C. downwards. I felt sure that the Guards never presented a finer sight than they did today – and I could not pay them a greater compliment than to say they were a pattern for the whole Army.¹⁰²⁶

Haig invariably took the opportunity to direct the attention of army commanders, and subordinate commanders to maintaining discipline, training and *esprit de corps* at the battalion level.¹⁰²⁷

¹⁰²³ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry, 16/03/1915.

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid. Entry 28/04/1916.

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid. Entry 25/10/1917; Entry 13/02/1918; Entry 17/05/1918.

¹⁰²⁶ Ibid. Entry 25/10/1917.

¹⁰²⁷ Ibid. OAD 291/30 Minutes of Army Commanders Meeting 21/12/1917.

While Haig was the Adjutant of the 7th (Queens Own) Hussars in India he had a reputation for being a strict disciplinarian, and some said a ‘martinet’.¹⁰²⁸ While Haig believed that ‘very strict discipline was necessary’ he considered that petty discipline characterised by ‘unnecessary fussiness should be avoided’.¹⁰²⁹ Haig was not the only high commander who subscribed to these opinions. In 1942, the C-in-C Home Forces, Gen. Sir Bernard Paget, is recorded as advising the Army Council:

Speaking of the Army generally, the Commander-in-Chief stressed the need of all-round higher discipline, of the kind that promoted fighting efficiency and esprit de corps. Any relaxation of saluting and the tendency to instil in the minds of the troops the feeling that pride in appearance and a soldierly bearing were part and parcel of the worst elements of “spit and polish” were a great mistake.¹⁰³⁰

The most severe form of regimental punishment was Field Punishment No 1, colloquially known as “crucifixion”. Although this punishment could be imposed by courts-martial, it was also available to battalion commanders and was reserved for the most serious offences that could be dealt with at this level. Arguably, Field Punishment No 1 was exemplary but its primary purpose was to bring shame on the offender in front of his battalion or regiment.

In late 1916, led by the trade union movement at home, supported by colleagues in France and Italy and aided and abetted by the tabloid press, great pressure was placed on politicians for the abolition of the practice. Both Houses bowed to the lobby and the WO was instructed to obtain opinions from the C-in-C’s of the various Expeditionary Forces. With the exception of the C-in-C Force D.,

¹⁰²⁸ NLS-Acc.3155/324/a, "Post War Letters to Lady Haig." Letter Sgt-Maj. H.J. Harrison, 7th Hussars to Lady Haig 17/04/1937 and her response 30/06/1937.

¹⁰²⁹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 15/01/1915.

¹⁰³⁰ TNA/WO/32/15773, "Reintroduction of Death Penalty for Desertion in the Field." Army Council Meeting Minutes 11/08/1942 p. 4.

Mesopotamia, all of the C-in-C's including Haig said 'it was impossible to do away with the field punishment'. He argued that its abolition 'would have disastrous and far reaching consequences and that as a result a recourse to the death penalty would become more frequent'. However, Haig did offer a compromise whereby the application of the punishment was standardised throughout the Army. Thus, although offenders could still be shackled, this could not be done in the crucifix position. These recommendations were accepted.¹⁰³¹ Proposals for abolition were raised again in 1919, and once more Haig successfully argued for retention.¹⁰³² After relinquishing his command, the practice was abolished in 1923.¹⁰³³

It does appear that Haig's approach to exemplary discipline did stiffen morale. For the British Army as a whole 7,361 cases of desertion, the most common capital offense, were tried by Field General Courts-Martial between August 4th 1914 and March 31st 1920.¹⁰³⁴ Of these prosecutions, only 266 or 3.7% resulted in the death penalty.¹⁰³⁵ When the incidence of desertion abroad (7,361) is compared to the figure at home (31,269), the result is instructive.¹⁰³⁶ Over four times as many soldiers deserted in Britain as abroad. Although there were other obvious factors at play including the proximity of refuge, language and the ease of travel, the vital difference between the two regimes may have been the deterring effect of the death penalty. In Britain, virtually all prosecutions took place under a District Courts-Martial where the sanction of the death sentence was prohibited. It is highly likely that the selection of this jurisdiction was influenced by political and military concerns to protect voluntary recruitment. Abroad, cases were typically tried by Field General Courts-

¹⁰³¹ TNA/WO/32/5460, "Abolition of Field Punishment No 1." Memo: Haig to WO 04/12/1916.

¹⁰³² TNA/WO/32/5461, "Enquiry into Field Punishment No 1." Memo: Haig to WO 02/06/1919.

¹⁰³³ TNA/WO/32/5462, "Revised Rules for Field Punishment No 1." Extract from London Gazette 21/08/1923.

¹⁰³⁴ TNA/WO/394/20, "Statistical Abstract: Armies at Home and Abroad (1914-1920)." p. 669.

¹⁰³⁵ Ibid. p. 649.

¹⁰³⁶ Ibid. p. 658.

Martial that had the power to impose a capital sentence. This finding indicates that Haig was right in his assessment that exemplary punishment was an effective deterrent, in part at least.

The death penalty was abolished in 1930 for military offences against the advice to politicians of the Military Members of the Army Council who believed that discipline could collapse without it. In 1942, General Auchinleck, C-in-C (Middle East), drawing on the support of British C-in-Cs in other theatres, petitioned the WO to reinstate the death penalty to reduce the desertion rate and underpin sagging morale.¹⁰³⁷ This attempt failed, again as a matter of political expediency.¹⁰³⁸ However, as David French has been able to demonstrate both the Army Council's earlier fears and those of Auchinleck later proved unfounded.¹⁰³⁹

Conclusion: Attainment of Unity-of-Moral-Effort in the BEF

As alluded to the tools and the evidence do not exist to determine with any precision the degree to which unity-of-moral-effort was achieved in the BEF. However, bearing in mind the caveats discussed above, an indicative answer is revealed by the few remaining troop letter censorship reports that exist in archives that comment upon the fluctuating state of the BEF's morale during Haig's tenure.

In the first report (March 1917) following the Somme campaign the censor concluded that 'the sections dealing with the different Armies leaves a general impression that the spirit of confidence remains as high as ever, [and] that

¹⁰³⁷ TNA/WO/32/15773, "Reintroduction of Death Penalty for Desertion in the Field." Memorandum. General C.J.E. Auchinleck, C-in-C Middle East Forces to Secretary of State for War, Annex I, 07/04/1942 n.p.

¹⁰³⁸ TNA/WO/32/15774, "Reintroduction of Death Penalty for Desertion in the Field." Prime Minister's (Winston Churchill) Personal Minute, 07/06/1914.

¹⁰³⁹ David French, "Discipline and the Death Penalty in the British Army in the War against Germany during the Second World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, no. 4 (1998) pp. 535; 540-543.

determination to see the war through [was] practically universal'.¹⁰⁴⁰ In the second report (July 1918), after the costly German offensive and based upon 83,621 letters, the censor notes that 'high quality of the moral which was especially evident...in the March report, was amply confirmed by later experience'. Elaborating the officer found that 'general moral' was 'at its highest when fighting was in progress, some slackening during recent quieter periods, but all Armies [were] full of confidence'.¹⁰⁴¹ Paradoxically, the censor concluded that 'the loss of ground both on the Somme and further North acted as a powerful tonic on the moral of the Army as reflected in its correspondence'.¹⁰⁴²

After having read both reports carefully, and in the full knowledge of the operational context, the impression is created that the censor's optimistic tone may not have entirely reflected the reality on the ground. To some extent this found support from Capt. M. Hardie, Censor at Third Army. In August 1917, based upon the censorship of 65,000 letters, he recorded 'in regard to moral it must be frankly admitted that the letters show[ed] an increasing amount of war weariness. There [was] a tinge of despondence that has never been apparent before'.¹⁰⁴³ Remarkably, Hardie reported an improvement in morale in October.¹⁰⁴⁴

When all of these factors that influence, determine and underpin morale are drawn together it does appear that their combined and pervasive effect across the BEF was positive. A fair and albeit subjective judgement does suggest that unity-of-moral-effort to a relatively high degree was achieved by Haig during his tenure. In this respect, as J.G. Fuller observed:

¹⁰⁴⁰ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)."Report: The British Armies in France as gathered by Censorship; March, 1917. p. 1.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ibid. Report: The British Armies in France as gathered from Censorship; July 1918. Summary.

¹⁰⁴² Ibid. p. 1.

¹⁰⁴³ IWM/Capt.M.Hardie-Papers/84/46/1. Report: August 1917.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibid. Report: October 1917.

The BEF outlasted 'friend and foe alike'. The French Army...underwent a crisis of morale after the profound shocks of the battles of the frontiers of 20-22 August 1914 [and] was subject to widespread mutiny in the summer of 1917.¹⁰⁴⁵ By autumn of 1918, and arguably before, German resistance crumbled on the home front, and the great German military machine, let down by indiscipline concentrated in the rear areas ground to a halt'.¹⁰⁴⁶

Yet the British and Dominion forces on the Western Front kept going, withstanding the mightiest blows the German Army could deliver in spring 1918. The BEF took the leading part in the great war-winning offensive of that autumn and at no time did discipline collapse. The Fifth Army staggered under the weight of the German assault of the latter part of the war in March 1918, but no Caporetto-style collapse ensued.¹⁰⁴⁷

When at the end of the war, Haig asked Edmonds if he could explain the British victory, his immediate response was 'because the troops are like yourself; they didn't know when they were beaten'.¹⁰⁴⁸ Haig could not have done better than to have summed up the impact of unity-of-moral-effort in this way.

¹⁰⁴⁵Hew Strachan, "Training, Morale and Modern War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 41(2006) p. 211 See also French, *Raising Churchill's Army: The British Army and the War Against Germany 1919-1945*. p. 122.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Strachan, Strachan, "The Morale of the German Army, 1917-18." pp. 385-396.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*. pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁴⁸ LHCMA:Edmonds:Memoirs. p. 434.

7. The Management of Unity-of-Effort in the BEF

In previous chapters, the nature and character of unity-of-effort as perceived by Haig have been investigated. The practical application of the principle in terms of unity-of-mental, physical and moral effort has been demonstrated. This chapter will explore how Haig aimed to optimise unity-of-effort in the BEF through the agency of his General Staff. Firstly, it will be shown that up to 1909 the improvised staff organization used by successive British armies in the field produced mixed and sometimes catastrophic results. The outcome depended largely, if not solely, on the organizational and administrative ability of the incumbent General Officer, C-in-C. Further, it will be explained how in 1909 ad-hocism was replaced by a permanent staff organization regulated by principles that Haig embodied in *FSR-II*. These principles found practical elaboration in the *General Staff Manual, 1911* and the *Staff Manual, 1912*. Thus, for the first time, the attainment of unity-of-effort in the field by the British Army was transformed from being an ad-hoc and arbitrary process to potentially a formal and managed one. The organization and development of the GS within the BEF will then be considered. In particular, a new organizational construct will be introduced to explain how Haig expected the vital role of coordination, exercised by the GS, to work in British military organization from GHQ down to platoon HQ. Finally, evidence drawn from the Battle of Amiens will show how unity-of-effort was managed by the GS in an operational environment.

To establish a firm basis for understanding, it is important to note that the following discussion is confined to the British GS system *in the field*, and *at war*, unless expressly stated otherwise. This will avoid any confusion with the GS branch at the WO, the British command staff organization in peacetime, or the temptation to

make false comparisons with the German Great General Staff and the General Staff of the French Army. As John Gooch observed the British General Staff was 'a particularly Anglo-Saxon institution'.¹⁰⁴⁹

A Tradition of 'Adhocism'

The modern British Army's staff has its antecedents in Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army formed in 1645. Although Cromwell fashioned his own staff loosely on the Continental model, its organization was firmly grounded in 'adhocism' where improvisation was the governing principle. Hence, when in 1650 he became Captain-General to carry the Civil War into Scotland he took with him a Chief of the Staff (Sergeant-Major-General Skippon) and a cadre of administrative staff officers. Cromwell used the staff as the directing organ of his army and this method gave a degree of stability to the English way of warfare. However, Cromwell was not only a brilliant field commander, he was also an extremely competent organiser. His administration set a very high standard, and in this process he recognised the value of an efficient staff.¹⁰⁵⁰ That said, Cromwell fashioned his own staff organization, and the roles of its officers were dedicated to his own needs and purposes. There was no formal organization, specific roles were not codified and Cromwell 'founded no schools devoted to military learning, or the training of staff officers'.¹⁰⁵¹ His legacy for the Staff was a pattern of improvisation, which relied solely on the organizational and administrative abilities of future commanders for its success.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Gooch, "A Particularly Anglo-Saxon Institution: The British General Staff in the Era of Two World Wars." p. 203.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Lieut.-Col J.D. Hittle, *The Military Staff: Its History and Development* (Harrisburg PA.: Military Service Publishing Company, 1944) pp. 113-116.

¹⁰⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 117.

In the immediate future the Army was fortunate in its commanders. Monck continued in Cromwell's mould establishing the Adjutant General's Department.¹⁰⁵² Marlborough proved to be an exceptional commander and an able administrator.¹⁰⁵³ His ad-hoc staff organization was convened and reconvened to suit the particular circumstances of his annual campaigns. His principal staff officer was the Quartermaster-General, William Cadogan who at various times acted as 'chief of staff, master logistician, and chief of intelligence'.¹⁰⁵⁴ There is little doubt that Marlborough's successes would not have been achieved without a highly efficient staff, but this was underpinned by his charisma and close attention to detail.¹⁰⁵⁵ For example, 'every gun at Blenheim was laid under his own eye'.¹⁰⁵⁶

Wellington never contemplated any other staff system, other than his own. As Brian Bond observed 'it is entirely appropriate to speak in personal terms of "Wellington's Staff"'.¹⁰⁵⁷ His GHQ staff organization comprised the Adjutant General's branch and that of the Quartermaster-General whose duties included operations and intelligence, all under Wellington's strict supervision.¹⁰⁵⁸ Unlike Napoleon who employed a Chief of Staff (État-Major) as 'the pivot of all operations', Wellington did not see the necessity for this officer and the post was not part of his staff organization. The Duke also ensured that the staff organization at his headquarters was extended and standardised in compressed form down to his divisions.¹⁰⁵⁹ Moreover, he divided his staff into two sub-divisions, the Adjutant

¹⁰⁵² George Monck, 1st Duke of Albemarle (1608-1670).

¹⁰⁵³ The Hon. J. W. Fortesque, *A History of the British Army*, 20 vols, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1935) p. 401. John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722)

¹⁰⁵⁴ Richard Holmes, *Marlborough England's Fragile Genius* (London: Harper Press, 2008) p. 217.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Hittle, *The Military Staff: Its History and Development*. p. 121.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Fortesque, *A History of the British Army*, 1. p. 589.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Brian Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College, 1854-1914* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972) pp. 52-53.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Miles, "Army Administration." p. 32.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Hittle, *The Military Staff: Its History and Development*. p. 125.

General's department and the Quartermaster-General's department. The former was responsible for operations and intelligence and the latter supply. 'There can be little doubt that an efficient staff was an important factor in Wellington's consistent success'.¹⁰⁶⁰

Following the establishment of the Staff College in 1801 under the auspices of the C-in-C, the Duke of York, and following the success of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, apathy took hold in relation to any further staff development in the British Army. Adhocism continued with Lord Raglan in the Crimea where his improvised staff organization and administration broke down with calamitous results.¹⁰⁶¹ This also appears to have been the case in South Africa where there was 'chaos and confusion' in the early campaigns under Buller.¹⁰⁶²

In 1900, when Roberts replaced Buller, he continued to improvise. Roberts was an able commander, but a much less able administrator. He appointed Kitchener as his Chief of Staff placing him in the invidious position of supervising the ill-defined and often conflictual duties of the operational and administrative staff. Kitchener's position was further compromised when Roberts went over his head and dealt directly with the Directors of his administrative services.¹⁰⁶³ With a degree of irony that was obviously lost on Roberts he complained to the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa of the 'indifferent staff-work', where mistakes were made which had the most serious consequences'.¹⁰⁶⁴

As the evidence of the Elgin Inquiry showed, by the end of the war the deficiencies of the ad-hoc staff organization were abundantly clear to both the

¹⁰⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 129.

¹⁰⁶¹ Miles, "Army Administration." p. 25.

¹⁰⁶² [Cd.1791], "Royal Commission on the War in South Africa: Minutes of Evidence." p. 234.

¹⁰⁶³ Maj.-Gen. Sir Frederick Maurice, *History of the War in South Africa: 1899-1902*, IV vols, vol. IV, (London: Hurst and Blackett Limited, 1910) p. 590.

¹⁰⁶⁴ [Cd.1791], "Royal Commission on the War in South Africa: Minutes of Evidence." p. 63.

military and to politicians. There was no formal staff organization, the roles of staff officers and their duties were not defined, the Staff College was producing too few trained officers for anything other than imperial policing, and administrative staff officers had no access to higher education or training. Unity-of-effort within both the staff and army was compromised. The price of this failure was paid in blood and treasure. Arnold Foster in a forceful address to Parliament lamented that the Army 'imperfectly prepared, wasteful in its methods and unsatisfactory in results, [was] one of the most costly machines ever devised.'¹⁰⁶⁵

Evolution of Formal Staff Methods (1909-1912)

In January 1904 the Esher Committee published its report abolishing the post of C-in-C and replaced the Army Board with a seven man Army Council (four military and two civil members), chaired by the Secretary of State for War who was analogous to the First Lord of the Admiralty. The military members included the new post of the Chief of the General Staff who had responsibility for preparation and training for war, the Adjutant-General, the Quartermaster-General and the Master-General of Ordnance. Although these officers reported directly to the Secretary of State, the intention was that the CGS would be *primus inter pares*.¹⁰⁶⁶ His GS branch would be the so called 'brain of the army'.¹⁰⁶⁷ Moreover, the Committee demanded field service regulations setting out 'the accepted principles as regards the training of the Forces, and their administration in, war' which the members stipulated were 'essential'.¹⁰⁶⁸ While these proposals were approved by Parliament, the onerous job of military implementation finally fell to Haig, under Haldane's political leadership.

¹⁰⁶⁵ [Cd.1907], "Re-Organization of the Army," ed. War Office (London: HMSO, 1904) p. 2.

¹⁰⁶⁶ [Cd.1932], "Report of War Office (Reconstitution) Committee." p. 9; 10.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1914*, 1, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶⁸ [Cd.1932], "Report of War Office (Reconstitution) Committee." p. 23.

Before Haig took up his post of DSD, work within the branch had already begun on *FSR-II*.¹⁰⁶⁹ It is highly likely that Lieut.-Col. Walter Adye was the original draftsman of *FSR-II*.¹⁰⁷⁰ He supervised the publications section (S.D.2) of the newly formed Directorate of Staff Duties.¹⁰⁷¹ However, unlike the *Combined Training, 1905* manual, publication of *FSR-II* had been blocked by other departments at the WO, fearful of incursions on their own prerogatives.¹⁰⁷² This is perhaps fortunate because Adye had faithfully translated the Esher Committee's proposal which effectively united command and administration under the C-in-C into the draft regulations.¹⁰⁷³ The unintended consequence of this action was that, as had happened in the past, there was a danger that top ranking officers in peace time could become 'immersed in administrative and routine matters', with training and command being relegated to quite a secondary place.¹⁰⁷⁴ In addition, while the C-in-C retained unqualified control for these two great functions, perversely he was given 'no financial responsibility'.¹⁰⁷⁵

Advised by Haig, Haldane drafted two memoranda for the consideration of the Army Council with a view to settling the question of financial responsibility in the field. He hoped that this action would open the way for the publication of *FSR-II*. It appears that Haldane received little response to the first document, but the second was debated at three Army Council meetings (nos. 89, 90, 91).¹⁰⁷⁶ In July 1907, at the last of these meetings, the military members took the bold decision to convene a nine man committee chaired by the DSD, Maj-Gen. H.D. Hutchinson, to translate

¹⁰⁶⁹ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)*.

¹⁰⁷⁰ TNA/WO/32/4735, "The Incidence of Administrative Responsibility in the Field," (1907). n.p.

¹⁰⁷¹ King, *The War Office List and Administrative Directory*. p. 68.

¹⁰⁷² Edward M. Spiers, *Haldane: An Army Reformer* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1980). p. 151.

¹⁰⁷³ TNA/WO/32/4735, "The Incidence of Administrative Responsibility in the Field." *FSR-II* Draft. p. 2.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Miles, "Army Administration." p. 25.

¹⁰⁷⁵ TNA/WO/32/4735, "The Incidence of Administrative Responsibility in the Field." p. 2.

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Précis for Army Council 334; Memorandum (As amended at the 90th and 91st Meetings of the Council).

Haldane's proposals into *FSR-II*, already in draft. It was agreed that attention would focus on the first five 'doctrinal' chapters as the remainder were consequential upon their provisions.¹⁰⁷⁷ This thankless task fell to the unfortunate Adye. Closely supervised by the Committee, and under the critical eye of the Military Members, the good Colonel's difficulties in performing this duty can only be imagined.

The matter remained in the Committee's dead hand for a further four months until Haig succeeded Hutchinson in November 1907 when the body was dissolved. Unsurprisingly, no real progress had been made. To drive through the regulations, Haig was left in the onerous position of having to address the almost irreconcilable differences with, and within, the Army Council. Unfortunately, none of the revised drafts of *FSR-II* prepared by Adye under Haig's supervision have been located. However, the original text for Adye's first five chapters has been found.¹⁰⁷⁸ The full extent of Haig's influence is revealed by the simple expedient of comparing the first five chapters of Adye's original draft with the final regulations published in 1909.¹⁰⁷⁹ This shows that Haig made a vital and far reaching contribution to the principles espoused, and to the structure and content of the doctrinal chapters. For the first time, Haig introduced a set of general principles applicable to *War Organization*; the first of which was the principle of unity-of-effort:

*The successful issue of military operations depends mainly upon the combination and unity of effort directed with energy and determination towards a definite object.*¹⁰⁸⁰

¹⁰⁷⁷ Ibid. Front notes 3, 4, 6, 8.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ibid. Field Service Regulations. (Part II) Chapters 1-5, n.p.

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)*.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 22. (Emphasis in original).

Elaborating on this principle, Haig insisted that:

*The essence of all efficient organization lies in the due subdivision of labour and the decentralization of responsibility among subordinates, combined with central control and co-ordination of subordinated parts for the attainment of common objectives.*¹⁰⁸¹

Haig then coupled the principle of unity-of-effort with the strategic outcome:

*Success in war can be attained only by the defeat of the enemy's mobile forces. The efforts of all parts of an army must be combined to that end.*¹⁰⁸²

The other principles of war organization articulated by Haig in *FSR-II* were unity of control, (generally referred to as unity of command); the division of labour, span of control, delegation of responsibility and the chain of command.¹⁰⁸³

It is a mark of Haig's achievement that these fundamental organizational principles were later enunciated by Henri Fayol, considered to be the founding father of modern management science, in his famous work *Administration Industrielle et Générale*, first published in July 1916.¹⁰⁸⁴ The obvious conclusion is that in matters of organization and administration, Haig was well ahead of his time. The principles established by Haig in 1909 are still considered best practice today in major institutions and corporations around the world.

As shown in Figure 27 (below), the structure and content of the original and revised chapters are markedly different:

¹⁰⁸¹ Ibid. p. 23. (Emphasis in original).

¹⁰⁸² Ibid. p. 23. (Emphasis in original).

¹⁰⁸³ Ibid. pp. 22-24.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Fayol, *General and Industrial Management*. p. v-vi. Nancy M. Carter, "General and Industrial Management by Henri Fayol," *The Academy of Management Review* 11, no. 2 (1986) p. 454

Figure 27: Comparison of *FSR-II* Editorial Structure (1906 versus 1909)

| 1906-07 Text (Pre-Haig): ¹⁰⁸⁵ | 1909 Text (Post-Haig): ¹⁰⁸⁶ |
|---|---|
| CHAPTER I. | CHAPTER I. |
| ORGANIZATION, COMMAND, AND ADMINISTRATION | PREPARATORY MEASURES. |
| CHAPTER II. | CHAPTER II. |
| THE STAFF. | WAR ORGANIZATION. |
| CHAPTER III. | CHAPTER III. |
| ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS, AND OFFICERS HOLDING SPECIAL, AND PERSONAL APPOINTMENTS. | GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND OF THE COMPONENT PARTS OF THE FORCES IN THE FIELD. |
| CHAPTER IV. | CHAPTER IV. |
| LINES OF COMMUNICATION. | GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE MAINTENANCE OF THE FORCES IN THE FIELD. |
| CHAPTER V. | CHAPTER V. |
| MAINTENANCE OF AN ARMY. | PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE OF PERSONNEL. |

Of particular importance is the comparison between Chapter II ‘*The Staff*’ in the original, and Chapter III of Haig’s *FSR-II*. This reveals that in the original, the responsibility for command and administration was combined under the C.-in-C. (‘The instructions of C-in-C are conveyed to the army through three officers, viz. – the Chief of the General Staff, the Adjutant General, and the Quartermaster General.’).¹⁰⁸⁷ By contrast, *FSR-II* made a clear demarcation between the responsibility for command and administration. The regulations stressed that:

¹⁰⁸⁵ TNA/WO/32/4735, "The Incidence of Administrative Responsibility in the Field," (1907). *FSR Part II* n.p.

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)*, (London: HMSO, 1909).

¹⁰⁸⁷ TNA/WO/32/4735, "The Incidence of Administrative Responsibility in the Field." Chapter II, The Staff, section 6, p. 4).

*The C.-in-C. issues such orders on all matters connected with the efficiency and maintenance of the forces in the field as he considers necessary for the execution of his plan of operations, for the success or failure of which he is responsible. But it is a principle of war organization the C.-in-C. is relieved of the responsibility for the conduct of the business of providing for the requirements of the forces in the field, unless he sees fit to interpose.*¹⁰⁸⁸

The original only alluded to the coordinating role of the Staff:

The members of the staff convey the commander's instructions to the troops and administrative services under his command and see that they are duly observed. The staff, therefore, acts as a directing and explaining body towards the troops and administrative services. An officer of the staff is vested with no military command.¹⁰⁸⁹

FSR-II made this role plain:

*An officer of the staff, as such, is vested with no military command, but he has a two-fold responsibility; first, he assists a commander in the supervision and control of operations and requirements of the troops, and transmits his orders and instructions; secondly, it is his duty to give the troops every assistance in his power in carrying out the instructions issued to him.*¹⁰⁹⁰

In 1923, presumably to reflect the experience gained in the field, the role of the staff was elaborated further in *FSR-I (Organization and Administration)*:

The main object of staff organization is to ensure smooth and efficient cooperation of every part of the force, directed with energy and determination to the defeat of the enemy.

¹⁰⁸⁸ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)* p. 27. (Emphasis in original).

¹⁰⁸⁹ "The Incidence of Administrative Responsibility in the Field." Chapter II, Section 5, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)* p. 35. (Emphasis in original).

*No perfection of organization, however, can make up for the absence of care, forethought, knowledge, and cordial goodwill through the staff. The relationship between all officers serving on the staff must therefore be close and cordial. It must be realized that though the work is organized in different branches, there is only one staff – and this has but one purpose – to assist the commander in framing his plan and the troops in carrying it out.*¹⁰⁹¹

In 1911, building upon the foundation established by *FSR-II*, a *General Staff Manual*, albeit issued in provisional form, was published to set out in detail the organization, functions and specific duties of the branch in the field.¹⁰⁹² The origins of this manual remain obscure. However, a footnote in Adye's original 1907 draft of *FSR-II* referred specifically to the volume suggesting that it was in gestation at this time.¹⁰⁹³ In January 1908, at Haig's first GS Conference in his capacity of DSD, he drew attention to the dysfunctional organization of the staff during the South African War where 'three entirely different systems were adopted concurrently by three different headquarters'. He advocated that it was 'necessary to have some book of regulations that would show the normal conditions' allowing the GS to be organised 'as efficiently as possible' for a large-scale campaign'.¹⁰⁹⁴ Given the context of the meeting and the specific discussion on staff organization, it is most likely that Haig was referring to the *General Staff Manual* which he knew was in preparation, and where public recognition of his full backing was necessary to fend-off any potential opposition. Following the meeting, Adye's team prepared the volume under Haig's close supervision. Although the manual was published in July 1911, 18 months after

¹⁰⁹¹ *Field Service Regulations Vol I: Organization and Administration*. p. 23. (Emphasis in original).

¹⁰⁹² TNA/WO/279/861, *General Staff Manual. War. (Provisional)*.

¹⁰⁹³ TNA/WO/32/4735, "The Incidence of Administrative Responsibility in the Field." Chapter II, The Staff, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹⁴ TNA/WO/279/18, "Report on a Conference of General Staff Officers at the Staff College 7th to 10th January 1908." pp. 26-27.

Haig had left the WO to take up his post as CGS in India, it is unlikely that any changes of substance were made to the regulations prior to publication. Haig had recommended Maj.-Gen. L.E. Kiggell, as his replacement as DSD precisely because he wanted to ensure continuity of his ideas within the directorate.¹⁰⁹⁵ Moreover, in the lengthy correspondence between the two men, where it is apparent that Kiggell sought and followed Haig's advice on even relatively trivial matters, no mention was made of the GS regulations. This suggests that progress to publication proceeded as Haig originally intended.¹⁰⁹⁶

The *General Staff Manual* is instructive because it not only re-confirms the coordinating role of the body, but it also leaves no doubt as to how Haig believed this role should work:

13. Decentralisation and co-ordination of Staff duties:

1. The more thoroughly the will and influence of the Commander-in-Chief permeates the whole army, the higher the degree of combination attainable. The chain of command is the main channel through which this will and influence must flow, but the physical and mental powers of individual being limited, this chain of command is only sufficient in itself to attain the desired end in the case of small forces acting under the eyes of the commander. With larger forces, the Staff, working through this main channel, is intended to furnish the means to so assist the natural powers of a commander that he may be enabled to keep in close touch with every part of his command. The duties of the Staff are, therefore multifarious.

2. In order to provide for the efficient performance of Staff duties, it is necessary to arrange for the division of labour

¹⁰⁹⁵ LHCMA:Kiggell:1/1-37, "Letters Haig to Kiggell (1909-1914)." Letter: Haig to Kiggell 18/5/1909; 14/07/1910; 21/05/1909.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Ibid. Letters (1909-1914). 27/04/1911; 14/04/1911; 04/05/1911; 25/05/1911; 13/07/1911.

combined with central control. With these two objects in view Staff work at General Headquarters is grouped into three branches, as described in Field Service Regulations, Part II.; and it is laid down that the “the power and responsibility of co-ordinating Staff work at General Headquarters is vested in the Commander-in-Chief.”

3. Another important principle in military organization, however, is that no individual should be burdened with more work than it is possible for him to do thoroughly; and it is essential that the Commander-in-Chief should be relieved, so far as possible, of all detail in order that he may be enabled to devote himself to the more important work of his high office. He is empowered therefore, by Field Service Regulations, to delegate the duty of co-ordination to the Chief of the General Staff, but with the proviso that the latter is not to be charged with responsibility for the inner working of the other branches. It is further laid down that the Chief of the General Staff is the Staff officer through whom the Commander-in-Chief “exercises his functions of command, and by whom all orders issued by him will be signed...”¹⁰⁹⁷

The first passage showed that in Haig’s mind the coordinating role of the GS in the field was one of its primary functions, if not the principal one, within the whole force at each level of command. The intention was that the GS would achieve coordination mainly by the preparation (Section O(a)) and despatch of orders (Section O(b)) under the signature of the commander.¹⁰⁹⁸ Furthermore, while the C-in-C was responsible for coordinating the Staff, this duty in effect rested with the CGS, and through him to his direct subordinates.

¹⁰⁹⁷ TNA/WO/279/861, *General Staff Manual. War. (Provisional.)* pp. 16-17. See also sec. 2. Position of the Staff in Relation to Commanders pp. 9-10.

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Ibid.* Chapter IV. Operations Section, pp. 32-49.

To summarise, the C-in-C had the specific power and responsibility for coordinating the Staff at GHQ.¹⁰⁹⁹ To avoid overburdening the C-in-C, the regulations gave him leave to delegate the coordination of the Staff, as he saw fit, to the CGS, and through this officer to members of the GS branch.¹¹⁰⁰ By virtue of the CGS's position, he had the capacity to issue instructions under his Chief's signature to the C-in-C's immediate subordinate commanders whose rank was normally superior to his own, and to heads of the specialist fighting services under the C-in-C's command. The CGS, through the GS branch, worked out the detailed arrangements demanded by the C-in-C's instructions and drafted the orders thereto. These were issued through the GS branch to lower formations whose HQ organization mirrored that of GHQ in progressively compressed form. Vitaly, the Staff was vested with no power of military command outside their respective branches. They merely animated the C-in-C's instructions.¹¹⁰¹ In this sense the Staff commanded no one, but the body did assist the C-in-C to command everyone.¹¹⁰² Crucially, the regulations anticipated that the effective and efficient work of staff officers in pursuit of the C-in-C's instructions would be facilitated by a productive network of personal contacts of all kinds within the three staff branches, regular fighting formations and specialist fighting services.¹¹⁰³ A subtlety of this arrangement which has not been widely acknowledged, is that by right of this vested authority, staff officers were deemed to have access to the C-in-C's personal network of contacts, and on equal terms.¹¹⁰⁴

The *General Staff Manual* was superseded by the *Staff Manual, 1912*. The main difference between the two volumes is signalled by the abbreviation of the title.

¹⁰⁹⁹ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)* para 3. p. 36.

¹¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* Para. 3. p. 36.

¹¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* Para 2. p. 35.

¹¹⁰² Urwick, "Organization as a Technical Problem." p. 63.

¹¹⁰³ *Ibid.* p. 67.

¹¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p. 63.

The *Staff Manual* was revised and extended to include the organization and duties of the administrative staff branches and departments. The passages quoted above were reproduced without change except those required to include the added staff branches.

The General Staff – The Third Dimension in British Military Organization

The use of the GS acting as the vehicle dedicated to achieving a high degree of coordination, and thereby unity-of-effort, was a uniquely British and a potentially revolutionary organizational concept. An updated version of General Bronsart von Schellendorff's standard work, *The Duties of the General Staff* observed:

The English Army is in every respect so entirely different from any of the great European armies, not only as regards the system of recruiting of the Army, but also as regards administration and the duties of the higher military authorities, that it must not appear surprising if the character, duties and business of the General Staff belonging to it are totally different from that of any other Army.¹¹⁰⁵

Lyndall Urwick, a distinguished former BEF GSO, was possibly the only contemporary management scientist who publicly recognised the potential of this innovation for large-scale organizations. However, his important paper *Organization as a Technical Problem* published in 1937 was largely overshadowed by the work of the American scientific management school, including that of its much celebrated founding member, Frederick Winslow Taylor.¹¹⁰⁶ Urwick also misjudged his primary American audience with his dense writing style and totally Anglo-centric exposition. Even today, the full significance of the British GS's coordinating role has not fully

¹¹⁰⁵ General Bronsart von Schellendorff, *The Duties of the General Staff* (London: HMSO, 1905) p. 105. This opinion has been reaffirmed by modern historians. Eugene O. Porter, "The Evolution of the General Staff," *The Historian* 8, no. 1 (1945) p. 35. Gooch, "A Particularly Anglo-Saxon Institution: The British General Staff in the Era of Two World Wars."

¹¹⁰⁶ Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1919).

been recognised by military historians and top managers of institutional, commercial and industrial organizations. This is perhaps not surprising because there have been 'few systematic studies' of the GS on the Western Front.¹¹⁰⁷

The latest work in the field by Dr Paul Harris, acknowledged but omitted to fill this particular gap in our knowledge. In a thoroughly well researched study supported by deep quantitative analysis, his focus was primarily on *who* the GS were and *what* they did, rather than *how* they did it. Harris defined the GS as 'assistants to their commanders and servants to the troops'.¹¹⁰⁸ While this pithy interpretation is correct, it obscures the vital importance of the GS's coordinating role. Harris did discuss this duty, but he did not elaborate much beyond positing that 'conferences played a significant part in the planning process and the life of a staff officer'.¹¹⁰⁹ He also drew attention to the communications difficulties GSO's experienced in field, which to some extent would have impaired their ability to carry out their coordinating role.

To illuminate fully the novelty of the British staff system as devised by Haig it is first necessary to make a small mental leap. Since at least 1896, the ubiquitous two dimensional organogram has been used to illustrate the structure and relationships within organizations including the military.¹¹¹⁰ One way to quickly grasp how the staff system worked as articulated by Haig in *FSR-II* is to consider the organogram depicted in three dimensions. The first dimension is represented by the First Line fighting services; the second dimension by the Second Line supporting services and the third dimension by the Third Line coordinating service, namely the General Staff. This treatment immediately reveals the GS's functional organizational relationship.

¹¹⁰⁷ Harris, "The Men Who Planned the War: A study of the Staff of the British Army on the Western Front." Harris provides a thorough review of the existing literature in his thesis, demonstrating its paucity. pp. 8-38.

¹¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p.75.

¹¹⁰⁹ Ibid. pp.139-143.

¹¹¹⁰ J. Slater Lewis, *Commercial Organization of Factories* (London: E. & F.N. Spon, 1896) pp.474-476: Diagram of Staff Organization.

It illustrates how the Branch was able to exercise its coordinating role upon the First and Second Line arms and services, directly impacting unity-of-effort at each level of command from GHQ down to the platoon, or its equivalent in the non-infantry fighting arms.

‘The chief purpose of coordination is to secure correlated action by individuals’.¹¹¹¹ Visualised in three dimensions, the GS can be personified as the ‘spinal cord’ of the organization acting as the conduit for the transmission of orders, which acted to deliver perpendicular coordination.¹¹¹² The GS promoted horizontal coordination, within and between the First Line and Second Line through the active ‘service of knowledge,’ meaning the provision of information, advice and counsel.¹¹¹³

Building on *FSR-II*, *The General Staff Manual, 1911* elaborated further:

The duties of the General Staff, as laid down in Field Service Regulations, Part II may be conveniently considered generally as consisting of:

- (a) Obtaining and communicating to responsible commanders information:—
 - i. Of their own forces.
 - ii. Of the enemy and the country.
- (b) Conveying the instructions and orders of the responsible commanders to those who have to act on them, and assisting the latter to carry out these instructions and orders in such a manner as will conduce to bringing the operations to a successful issue.

¹¹¹¹ Urwick, "Organization as a Technical Problem." p.60.

¹¹¹² Hubert Foster, *Organization: How Armies Are Formed For War (1911)* (London: Hugh Rees, Ltd, 1911). Foster observed that the ‘Staff forms the nervous system of the Command’. p. 58.

¹¹¹³ Mooney, "The Principles of Organization." pp. 93-95 This distinction, implied by *FSR-II* was made explicit by Mooney, Vice President of the General Motors Corporation and a leading American organizational practitioner in 1937.

- (c) Keeping the necessary records, both of the purposes of war and for a subsequent history of it.
- (d) Miscellaneous duties, such as censorship, control of the press correspondents, charge of foreign attachés, and drafting despatches.¹¹¹⁴

It should be mentioned that the *Staff Manual 1912*, added an extra duty for the GS namely ‘furnishing timely information to the staff and administrative services and departments as to the situation and probable requirements of the troops’.¹¹¹⁵

Although there was a direct reporting relationship in the chain of command between GSOs, in fact, this was a ‘dotted line’ relationship characteristic of modern matrix organizations.¹¹¹⁶ These officers reported directly to their respective formation or unit COs, while their training, discipline and career prospects were the ultimate responsibility of their GS superiors, and the branch to which they belonged.

The foregoing explanation provides a summary of *what* GS officers did; it is now possible to outline *how* they did it. Henri Fayol enumerated 14 principles of administration and identified five elements comprising the process of management in his treatise. As elaborated previously in *FSR-II*, the principles included unity of direction, unity of command, the scalar chain, division of work, and decentralised responsibility foreshadowing mission command.¹¹¹⁷ However, it is Fayol’s five elements of management, characterising the management process that are of the greatest value here: *Prévoyance* – this French term combined both the idea of foresight with that of planning. The process included forecasting, goal setting and action determination. *Organizing* – this provided the organization with everything

¹¹¹⁴ TNA/WO/279/861, *General Staff Manual. War. (Provisional.)* pp. 20-21.

¹¹¹⁵ TNA/WO/32/4731-34, *Staff Manual* (HMSO, 1912). p. 27

¹¹¹⁶ <http://www.global-integration.com/matrix-management/matrix-structure/solid-line-reporting-dotted-line-reporting-matrix-organization-structure/> 02/12/2015.

¹¹¹⁷ Daniel A. Wren, *The History of Management Thought* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc, 2005) pp. 214-219. *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)*; Fayol, *General and Industrial Management*. General Principles, pp. 22-24.

useful to its function. *Commanding* – this involved setting the organization’s assets into motion. *Coordinating* – this harmonised the organization’s activities so as to facilitate its working. *Controlling* – this verified that everything occurs in conformity with the plan adopted, the instructions issued and the principles established.¹¹¹⁸

As can be seen in Figure 28, (below) these activities provide a matrix that neatly encapsulates GS’s duties enunciated in *FSR-II*, the *General Staff Manual, 1911*, and added to in the *Staff Manual, 1912*. If the allocation of staff duties within the matrix is accepted, then it can reasonably be concluded that the GS performed its duties by what is now recognised as the management process. In effect, GS officers might be named ‘military managers’ to more accurately signal their role. The staff duties identified in Figure 28 all impinged in characteristic ways on the overall coordinative function.¹¹¹⁹ *Prévoyance* (which in of itself requires information and/or intelligence) delivered the operational and other types of plans, which created, among other things, the contexts for coordination. *Organizing* brought manpower and resources into play in accordance with the plan. *Commanding* involved issuing orders, putting the plan in action. *Coordinating* ensured that all First and Second Line activities were harmonized, in accordance with the plan typically through meeting and conferences. *Controlling* monitored the outcomes and results of the plan. At the macro level of organization the GS utilised these management elements to promote unity of mental, physical and moral effort. In pursuit of unity-of-effort, coordination was the object of these elements of management *in toto*. At the micro level of organization, the function of coordination, like that required by an operational plan for instance, remained a discrete element within the management process.

¹¹¹⁸ Wren, *The History of Management Thought*. pp. 219-222 . Fayol, *General and Industrial Management*. Chapter 5, Elements of Management pp. 43-110; 104-105.

¹¹¹⁹ Urwick, "Organization as a Technical Problem." p. 60-69.

Figure 28: Staff Duties Encapsulated by Henri Fayol’s Elements of Management

| | Prévoyance | Organizing | Commanding | Coordinating | Controlling |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|--|---|
| FSR-II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining and communicating to responsible commanders information of their own troops and of the enemy and the country. • To study the situation constantly and be prepared to suggest plans of operation to commanders. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furnishing timely information to the staff and administration services and departments as to the situation and possible requirements of troops. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conveying the instructions of the responsible commanders to those who have to act on them... • [It is implicit in <i>FSR-II</i> that the GS exercises command through the chain of command established within its own organization]. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...and assist the latter to carry out these instructions in such a manner as will conduce to the successful issue of the operations. • CGS is responsible for working out all arrangements, and for the drafting of detailed orders regarding with military operations, war organization and efficiency of troops. • CGS is responsible for general coordination of staff work (G.S., A.G. and Q.M.G. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miscellaneous duties, such as censorship, control of press correspondent, charge of foreign attachés, and drafting despatches. • Keeping records for present and historical purposes |
| Staff Manual 1912 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section O(a) is responsible for detailed planning, preparation of reports and drafting of associated orders. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations Section (O) • Sub-section O(a) Plans, Orders and Intercommunications. • Sub-section O(b) Records. Reproduction, record and despatch of orders, messages and other documents emanating from the GS. • Intelligence Section (I) • Subsection 1(a) Information. • Subsection 1(b) Secret service. • Subsection 1(c) Topography. • Subsection 1(d) Censorship. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chain of command between the CGS and other GS Officers is qualified. Subordinate commanders are solely responsible for all personnel within their commands including GS officers. • In acknowledgement of this relationship, all communication between the staff is done in the name of their respective line commanders... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BGGs Operations Section is responsible for obtaining decisions as to the action to be taken, both regarding operations and the amount of information to be circulated to all branches and subordinate commanders. • Sections O and I are required to closely coordinate methods of gaining intelligence • Section O(b) is responsible for the GS Central Office and as such is responsible for the distribution of intelligence information. • Section O(a) is responsible for dispatch of orders to O(b). Where these orders are of a specialised nature (e.g. Artillery and Engineers) drafts are to be prepared and obtained by O(a) from the specialist branch concerned. | |

Unity-of-Effort at the Battle of Amiens (August 8th-12th 1918)

As argued above, the GS's principal responsibility at all levels of command was coordination. To demonstrate how this process worked in the field, a case study has been made of the GS's role at the Battle of Amiens in August, 1918. Specifically, the staff practices and processes used by Fourth Army, working through the Australian Corps, the 5th Australian Infantry Division, the 15th Australian Infantry Brigade, and the 57th Australian Infantry Battalion, have been examined.

The Battle of Amiens has been chosen because by 1918 the British GS system had arguably reached its full elaboration, and its officers were thoroughly versed in their respective roles. The Australian Corps, rather than the British III Corps or the Canadian Corps, have been selected simply because Monash was considered to be an able manager, and like Haig he would not have knowingly tolerated poor staff practices under his command. The 5th Division was chosen because its staff records have been retained in unusual detail and are readily accessible on-line from the Australian War Memorial. The establishment of the Imperial General Staff, again with Haig's close involvement, ensured that the Australians adopted the GS principles, practices and work processes specified in *FSR-II* and the later 1912 *Staff Manual*. The records of the Australian Corps, 5th Division and lower formations provided evidence of the similarity of staff practices between the Australian and British formations which extended down to the use of identical printed stationery.

The staff records of the formations included in this study have been assessed through the prism of Fayol's management process. Broadly, this work examined the period between July 12th 1918, when the battle plan was in formulation, to August 10th 1918 when the main thrust of offensive action was concluded, whereupon the

5th Australian Division went into Corps reserve. The detailed examination focused on the period from July 28th, when the offensive was approved by Foch, to August 9th.¹¹²⁰

The findings of the case study are based upon the primary source material presented in Appendix 1. This evidence was drawn from the July to August 1918 war diaries maintained by the relevant formations and units. This information has been augmented by entries and original documents contained in the relevant volumes of Haig's 'typed' war diaries, orders and memoranda in the Fourth Army: Operations (July 17th to August 30th 1918) file, and where necessary the British Official Histories.¹¹²¹

As can be seen from Appendix 1, the order and information flow has been marshalled by GHQ, formations (Fourth Army, Australian Corps, 5th Aust. Division, and 8th Brigade) and battalions (57th Aust. Bn.). It has been assembled under Fayol's management elements (*prévoyance*, organising, commanding, coordinating and controlling). The primary object was to illuminate the overarching coordinating role, both perpendicular and horizontal, of GSOs in carrying out these management processes in respect to operations and administration. The role played by Haig as the 'coordinator in chief' is also shown on the matrix.

It is important to note that Appendix 1 suffers from at least two limitations. First, the information in the matrix is not comprehensive and reflects only those documents and other written material (messages, telephone reports, telegrams, etc.)

¹¹²⁰ Under ideal circumstances, earlier British operations would have been included in this study to trace the evolution of General Staff work practices and processes. In addition, it would have been useful to include all of the British formations that took part in the offensive to examine in what ways and to what extent the staff process and work practices differed between them. However, within the word constraint these two exercises have not been possible.

¹¹²¹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." (July-August 1918); TNA/WO/158/241, "Fourth Army File No 11 (17th July-30th August 1918)." AWM4/1/35/7-8, "Australian Corps (July - August)," (1918). AWM4/1/50/20-30, "5th Australian Division: General Staff HQ July - August," (1918). AWM4/23/15/30/3, "15th Australian Infantry Brigade War Diary (August)," (1918). AWM4/23/74/30-31, "57th Australian Infantry Battalion War Diary (July - August)," (1918).

retained on file. Relevant information may not have been filed in the first place, and some information that was collated could subsequently have been 'weeded-out'. It appears that administrative communications in particular suffer from these problems. Secondly, it is also the case that the coordinating role of the GS relied on informal meetings, face-to-face communication of other kinds, and telephone calls. Again, it is probable that the substance of many of these contacts has not been recorded. Nonetheless, based on the evidence included in Appendix 1, it is possible to draw the following primary conclusions:

First. It is clear that the GSOs including battalion adjutants, exercised their coordinating responsibilities (perpendicular and horizontal) within the framework that Fayol defined as the management process.

Prévoyance

In respect to the planning process, Haig and his CGS Lieut.-Gen. Sir Herbert Lawrence were primarily responsible for establishing the operational objectives, selecting Rawlinson's Fourth Army to conduct the offensive, and augmenting its strength with the addition of the Canadian Corps. Haig also proposed the idea of a combined Anglo-French attack with the First French Army covering the Canadian flank on the right wing. Rawlinson's MGGS, Montgomery-Massingberd, and his SOs prepared the offensive plan in outline including objectives and dispositions for each army corps (III, Australian and Canadian Corps). Following evaluation, approval by GHQ, and ultimately with Foch's sanction, Montgomery-Massingberd prepared a detailed administrative plan to support the operation. At the same time each corps commander together with his staff elaborated and then distributed the plan down to divisional level. The Australian Corps plan was set-out in 21 high-level battle instructions prepared by the BGGs, Brig.-Gen T.A. Blamey, under the close

direction of Monash. These instructions included the method of attack; dispositions of the infantry divisions; the deployment of heavy counter-battery and field artillery; the vital element of secrecy; the critical question of tanks; the organization of communications and HQs; the programme of action; road access; light signals, message and smoke protocols; intelligence and disposal of POW's; co-operation of infantry and aircraft; the role of cavalry and the Armoured Car Battalion; and other essential matters. This process was repeated by division, brigade and battalion HQs. Instructions of increasing granularity were issued, and in some cases amended. The formal order to launch the offensive was issued on August 7th confirming 'Z' day (August 8th) and hour (04.20).

Two novel aspects of this process deserve special attention. The first is the speed with which these plans were prepared and issued. In this case, the whole process was completed in a matter of weeks, rather than the months required for the first battle of the Somme.¹¹²² It has been estimated that planning for the Amiens offensive was completed in 26 days, while that on the Somme took 115 days.¹¹²³ Secondly, because these instructions were issued progressively and the process was repeated by division and brigade HQ, each formation down to battalion was given a welcomed 'heads-up' allowing more preparation time. The benefit of the process was experienced by Lieut.-Col. Chas. A. Denehy, commanding the 57th Aust. Inf. Bn.:

Issue of Orders: I cannot speak too highly of the system adopted days before the operation and continued right up to the issue of the final operations order, of giving Battalions advanced information in the shape of preliminary

¹¹²² As Professor William Philpott has noted, the Somme planning was extended by the complex political machinations that were taking place alongside the military planning. William Philpott, *Bloody Victory: The Sacrifice on the Somme and the Making of the Twentieth Century* (London: Little, Brown, 2009). See Chapters 2 & 3.

¹¹²³ Simpson, "The Operational Role of British Corps Command on the Western Front, 1914-18." p. 221.

instructions. The old practice of issuing a large operation order at the last moment when all information had to be collected and condensed seldom gave time to Battalions to make their dispositions and arrangements, without imposing tremendous pressure on senior Officers right up to the last moment. Certainly a lot of paper was employed but the “look ahead” principle was amply justified and at no time were we overwhelmed with a mass of orders. We thus had our arrangements thought out and completed well ahead of time.¹¹²⁴

Denehy’s opinion does suggest that the principles established in *FSR-II* including unity-of-effort did take time to bed-down during the course of the war.

Organizing

At the operational, as opposed to the administrative level, the organizing that took place in the strict sense of the word involved the reshuffling of commands and the movement of formations and units into the theatre of operation and within the theatre to assembly areas. The GS, at all levels of command including the battalion adjutants, were responsible for this action providing the overall direction, coordination and control.

Liaising with the GS, the AG’s & QMG’s branch organised and coordinated the administrative aspects of the operation through the relevant attached departments. The scope of this work encompassed railways, railheads, roads, canals, ammunition, supplies, water, ordnance, labour, medical, remounts, veterinary, traffic control, prisoners of war, accommodation and civilian inhabitants. In this case, it appeared that the DQMG, Maj.-Gen. H.C. Holman at Fourth Army HQ took the organising lead in this process, issuing orders which were translated down through the

¹¹²⁴ AWM4/23/15/30/3, "15th Australian Infantry Brigade War Diary (August)." Report: (Issue of Orders). (Emphasis in original).

DA&QMG Brig.-Gen. R. A. Carruthers, at Australian Corps, then on to the DAA&QMG Col. J.H. Bruche at the 5th Australian Division, to the Staff Captain at the 15th Brigade before finally reaching the QMS via the Adjutant at the 57th Australian Infantry Battalion. At each level, the requirements were adapted to the needs of the formation and units concerned.

Commanding

It is within the functions of commanding and that of coordinating where the true value of the GS in action is revealed within the context of the three-dimensional organizational structure. As per *FSR-II*, Haig in his capacity sat at the top of the command structure and exercised his function of command and coordination through his CGS who issued Haig's orders under his signature.¹¹²⁵ In this way, on July 23rd the CGS advised Rawlinson, via his MGGs, that his proposal for the Amiens offensive had been approved with the order to 'proceed with preparations as soon as possible' (OAD/900). In due course, Haig issued further orders to Rawlinson via his CGS, altering in particular the final objective of the offensive. On August 6th, on Haig's instructions, the CGS issued a formal order (OAD/15) to Rawlinson and Debeney, commander of the French First Army, whose 1 Corps was under Haig's command, to commence operations on August 8th at 04.20 hours. All orders cascaded down the staff system from GHQ to battalion adjutants.

As described above, warning orders in the form of battle instructions prepared by GSOs were issued to allow commanders to anticipate their orders and advance their battle procedure in a timely manner. In this particular case, owing to the need to maintain strict secrecy, the timing of these orders was staggered later at each level of command. Thus, while Fourth Army received official confirmation from Haig of the

¹¹²⁵ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)* p. 36.

operation on July 23rd, formal orders were withheld from battalion commanders until August 7th. However, through this use of the staff system, Haig could be confident that every man in the operation received his orders on a timely basis.

While this process worked well prior to “Z” day and the whole offensive began in a high state of preparedness, the same cannot be said for the two subsequent days. *FSR-I* made it clear that during an operation, orders should be prepared and issued on the day previous to the required action. Further, *FSR-I* advised that ‘if detailed orders cannot be issued till late in the evening for early operations the next day, great inconvenience will often be prevented by the issue of a preliminary order notifying the time of assembly or of starting’.¹¹²⁶ This did not happen. In the case of the Australian Corps this problem was further compounded by Rawlinson’s decision to leave the start time for operations on the second day to the Canadian Corps commander. As a result, on August 9th costly confusion ensued; while the Australians achieved their objectives momentum was lost. This allowed the enemy time to regain composure and resistance stiffened bringing the offensive to an end as far as the 5th Division was concerned on August 10th.

Coordinating

Prior to “Z” day, in addition to instructions and orders, the GS coordinated both the operational and administrative aspects of the offensive through a series of conferences attended by relevant commanders and their senior staff officers. These conferences took place at GHQ with Haig in the Chair, at army, corps, division and brigade levels. The senior GSOs at each level convened the meetings, prepared the minutes and ensured that the agreed actions were not left undone. The express purpose of these meetings was to ensure a common understanding among

¹¹²⁶ *Field Service Regulations, Part I (Operations)* p. 28.

commanders and resolve any concerns. Coordination was also rendered through personal visits by GSOs. For example, Haig with either his CGS or his BGGs (Operations) visited Monash at Corps HQ on several occasions to personally explain his views and plans.

This does not necessarily imply that Haig lacked confidence in Rawlinson or was micro-managing the planning process. Rather, it was Haig's habit prior to a major operation to visit subordinate HQs to show his interest and to offer his support and encouragement.¹¹²⁷ He also made similar visits to the subsidiary formations of his other armies.¹¹²⁸ At brigade level the brigade major was responsible for ensuring that the battalion commanders and their adjutants had a firm grasp of their instructions and orders. This included trips to observe the ground from the immediate back areas.

After "Z" day commanders and their staff were personally otherwise engaged, and coordination was effected by telephone and messaging services. Dispatch riders were used to carry written orders where the roads permitted and runners were used where they did not. At all levels of command liaison officers were used to maintain lateral contact and communications.

Controlling

Prior to "Z" day, Haig maintained control of proceedings by personally reviewing, amending if necessary, and approving all instructions and orders prepared and issued by his GS. Subordinate commanders exercised control in the same way. Real problems of control emerged as soon as the offensive was launched. An assessment of staff message logs at army, corps, divisional and brigade HQs

¹¹²⁷ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry: 31/07/1918; 01/08/1918; 05/08/1918; 07/08/1918; 11/08/1918; 12/08/1918.

¹¹²⁸ Ibid. 25/09/1918, Third Army; 27/09/1918; 18/09/1918, First Army; 18/09/1918, although Haig had meetings with Plumer (Second Army) at his HQ, he does not appear to have visited Second Army's subsidiary formations. This is most likely because of their deployment adjacent to Cassel 3 hours to the north 'fast travel'.

indicated a constant stream of information mainly flowing upwards from the subordinate units to the superior formations. Communications between GHQ, Army HQ, Corps and Divisional HQ tended to be by telegram or telephone. However, messaging from units in the field, which rapidly out-ran the availability of the cable network, came in by runner, pigeons, power buzzer-amplifier sets, contact aeroplanes and even message carrying rockets. By necessity, the common feature of these messages was their brevity, generally giving information on position and the state of enemy resistance. It appears from the content of messages, that no attempt was made to amend the existing orders of lower formations. Primarily, this may have been because the messaging logs showed it took between 45 minutes and five hours for information to pass from the battalions in the field to the higher decision making formations. Thus, the degree of higher control achieved once the battle was joined was passive rather than active. In short, while the higher commanders were aware of progress, albeit in some cases many hours after the event, their capacity to react was strictly limited.

Second. The results indicate that unity-of-mental-effort was also facilitated by the GS through the application of principles established in *FSR-I* and *FSR-II*, *S.S.135 The Training and Employment of Divisions (January 1918)*, and *S.S.143 The Training and Employment of Platoons (February 1918)*. In addition, the lessons learned as recently as the battle of Hamel on July 4th 1918 were rapidly disseminated by the GS and applied in the lower formations.¹¹²⁹ Although at the start of the war ‘battle procedure’ was ‘a rudimentary notion’¹¹³⁰ it is clear that, despite the pressure on planning, in accordance with *FSR-I* superior orders were issued in

¹¹²⁹ TNA/WO/158/244, "Summary of Operations, Fourth Army. 01/03/1916 to 08/11/1918." Summary of Operations from 29th June to 5th July 1918. Battle of Hamel.

¹¹³⁰ Peter Pedersen, "Maintaining the Advance: Monash, battle procedure and the Australian Corps in 1918," in *1918 Year of Victory: The end of the Great War and the shaping of history*, ed. Ashley Ekins (Auckland: Exisle Publishing Limited, 2010) p. 131.

sufficient time to enable subordinate commanders to frame and distribute their own orders.¹¹³¹ As discussed, in accordance with *S.S.135* these orders were issued at each level of command in the form of instructions dispatched sequentially and concurrently as the planning process progressed. As affirmed by *S.S.135*, this method was adopted precisely because it allowed commanders in lower formations to anticipate their orders, opening up as much time for preparation and training as possible. In addition, ‘preliminary measures’, which *FSR-I* alluded to as concurrent reconnaissance, planning, orders and preliminary movement, that today forms the fundamental basis of battle procedure, were clearly in evidence in the relevant War Diaries as preparation progressed in the days immediately prior to the attack.¹¹³² Moreover, the procedure for framing orders determined by *FSR-I* was strictly adhered to. This included setting a definite task for each body of troops, distinctly stating the direction of attack for each formation, ensured the planned simultaneity occurred in reality, and allowed the subordinate commanders to set out the manner of the attack.¹¹³³

On the basis of lessons learned in the campaigns of 1914 and the spring of 1915, the French Army abandoned its costly recipe for offensive success that relied on size and mass, i.e. more guns and more men.¹¹³⁴ A new operational doctrine *But et conditions d'une action offensive d'ensemble* (Goals and Conditions for a General Offensive Action or Note 5779) was substituted in its place.¹¹³⁵ As Jonathan Krause, the author of *Early Trench Tactics in the French Army* points out, this was ‘a monumentally important work’ that emphasised the need for rigorous and methodical organization which placed the infantry in a verified favourable position to attack

¹¹³¹ *Field Service Regulations, Part I (Operations)* p. 28.

¹¹³² *Ibid.* Preliminary Measures, Sec 104, pp. 112-114.

¹¹³³ *Ibid.* p. 113.

¹¹³⁴ Jonathan Krause, *Early Trench Tactics in the French Army* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013) p. 26.

¹¹³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 23.

through the decisive support of artillery before and during operations. This approach tied in with ‘Foch’s mantra of slow, methodical and prolonged preparation...[where] troops advance on small realisable objectives in a series of limited offensives’.¹¹³⁶ The method were mooted by Rawlinson following the Battle of Neuve Chapelle in the form of ‘bite and hold’ tactics, skilfully deployed by Plumer at Messines, and perfected at Cambrai when ‘breakthrough had been achieved’. However, these tactics were not applied on a large scale until Amiens where they were underpinned by ‘a true weapons system, with interlocking roles assigned to tanks, aeroplanes, a variety of forms of communication, artillery, infantry, and even horse-soldiers’.¹¹³⁷

Third. Unity-of-physical-effort was achieved by training organised via the GSOs. As the intervention of armour was planned to be a major feature of the all-arms attack, infantry of the fighting battalions were put through a two-day training programme in cooperation with tanks organised by brigade majors in the week prior to August 8th. To ensure uniformity of method the course of instruction was based on *S.S.204 Infantry and Tank Co-operation and Training*.¹¹³⁸ Haig witnessed this training session:

Remarkable progress has been made since Cambrai, not only in our pattern of Tanks, but also in the methods of using them. Tanks now go first, covered by shrapnel barrage, and break down all opposition, (sic) Enemy in strong points and machine gun nest are then flattened out by the Tanks. The latter then signal to Infantry to “come on”, and these then advance in open order and mop up the remaining defenders,

¹¹³⁶ Ibid. pp. 23-25.

¹¹³⁷ Robin and Trevor Wilson Prior, *Command on the Western Front* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992) pp. 78, 302-303, 309; Peter Simkins, "Forward," in *The German Army at Passchendaele* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2007). Mark Connelly, *Steady the Buffs! A Regiment, a Region, & the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) p. ix. p.155

¹¹³⁸ AWM4/23/15/29, "15th Australian Infantry Brigade War Diary (July)," (1918). Training 31/07/1918.

and collect prisoners. During consolidation Tanks zig-zag in front to cover the operation.

Some Australian Infantry were used to demonstrate first of all, and then the onlookers from another battalion were put through similar exercises on the same course. The result of these methodical exercises has been to render the Tank more effective and much less costly to us. Sir H. Rawlinson, General H. Elles and Staff of Tanks met me at the Tank ground.¹¹³⁹

Further, *S.S.143* was specifically identified as the basis for platoon training prior to the attack.¹¹⁴⁰ At a conference on July 29th, Haig emphasised that:

Army Commanders must do their utmost to get troops out of the influence of trench methods. We are all agreed on the need for the training of Battalion Commanders who in their turn must train their Company and Platoon Commanders. This is really a "Platoon Commanders' War".¹¹⁴¹

Given the detailed nature of the instructions and the known wariness of Australian troops to working with tanks, the emphasis on training at brigade and battalion level was surprisingly absent in the preliminary battle instructions issued by GHQ, Army HQ and Corps HQ. This indicates that the higher commanders believed that the general state of troop preparedness was satisfactory. However, the reality on the ground was somewhat different particularly as regards the poor state of training of junior officers supplied as reinforcements.¹¹⁴²

Fourth. Unity-of-moral-effort was promoted by a number of factors. Experience had shown that in general troop morale rose when successful fighting

¹¹³⁹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry 31/07/18.

¹¹⁴⁰ AWM4/23/74/30-31, "57th Australian Infantry Battalion War Diary (July - August)." Appendix 33.

¹¹⁴¹ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Entry 29/07/1918.

¹¹⁴² IWM/Maxse-Papers/69/53/13/53/2. Note: Byng to Maxse, 20/07/1918.

was in progress.¹¹⁴³ Thus, following the stunning Australian success at Le Hamel on July 4th, there was a marked improvement of morale in July and subsequently in August. As a result of this offensive, confidence in Monash's generalship was high and the Australian Corps were in good spirits on "Z" Day. This improvement in Australian morale was reflected by statistics on the BEF's prison population in France. Australian inmates in custody dropped from an all-time high in February of 8.8 to 6.8 per thousand in August, a positive movement of 30%.¹¹⁴⁴ However, following 'months of almost continuous hard fighting, heavy casualties and dwindling numbers of reinforcements sapped the strength of units and produced an inevitable decline in discipline and morale'.¹¹⁴⁵ By November the population of Australian inmates had scaled new heights, approaching 9 convictions per thousand.

Fifth. Given the success of the offensive at Amiens, it does appear that the GS achieved unity-of-effort through its overall coordinating role. In particular, the findings show that the GS at all levels of command, including battalion adjutants fulfilled their primary responsibility as stipulated by *FSR-II* and the *Staff Manual, 1912*. These officers assisted their 'commander[s] in the supervision and control of the operations and requirements of the troops, and transmitted [their] orders and instructions'. Furthermore, they coordinated the work of the administrative staff branches as required.¹¹⁴⁶

¹¹⁴³ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)." Report: *The British Armies in France as gathered from Censorship* p. 1.

¹¹⁴⁴ TNA/WO/394/11, *Statistical Abstract of Information Regarding the Armies at Home and Abroad* (1st December 1918) p. 467.

¹¹⁴⁵ Ashley Ekins, "Fighting to Exhaustion: Morale, discipline and combat effectiveness in the armies of 1918," in *1918 Year of Victory: The end of the Great War and the shaping of history*, ed. Ashley Ekins (Auckland: Exisle Publishing Limited, 2010) p. 111.

¹¹⁴⁶ *Field Service Regulations Part II (Organization and Administration)* pp. 36-37.

Conclusion

Before 1909, the attainment of unity-of-effort in the field was an ad-hoc process. Success was largely dependent on the organizational and administrative skills of the C-in-C. Under Wellington in the Peninsula War, the organization and administration was of a high standard. Infamously, this was not the case in the Crimea. In the South African War, the standard under Buller and Roberts was heavily criticised and most unsatisfactory.

In 1909, *FSR-II* brought *ad-hocism* to an end. Thanks to Haig, for the first time the British Army had a formal GS system responsible for both vertical and horizontal coordination. The role of the GS, as conceived in *FSR-II* and elaborated upon in the *General Staff Manual, 1911* can be revealed by depicting the organization of the BEF in three rather than the traditional two dimensions. As seen in previous chapters, Haig made the GS responsible for the development and dissemination of doctrine. This was also the case at Amiens, promoting unity-of-mental-effort. Specialised training organised by the GS delivered unity-of-physical-effort. High standards of operational and administrative staff work contributed to the maintenance of morale and discipline, helping to achieve unity-of-moral-effort. The attainment of these factors promoted overall unity-of-effort within the Australian Corps. The GS, as coordinators, performed their duties through the elements of management as defined by Henri Fayol. The guiding principles of this process were foreshadowed by *FSR-II*. The net result was that the Australian Corps in concert with the British and Canadian divisions made August 8th the 'black day' for the German Army, paving the way for the ultimate Allied victory.¹¹⁴⁷

¹¹⁴⁷ General Erich Ludendorff, *My War Memories (1914-1918)* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1919). p. 679.

8. Conclusions

In 1909, Haig established unity-of-effort as the first principle of war organization as determined by *FSR-II*. He did not define the principle, most probably in the belief that the term was a commonplace and required no elaboration. Had this not been the case, given his deep personal experience of doctrine and training manual writing, Haig would have provided a definition for the principle as was the common practice in his cavalry training manuals.¹¹⁴⁸ Hence, it can be safely asserted that in all probability Haig subscribed to the contemporary common understanding of unity-of-effort as revealed and defined in Chapter 3.

On the Western Front, Haig strove to achieve unity-of-mental-effort through the development and inculcation of doctrine. The firm basis of the BEF's doctrine were the operational principles embodied in *FSR-I*, which reflected Haig's world-view on warfare. During his tenure as C-in-C, the BEF evolved into a successful learning organization. This facilitated the evolution of tactical doctrines based on these principles, leveraged by rapid advances in technology and adapted to the novel conditions of trench warfare. By 1918, an effective all arms doctrine had been evolved and was deployed at the battle of Le Hamel on July 4th. As Jonathan Bailey has successfully argued, a military revolution did take place where the fighting was transformed from two to three dimensions, giving rise to the birth of modern warfare.¹¹⁴⁹ Of course this was not just a British phenomenon, the French and the Germans had made similar progress.

¹¹⁴⁸ *Cavalry Training*. (1904) and (1907).

¹¹⁴⁹ J.B.A. Bailey, *The First World War and the Birth of the Modern Style of Warfare*, Occasional Paper No 22 (Camberley: Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, 1996).

However, there is disagreement over the degree to which doctrine was uniformly inculcated across the armies of the BEF. Three schools of thought have emerged. The first, which included Haig, have claimed that driven from GHQ the British armies had conceived and widely adopted the right tactical methods, vindicated by the German defeat. The second school, mainly comprising military historians, have asserted that effective tactical methods had been developed, but this occurred within the lower formations and units with the result that there was little uniformity in the BEF.¹¹⁵⁰ The third school, supported by many young revisionist historians, take the middle course. These people have argued that learning was driven in both directions from the top and from the bottom, concluding that while learning was less than perfect particularly below battalion level, ultimately the performance of the BEF proved better than that of the enemy.¹¹⁵¹ Based upon the balance of the evidence, this can be regarded as the settled opinion.

Haig drove unity-of-physical-effort by establishing and promoting the BEF's training organization. When he assumed command of the force in December 1915, the responsibility for training was elevated to his DCGS. In 1917, in recognition of the rapidly evolving training needs of his armies, Haig created a TB at GHQ supported by specialist GSOs at army, corps and divisional level. In July 1918, he went further and established the IT and charged the organization with the specific responsibility for achieving uniform training standards across the BEF, and for coordinating methods and standards of training at home with those in France. However, Haig can be justly criticised for not acting sooner, particularly in regard to the establishment of the IT, given the wealth of his relevant pre-war experience. As a

¹¹⁵⁰ Travers, *How The War Was Won: Command and Technology in the British Army on the Western Front, 1917-1918*. p. 149.

¹¹⁵¹ Boff, *Winning and Losing on the Western Front; The British Army and the Defeat of Germany in 1918*. p. 246. See also Beach, "Issued by the General Staff: Doctrine Writing at British G.H.Q., 1917-18." p. 491.

consequence, this body had little beneficial impact during the closing stages of the war on the standards and uniformity of training within the BEF and between GHQ and the training organizations at home.

Haig readily supported the widely accepted notion that the 'moral' of an army was fundamental to battlefield success. This principle received formal authority in *FSR-I*. To sustain the 'moral' of his armies, Haig pursued multiple initiatives to drive unity-of-moral-effort. He based his administration upon meritocratic principles with the aim of ensuring the best leaders were promoted to the right positions of command. Haig co-opted the clergy to promote the belief of his troops in the British fighting cause. He ensured that the physical welfare of his soldiers, most particularly in respect to the quantity, quality and supply of food, was maintained to a high standard. He lent his personal support to popular and widespread forms of rest and recreation from traditional sporting activities to novel musical hall and other theatrical entertainments. To bolster morale on the home front, with its causal impact on his troops at the Front, Haig implemented a modern, sophisticated and highly effective press relations campaign.

Haig underpinned 'moral' by judicious application of exemplary punishment.¹¹⁵² Of course this reference to 'judicious' use is not a settled opinion as demonstrated by the sustained and ultimately successful campaign against the Ministry of Defence to exonerate all 351 officers and men who were executed by the British Army during the war.¹¹⁵³ Nonetheless, for Haig's part, he sanctioned the death by firing squad of three officers, 15 NCO's and 232 private soldiers. In 85% of these cases the soldiers

¹¹⁵² John Peaty, "Haig and Military Discipline," in *Haig: A Reappraisal 70 Years On*, ed. Brian Bond and Nigel Cave (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1999) p. 221.

¹¹⁵³ Julian Putkowski & Julian Sykes, *Shot at Dawn* (London: Leo Cooper, 1989). Authors' Statement. On August 15th 2006, the MOD pardoned 306 soldiers of WWI. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1526437/Pardoned-the-306-soldiers-shot-at-dawn-for-cowardice.html> 05/12/2015

concerned were convicted for desertion. Haig did not generally interfere with the due process of field discipline, and was an unwavering supporter of strict regimental discipline including Field Punishment No 1.

In summary, the programmes that Haig deployed to sustain the 'moral' of the BEF were successful to the extent that, unlike the French and German armies, there was no systemic breakdown in British morale or discipline. In October 1918, the Australian Corps was judiciously withdrawn from the line to prevent possible serious breaches of discipline. That said, Australian morale, as with the rest of the BEF, may have faltered, but it was never broken.

In pursuit of unity-of-effort, Haig established the coordinative function of the GS in *FSR-II* published in 1909. At the time this role was peculiar to the British Army, but was formally adopted later in 1917 by the US Army.¹¹⁵⁴ The GS's role received further elaboration in the *General Staff Manual, 1911*, which also benefitted from Haig's attention. The simplest way to understand Haig's conception of the GS's role is to visualise the typical organogram in three dimensions. Here the GS provides the third dimension, facilitating both vertical and horizontal coordination of the entire organization. To personify this construct, the role of GS is equivalent to the spinal column, providing the conduit to facilitate mental, physical and moral coordination. If the spinal column is severed, the individual concerned is partially or wholly incapacitated.

GSOs conducted their business through the employment of what Henri Fayol later articulated as the management process. In July 1916, Fayol identified five elements of the management process, as distinct from his 14 principles of management: *Prévoyance* – this embraced the ideas of both foresight and planning

¹¹⁵⁴ *Staff Manual: United States Army*, (Washington: War Department, 1917) pp. 19-20.

and the process included forecasting, goal setting and action determination. *Organizing* – provided the organization with everything useful to its function. *Commanding* – involved setting the organization’s assets into motion. *Coordinating* – harmonised the organization’s activities so as to facilitate its working. *Controlling* – verified that everything has occurred in conformity with the principles established, the plan adopted, and the instructions issued. A case study based on the Battle of Amiens illustrated how GSOs successfully employed these elements of the management process to execute their coordinating role to drive unity-of-effort, resulting in a war-winning victory for British and Allied forces.

Research Outcomes and their Importance

It is undoubtedly wishful thinking to suppose that this new representation of Haig as the “Heroic Manager” will release his reputation from the *lieu de mémoire*, in the British public’s mind at least. However, it does suggest that within the context of ‘total war’ in the main theatre of operations, attempts to represent the C-in-C as a “Heroic Warrior” is an anachronism. Furthermore, the desire by contemporary British politicians including Lloyd George and modern Francophile military historians to fit this mantle on other candidates like Foch for example, is misjudged.

It is hoped that one of the canards that this study has set aside is the notion that Haig presided over a command vacuum which led to ideas, and changes in tactics and training, filtering upwards and sideways to avoid GHQ, rather than downwards from GHQ.¹¹⁵⁵ This of course feeds into the institutional learning debate that has been much discussed in relatively recent scholarship. From this work the idea of a ‘learning curve’ has emerged as a metaphor for the learning process, which it is

¹¹⁵⁵ Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918*. p. 111.

judged, the BEF ascended as it came to grips with the novel conditions of trench warfare. Historians have now moved beyond the simplistic limitations of this device.¹¹⁵⁶ However, judging by the number of operational, organizational and administrative innovations that Haig directly participated in, or used his influence to promote, it appears that he actively encouraged the development of as many 'learning curves' as he could, in all parts of his organization on and behind the front line. Furthermore, it is apparent that he was much more concerned that learning did take place, rather than where or how it happened.

This study shows that any assessment of the modern high commander should be judged in the round, both on and off the battlefield. This reinforced the opinion held in the British General Staff after the war that 'effective administration was what mattered most'.¹¹⁵⁷ It also draws on Morris Janowitz's illuminating social and political portrait *The Professional Soldier*. Within the framework of the Second World War, he made the distinction between 'heroic leaders who embody traditionalism and glory, and military "managers" who were concerned with the scientific and rational conduct of war.' He further insisted that the military manager reflected 'the scientific and pragmatic dimensions to war making,' while the heroic leader is 'a perpetuation of the warrior type, the mounted officer who embodied the martial spirit and the theme of personal valor.'¹¹⁵⁸ Janowitz took his inspiration from Alfred Vagts, who in his formulation of the "military way," suggested that military management was characterised by a 'primary concentration of men and materials on

¹¹⁵⁶ William Philpott, "Beyond the 'Learning Curve': The British Army's Transformation in the First World War," (2009).

¹¹⁵⁷ Gooch, "A Particularly Anglo-Saxon Institution: The British General Staff in the Era of Two World Wars." p. 199.

¹¹⁵⁸ Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (Illinois: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964) p. 21 (Emphasis in original).

winning specific objectives of power with the utmost efficiency, that is, with the least expenditure of blood and treasure'.¹¹⁵⁹

This study has produced a systematic definition of unity-of-effort relevant to unitary military organizations, albeit based on the contemporary understanding largely in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Going forward, this definition could be used to frame and inform better military policy decisions both during peace and at war. It can be also used to illuminate historical military events, not least of which is the Allied victory on the Western Front. Furthermore, it can help resolve historical puzzles including Lloyd George's failure to sack Haig when as Prime Minister he showed the strong desire to do so, particularly in 1917 during the prelude to the Nivelle Offensive and again later in 1918.¹¹⁶⁰

On January 21st 1918 Lloyd George despatched General Jan Christian Smuts and Sir Maurice Hankey to France in part to see if they could identify a suitable alternative for Haig. They both concluded that 'there was no better General in sight'. In July, Lloyd George gave consideration to replacing Haig by Gen. 10th Earl Cavan, the C-in-C of British forces in Italy, although nothing came of this. This may have been because Hankey, who was Secretary of the War Cabinet and Lloyd George's trusted adviser, 'was not greatly impressed by him'.¹¹⁶¹

Apparently, the Prime Minister was deterred from dismissing Haig by a number of factors: He could not rely on the support of his Cabinet or Dominion representatives for this decision; the press and public opinion was against him; and he did not believe that the replacement of Haig would necessarily resolve the

¹¹⁵⁹ Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism* (New York: Norton, 1937) p. 11.

¹¹⁶⁰ George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (1918)*, VI. See Index under 'Haig' for Lloyd George's opinion of Haig. See also French, "Sir Douglas Haig's Reputation: A Note." pp. 955-958; and Stephen Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets*, ii vols, vol. i (London: Collins, 1970) pp. 469-470' 484.

¹¹⁶¹ Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets*, i. p. 582.

‘intrinsic defect’ of the Allied strategy, which according to him was the lack of a common or united front.¹¹⁶²

There was one other factor, and one that is probably the most important of all. In a generally damning assessment, Lloyd George admitted that Haig had ‘a large measure of...business capacity’ with a ‘mastery of [his] profession’. He also conceded that while there were other eminent Generals in the British Army...‘none of them was fitted to lead an army five time as large as Napoleon ever had under his command, in a military undertaking which would have tested even his genius to its utmost’.¹¹⁶³ Thus, it can be surmised that the Prime Minister did not sack Haig primarily because he feared that there was no other British commander who offered the leadership and command talents, in combination with the proven organizational, administrative and management skills, and the experience required to address the huge scale, complexities and dynamics of the BEF’s five army group. Lloyd George lent support to this assertion in his *Memoirs* when he concluded that ‘there was no conspicuous officer in the Army who seemed to be better qualified for the Highest Command than Haig’.¹¹⁶⁴

The elaboration of the principle of unity-of-effort and its practical application by Haig in the BEF provides the basis for the development of a conceptual toolbox necessary to drive unity-of-effort within the modern British military. The current British Army capstone doctrine, *Operations (2010)* uses the phrase unity-of-effort 23 times in varying contexts, and without elaboration.¹¹⁶⁵ This research demonstrates that unity-of-effort is not simply a platitude of good intent. It is a tangible organizational

¹¹⁶² David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (1917)*, VI vols, vol. IV (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1934) pp. 2223, 2228, 2266, 2271, 2342-2346.

¹¹⁶³ George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (1917)*, IV, pp. 2267-2268.

¹¹⁶⁴ George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (1918)*, VI. p. 3424.(Emphasis in Original)

¹¹⁶⁵ "Army Doctrine Publication: Operations," (Shrivenham: Ministry of Defence, 2010).

principle whose mental, physical and moral components must be managed and optimised, as manifestly demonstrated by Haig.

This study alludes to the important notion that unity-of-effort is vital to military success because it drives organizational efficiency and operational effectiveness. This assumes, as other practitioners have done, that these two qualities are linked in some relationship to victory.¹¹⁶⁶ Of course, this does not mean that an army displaying a high degree of operational efficiency and operational effectiveness can overwhelm sheer mass, which at some point it surely cannot. Haig intuitively understood this causal relationship, confirmed by his decision to make unity-of-effort the first principle of war organization and administration in *FSR-II*. In Haig's war diary, he constantly used the term 'efficiency' as a catch-all phrase in relation to the military in general and his troops in particular. It is readily apparent that he coupled the deterioration or improvements in moral, discipline, training, and the inculcation of doctrine with decreases or increases in efficiency. Haig also used the term 'effective' throughout his diaries alluding to it as a pre-requisite for goal attainment in whatever military context he was discussing.¹¹⁶⁷

It is true that the notions of organizational efficiency and operational effectiveness are not clearly defined or commonly agreed concepts, at least in the military context.¹¹⁶⁸ Attempts have been made including those of Messrs Millett, Murray and Watman who have suggested that 'military effectiveness is the process by which armed forces convert resources into fighting power. A fully effective military is one that derives maximum combat power from resources physically and

¹¹⁶⁶ Maj.-Gen. E.A. Altham, *The Principles of War*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1914) p. 35. William C. Martell, *Victory in War: Foundations of Modern Military Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Chapter 12 Military Power and Policy pp. 265-290.

¹¹⁶⁷ NLS-Acc.3155/98-136, "Haig's Great War Diary (Typed Version)."Entry 15/01/1916; 17/10/1916; Report, 21/11/1916, Appendix, p. 7; 01/12/1916 .

¹¹⁶⁸ Eugene Gholz, "Military Efficiency, Military Effectiveness, and Military Formats," in *APSA Annual Meeting* (Philadelphia, P.A.2003) p. 1.

politically made available. Effectiveness thus incorporates some notion of efficiency'.¹¹⁶⁹ This definition is less than satisfactory because it introduces but leaves open the awkward question of maximum combat power, and conflates effectiveness with efficiency, without defining the latter. Other authors are even less forthcoming and have defined 'military effectiveness implicitly – as victory in battles, nominally controlling for the amount of resources that each side brings to the fight'.¹¹⁷⁰ To engage further in this debate is beyond the scope of this thesis; suffice to say it presents a ripe opportunity for further study.

Perhaps one of the most far reaching revelations of this study is the coordinating role of the GS, understood within the context of an organization depicted in three dimensions. In large part, it was through the effective use of the coordinating role of the GS that Haig managed the exponential growth of the BEF, without any severe organizational or administrative dysfunction, driving unity-of-effort. Haig was satisfied with the way this arrangement worked. Commenting on a conversation with Haig in 1915 Esher confided to his diary:

I told [Haig] that the French were rather critical of our staff work, and thought their own very superior to it. He agrees that the paper work of the French General Staff is very superior to ours, but he does not consider that their staff officers are as good as ours in seeing work carried out.¹¹⁷¹

Furthermore, after the war, Haig's continued satisfaction with the GS's coordinating role is expressed by comments he made addressed to Lieut.-Gen. Sir

¹¹⁶⁹ Allan R. Millett; Williamson Murray; Kenneth H. Watman, "The Effectiveness of Military Organizations," *International Security* 11, no. 1 (1986) p. 37.

¹¹⁷⁰ Alan C. Stam Dan Reiter, *Democracies at War* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002) pp. 58, 60.

¹¹⁷¹ Lord Esher, "Journal," in *Viscount Esher Papers: ESHR 2/14* (Churchill Archive, 1915). I am indebted to Professor William Philpott for this reference.

Walter Braithwaite, chair of a committee appointed by him in December 1918 to review the staff organization during the war:

I am in agreement...that the work of the Staff during the war has been accomplished with remarkable success and is strong evidence of the soundness of the doctrine taught in the antecedent period.

Haig also expressed his 'entire sympathy' with a recommendation of the Braithwaite Committee to increase the coordinative functions of the GS by insisting that the GS in all formations should coordinate all branches of staff work in conformity with the policy laid down by the commander and be the '*one* Military Adviser, through whom the Commander exercises his function of command'.¹¹⁷²

Bain & Co, one of the world's most respected management consultancies, have claimed that approximately 70% of organizational change programmes fail and the consequent costs are huge.¹¹⁷³ The example of the British GS with its unique coordinative function, set within the novelty of the three-dimensional organization, may hold the key to reversing this failure. Led by Haig, the BEF was transformed from an imperial police force into a modern continental army capable of defeating the most formidable first class adversary of its day. This result, achieved within an astonishingly short period of only three years, provides an exemplar to follow for other large-scale organizations in the public, financial, commercial, industrial and other spheres. Of course, the increase in operating costs that would flow from the establishment of a staff acting as the third coordinative dimension would be strongly resisted by accountants. But there are a number of cost effective ways in which this could be achieved. For example, consideration could be given to the creation of

¹¹⁷² TNA/WO/32/5153, "Staff Organization," (1919). Letter: Haig to War Office 24/03/1919. (Emphasis in original).

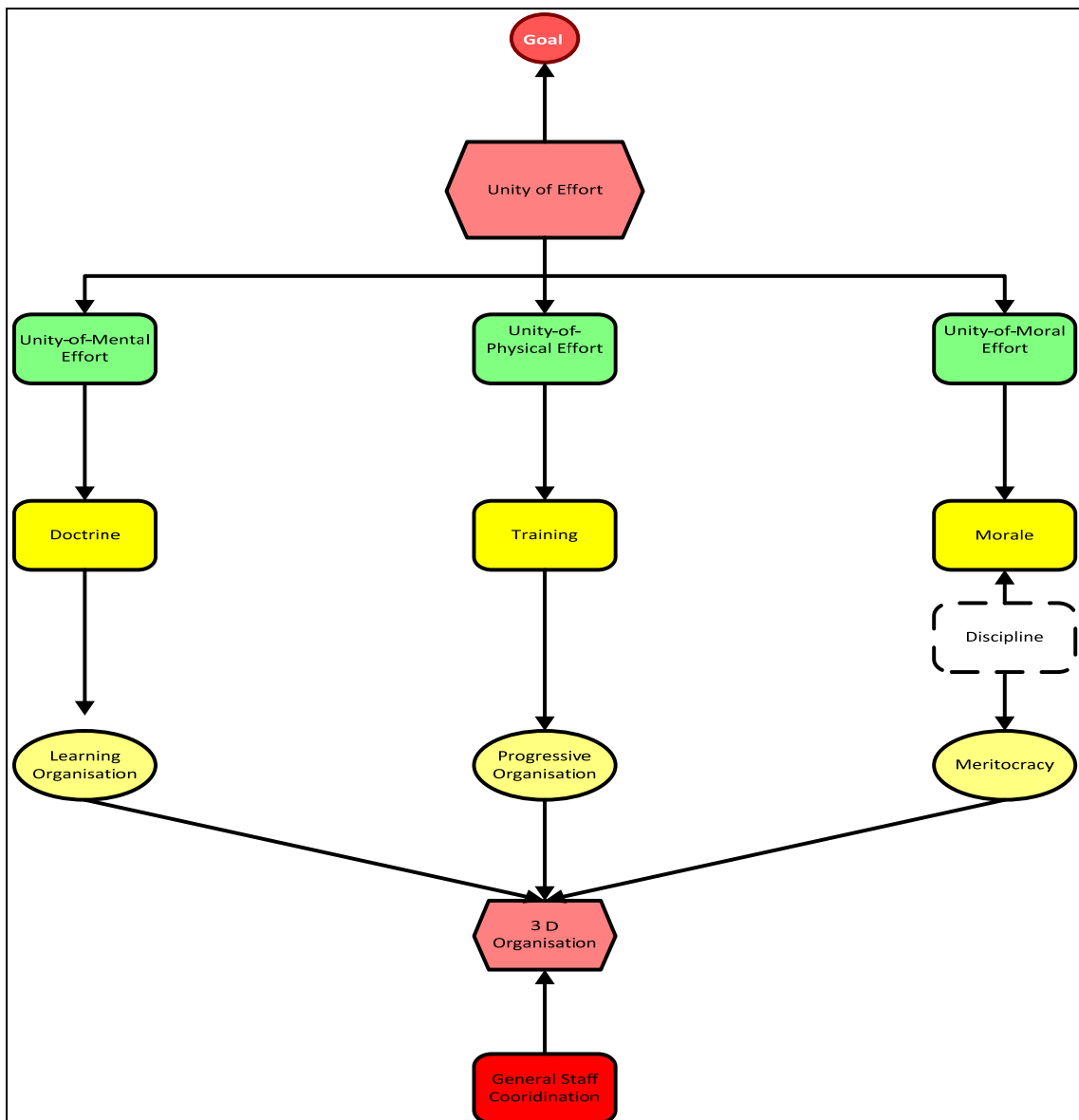
¹¹⁷³ Brunes, *Managing Change: A Strategic Approach to Organizational Change*. p. 2.

temporary or virtual proxies for the staff organization, deployed to address the needs of major change programmes for their duration.

Towards a General Theory of Military Unity-of-Effort

It is now possible to project Haig’s principle of unity-of-effort forward from the past to outline a general theory that may well have application today in the modern military deployed for the security of advanced countries. A schematic of this theory is shown in Figure 29.

Figure 29: Schematic of the Principle of Unity-of-Effort



Unity-of-effort requires unity of object.¹¹⁷⁴ Agreeing unity of object presents large-scale military organizations with their first and perhaps most important challenge, and one that cannot be taken for granted. Having established a clear goal, subscribed to at least by the high-ranking political and military leadership, and with programmes in place to obtain the support of the whole organization to this common cause, the process of unity-of-effort must be actively managed to deliver the requisite organizational efficiency and the operational effectiveness. Clearly, this is a critical necessity for the modern military at war, but it is also vitally important that the requisite preparations are made during peace. In turn, formal and managed impetus is required to achieve unity-of-mental, physical and moral effort, which in combination will help drive the military organization towards its goal. It is self-evident that as military organizations increase in size and complexity, unity-of-effort becomes progressively more difficult to secure, demanding additional GS management resources that must be deployed on a timely basis.

Unity-of-mental-effort is made manifest by doctrine, a corpus of principles and values used to guide an organization to its agreed destination. To capitalise on the opportunities and accommodate the pressures thrown up by rapidly changing external and internal environments, military organizations must have the motivation and capability to learn, innovate and adapt.

Unity-of-physical-effort is inculcated by training. This should be a progressive process in response to the organization's changing needs. Crucially, some form of independent training inspectorate is required to ensure high and uniform standards are achieved across the general and specialised functions of the organization.

¹¹⁷⁴ Donovan, Prof. Robert John, Dr. Julia Anwar McHenry and Anthony J. Vines, "Unity of Effort requires unity of object: why industry should not be involved in formulating public health policy," *Journal of Public Affairs* doi: 10.1002/pa.1553 (2014).

Unity-of-moral-effort is characterised by morale, underpinned by discipline. Morale provides organizations with the human will and determination to achieve their goals. The process of obtaining and sustaining high morale must be based upon meritocratic organizational principles, and be the subject of active management.

The process of achieving unity-of-effort is a management function like any other and requires its own coordinative agency for efficient and effective implementation. One approach, the success of which has been proven, is to adopt and adapt the coordinative model of the British GS system viewed within a three dimensional organizational setting and practiced on sound management lines like those used by Haig and espoused by Henri Fayol.

This résumé allows a further iteration of the working definition for unity-of-effort within the context of a military organization:

Unity-of-effort is the *raison d'être* of all forms of human organization including the military. It is a tangible and effective principle, rather than a mere rhetorical gesture or oratorical flourish. The nature of unity-of-effort is immutable and singularly *coordinative*. The principle finds expression in its compound character, which has distinct mental, physical and moral components, specific to each type of organization. It is a normative ideal, as opposed to an absolute standard.

In military organization, unity-of-effort is optimised by the development of operational, organizational and administrative doctrines to obtain *unity-of-mental-effort*; by inculcating the principles of doctrine through progressive training to achieve *unity-of-physical-effort*; and by promoting the will to fight through sustained morale underpinned by discipline to attain *unity-of-moral-effort*.

Unity-of-effort drives *organizational efficiency* and *operational effectiveness*. The concept of organizational efficiency inherently implies economy of effort, which

is the judicious exploitation of manpower, material and time in relation to the value and attainment of objectives. Operational effectiveness is ultimately demonstrated by mission or goal attainment.

In all military organizations, unity-of-effort is created and optimised through the coordinative function of the GS, although the ultimate responsibility rests with the C-in-C in the field. This body executes its coordinating role through the process of management, which itself is characterised by forecasting, planning, organising, commanding, coordinating, and controlling.

Directions for Future Research

The principle of unity-of-effort offers a new prism to review the performance of the BEF on the Western Front, in other theatres, and by comparison to Allied and enemy armies. Thus far, military historians have understandably focused attention on forward operations, while the organization, administration and management of forces have not been given due consideration. Comparative studies are rare, if they exist at all. Apart from other benefits, a comparison of the application of unity-of-effort in the French and German armies on the Western Front will provide fresh perspectives and may offer alternative explanations for the Allied victory and possibly for the German defeat.

Facilitators of unity-of-effort should also be identified and investigated. In the case of the BEF, ground-breaking studies concerning logistics and communications have already been made.¹¹⁷⁵ But comprehensive investigations of British command and control processes and systems during the war offer opportunities for further detailed study.

¹¹⁷⁵ Brown, *British Logistics on the Western Front 1914-1919*.; Hall, "The British Expeditionary Force and Communications on the Western Front."

While this thesis has focused on unity-of-effort in the BEF as a unitary organization, it would be of great service to the modern military, with its dependence on coalition warfare, to investigate the nature and application of the principle in the Anglo-French alliance. A useful starting point is the series of US Army doctrinal manuals addressing multinational operations where the vital value of unity-of-effort is indicated.¹¹⁷⁶ A chapter length study has already been drafted on this topic, but its inclusion in this thesis has not been possible.

The crucial relationship between unity-of-effort, and its corollaries organizational efficiency and operational effectiveness requires detailed study and articulation. This is not a trivial exercise, and one that is likely to be much more challenging than suggested by intuition. As discussed, part of this difficulty arises from the lack of commonly agreed definitions. The other challenging aspects will be to relate theory to practice, combined with obtaining the relevant supporting evidence. Nonetheless, the results of this research will undoubtedly be of great value to all large-scale military organizations, helping to reduce costs and improving the process by which resources are converted into fighting power.

The Verdict: Haig's Competence as a Military Manager

This study was originated to assess Haig's managerial competence with particular reference to his tenure as C-in-C of the BEF on the Western Front. To frame and inform this study an examination of his formation as a military manager has also been made.¹¹⁷⁷ The results of this work show that the attributes that Henri Fayol ascribed to the management process came instinctively to Haig and he was

¹¹⁷⁶ *FM 3-16 (FM 100-8) The Army in Multinational Operations*, (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2010).

¹¹⁷⁷ Anthony J. Vines, "Sir Douglas Haig - The Making of a Military Manager" (KCL, 2007). This paper was presented to examiners as part of a PhD upgrade package.

able to put them into practice prior to the war, reforming the British Army with a high order of competence. For example, his *prévoyance* was demonstrated by his contribution to the formation of the office of the CIGS in 1909. His *organizing* ability was shown by the realisation of the Territorial Force in 1908. His *commanding* talent was in evidence when he dealt with the thorny dissolution of the militia, thus mobilising manpower for the Special Reserve. His *coordinating* skills were shown by the success he had in driving through all of Haldane's reforms. His *controlling* ability was proven by the fact that all of these initiatives including the formation of the BEF were accomplished in just three years.

Between 1916 and 1918 Haig was confronted with the novel conditions of trench warfare, the huge growth of the BEF manned by green and untrained officers and men, rapid changes and advances in technology, and the most formidable enemy on earth. He overcame this supreme management challenge by the successful application of the principle of unity-of-effort, and its constituent mental, physical and moral components. Haig delivered the military means to obtain the military end of assisting the French nation to drive out the German army from their territory.

It is also relevant to mention that after the war, Haig added a new managerial process to his armoury, and one that can be called *convening power*.¹¹⁷⁸ In June 1921, he used his considerable influence behind the scenes to weld the competing and fractious organizations of returned servicemen into a single unified body in the shape of the British Legion, before becoming its President and establishing the Haig Fund. Haig's aim was to present the Government, still led by his nemesis Lloyd George, with a united front to obtain much better financial provision, welfare and support for disabled and jobless ex-servicemen's organizations'. It was also Haig's way of

¹¹⁷⁸ See p. 99.

dissuading many of these men from engaging in left wing politics, which as he saw it, could damage the national interest.¹¹⁷⁹

In 1928, Brig.-Gen. G.F. Ellison, Haldane's private secretary at the WO, wrote to Lady Haig and concluded:

I wish to add briefly my own impressions of Haig's achievements during the time I worked with him at the War Office. He combined in quite unusual degree great administrative capacity with innate powers of command. The only person with whom I was brought in contact, who at all equalled him in this respect, was Lord Wolseley on whose staff I served for two years (1896 – 97). Haig was indeed fortunate in this opportunity which fell to him of using in the Field the instrument he had so largely helped to fashion in the Office.¹¹⁸⁰

When the evidence is considered in the round, it is not an overstatement to claim that Haig was an outstanding military manager, with exceptional military organizational, administrative and management ability. Haig may not have been the "Heroic Warrior" of military legend, but there can be absolutely no doubt that he was a "Heroic Manager". Hopefully, this revelation will solve the enigma of Haig.

¹¹⁷⁹French, "Sir Douglas Haig's Reputation: A Note." p. 957; Graham Wootton, *The Official History of the British Legion* (London: Macdonald and Evans Limited, 1956). In particular, pp. 6, 15, 16, 28;

¹¹⁸⁰ NAM-8704-35-472-475. Letter: Ellison to Lady Haig, 11 September 1928. p. 4

Appendices

Appendix 1: General Staff Coordinating Duties – Amiens (July 3rd – 9th August, 1918:)

| | Prévoyance | Organising | Commanding | Coordinating | Controlling | Ref: |
|-----|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| GHQ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 03/07/18: Haig stresses to his C.G.S. (Lieut.-General Sir Herbert Lawrence) the necessity of improving situation east of Amiens ASAP. 04/07/18, 9.55 am: Telegram <i>Operations Special Priority</i>. Haig is made aware of the successful Australian attack at Le Hamel. 05/07/18: Ahead of Army Commander's conference, Rawlinson requests Haig's permission to make another attack south of Somme. Haig demurs because in his opinion the operation would extend the British line without having sufficient covering reserves. Nonetheless, Haig instructs Rawlinson to make a plan for the attack, which would be deployed in the event that the necessary reserves become available. 12/07/18, Letter 2021 to Haig: Foch asks the British to attack on the front Festubert-Robecq, providing German reserves are absorbed in the Champagne battle. [Foch and Haig were haggling over enemy intentions, detaching British reserves, and the nature of British offensives to support the French.] 16/07/18: At a meeting with Rawlinson, Haig asks him to make preparations for a major operation to push the Fourth Army's right to the River Luce near Caix with the line running northwards through Harbonnières to Chipilly on the Somme. Haig indicates he will ask Foch to order the French Army on the right [First French Army] to cooperate in a movement to pinch the salient formed by the rivers Luce and Avre between the villages of Caix and Pierrepont. [Rawlinson and his staff had been working on an offensive plan since 05/07/18 was able to submit his formal proposal the next day.] 17/07/18 OAD 895: With Rawlinson's proposals in mind Haig presses Foch to adopt the Amiens plan, in preference to his own for an attack further north between Festubert and Robecq. (12/07/18: – LETTER 2021) Haig stressed that 'secrecy and north surprise will be of the utmost importance.' 20/07/18: (État-Major Général No 22481) Foch agrees to the Amiens operation. 24/07/18: In a meeting between Haig and Foch, with Generals Lawrence and Weygand present, it is agreed to 'proceed with operations East of Amiens <u>as soon as possible</u>.' 26/07/18: Conference with Foch, Lawrence, Rawlinson, Montgomery, Weygand (C.-of-S. to Foch) and Debney (sic) to settle details of Amiens operation. 'R. was very anxious to carry out his operation alone without French cooperation; but in view of limited number of divisions I agreed that Debney (sic) should operate on our right'. 29/07/18: In a meeting with Rawlinson, Haig advances launch date by two days. 03/08/18: Haig confirms to Foch that he has set Ham (across the | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16/07/18: Haig confides to his diary that he intends to instruct Rawlinson to 'send the 4 Canadian Divisions...to carry out the attack which I had suggested in cooperation with the Australians'. [It appears that in this instance, Haig is taking credit where credit is not due. Rawlinson, if not Monash was the initiator of this offensive.] 28/07/18: Foch places First French Army under Haig's command to coordinate Allied effort at Amiens-Montdidier. 'F. wishes operations hurried on...I am pleased Foch has entrusted me with this operation'. 29/07/18: OAD 904: Army HQ's advised Canadian Corps and 'certain Artillery and Tanks units will be concentrated in Fourth Army area. Special instructions regarding the probable use of these troops and reconnaissance to be carried out will be issued to Commanders concerned.' 29/07/18: OAD 900/4 Kavanagh advised that Cavalry Corps will be placed under Rawlinson's command. 02/08/18: OAD 900/8 advice to Rawlinson (personal and very secret) regarding RAF cooperation with Fourth Army and First French Army during Amiens offensive. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21/07/18: Haig advises C.G.S. that he intends to attack on Amiens front if German reserves are absorbed elsewhere. 23/07/18: OAD 900: Informs Rawlinson that his proposal GSHQ 200(G) 'is approved generally and you should proceed with preparations as rapidly as possible...' C.G.S.. 28/07/18: Directive Particuliere No 2467. Haig receives his formal orders from Foch for Amiens offensive. 28/07/18: OAD 900/2: Formal order issued to Rawlinson, Fourth Army and Debney, French First Army via GHQ in accordance with instructions Foch ordering Amiens offensive 'with the objective of disengaging Amiens and Paris-Amiens railway.' 29/07/18: OAD 900/3: Formal order from C.G.S. to Rawlinson and Debney establishing objectives for Amiens offensive. Fourth Army is tasked with keeping its left flank on the Somme and press the enemy in the direction of Chaulnes. (Ref: 03/08/18:) 05/08/18: OAD/13 Fourth Army HQ. Final verbal order to proceed with Amiens Offensive from Haig to Rawlinson and Debney in presence of C.G.S., MGGs O(a) Fourth Army MGGs (Montgomery) and Cavalry Corps Cmd. (Kavanagh). 05/08/18: OAD900/14 in continuation of OAD 900/3 dated 29/07/18.; formal order from C.G.S. to Rawlinson and Debney reaffirming the first objective (Old Amiens Defensive Line – Hangest to Harbonnières vide O.A.D. 900/3 dated 29th July) and establishing a second objectives in general direction of Roye-Chaulnes, which should be pursued with the least possible delay, thrusting the enemy back with determination in the general direction of Ham, and so facilitating the operations of the French from the front Noyon-Montdidier. 06/08/18: OAD 900/15 Formal order from C.G.S. to Rawlinson and Debney establishing 8th August as 'z-day' for Amiens offensive. The two generals were ordered to arrange zero hour directly between them. 08/08/18: At 7 am, Haig receives report from Fourth Army HQ, via (Ob) at advanced HQ, that 'attack apparently a complete surprise and is progressing satisfactorily'. Later Haig motored to Fourth Army HQ accompanied by his MGGs (Davidson) to meet Rawlinson. Haig tells Rawlinson to '<u>organise his left strongly; if opportunity offers to advance it to line Albert – Bray</u>. With his left strongly held he will push his defensive front out to line Chaulnes - Roye.' Further, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25/07/18 Haig holds meeting with Rawlinson regarding forthcoming operation. Davidson (M.G.S. O (a)) and Montgomery present. 27/07/18: OAD 900/1 Outline of Amiens offensive sent to all Army, RAF and Tank Corps commanders FYI. 26/07/18: Haig attends conference with Foch, Lawrence, Rawlinson, Montgomery, Weygand (C-of-S. to Foch) and Debney to settle details of Amiens operation. 'R. was very anxious to carry out his operation alone without French cooperation; but in view of limited number of divisions I agreed that Debney (sic) should operate on our right'. 29/07/18: At a conference at Advanced H.Q. Haig briefs all Army Commanders on Foch's future policy and forthcoming operations. 31/08/18: Haig visits Monash at Bertangles Château on latter's return from leave. Monash tells Haig he "had all the threads of the operation un his hands". Haig insists 'getting some Cavalry under his command, and suggested getting a Brigade from the Cavalry Corps as he said his own Corps mounted troops were not enough well trained for this work. 01/08/18: Haig meets Kavanagh to discuss cavalry's role in forthcoming operation. 05/08/18: Haig chairs a conference at Fourth Army HQ assisted by G.C.S. (Lawrence). Rawlinson, Kavanagh and Debney in attendance. Haig comments on Fourth Army orders. He thinks that the orders 'aimed too much at getting a final objective on the old Amiens defence line, and stopping counter-attacks on it'. In Haig's opinion, if the element of surprise worked, the line should be put in a state of defence but not to delay – at once reserves must be pushed on to capture the line Chaulnes – Roye with the cavalry pressing through further. 05/08/18: Haig with Lawrence visit Monash at Château Bertangles to explain his views and plan. 10/08/18: P.M. Haig visits Canadian Corps H.Q. (Currie) where he is joined by Rawlinson where upon Haig 'explained [his] intentions and orders'. 11/08/18: Haig and Lawrence visit Monash at Aust. Corps H.Q. (Bertangles). The latter reports that none of his 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28/07/18: After making some amendments, Haig approves Rawlinson's and Debney's detailed plans for Amiens offensive. z day agreed 8th August. 27/07/18: Haig modifies operational plan to include French and extends objective to general direction of Chaulnes. [08-16 p. 3942] 28/07/18; Haig approves GHQ's final draft of orders.[08-16 p.3942] 29/07/18: In a meeting with Rawlinson, Haig advances launch date by two days. 02/08/18: Fourth Army 20(G) from Montgomery to Davidson (MGGs O(a) advising amplification of orders 20(G) issued to Corps commanders on 31/07/18: 04/08/18: Haig reviews and comments on Rawlinson's and Debney's detailed operational plans. 04/08/18: Haig reviews and annotates orders to be issued by Rawlinson and Debney. 05/08/18: At Army Conference, Haig urges Rawlinson not to delay at the old Amiens defence line, and advance as rapidly as possible – as per his orders. 07/08/18: Haig goes to Fourth Army H.Q. (Flexicourt) to ensure plans are progressing satisfactorily. Rawlinson confirms 'everything is going without a hitch and the enemy seems ignorant of the impending blow!' He then visits Currie at Canadian Corps H.Q. (Dury). He then returned to his Advanced HQ in a train stationed at Wiry au Mont. Haig has 9 officers living in his train and his General Staff of 8 officers occupy a second train, the whole being 'very long, half a mile about!' 09/08/18: Haig establishes from his liaison officer (Col. Cavendish) that Debney is hanging back waiting for Canadians rather continuing his advance. Haig calls in Debney to his Advanced H.Q. at 4pm and persuades him to advance and take Roye. Haig wryly notes 'all opposition had been removed by the British advance of course!' 09/08/18: 11.15 pm Haig advised as result of a telephone message received by GS (Ob) from Fourth Army H.Q. that Australians have captured Lihons. 10/08/18 Haig gets mixed messages regarding enemy resistance. Cavalry Corps suggest "enemy's | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HD 04/07/18 [3748] HD 05/07/18 [3758] HD 12/07/18 [3814] HD 12/07/18 [3823] HD 16/07/18 [3837] HD 16/07/18 [3837] HD 17/07/18 [3842-3843] HD 20/07/18 [3879] HD 24/07/18 [3896] HD 25/07/18 [3909] HD 26/07/18 [3922] HD 28/07/18 [3938] HD 29/07/18 [3942] HD 29/07/18 [3943] HD 28/07/18 [3945] HD 31/07/18 [3952-53] HD 01/08/18 [4046] HD 03/08/18 [4060] HD 04/08/18 [4080] HD 05/08/18 [4082] HD 05/08/18 [4090] HD 07/08/18 [4097-98] HD 08/08/18 4114-4116 HD 09/08/18 [4121] HD 09/08/18 [4122] HD 10/08/18 [4133-4134] HD 10/08/18 [4135] HD 11/08/18 [4139] WO 158/241[2] 4th Army OAD 900 WO 158/241 4th Army OAD 900/1 WO 158/241 4th Army OAD 900/2 WO 158/241 4th Army OAD 900/3 WO 158/241 4th Army [2] OAD 900/13 WO 158/241 4th Army [2] OAD 900/14 WO 158/241 4th Army [2] OAD 900/15 [4091] WO 158/241 4th Army OAD 904 WO 158/241[2] 4th Army OAD 900/8. WO 158/241[2] 4th Army 20(G). |

| | Prévoyance | Organising | Commanding | Coordinating | Controlling | Ref: |
|--------------------|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| | Somme river) as final objective for offensive. Foch had wanted a position south of Chaulnes but agrees with Haig's proposal. | | Haig is advised that the 'Australians on final objective (Old Amiens Defence Line) all along their front'. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10/08/18: A.M. Foch meets Haig and wishes to continue the advance to the line Noyon – Ham Peronne and to get bridgeheads on the Somme. Haig counters by outlining an alternative proposal to halt the advance, and strike with First Army at Aubers Ridge freeing up Bethune coal mines. Nonetheless, Haig issues orders according to Foch's wishes with caveat that the advance should only be continued providing 'present battle front is not stiffening'. | divisions have lost 1,000 men which Haig considers 'wonderfully small'. Haig explains his plan to Monash and instructs him to prepare to put in an attack with the objective of breaking the enemy's present battle front in the direction of Bapaume | opposition was diminishing", while 32nd Division Cmdr. (Lambert) reported 'enemy's opposition had stiffened up'. Haig sided with Lambert, 'and came away more determined that ever to press our offensive from the Third and First Army fronts (see August 14th)'. | |
| Fourth Army | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17/07/18: AHQ No. 220(G): In response to Haig's instructions (05/07/18 and 16/07/18:), Rawlinson's formal proposal for the Amiens offensive is submitted to GHQ for consideration. 21/07/18: AHQ No. 220 (G) Amiens proposal discussed in conference with Aust. and Cdn. Corps Commanders and their respective senior Staff at Fourth Army H.Q. (Flixecourt). Army Cmd. MGGS, GOCRA and GSO1 attended. 23/07/18: AHQ 220(G) approved in principal by GHQ. in an order signed by Davidson (MGGS) for C.G.S. 29/07/18: At conference (HQ III Corps, Villers Bocage) between Rawlinson, his staff and corps commanders (III, Aust. Cdn.) permission is to advise Div. Commanders of the impending Amiens operation. (WO 95/437 Appendices [14]) 31/07/18: Fourth Army No 32 (G) General instructions: - First part issued by M.G.G.S.to Corps. (1.Secretcy. - 2. Reserves - 3. Artillery - 4. Tanks - 5. Communications - 6. Maps - 7. Roads.) 01/08/18 Fourth Army No 32 (G) General instructions: Second part issued to Corps by M.G.G.S. (3. Artillery. Field artillery barrages, heavy artillery barrages, normal activity, counter battery action, close support of the infantry, action in case of bombardment by hostile artillery previous to zero. - 4. Tanks - 5. Communications. - 6 Date and Hour of Attack. 'Zero hour will be communicated to Corps in writing at 12 noon on "Y" day'. - 9. Reliefs - 10. Army Policy on Reaching Objective. Preparations had to be made to meet any counter attack, build a defensive system in depth, await further order. 11. Special Companies R.E. 02/08/18 Fourth Army No 32 (G) General instructions: Third part issued to Corps by M.G.G.S. 4. Tanks. 7. Roads. 11. Special Companies R.E. 02/08/18 Fourth Army No 32 (G) General instructions: Fourth part issued to Corps by M.G.G.S. 5. Communication. 7. Roads 03/08/18 Fourth Army No 32 (G) General instructions: Fifth part issued to Corps by M.G.G.S. 12. R.A.F. 04/08/18 Fourth Army No 32 (G) General instructions: Sixth part issued to Corps by M.G.G.S. 3. Artillery 5. Communications 9. Reliefs 04/08/18 Fourth Army No 32 (G) General instructions: Seventh part issued to Corps by M.G.G.S. 3. Artillery 5. Communications 13. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31/07/18: Fourth Army 20(G) Advice to Corps Commanders incl. Cavalry, RAF and Tank Bde. setting out organization for Amiens offensive. 03/08/18: Fourth Army 20(G) Organization of right (Canadian) and centre (Australian) Corps boundaries. [III Corps operated on left] 06/08/18: Fourth Army Administrative Arrangements issued by D.A. & Q.M.G. Maj.-Gen. H.C. Colman. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31/07/18: Fourth Army ORDER 20G: issued to Corps Commanders for Amiens attack. 'The Fourth Army will attack the enemy's position between Morlancourt and the Amiens – Roye Road (inclusive) [about 18,000 yds. – 4th Army WD Aug 1918-1] on a date to be notified later. The III, Canadian, Australian and Cavalry Corps carry out this attack'. In conjunction, 'the First French army will attack the enemy's position between the Amiens-Roye Road (exclusive) and the Avre valley'. 01/08/18: Fourth Army 20(G) amendment issued revising III Corps, Cde. and Aust. Corps objectives for attack. 1. In continuation of Fourth Army Order No. 20(G) dated 31/7/18:. 2. 'In view of the extensive nature of the operations which are being undertaken by the French, as described verbally to Corps Commanders today, it is probable that, in the event of initial success, the battle will develop into one of considerably magnitude. 4. 'The first object of the operation is to disengage Amiens and the Paris-Amiens railway line by pushing forward and seizing the old Amiens defence line Hangest – Harbonnières = Mericourt (vide Fourth Army No 20(G) dated 31/07/18, para 1 and map.' 5. 'The next object is to push forward in the general direction of the line Roye – Chaulnes with the least possible delay, thrusting the enemy back with determination in the general direction of Ham, and so facilitating the operations of the French from the front Noyon – Montdidier. 8. The Australian Corps, pivoting on the Somme between Mericourt and Etinehem, will swing their right so as to keep touch with the advance of the Canadian Corps. 02/08/18: Fourth Army 20(G) MGGS amplification of Corps orders issued on 31/07/18. 03/08/18: Fourth Army 32(G) General Instruction issued by MGGS to staff of all Corps HQs taking part in offensive. 08/08/18: Fourth Army 32(G) Clarification of "General Instructions" Artillery (1) issued to Corps regarding the | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30/07/18: Conference at 5th Tank Bde HQ was held between Fourth Army staff (MGGS; GSO 1(o); Tanks Corps (GOC, GSO1 AA&QMG, GSO 2(i) and 5th Tank Bde. H.Q. COs 3rd, 4th and 5th Tank Bdes concerning tank cooperation. 30/07/18: Similar meeting with GOC 3rd Cavalry Div. held at Fourth Army HQ. 06/08/18: Fourth Army Administrative Arrangements issued by Maj.-Gen. H.C. Holman D.A. & Q.M.G. Plans coordinated in a series of staff conferences held on 25/07/18: at Aust. Corps HQ Bertangles; 25/07/18: at AHQ Flixecourt; 27/07/18: at III Corps HQ Villers Bocage; 30/07/18: 5th Tank Bde HQ; 30/07/18: AHQ Flixecourt; 01/08/18: III Corps HQ at Villers Bocage; 04/08/18: Cavalry Corps HQ at Auxi-le-Château; 05/08/18: AHQ Flixecourt (attended by Haig and all top ranking GHQ staff officers); and 06/08/18: AHQ Flixecourt. 11/08/18: Army Conference between Rawlinson and his M.G.G.S General Staff, and Corps commanders and their staff to review situation and agree future action. All agreed that 'the enemy's resistance was stiffening'. Rawlinson assured the meeting this this being the case, there was 'no intention to try and burst through [the enemy line] regardless of cost'. It was agreed that best course of action was hold current positions, meet any counter attacks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 08/08/18: 4.23 A.M. (3 min. after attack began) Fourth Army H.Q. receives message from Adv. Report Centre 'Off! Very few enemy flares and no shelling'. 08/08/18: 5.33 A.M. Aust. Corps noted 'reports received for both divisions that attack started to time: all going well'. 08/08/18: Progress reports continued coming in by telephone, runner and pigeon all day and through into the night mainly from Corps H.Q.'s Three reports, summarising progress, were sent to GHQ at 7.05 am, 10.12 am, and 5.20 pm. WO 95-437 4th Army WD (01-13 08 1918:.) [37-47] There was no mention in Aust. Corps H.Q. reports of artillery fire falling short. Messages below are from AWM 4th Army WD 1918 (1) 8.15 A.M. Aust. Corps H.Q. reports 3rd (left) Division on Green Line. 9.05 A.M. Aust. Corps H.Q. reports 2nd (right) Division on Green Line. 12.40 P.M. Aust. Corps H.Q. reports 5th Division on Blue line at 11.53 A.M. 2.55 P.M. Aust. Corps H.Q. (Monash) report 'Australian Flag was hoisted over Harbonnières at mid-day today. 3.25 P.M. Aust. Corps H.Q. reports 'all brigades now reported established on Blue line'. 6.05 P.M. Aust. Corps H.Q. reports 'our infantry on Blue Line and if they wished could go further. All is clear'. 7.35 P.M. Aust. Corps (Monash) 'Troops are advancing along Warfussee Road towards Red Line'. AWM 4th Army WD 1918 (2) 09/08/18: It was originally intended that the 1st Aust. Div. should move through the 5th Aus. Div., who were hold the Blue Line and renew the advance towards Lihons at 11 A.M. (time arranged between Cdn. Corps H.Q. and Aust. Corps H.Q.) but they did not actually move through the 5th Aust. Div until 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OH 1918 Vol IV Appendix IV. pp. 526-558. WO 158/241 4th Army 220(G) See also WO 95-437 4th Army WD Appendices (Aug 1918:.) WO 95/437 Fourth Army WD: Conference proceedings WO 95/437 Fourth Army WD: OAD 900. Personal and Very Secret. To Rawlinson from C.G.S.. WO 158/241 4th Army OAD 900 WO 158/241 4th Army Order 20(G) [30/07/18: conferences incl. in ref. WO 158/241[2] OAD 900/15 WO 95/437 Fourth Army WD: Army 20(G). [ORDER 31/07/18] WO 158/241[2] 4th Army 32(G). See also WO 95-437 4th Army WD Appendices (Aug 1918:.) [38] WO 158/241[2] 4th Army 20(G). [AMPLIFICATION] WO 158/241[2] 4th Army 20(G). [BOUNDARIES]] WO 95-437 4th Army WD Appendices (Aug 1918:.) Fourth Army No. 32 (G). OH 1918:., Vol IV Appendix VII Fourth Army Administrative Arrangements WO 95/437 Fourth Army WD: Army 32(G). [CLARIFICATION] WO 95-437 4th Army WD Appendices (Aug 1918:.) Con. Minutes 29/07/18:. WO 95-437 4th Army WD Orders 20(G) (Aug 1918:.) [135] also WO 95-437 4th Army WD App. [29] WO 95-437 4th Army WD Orders 20/1(G) (Aug 1918:.) [138] WO 95-437 4th Army WD Orders 20/3 (G) (Aug 1918:.) [140] WO 95-437 4th Army WD Orders 20/5 (G) (Aug 1918:.) [142] AWM 4th Army WD 1918 (1) |

| | Prévoyance | Organising | Commanding | Coordinating | Controlling | Ref: |
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| | <p>Cavalry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 05/08/18 Fourth Army No 32 (G) General instructions: Eighth part issued to Corps by M.G.G.S. 13. Cavalry. 05/08/18 Fourth Army No 32 (G) General instructions: Eighth part issued to Corps by M.G.G.S. 05/08/18 Fourth Army No 32 (G) General instructions: Ninth part issued to Corps by M.G.G.S. 12 R.A.F. | | <p>intervention of counter battery fire on Zero night in the event of a heavy hostile artillery barrage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 08/08/18: Fourth Army Order 20(G) (Received overnight on 09/08/18): Orders advance to be continued to Roye - Chaulnes-Bray sur Somme - Dernacourt. Aust. Corps, conforming in the first instance to the advance of the Canadian Corps, will advance tomorrow (09/08/18) with a view to establishing themselves on general line Lihons - Framerville - Mericourt. 09/08/18: Fourth Army Order 20(G) This order was a repeat of Order 20G above, but contained in the first paragraph the latest positions attained by the British and French Formations on 08/08/18. 09/08/18: Fourth Army Order 20/1(G) Orders advance to be continued. Aust. Corps to take over from III Corps as far North as the Corbie-Bray Road (exclusive) as far East as K.17. central. Aust. Corps will advance left flank tomorrow and occupy general line Lihons - Chuignolles -L.28 -L.7. 10/08/18: Fourth Army Order 20/3 (G) The Fourth Army has been ordered to press on to the Somme between Ham (exclusive) and Peronne and establish bridgeheads on the right bank of the river. The Australian Corps will continue its advance with a view to securing the line of the Somme between St. Christ (inclusive) and Bray and establishing bridgeheads on the right bank of the river. 11/08/18: Fourth Army Order 20/5 (G) The advance of the Fourth Army to the Somme will not be continued until all available artillery can be brought up in support and the number of tanks now with the Corps increased. | | <p>p.m. Meanwhile the latter to conform with the advance of the Cdn. Corps on the right, pushed forward and enveloped Vauvillers, which was cleared of the enemy by the time the attacking troops arrived. Tanks suffered heavily in the advance, but at 4.20 P.M. 2nd Aust. Div. moved through the 5th Div immediately south of the Amiens Foucaucourt Road and attacked Framerville on a two bde. front.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.39 A.M. Morning Report – Quiet night. 9.50 P.M. Monash reports by telephone that the Aust. Corps are on Red Line. | |
| <p>Aust. Corps Lieut.-Gen. Sir John Monash</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30/07/30-07/08/18: Immediately prior to receipt of Fourth Army Order 20G ordering the Amiens attack Aust. Corps (BGGs) under ACO No 140 issues Instructions No 1. This is the first of 21 Battle Instructions issued by BGGs in memo form to the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th division and their respective brigades between 5th and 7th August. Unfortunately these battle instructions are missing from the relevant Aust. Corps War Diary. However, a copy is available in <i>Australian Victories in France</i> in 1918: by Lieut.-Gen. Sir John Monash, the Corps Commander. 01-03 /08/18 AC Artillery Instructions No 249, 250, 255 Plan for Amiens offensive. 05/08/18 AC Heavy Artillery Order No 150. Plan of Amiens offensive. 06/08/18 Counter Battery Op Order No 12. Plan for Amiens Offensive. These artillery communications were both plans and orders. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24/07/18: ACO 135 organization of reliefs (58th Div. III Corps reliving 5th Div.) 27/07/18: ACO 137 organization of relief. (Aust. Corps by III Corps) 29/07/18: ACO 138 organization of artillery relief involving 4th, 5th Div. artillery and III Corps. 29/7/139-01/08/18: ACO 139-148 organization of formations in Corps area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 27/07/18: H.A. Order 149 in support of 5th Division preparatory attack. 27/07/18: H.A. Op. Order 11. in support of 5th Division preparatory attack. 05/08/18:-07/08/18: Corps Orders for the Amiens offensive took the form of battle instructions. 07/08/18 AC issues advice to Divs. 07/08/18 is “Y” day. [2nd Div WD Aug 1918 (1)] 07/08/18: General Staff Memo AC/42 “ZERO will be for 4.20 am on 8th instant. [Battle Instructions no 21 p. 344] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 01/08/18: Div. Commanders and staff (2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th div.) attend conference at Corps HQ to be briefed on Amiens offensive. 02/08/18: Conference held to coordinate administrative matters attended by div. AA&QMG staff officers. 04/08/18: Div. Commanders and staff attend conference at Corps H.Q. NOTE: These conferences have not been recorded in Aust. Corps WD but they are referenced in 5th Div. WD as below. NOTE: An analysis of inward wires (Aust. Corps WD Aug 1918 (4) shows that where it has been possible to time these wires it took: D.H.Q. to C.H.Q.: Approx. 2 hrs. A.H.Q. to C.H.Q.: 1.5 to 5 hrs. Balloon Co to C.H.Q. 45min – over one hr. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 08/08/18: In total 249 inward messages were received by Aust. Corps H.Q. from formations above Bde. In the main these messages indicated progress, position, casualties, prisoners and equipment captured, and enemy response. It appears from the descriptive detail of these messages that Corps HQ was able to have a clear and accurate picture of proceedings. 08/08/18: In total Corps HQ despatched 53 outward messages mainly to 4th Army H.Q. Of the messages sent to Divs. these were used to provide relevant information that would be useful to decision making on the ground. No attempt was made to direct proceedings. 09/08/18: The same general comment can be applied as above. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC WD July (2) ACO 135 AC WD July (46) HAO 135 AC WD July (2) ACO 137 AC WD July (46) HAO 11 AC WD July (2) ACO 138 AC WD July (2) ACO 139-141; AC WD Aug (1) ACO 142-148. Note: 146 missing. Monash, Lieut.-Gen Sir John Monash, <i>The Australian Victories in France</i>, Appendix C. pp. 317-344. As above. Battle Instruction 21. Aust. Corps WD Aug 1918 (3) (Inward Wires) Aust. Corps WD Aug 1918 (3) (Outward Wires) 5th Div WD Aug 1918 (17) OD 249-250-255 5th Div WD Aug 1918 (17)-2 HA Order 150 |

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| <p>5th Division</p> <p>Maj.-Gen. J.J. Talbot Hobbs</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28/07/18: "C" Division – Aust. Corps Defence Scheme. Following the successful Morlancourt attack, 5 Div. moved into Corps reserve and a highly detailed defence scheme was issued. 29/07/18: Although 5th Division Commander, Maj.-Gen. Joseph Talbot-Hobbs, became aware of the Amiens offensive when extemporising for Monash. Due to the secrecy that underpinned the operation, Talbot Hobbs was only formally given notice of the proposed attack by Aust. Corps on 29/07/18:. 01/08/18: Battle Instruction No 1 issued under the signature of The GSO1 to 5th Div brigades and other Divisional formations participating in offensive. The format of the plans was similar to the those issued by Aust. Corps G.S. but the instructions adapted and applied in detail to the 5th Div formations. 02/08/08 'Plan of Attack' submitted to Aust. Corps for approval. 02-07/08/18: Battle Instructions No 2-33 prepared and issued. 09/08/18 Artillery Instruction No 6 issued at 8.30 A.M. 09/08/18 Artillery Instruction No 8 issued at 3 P.M. cancelling Instruction No 7 [no copy] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25/07/18: Div. Order 216 issued in response to ACO 135 by GSO 1 (Lieut.-Col. J.H. Peck) 25/07/18: Order 216 partially postponed until further orders. 25/07/18: AAMC Order 16 issued to field ambulance units to promulgate Order 216. 25/07/18: Artillery Order 49 issued to effect positional changes. 28/07/18: Order 219. 5th Div. is relieved by 18th Division and moves into Corps Reserve. 04/08/18: Order 220. Organization and movement of participating formations effected. 06/08/18: Order 221. Organization and movement of participating MG Cos effected. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23/07/18: Talbot-Hobbs assumes temporary command of Aust. Corps from Monash. 27/07/18: Order 218: instructs 8th and 14th Aust. Inf. Bde to attack and capture enemy line adjacent to Morlancourt. The advance is to be made astride the Corbie-Bray road (5th Div. [Ellis] p. 318:) 07/08/18: Order 222. '5th Australian Division will carry out an attack in accordance with Battle Instructions and amendments thereto previously issued and which are hereby confirmed'. 05/08/18: AAMC Order No 19. Sets out arrangements and orders for divisional Field Ambulances. 06/08/18 Art. Order 63. 'The 5th Australian Division will attack the enemy on 8th August 1918...' 09/08/18 Battle Instruction Series B. 'The attack will be resumed on 9th Instant...It is not anticipated that the attack will be launched before 10 A.M. ZERO will be notified as soon as it is ascertained'. [From Canadian Corps H.Q.] In so far as the 5th Division was concerned, according to this order, only the 8th Inf. Bde. was involved. The rest of the Division was to remain on the defensive while the attack was carried by 1st Aust. Div. In the event ZERO hour was confirmed at 11 A.M., the 1st Aust. Div was late, and the Division moved forward in support of the Canadians to be relieved later in the day by 1st Aust. Div. 10/08/18 – 13/08/18 The 5th Div took no further active part in the offensive. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 01/08/18: Talbot-Hobbs and staff attend Corps conference. [WD] 01/08/18: Talbot hold presides at conference to brief subordinate brigade and other unit commanders and their staffs on forthcoming operation. [WD] 01/08/18: Talbot Hobbs visits 2nd Aust. Div. to coordinate arrangements. [WD] 02/08/18: AA&QMG attended conference at Corps HQ regarding "Q" arrangements for forthcoming operation. 03/08/18: Talbot-Hobbs visits HQ's of 8th, (Tivey) 14th, and 15th Bdes to discuss forthcoming operations with commanders and staff. [WD] 03/08/18: (Admin) Conference of Brigade Staff Captains regarding arrangements for operations. [WD] 04/08/18: (Admin) 'Several conferences held in order that responsible Officers would clearly understand all arrangements in connection with the operation...' [WD] 04/08/18: Talbot-Hobbs attends conference at Corps HQ to explain plan for forthcoming operations and to receive any last instructions. [WD] 04/08/18: Talbot-Hobbs meets with Commander of 5th Tank Bde concerning tank and armoured car cooperation. [WD] 05/08/18: Conference held at 5 Div. HQ with commanders and staff participating in offensive to ensure clear understanding and close cooperation between all formations. [WD]. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 08/08/18: Over 300 incoming messages received by Div. HQ from units in the field providing progress, position, casualties, prisoners and equipment captured, and enemy response. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5th Div WD July 1918: (16) Defence Scheme WO 95-437 4th Army WD Appendices (Aug 1918:) Con. Minutes 29/07/18:. 5th Div. WD July (1). 5th Div. Art WD Jul 1918: (2) Div. Order 216. 5th Div Art WD Jul 1918: (2) 012/2649. 5th Div. WD July 1918: (15) AAMC Order 16 5th Div. WD July 1918: (15) Art Order 49 5th Div. WD July 1918: (11) Order 219. WD Aug 1918 (9) Plan of Attack 5th Div. WD Aug 1918: (7) Order 220 5th Div. WD Aug 1918: (7) Order 221 5th Div. WD Aug 1918: (4) Battle Instructions 1-18:. 5th Div WD Aug 1918: (5) Battle Inst. 19-31 [Copy in 5th Div. WD (16) 18:0807 5th Div WD Aug 1918: (7) Order 222 5th Div Admin WD Aug 1918:. 5th Div WD Aug 1918: (5) AAMC Order 19 5th Division WD Aug 1918 (5) Art. Order 63 5th Division WD Aug 1918 (5) BI Series B [27-29] |
| <p>8th Brigade</p> <p>Brig.-Gen. E. Tivey</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 02/08/18: Conference of Bn. Commanders held at H.Q. (Bois de Mai) to be briefed on forthcoming offensive. [WD] 03-07/08/18: Battle Instructions 1 to 26 together with Administrative instructions prepared by Bde Major and Staff Capt. and issued. [WD]. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30/07/18: Brigade Order 196. Adjustments of defensive organizations takes place. 02/08/18: Bns. practiced battle formations [leap frogging] [WD]. 07/08/18: Formations and units move to assembly areas. [WD]. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 07/08/18: Order No 198 issued. 'The 8th Aust. Inf. Brigade will carry out an attack in accordance with Battle Instructions and Amendments thereto, and which are hereby confirmed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 04/08/18: Conference of Bn. Commanders, together with O.C. 8th L.T.M.B. [Light Trench Mortar Battery] Artillery and Tank officers [staff] to discuss and coordinate arrangements for forthcoming offensive. [WD] 05/08/18: Bde Commander attends meeting at Divisional H.Q. [WD] Staff Capt. visits all units. Attend further conference of O.C.s and staff. [WD] 06/08/18: formation [staff] officers visit H.Q. to finalise arrangements. [WD] 06/08/18: C.O.s conference at H.Q. [WD]. 07/08/18: Final conference of all Cos and staff held at H.Q. [WD]. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8th Infantry Bde WD July 1918: Order 196 8th Infantry Bde WD (Aug) 1918: Battle Instructions and Orders |

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| <p>15th Brigade</p> <p>Brig.-Gen. H.E. (Pompey) Elliott</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 02-07/04/18: Preliminary Instructions 1 to 23 prepared and issued by Bde Major, culminating in No 23, establishing Zero hour at 4.20 A.M. on 8th instant. 03/04/15 Administrative Instruction 21 prepared by Staff Captain and issued. 04/08/18: Administrative Instruction 21 prepared by Staff Captain and issued. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 04/08/18: Order 183 - 184. Units moved to assembly areas. 07/08/18: Admin. Order 23 supply and transport units moved into support areas. 07/08/18: 'Battalions reached assembly areas safely. [WD] 10/08/18 Bde moves into reserve. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 03/08/18 Brig.-Gen. H.E. Elliott resumes command after being recalled to Brigade from leave in England.. [WD] 07/08/18: Order No 185 issued with a high level of detail confirming attack. Note zero hour confirmed in 'Preliminary instruction no 23. 10/08/18: Order No 186 issued moving the Bde into reserve. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 01/04/18: Acting Bde commander (Lieut.-Col J.E.C. Lord of 40th Bn.) attends conference at Div. HQ where he is informed of the forthcoming offensive. Necessity for secrecy stressed. [WD] 01/08/18: Conference held at Brig HQ where all commanders and staff are similarly advised by A/Brig. commander. 04/08/18: Bde Commander holds conference with O.C. and staff to coordinate plans. 05/08/18: Conference including 'Brigadiers, Brigade Majors, and Heads of Administrative Services and Departments, also Specialist Commanders', held at Div. H.Q. to coordinate plans. [WD] 05/08/18 57th Bn. Order No 148. Bde placed under tactical command of 2nd Aust. Div on night of 5/6 August. This was to facilitate the tight coordination of the leap-frog advance through the Green Line. Once the Bde had passed through 2nd Aust. Div. on 08/08/18 tactical command would revert to 5th Div. 06/08/18: HQs of 15th, 8th Bdes and 13th and 14th Aust. F.A. Bdes share same dugout to ensure close coordination. [WD] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 03/08/08 'Brigade Major reconnoitred the forward area with officers of each battalion'. [WD] 08/08/18: 7.50 am: Bde HQ receive hand written message from 57th Bn. 'We are at La Bastille Mill – All well – Tanks are in Marcelcave. We are in touch with Canadians who report they are doing well'. [Message recorded as being sent at 7.35 am at Bn. HQ, thus it took only 15 minutes for the hand written message to reach Bde HQ presumably by runner. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15th Infantry Bde WD Aug 1918: (2) Prelim Instructions 1-23. 15th Infantry Bde WD Aug 1918: (1) Admin Od 21 15th Infantry Bde WD Aug 1918: (1) Admin Od 21 15th Infantry Bde WD Aug 1918: (1) Order 18:3 - 18:4 15th Infantry Bde WD Aug 1918: (2) Order 18:5 15th Infantry Bde WD Aug 1918: (1) Admin Od 23. 15th Infantry Bde WD Aug 1918: (3) Messages [11 BN WD [84]] 57th Inf. Bn WD Aug [59] |
| <p>57th Bn.</p> <p>Lieut.-Col. C.A. Denehy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 03-07/08/18: Preliminary instructions prepared and issued. [WD] In total 19 preliminary instructions were issued under BN. Order No 146. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 29-07-18: Bn. Order 145 from the Adjutant. Bn. to move by route march to Querrieu where it will embus to HEM. [WD] 04/08/18: Bn. Order No. 147 directs BN. to assembly area. 05/08/18: Bn. arrives at assembly area. [WD] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 03/08/18: Lieut.-Col C.A. Denehy resumes command of Bn. [WD] 05/08/18: Bn. Order No 148, issued by Adjutant concerns administrative and marching orders. 07/08/18: Under Bn. Order No 146 the offensive is confirmed with exception of zero hour. 08/08/18: At 2 a.m. the bn. (27 officers and 617 other ranks) were ordered out of the assembly positions to the lie positions in the order A, B, HQ C and D Coys. These units 'proceeded via the out skirts of Villers Bretonneox (sic) to taped positions'. [WD] At 5.20 am the 57th Bn. commenced its advance to the Green line. 10/08/18 'Order received from Bde. to effect the Division would move back into Corps Reserve starting at 10.30 A.M.' WD [19] 11/08/18 The Bn. was inspected by the King. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 02/08/18: Bn. Acting C.O. attends conference at Bde HQ and is advised of forthcoming offensive. Necessity for secrecy stressed. Through equipping of men to be put in had at once. [WD] 03/08/18: A party of one officer and four other ranks accompany Brigade Major on a reconnaissance of the assembly area. [WD] Acting C.O. holds conference of company C.O.s to brief them on forthcoming operation. [WD] 04/08/18: C.O. and Adjutant attend conference at Bde H.Q.[WD] 05/08/18: C.O. and Adjutant attend a second conference at Bde H.Q. 'Officers from Tanks, Engineers, Machine Gun Bn. Brigade exploiting party and Trench mortars were present. [WD] 07/08/18: C.O. called Company Commanders together for a final briefing. [WD] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 08-09/08/18: 42 messages recorded messages passed between the fighting Cos. Bn. HQ and Bde HQ. 08/08/18: These messages were mainly from the Coy. C.O.s reporting their positions and condition. It is clear that control of the fighting rested in the hands of Coy C.O.s and Platoon Cos. 08/08/18: 8.05 am: A Coy reported '18: prs dropping short on about our line'. At 8.50 am the Bn. C.O. notified Bde. HQ that 4.5 hows. shooting short in V6c aaa Can you lift please. At 8.55 am this message was repeated. At 9.24 am and 9.40am 4.5 and 6 inch howitzers were reported by Bn CO to be shooting short and holding up cavalry and infantry. 08/08/18: At 12.55 pm communications were opened between the Bn. CO and 59th Bn. and 24th Canadian Bn. regarding a potential enemy counter-attack and movements of the cavalry. CO attempts to coordinate movements of advance. 08/08/18: Communication between Bde. HQ and Bn. HQ is not reported. 09/08/18: 8.48 am: All Coys report to Bn. CO that 'Amiens line [Blue] is occupied'. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 57th Inf. Bn WD Aug 1918: Report inc. orders. 57th Inf. Bn WD Aug 1918: Order 146 57th Inf. Bn. WD Aug 1918: Order 147 57th Inf. Bn. WD Aug 1918: Order 148 57th Inf. Bn. WD Aug 1918: Report inc. orders(Summary of messages -5.15 am To Bde H.Q. from C.O. 'Moving in 5 minutes aaa All correct'. [23] 1918: Report inc. orders(Summary of messages) [23-27] 57th Inf. Bn. WD Aug 1918: [19] |

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