An innovative comparative history of how German and British soldiers endured the horror of the First World War. Unlike existing literature, which emphasises the strength of societies or military institutions, this study argues that at the heart of armies’ robustness lay natural human resilience. Drawing widely on contemporary letters and diaries of British and German soldiers, psychiatric reports and official documentation, and interpreting these sources with modern psychological research, this unique account provides new insights into the soldiers’ fears, motivations and coping mechanisms. It explains why the British outlasted their opponents by examining and comparing the motives for fighting, the effectiveness with which armies and societies supported men and the combatants’ morale throughout the conflict on both sides. Finally it challenges the current consensus on the war’s end, arguing that not a ‘covert strike’ but rather an ‘ordered surrender’ led by junior officers brought about Germany’s defeat in 1918.

ALEXANDER WATSON is a Research Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge. In manuscript form *Enduring the Great War* was joint-winner of the Institute of Contemporary History and Wiener Library’s Fraenkel Prize for 2006.
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This book began life as a doctoral thesis in October 2001, and it is to my former supervisor, Professor Niall Ferguson, that I owe the greatest thanks. It was he who persuaded me to conduct research in Germany, and at every stage of my work I have benefited enormously from his wisdom and support.

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NOTE
For clarity, German terms have been placed in italics throughout the text.
Abbreviations

ARCHIVES
BA-MA Freiburg Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Freiburg
BZ Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte, Stuttgart
DTA Deutsches Tagebucharchiv, Emmendingen
GLA Karlsruhe Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe
HStA Dresden Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden
HStA Munich/IV Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv München, Abteilung IV: Kriegsarchiv
HStA Stuttgart Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart
IWM Imperial War Museum, London
LA Nuremberg Landeskirchliches Archiv Nürnberg
Staatsbib. Berlin Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Handschriftabteilung, Berlin
Staatsbib. Hamburg Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Handschriftabteilung, Hamburg
TNA The National Archives, Kew (formerly Public Record Office)
WLHM Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine, London

BOOKS

Medical Services Mitchell, T.J. and Smith, G.M. (eds.), History of the Great War based on Official Documents. Medical Services. Casualties and Medical
List of abbreviations


Military Effort

RWOCIS

Sanitätsbericht II

Sanitätsbericht III

GENERAL
ADMS Assistant Director of Medical Services
AEF American Expeditionary Force
AK Armykorps
ANZAC Australian and New Zealand Army Corps; a man from this formation
AOK Arme-Oberkommando
AWOL Absence without leave; a man guilty of absconding
BEF British Expeditionary Force
CO Commanding Officer
GHQ General Headquarters, British Expeditionary Force
MO Medical Officer
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<td>NCO</td>
<td>Non-commissioned Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Nachrichtenoffizier</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHL</td>
<td>Oberheeresleitung, German Field Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>I/bayerisches Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 23</td>
<td>I Bataillon des bayerischen Reserve-Infanterie-Regiments Nr. 23 (same form used for other German regiments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/5 Durham Light Infantry</td>
<td>5th Battalion of First Line Territorials, Durham Light Infantry (same form used for other British regiments)</td>
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THE WESTERN FRONT 1914–1918

Black arrows indicate site and direction of the two great 1916 offensives: VERDUN (German), bottom right; SOMME ( Anglo-French), centre left.

- Frontiers of 1914
- Limit of German advance 1914
- Limit of German advance 1918
- Approximate line of the front from late 1914 to beginning of the Battle of the Somme, 1 July 1916
- Armistice line, 11 November 1918

10 miles
50 kilometres

Alsace-Lorraine (inactive sector)