Introduction

> I shall be strengthened in the discharge of the great responsibility which rests upon me by the confidence that in this time of trial my Empire will stand united, calm, resolute, trusting in God.
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> King George V (1914)[1]

On the evening of August 4, 1914, Great Britain went to war with Germany. Within hours, the self-governing Dominions of Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa pledged their unqualified support for the war effort.[2] Political leaders and public discourse alike employed the language of race and kinship to assert their intentions to, in the words of one Australian premier, "stand beside the Mother Country to help and defend her to the last man and the last shilling."[3] All together, the white populations of the empire contributed over 6,250,000 soldiers to the war effort, the vast majority of them volunteers. By the time the guns ceased on November 11, 1918, over 880,000 had lost their lives on distant battlefields with now iconic names such as Gallipoli, the Somme, and Passchendaele.

The rallying of the empire at the outbreak of the First World War was in part a manifestation of British race patriotism. Despite blooming colonial nationalism and physical separation by enormous geographical distances, the bulk of white colonists nonetheless retained a "British" self-identification marked by common language, allegiance to the Crown, and a vague (and often contested) racial affiliation. This collective identity coincided with a popular understanding of the empire as a transnational community of Britons sustained more by culture and sentiment than formal political ties. Belonging to this "Greater Britain" allowed for the coexistence of ethnic, colonial, or national identities

[1] *Times*, August 5, 1914.
[2] The self-governing colonies became "Dominions" in 1907. By 1914 they included Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Newfoundland. I use the terms Dominions and self-governing colonies interchangeably.
[3] Eric Montgomery Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion: Anglo-Australian Relations during World War I* (Cambridge 1993), 41.

under the protective umbrella of the British connection. In other words, an Australian could simultaneously regard himself or herself as a Scot and a Briton. As the empire expanded to cover one-fifth of the world's landmass, the sentimental components of Britishness became a powerful cultural force that linked disparate groups from London to Sydney to Cape Town.

This book explores the cultural, social, and political dimensions of British and Dominion military and naval cooperation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In particular, it demonstrates how ideas of race and culture shaped the evolution of imperial defense policy. Historians commonly represent Anglo-Dominion relations during the period 1870–1914 as a monolithic struggle between the proponents of imperial federation and the powerful undercurrents of colonial nationalism. In contrast, I argue that a pervasive sense of pan-British identity shaped the worldview of most white subjects, allowing for an unprecedented level of collaboration in security affairs. The book merges more traditional studies of diplomacy, imperial administration, and defense planning with a wider cultural analysis. In doing so, it poses important questions about the ontological nature of race, empire, and identity. What was a Briton and what was Britishness? How were these ideas represented? And how did concepts of race patriotism and "Greater Britain" contribute to the formation of a closely coordinated imperial defense arrangement in the decades prior to the First World War? The book thus reasserts the fundamental importance of the international security partnership between Britain and the Dominions, and provides a comprehensive and more nuanced understanding of the meaning of British identity within the empire.

Historians have long relegated the study of Britain's interactions with the Dominions as anachronistic. In the aftermath of the Second World War, scholarly attention understandably shifted from white imperial elites to nonwhite colonial subjects. The subsequent model of "informal empire," or the analytical categories of "metropole" and "periphery" did not always apply to the white colonists who shared in the dividends of the empire.[4] Nor have race and gender studies significantly advanced scholarly discussions of the self-governing colonies. Although these valuable contributions offer a better understanding of European hegemony

[4] Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *Economic History Review* 1 (1953), 1–15; Ronald Robinson, John Gallagher, and Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London, 1961); David Fieldhouse, *Economics and Empire, 1830–1914* (Ithaca, 1973). In 1993, Cain and Hopkins' study on "Gentlemanly Capitalism" acknowledged the importance of the Dominions in the empire, but from a purely economic standpoint that neglected the wider cultural framework of British identity. P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London, 1993).

over the nonwhite "Other," they reveal very little about white settler populations, many of whom considered themselves British.[5] Nationalist historians in the former Dominions have also eschewed a study of the empire. In Australia and New Zealand, the postwar historiography became increasingly insular and parochial in context, whereas Canadian historians largely ignored the British connection in favor of a multiethnic Canadian history. These scholars have followed a narrow path that sought to erase any evidence of the imperial past.[6] What was lost in these "national" perspectives was the vast cultural interconnectedness between Britain and the Dominions.

Fortunately, scholarly trends have moved the study of the British Empire to a more comparative approach that acknowledges the importance of the Dominions. The publication of Linda Colley's *Britons* in 1992 launched a scholarly (and public) debate over the nature of Britishness in the United Kingdom.[7] Colley's contention that one could be English, Scottish, or Welsh as well as British offered tantalizing possibilities for scholars struggling with the elusive issue of white identity within the empire. Historians are now beginning to take seriously the idea that there was a British World, and that many of its white residents claimed membership as Britons as well as English, Scots, Canadians, or South Africans.[8] As two leading scholars of this trend insist, "we have lost contact with what was always the heart of the imperial enterprise, the

[5] See, for example, Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York, 1995); Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The "Manly Englishman" and the "Effeminate Bengali" in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, 1995); Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe* (Durham, 1996).

[6] For a survey of this material see Stuart Macintyre, "Australia and the Empire," in Robin Winks (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V Historiography* (Oxford, 1999), 172–181; D.R. Owam, "Canada and the Empire," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, 156–162. For a critique of this development, see Philip Buckner, "Whatever Happened to the British Empire?," *Journal of Canadian Historical Association* 4 (1993), 3–32; A.G. Hopkins, "Back to the Future: From National History to Imperial History," *Past and Present* 164 (August 1999), 198–243. Some scholars recognized this problem and sought to reinsert the empire back into national histories. In 1974, New Zealander John Pocock, a leading historian of early modern England, decried the "Balkanization" of the profession and challenged his colleagues to readdress British history from a global perspective. J.G.A. Pocock, "British History: A Plea for a New Subject," *New Zealand Journal of History* 8 (1974), 3–21.

[7] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, 1992).

[8] See, for example, Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich (eds.), *The British World: Culture, Diaspora, and Identity* (London, 2003); Philip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (eds.), *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary, 2005); John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System* (Cambridge, 2009); Andrew Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics, 1880–1914* (New York, 2000); James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World* (Oxford, 2009); Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain* (Princeton, 2007).

expansion of Britain and the peopling and building of the trans-oceanic British world. It is time we reacquainted ourselves with what was once considered both vitally important and self-evident."[9]

Historians have also readdressed the considerable influence of the empire on metropolitan society and culture. In the 1980s, John MacKenzie's *Propaganda and Empire* (1984) and *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (1986) launched a wave of cultural studies that viewed an "imperial ideology" as an integral part of British society.[10] These works, many of which appear in the highly influential Manchester University Press series on "Studies in Imperialism," argued against older claims that the empire mattered only to an elite subcaste of bureaucrats, landowners, merchants, and bankers. Instead, they point to varying manifestations of the empire in everyday activities such as school, entertainment, consumer advertising, and sports. Initially, the vast bulk of these books focused on India and the Crown colonies, though many recent additions examine the cultural connections with the white settler communities.[11]

Despite the scholarly renaissance in imperial historiography, there remains a noticeable void between the history of the Victorian Empire and military/naval history. Most studies of British defense policy in the prewar era focus on topics such as the Royal Navy, foreign relations, army reform, and defense administration from a largely metropolitan perspective.[12] Other works consider the topic of security largely from

[9] Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich, "Mapping the British World," in *The British World*, 10.

[10] John M. MacKenzie, "Introduction," in MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986), 5. Also see MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: Public Opinion and the Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880–1960* (Manchester, 1984).

[11] Some of these include: Daniel Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester, 2006); John MacKenzie and Nigel Dalziel, *The Scots in South Africa: Ethnicity, Identity, Gender, and Race 1772–1914* (Manchester, 2007); Marjory Harper (ed.), *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movement of Emigrants, 1600–2000* (Manchester, 2005); Annie Coombes, ed., *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa* (Manchester, 2006); Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity: Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester, 2009); Angela McCarthy, *Scottishness and Irishness in New Zealand since 1840* (Manchester, 2011); Neville Kirk, *Labour and the Politics of Empire: Britain and Australia, 1900 to the Present* (Manchester, 2011).

[12] See, for example: Arthur Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power: A History of British Naval Policy in the Pre-Dreadnought Era 1880–1905* (New York, 1940); John F. Beeler, *British Naval Policy in the Gladstone-Disraeli Era 1866–1880* (Stanford, 1997); Rhodri Williams, *Defending the Empire: Conservative Party and British Defense Policy, 1889–1915* (New Haven, 1991); Donald Schurman, *Imperial Defence 1868–1887* John Beeler (ed.) (London, 2000); W.C.B. Tunstall, "Imperial Defence, 1897–1914" in J. Holland Rose, A.P. Newton, and E.A. Benians (eds.), *Cambridge History of the British Empire Volume I* (Cambridge, 1929), 563–604; Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar, The Russian Factor in British Policy, 1894–1917* (Oxford, 1996). Also see the collections in Greg Kennedy (ed.), *Imperial Defence: The Old World Order 1856–1956* (New York, 2008).

the perspectives of the individual Dominions.[13] Two older studies by Donald Gordon and Richard Preston explore how British authorities worked with the self-governing colonies to forge a program of common "imperial defence."[14] Though incorporating Canadian and Australasian perspectives, these studies emphasize the deliberations and actions of policymakers, neglecting broader cultural, social, and intellectual influences. Most importantly, this scholarship by diplomatic and military historians is rarely in dialogue with the broader study of the empire. As one prominent scholar insists, military and naval historians "have to exploit the current interest in Empires to join the debates, bringing their own unique insights and resources to bear."[15]

This book answers this challenge and spans a number of historical subfields to provide the first comprehensive study of the cultural origins of imperial defense in the British World. First, it contributes to the growing literature on identities and cultural networks in the empire. The fact that terms such as "Britons" and "Britishness" transcended the political boundaries of the United Kingdom suggests important global ramifications for understanding this racial and cultural bond. In particular, it demonstrates the prominence of settler colonies in British consciousness. These white colonials were not the exotic characters drawn from the pages of Rudyard Kipling and G.A. Henty; they were the masculine sons and cousins of Britons in the metropole. Their collective self-identification as Britons, particularly in periods of acute international crisis, played an important role in representing Greater Britain as a transnational community that traversed oceans and continents. Second, this book contributes to the "New Military History" of the empire.[16] Social and cultural

[13] See, for example, Stephen Harris, *Canadian Brass: The Making of a Professional Army, 1860–1939* (Toronto, 1988); James Woods, *Militia Myths: Ideas of the Canadian Citizen Soldier, 1896–1921* (Vancouver, 2011); I.C. McGibbon, *The Path to Gallipoli: Defending New Zealand, 1840–1915* (Wellington, 1991); Neville Meaney, *The Search for Security in the Pacific, 1901–1914* (Sydney, 1976); John Connor, *Anzac and Empire: George Pearce and the Foundations of Australian Defence* (Cambridge, 2011); John Mordike, *An Army for a Nation: A History of Australian Military Developments, 1880–1914* (Sydney, 1992).

[14] Donald Gordon, *Dominion Partnership in Imperial Defense 1870–1914* (Baltimore, 1965); Richard Preston, *Canada and Imperial Defense 1867–1919* (Durham, 1967). In his review of Preston's book, Gordon criticized the author for being "indifferent to the emotions reflected in press and parliaments." However, Gordon largely neglects this cultural dimension as well. Donald Gordon, "Review of 'Canada and 'Imperial Defense': A Study of the Origins of the British Commonwealth's Defense Organization, 1867–1919," *Military Affairs* 31 (1967), 199.

[15] Andrew Lambert, "The Royal Navy and the Defence of Empire, 1856–1918" in Greg Kennedy (ed.), *Imperial Defence: Old World Order, 1856–1956* (New York, 2008), 128.

[16] For example of the "New Military History" that emphasizes social and cultural issues, see Jan Rüger, *The Great Naval Game: Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge, 2007); Mary Conley, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack: Representing Naval Manhood in the British Empire 1870–1918* (Manchester, 2009); Heather Streets, *Martial*

concerns greatly shaped the formation of imperial defense policy. After all, governments might employ powerful instruments of state such as armies and fleets, but they relied on the popular approval and whims of modern mass society. The book analyzes the cultural and intellectual milieu within which political elites operated and which allowed for such an unprecedented global partnership to flourish under a common imperial banner.

The methodology reflects this multidisciplinary approach. On the one hand, it relies upon intensive archival research from a variety of international sources to consider the "official mind" of policymakers and defense administrators. Of particular interest are the ministerial offices responsible for defense and imperial relations, including the Admiralty, the War Office, the Colonial Office, and the Committee of Imperial Defense, as well as the leading political and defense figures in Britain and the Dominions. On the other hand, it addresses wider cultural attitudes as expressed through newspapers, advertisements, popular literature, and boys' weekly magazines. Print media occupies a central part of this analysis. Benedict Anderson's concept of "Imagined Communities" points to the role of print culture in forging national identities. This was particularly applicable in the Victorian British world, where the emergence of the "penny press" and the establishment of imperial telegraph lines allowed for a mass global audience of daily newspaper readers.[17] The book draws on over 140 different periodicals from throughout the empire as a means of assessing "public" opinion and, more importantly, understanding the discursive elements and vocabulary of Britishness.

Each of the seven chapters in this book explores a different dimension of how ideas of pan-British solidarity shaped the imperial relationship. It is arranged thematically as well as roughly chronologically, demonstrating that race patriotism became increasingly central to cultural and political concerns about imperial security until they reached a crescendo at the outbreak of the First World War. Chapter 1 establishes the study's foundation and examines the concept of the British World as a global diaspora. Being a Briton was both a nebulous and highly contested identity that could apply to various groups of people. It was an inclusive political term that melded English, Scottish, Welsh, and sometimes

Races: The Military, Race, and Masculinity in Imperial Culture (Manchester, 2004); Helen McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers: The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War* (Cambridge, 2011); Matthew Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge, 2006); Mark Sheftall, *Altered Memories of the Great War: Divergent Narratives in Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada* (London, 2009).

[17] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York, 1991). For an excellent study of the imperial press connections, see Simon Potter, *News and the British World* (Oxford, 2003).

Irish identities into a common association.[18] Britishness also served as a cultural and racial bond connecting Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, and white South Africans with the residents of Great Britain. The British label could even stretch its boundaries to incorporate limited numbers of French Canadians, Boers, and non-British European immigrants. Nonetheless, it remained a racially exclusive group that largely denied membership to the nonwhite population of the empire. Negative depiction of Indians, Asians, and Africans, in opposition to Europeans, was integral to the construction of imperial Britishness. The chapter also explores the concept of Greater Britain as a global community linking the "Mother Country" with the settler communities overseas. Here the focus is less on actual political boundaries and more on the popular vision of the empire as a racially homogenous entity. Unlike most studies of imperial unity, I emphasize the ideas of contemporary theorist Richard Jebb, whose pragmatic views on the cultural (rather than political) underpinnings of the imperial community, and the compatibility of British race patriotism with colonial nationalism, most accurately captured the reality of the late Victorian empire.

Protecting global possessions with limited resources was one of the greatest challenges facing British policymakers of the nineteenth century. Chapter 2, therefore, examines how ideas of Greater Britain became associated with concerns about the declining state of imperial security. In the aftermath of the Indian Rebellion (1857), and concomitant with the rise of Social Darwinism and scientific racism, many Britons became increasingly wary of employing nonwhite troops, including the vast Indian Army, against European adversaries. At the same time, developments in white colonial military and naval affairs sparked interest in a possible mutual defense arrangement between Britain and the white colonies. Australian participation in the Sudan Campaign (1885), and colonial financial subsidies toward the Royal Navy (1887) underscored the belief that the settler colonies were loyal and maturing states prepared to share the common burden of empire. The chapter reveals how policymakers' efforts and popular culture combined to produce a pervasive vision of a future racial alliance between the white, English-speaking populations of the empire.

White colonial participation in the South African War (1899–1902) marked an important turning point in the evolution of the empire.

[18] Many if not most Catholic Irish subjects did not consider themselves "British." Moreover, the peculiar nature of the Irish as a semicolonized group within the United Kingdom challenges the conception of the empire as a homogenous community. The issue of Irish identity within the empire is an enormous topic that has been addressed elsewhere. With few exceptions, this book focuses on the self-governing colonies to the exclusion of Ireland.

All-white volunteer contingents from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa became powerful symbols of imperial solidarity. This image contrasted sharply with British policies prohibiting the use of nonwhite troops. Unlike other colonial wars, this conflict against the Boers was to be "a white man's war." Chapter 3 traces British and colonial efforts at military collaboration in South Africa, as well as the explosion of patriotic and racialist rhetoric that accompanied the war. It also addresses how the contributions of "frontier" colonial troops provided the archetype for a masculine and patriotic Briton. These ideas were expressed in wartime advertising, literature, and press reports that emphasized the masculine qualities of white colonial men. By examining the semiotic appeal of these colonial "Rough Riders," this chapter demonstrates the importance of race, gender, and imperial military service in fashioning and representing global British identities.

European governments at the *fin de siècle* often employed military parades and naval reviews to encourage and represent national unity. Chapter 4 analyzes such events as the Diamond Jubilee of 1897, the Quebec Tercentenary of 1908, and the Royal Coronations of 1902 and 1911 as propaganda campaigns in which elites manufactured a stirring image of imperial military solidarity. Two major themes are explored: the significance of using colonial troops in metropolitan spectacles, and the public representation of the Royal Navy as a symbol of the empire. The chapter addresses the view "from above" – the actions and intentions of policymakers and organizers – as well as public reactions to these carefully orchestrated rituals. A crucial part of this study concerns contemporary discursive comparisons between white and nonwhite participants. After all, the depiction of Indian, African, and West Indian troops as "colorful" or "exotic" auxiliaries was an important component in legitimatizing white colonial hegemony. Through a wide-ranging survey of these richly documented events, this chapter engages and adds to the scholarly debate over "invented traditions" to understand imperial military spectacles as enormously popular events in which government and public performed visions of a united empire.

Chapter 5 examines the confluence of imperialist and navalist rhetoric during the height of the Anglo-German naval arms race. During the 1880s and 1890s, the British Admiralty encouraged colonial financial contributions to the Royal Navy as the most effective form of joint defense cooperation. However, the sentimental demands of colonial nationalism necessitated the eventual creation of independent Australian and Canadian navies – inherently national forces intended for service alongside the Royal Navy. The result was a fundamental shift in public thinking about Britain's traditional naval supremacy. Policymakers in

Britain encouraged colonial naval developments as part of common maritime heritage, while the popular press employed discursive terms such as "Sea-United British," "Empire of the Sea," and the "Sea League of all the Britons" to describe the evolving imperial partnership. For many contemporaries, these colonial navies were more than quantitative contributions to the strength of the imperial battlefleet; they had a qualitative component, too, symbolizing a new *Kriegsverein* of English-speaking countries able to meet the security challenges generated by the European arms race.

The vast majority of Britons who served in the First World War came of age during a period of intense public discussion about national service and patriotism. Their childhood experiences are the subject of Chapter 6. It considers how white boys throughout the empire received a programmed education that reinforced ideas of race patriotism and nationalism, as well as the masculine and civic responsibilities of military service. The chapter surveys public debates about universal military training in both Britain and the Dominions via an array of movements including education reform, the National Service League, school cadet programs, and extracurricular organizations. The Boy Scouts receive special focus as an important transnational institution that instilled lessons of race patriotism and military preparedness. Most importantly, the chapter makes clear the primacy of race and empire in political and popular discourse about military service. The fact that many colonials in Durban, Melbourne, or Toronto saw military training as "A Young Briton's Duty" points to the global and cultural contours underlying discussions of imperial security.

Chapter 7 chronicles Anglo-Dominion defense relations in the first decade of the twentieth century. Rising sentiments of imperial unity, combined with an increasingly volatile international situation, led to closer political and military ties within the empire. British and colonial leaders gradually oriented their armed forces for cooperation in time of crisis. The creation of the Committee of Imperial Defence (1902) and the Imperial General Staff (1909), as well as the convening of frequent "imperial conferences," constituted conscious efforts toward forging a more cohesive system of imperial security. Yet, any common defense arrangements had to contend with the reality of colonial nationalism, which resented any infringement on Dominion autonomy. Chapter 7 delves into the complicated and detailed negotiations between British and Dominion leaders that prepared the white states of the empire to engage in a united war effort. It bridges "national" and "imperial" contexts to demonstrate the overwhelming importance of culture, sentiment, and mutual understanding in forging the "Britannic Alliance" of the First World War.

The Conclusion briefly surveys the explosion of imperialist and racialist rhetoric throughout the empire during the opening months of the First World War. The war may have eventually furthered a sense of Dominion national identity (as expressed most saliently in Australia with the myth of "ANZAC"). Nonetheless, popular discourse in the fall of 1914 commonly framed the conflict as tangible evidence of the empire's racial ties. The book concludes with this culminating moment, and serves as an apt summation of how themes of racial and cultural solidarity, and a desire for greater collective security, led to a remarkably unified imperial war effort.