

The Psychological Experience of a Soldier: Analyzing Letters from Gallipoli

AP Research

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I. Introduction

The First World War is regarded as one of the most transformative events of the Twentieth Century. Much of the research on the war, and in histories of war in general, has been done in the military, diplomatic, and political fields of study; yet, other areas of research can help provide a more wide-ranged, intersectional understanding of such events. These fields, such as cultural and social history, have become increasingly prevalent in the writing of the history of World War I, the historiography of the war, as historians attempt to understand the impact of the war on the humans involved. Jay Winter and Antoine-Prost, in their review of the historiography on the First World War, note a change in research in the latter third of the Twentieth Century, where a large branch of historical researchers began to focus on sociological and anthropological aspects of the war.¹ This shift, what Winter and Prost call “the third historiographical configuration”², prompted a sudden interest in primary sources from the war. This new attention given to primary sources, particularly letters and diaries, has yielded more questions of a personal nature and has since contributed social psychological analyses to the historiography of the First World War.

This paper asks these personal questions and researches the psychological state of a soldier in the First World War. The soldier in question is an English officer, Captain Arthur Crookenden of the Cheshire Regiment. Captain Crookenden held the position of Brigade Major of the 159th Infantry Brigade, of the 53rd Welsh Division, which consisted of the 4th and 7th

¹ Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in history: debates and controversies, 1914 to the present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

² Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in history: debates and controversies, 1914 to the present*.

Battalions of the Cheshire Regiment and the 4th and 5th Battalions of the Welsh Regiment, during the Gallipoli Campaign.

The Gallipoli Campaign, also known as the Dardanelles Campaign, was a major operation launched by the Allied forces of World War I against the Ottoman Empire. The campaign consisted of both an infantry assault on the Gallipoli Peninsula and a naval assault on the Dardanelles Straits. The aim of both assaults was to force the Allies up the peninsula and the straits, reach Constantinople, defeat the Ottoman Empire, and open up an eastern front of the war. Along with the British and French were Australian, New Zealand, Irish, and Indian soldiers, all of whom fought against the Ottoman Turks, who were also supported by some German and Austro-Hungarian forces.³

The campaign began on the 19th of February, 1915, when the British and French Navies began their attack on the Dardanelles. On the 25th of April, Allied infantry forces landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Each assault by the Naval and Infantry forces, however, was held back, as the strength of the Ottoman forces had been underestimated. By January 1916, the Allies had evacuated Gallipoli and the Dardanelles, with almost 500,000 casualties on both sides.⁴ The campaign has since become recognized as a colossal military disaster for the Allies and a major victory for the Ottoman Empire. This paper analyzes the personal accounts of Captain Crookenden at Gallipoli, in order to develop an understanding of his psychological experience and to create a greater understanding of the human impact of Gallipoli, and World War I in general.

³ C.F Aspinall-Oglander and A.F Becke, "Official History of the War: Military Operations Gallipoli"(London: Imperial War Museum (Great Britain), 1992).

⁴Aspinall-Oglander and Becke, 'Official History of the War: Military Operations Gallipoli.

II. Method

The personal accounts of Captain Arthur Crookenden at Gallipoli (henceforth referred to as A.C.) are a set of 29 letters sent to his spouse varying from two sentences to four paragraphs in length. All had never been previously analyzed; however, the letters had previously been transcribed and annotated by one of A.C.'s sons. The annotations, however, only include small amounts of context. Also, a disclaimer exists in the transcript saying that certain content in the letters was removed, as that content was personally sensitive to A.C. and his family, of which they did not want presented in public.

The method of this research consisted of a primary source analysis, a historiographical contextualization, and a comparative analysis. The primary source analysis was based off a basic evaluation guide, seen in a variety of research and guidebooks; however, this paper specifically sought advice from *The Information-Literate Historian* by Jenny L. Presnell.⁵ The analysis gathered information from specific content in the letters and, as advised by Presnell, searched for information in the tone, voice, structure, and length of some of the letters. An understanding of context surrounding A.C.'s socio-economic status, military rank, and audience also proved crucial in analyzing the letters, as knowing certain context allows one to search for meaning in what is not being said. The process involved thorough annotations of my impressions of the source as I evaluated it, and then at the end, an identification and categorization of major themes and trends seen in the analysis.

The second part of the method, the historiographical contextualization, involved a literature review of sociological and psychological research gathered from analyzing personal

⁵Jenny L. Presnell, "The Information-Literate Historian" (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 252-271.

accounts of World War I. This area of the historiography, for the contextualization, was narrowed down to the personal experiences of British soldiers while on the fronts of the war; thus, excluding their experiences away from the front, so as to more closely align with A.C.'s experience. Afterwards, I reviewed the letters and my own analysis, looking more in-depth for specific themes, trends, and pieces of content, as seen in the literature review of the historiography.

The third part of my method was a comparative analysis, in which I compared my primary source analysis with the historiography. The success of this comparative analysis will result very heavily on a clear understanding of necessary assumptions, and also a clear understanding of the limitations to each analysis. Through this comparative analysis, examining and comparing the themes and trends identified in my primary source analysis to the themes and trends identified in the historiography, a new analysis will be added to and compared with the current body of research, marginally increasing the historical understanding of the personal experiences of the First World War.

III. Historiography Review

The historiography surrounding the personal experiences of soldiers during the First World War in recent years has mainly focused on the psychology and attitudes of the soldiers. The main focus in these areas is on the psychology of combat, particularly the experience of killing, and what motivates a soldier in these situations. The second most researched, and most significant, area of discussion is the soldier's consent to fighting and taking part in war. These areas of research come from the nature of the First World War. As British soldiers on all fronts

constantly faced stagnation and a lack of progress, their motivation to continue fighting and to consent to the act of war, and the act of killing, is naturally the main focus.

The research and discussion on British soldiers' consent to war is one of the more contested subjects, with the historiography divided over institutional, social, and psychological influences. In the area of the former, Rousseau asserts that it is not a school of consent, but a school of constraint in which soldiers abide. He writes, in *History of European soldiers*, "What is a soldier, if not a man oppressed, bullied, dehumanized, terrorized, and threatened by death by his own side?"⁶ Rousseau's argument, therefore, is that soldiers have no motivation to fight other than the fear of being reprimanded by superior officers, specifically the chance of being court martialed and executed. While recognizing these institutional rules in the military, other researchers have still argued that soldiers' consent to war came from other influences.

Many historians point to societal circumstances and customs of early Twentieth Century Britain as explanations for many soldiers' consent to the war. Fuller claims that a "loyal indiscipline which marked industrial life in Britain was transferred directly to the army".⁷ Fuller's idea of "loyal indiscipline" describes a body of soldiers who will follow orders loyally but execute them with a degree of apathy.⁸ Winter also attributes industrialization as an influence to a soldier's consent to war, claiming that working in industry led to a population more likely to accept "the rules of the game".⁹ However, others point to cultural and social norms as the more significant influences. Denis Winter describes the British as "relatively static, tradition-oriented

⁶ Frédéric Rousseau, *History of european soldiers* (Paris: Seuil, 1999), 48.

⁷John G. Fuller, *Troop morale and popular culture in the British and Dominion armies 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990,), 86.

⁸ Fuller, *Troop morale and popular culture in the British and Dominion armies 1914-1918*, 86.

⁹Jay M. Winter, *The experience of World War I* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 112.

people,” of which came their “cheerful acceptance of fate”.¹⁰ Here, Winter claims that it was social attitudes engrained in British society which led to soldiers consenting to the war. Different attitudes, such as patriotism and a sense of national morality have also been accounted as influences in soldiers’ ability to consent to the war. Differing from Denis Winter, these researchers claim it was not societal attitudes and traditions that created consent and loyalty, or a “loyal indiscipline”¹¹ as Fuller says, but an actual drive to fight and win. Lyn Macdonald describes it as a “stoical endurance, a kind of patriotic insouciance which persuaded them that, being British, they could not possibly lose the war”.¹² Yet, another side exists to this discussion focusing more on abstract, psychological influences, rather than influences from British society.

Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker claim that the very nature of war culture, and conflict, create motivation for soldiers. They describes war culture as “a body of representations of the conflict crystallized in a veritable system giving to the war its profound meaning... inseparable from hatred of the enemy”.¹³ Fussell also follows this idea, calling it “gross dichotomy”.¹⁴ He describes the psychology of the soldier as, “‘We’ are all here on this side; ‘the enemy’ is over there. ‘We’ are individuals with names and personal identities; ‘he’ is a mere collective entity”.¹⁵ Fussell very much points to the physical nature of trench warfare as a cause of this describing the soldiers’ situation as the “Psychological equivalent of the binary deadlock, the gross physical

¹⁰Denis Winter, *Death’s men: soldiers of the Great War* (London: Allen Lane, 1978), 326.

¹¹Fuller, 86.

¹²Lyn Macdonald, *1915, the death of innocence* (London: Headline, 1993), 42.

¹³Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14-18, finding the war* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), 116.

¹⁴Paul Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 58.

¹⁵Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory*, 58.

polarization of the trench predicament”.¹⁶ Citing descriptions in diaries describing enemy soldiers as “wraiths” and “shadows”, Fussell also attributes trench warfare as a main factor in creating a dehumanization of the enemy.¹⁷ Overall, while areas of these arguments over institutional, societal, and psychological influences on soldiers consenting to war may be contentious, soldiers very well could have experienced a variety of these influences throughout their wartime experience.

Another widely discussed area of the historiography focuses on personal experiences in combat and in the act of killing. Niall Ferguson in 1998, made the claim that “Many men took pleasure in killing”.¹⁸ He argued that the soldiers during the First World War found it exciting and fun, saying that “Men kept fighting because they wanted to”.¹⁹ This point of view was also the conclusion of Joanna Bourke, after an extensive analysis of personal accounts. Bourke claims that “ordinary men take pleasure in bloodshed”.²⁰ While her definition of “ordinary” might be considered problematic, that possible insinuation could be seen as disrupted by her other claim that this drive to kill is seen in military men in all positions. Bourke also asserts the fact that “more men broke down in war because they were *not* allowed to kill than under the strain of killing” as they had “no outlet for aggressive tendencies”.²¹ Yet, others in the historiography take issue with these analysis and their significance, pointing to the nature of the fighting in the First World War.

¹⁶Fussell, 63.

¹⁷Fussell, 69.

¹⁸Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (London: Allen Lane, 1998), 134.

¹⁹Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, 135.

²⁰Joanna Bourke, *An intimate history of killing. Face-to-face killing in twentieth-century warfare* (London: Granta, 1999), 89.

²¹Bourke, *An intimate history of killing. Face-to-face killing in twentieth-century warfare*, 91.

Many, in their disagreements with Bourke and Ferguson, point to the fact that World War I, unlike many previous wars, relied heavily on artillery, rather than intimate fighting between soldiers. As Jones reminds, “In reality, hand-to-hand fighting was rare during the first world war and most killing was impersonal. Fifty-nine per-cent of casualties were a result of artillery, and three times as many men were killed by shells as by bullets”.²² Jones also rightly notes that as these analysis are based off personal accounts, there accounts of their psychology, attitudes, and motivations might be eschewed. He asserts that “diaries and letters were written between battles or during quiet periods of front-line service. They formed part of the soldier’s attempt to make sense of what he had gone through. For some they may have been a rationalization of what they had done or thought that they should have done.”²³ Bruce Newsome also makes the important distinction in this area, that these emotions of excitement and pleasure towards killing were motivations that sustained them through the experiences of combat, and that they were not motivations that drove them to join the armed services, nor ones that lasted after combat.²⁴ This area of the historiography is naturally one of the most contentious due to the sensitive nature of the subject; however, all sides certainly offer arguments worth discussing.

IV. Analysis Results, and Discussion

A.C.’s position as Brigade Major, as well as other context, first must be presented and discussed before the analysis, as it is crucial to understand certain assumptions and conclusions made during the analysis. Firstly, A.C. came from a middle class background in England, fought

²²Edgar Jones, “The psychology of killing: the combat experience of British soldiers during the First World War,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, no. 41 (2006): 229-246.

²³Jones, “The psychology of killing: the combat experience of British soldiers during the First World War”, 245.

²⁴Bruce Newsome, “The Myth of Intrinsic Combat Motivation”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 26 (2003), 24-46.

in the Boer War, and made a career out of military service. Secondly, as Brigade Major, A.C. would have been the second in command of the 159th Infantry Brigade at Gallipoli. In this position, he would have been involved with the planning of the campaign, but to a lesser extent than other, higher ranked, officers. A.C. also would have been charged with communicating the operations to the front line troops. Thus, he would have been ranked high enough to receive certain luxuries, such as better quarters and food; however, was also not ranked high enough to be estranged from regular privates.²⁵ Understanding this context not only served the analysis, but also will prove crucial to understanding the forthcoming discussion.

Firstly, the psychological experience of killing, one of the main phenomena discussed in the historiography, is an area of the analysis of A.C.'s letters that provided no results, as A.C. never gave, nor insinuated, any experience of killing, or attempting to kill, an enemy soldier; thus, his psychological experience towards killing is unknown. However, through the primary source analysis, several themes and trends in A.C.'s account of Gallipoli became apparent: discontent with operations and personnel, experience of boredom, and avoidance of emotion. The first phenomenon, an overall frustration and lack of faith in operations, troops, and officers was seen quite directly in the letters. A.C. spent a large portion of the letters directly criticizing and insulting both the officers ranked above him, and the soldiers ranked below him. A.C. not only criticized and insulted individuals and groups of people, but criticized the operations of the campaign in general. In one of the first letters, he provided an account of the first major assault, after landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Criticisms appear frequently throughout his account of

²⁵Jonathan Boff, "Military Structures and Ranks", The British Library, last modified January 29, 2014, <https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/military-structures-and-ranks>.

the assault. He describes the assault as having “little cohesion,”²⁶ being “badly supported,”²⁷ and beginning “in a very ragged sort of way.”²⁸ A.C. then ends his account with a lengthy criticism, saying: “Failure was caused by the entire lack of organisation of the attack - hurry which was quite unnecessary - exhaustion of men who had no food and worst of all no water. If this Brigade had been told to attack the original position on the ninth and had been allowed to prepare carefully we could have taken it easy.”²⁹ After trenches are built, and troops are established in Gallipoli, A.C.’s criticisms lessen in length and detail, but still remain prevalent. He writes about one operation as “an awful waste of time”³⁰ and qualifies another with: “with which I disagreed totally.”³¹ A.C. also took issue with the general management and conditions of the campaign. He described the new trenches that were built as “Unfinished, ill sited” and “appalling.”³² The large extent of his criticism, however, is reserved for specific persons and groups of people.

As a Brigade Major, A.C. experienced substantial contact with highly ranked officers, as well as regular troops. He does not reserve criticism for either group. On one superior officer he writes: “Even our arch-fool and champion blitherer, Penno the A.A.G. of the Division, cannot do more than just keep one pleasantly annoyed. He really is awful - never leaves the shelter of his office or dug-out and puts everyone off by writing idiotic memos and worse orders.”³³ Other occurrences of insult and criticism towards superiors are seen in the following descriptions and

²⁶Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 16 August 1915).

²⁷ Crookenden, 16 August 1915.

²⁸Crookenden, 16 August 1915.

²⁹ Crookenden, 16 August 1915.

³⁰Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 3 October 1915).

³¹ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 21 December 1915).

³² Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 1 September 1915).

³³ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 1 October 1915).

remarks: “an unpleasant person”³⁴, “a stinker”³⁵, “I long to hit him”³⁶, “a boor”³⁷, “In whom I have no confidence”³⁸, and “he had the fault of always agreeing to a thing, however much he disapproved”³⁹. While, he reserves some praise for certain officers, in regard to the campaign, A.C. makes his disdain for those in charge and operations quite clear throughout his writing. Yet, the more intense criticisms were more frequently directed towards those ranked beneath him.

A.C. characterizes the soldiers beneath him, writing: “They will not do what they are told and are very bad and careless”⁴⁰ and “They are getting slacker and slacker”.⁴¹ His frustrations became increasingly heightened, referencing his subordinates as “damnable”⁴², “Devils”⁴³, “pigs”⁴⁴, “cads”⁴⁵, and “first class swine”.⁴⁶ He describes two young men working for him as “hobbledehoys”⁴⁷, a term meaning young, awkward, and clumsy, and writes, “their ideas are those I should have expected from the average monkey”.⁴⁸ While both superiors and inferiors are the subjects of criticism and insult, the differences in rhetoric is notable; A.C.’s criticisms of his inferiors feature harsher and more exaggerated insults than those towards his superiors.

³⁴ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 25 August 1915).

³⁵ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 10 September 1915).

³⁶ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 7 October 1915).

³⁷ Crookenden, 7 October 1915.

³⁸ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 21 December 1915).

³⁹ Crookenden, 21 December 1915.

⁴⁰ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 20 August 1915).

⁴¹ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 6 October 1915).

⁴² Crookenden, 25 August 1915.

⁴³ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 6 September 1915).

⁴⁴ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 20 August 1915).

⁴⁵ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 24 September 1915).

⁴⁶ Crookenden, 3 October 1915.

⁴⁷ Crookenden, 3 October 1915.

⁴⁸ Crookenden, 3 October 1915.

A.C.'s broadest criticism about the management of the Gallipoli Campaign, and the war in general, is when he writes: "I feel now that [the war] will last 2 or 3 years - why I say now I don't know, because I have always thought so. I think what I mean is that having seen in some measure how we conduct it, we shall be lucky if we finish it in 3 years."⁴⁹ A.C. also at one point laments how "the Turks and Germans are crying out to be beaten".⁵⁰ Overall, it is clear after an analysis of his letters that A.C. felt a deep frustration and lack of belief in those in charge of planning and executing the Gallipoli Campaign, and the Allied war effort in general. His experience of frustration, however, did not solely come from the execution of operations, and those in charge of them, but also from the result of those perceived failures: the stagnant life in camps.

The largest portion of A.C.'s letters focus on his day-to-day life within the trenches and camps on Gallipoli. These are what A.C. describes as "domestic details"⁵¹, such as the meals he ate, walks he went on, books he read, and conversations he had. These notably appear more frequently the more time he spends on Gallipoli, as the front stalled. Particularly from the 9th of June onwards, A.C. begins to write paragraphs solely on meals. He often writes about having tea with the other officers⁵², as well as giving detailed accounts of cakes⁵³, bacon⁵⁴, and spirits⁵⁵ that were delivered to the camp. A.C. also writes about the books he read, including those by R.L.

⁴⁹ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 23 October 1915).

⁵⁰ Crookenden, 3 October 1915.

⁵¹ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 22 September 1915).

⁵² Crookenden, 6 September 1915.

Crookenden, 3 October 1915.

⁵³ Crookenden, 10, 24 September 1915.

⁵⁴ Crookenden, 10 September 1915.

⁵⁵ Crookenden, 22 September 1915.

Stevenson⁵⁶ and Anthony Hope.⁵⁷ Yet, while A.C. does take some interest in these day-to-day activities, he quite directly points out his miseries and boredom.

Trapped in trenches, boredom was quintessential to the experience of an Allied soldier, and leisure quintessential to the experience of an officer, whether in Gallipoli or in France. Often times A.C.'s feeling and experience of boredom come across quite directly, especially in lines such as, "All the same this lazy life is rather trying. I have nothing to do"⁵⁸, "I've had a dull day"⁵⁹, "Our mess is an extraordinary dull one"⁶⁰, and, rather sarcastically, "It's so jolly when one is cooped up in these dug-outs".⁶¹ All these references are rather matter-of-fact; however, certain descriptions of boredom provide some emotional response, particularly melancholy and anxiety. A.C. writes: "I wish I had more of interest to tell but the monotony of existence is quite unbroken. What is to happen to us no one knows"⁶², "Oh ! The utter boredom of this appalling existence. Nothing to do and all day to do it"⁶³, and "...notwithstanding am very bored. It is truly an awful life".⁶⁴ It is only in these descriptions of boredom, not in ones of trauma and pain, that he is willing to express vulnerability and sadness. This is most likely due to notions that suffering from boredom would not have gone against traditional notions of masculinity at the time, unlike emotional responses to fear or trauma.

⁵⁶ Crookenden, 23 October 1915.

⁵⁷ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 13 November 1915).

⁵⁸ Crookenden, 3 October 1915.

⁵⁹ Crookenden, 22 September 1915.

⁶⁰ Crookenden, 8 October 1915.

⁶¹ Crookenden, 6 September 1915.

⁶² Crookenden, 11 October 1915.

⁶³ Crookenden, 16 October 1915.

⁶⁴ Crookenden, 23 October 1915.

Ultimately, an analysis of A.C.'s letters provide notable evidence that he felt a constant frustration and lack of faith in those planning and those executing the Gallipoli Campaign. These issues, accompanied with a clear feeling of boredom and misery, bring into question A.C.'s reasons for consenting to the war and what motivation sustained him throughout. Already from conducting the analysis of his letters, certain conclusions on this topic seen in the historiography, can be dismissed. Firstly, in none of the letters' content does any evidence exist to suggest Rousseau's assertion that A.C. consented simply due to being bullied and dehumanized.⁶⁵ This is clearly due to A.C. being an officer; thus, he would have been the one recommending court martials, not receiving them. Moreover, A.C.'s background is often the case for dismissing several of the arguments in the historiography. As an upper middle class Englishmen, he would not have been influenced from working in an industrialized setting, as Fuller and Winter suggest.⁶⁶ The conclusions of Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, along with Fussell, that soldiers were motivated by an intense hatred of the enemy⁶⁷, also did not seem like a motivation prevalent in the analysis. While A.C. never provides any empathy or sympathy towards those he was fighting, he never provides or reveals any hatred for them. In referring to them, he'll simply say "a Turk" or "they", never describing them as particularly complex or human; however, while this shows slight signs of the "gross dichotomy" that Fussell describes⁶⁸, it does not seem to be a polarization driven by an intense hatred.

⁶⁵Rousseau, 38-56.

⁶⁶Fuller, 73-96.

J. Winter, 94-123.

⁶⁷ Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *14-18, finding the war*, 112-143.

Fussell, 58-72.

⁶⁸ Fussell, 63.

The motivations and A.C.'s influences towards consenting to the war, gathered from context and the analysis of his letters, seem to most closely align with the thesis of Denis Winter, that most men consented to engaging in war out of tradition and attitudes engrained in British society at the time.⁶⁹ A.C., being middle class and a military career man, would have most likely viewed his part in the war as a duty that must be carried out, regardless of how operations were run. His sense of tradition and obedience was also evident in his clear disdain for those who disobey orders or behave unprofessionally, as discussed previously. It is notable that A.C. described the Turks and Germans as “beatable”⁷⁰ and certain failed operations as “easy”.⁷¹ This showed that, while still pessimistic about how the campaign was being conducted, he wasn’t critical of the war effort conceptually. This apparent conviction towards the concept of the war might be attributable to the “moral force of the conflict”, a phenomenon asserted by Prost and Winter.⁷² Yet, while no contradictory evidence in the analysis is seen, no content in the letters reveal any possible commentary or views from A.C. on the moral nature of World War I. As for Lyn McDonald’s assertion, that patriotism and a “stoical endurance” motivated soldier’s throughout the war⁷³, A.C.'s criticisms are certainly not that of a stoic and his level of patriotism clearly does not extend to having faith in the British soldiers below him, nor the British officers above him. Ultimately, from the analysis of his letters, A.C.'s consent to taking part in the Gallipoli Campaign, and the motivations that sustained him throughout it, most likely were

⁶⁹D. Winter, 118-147.

⁷⁰ Crookenden, 3 October 1915.

⁷¹ Crookenden, 16 August 1915.

⁷² Prost and J. Winter, 157.

⁷³ Lyn Macdonald, *1915, the death of innocence*, 42.

influenced by a sense of tradition and duty, rather than a fear of punishment, faith in operations, or intense hatred of the enemy.

Notably, A.C.'s misery and anger came from his frustrations with operations and people, as well as his experience of boredom, but not from any experiences of trauma. Strikingly, emotion was absent in A.C.'s descriptions of being personally shot at, as well as his descriptions of the deaths of his fellow men. This was seen in lines such as, "Weston was badly wounded-shot through the head".⁷⁴ Here A.C. describes the death of a soldier, and even some details, but offers no thoughts or emotional response to the incident. In a similar way, A.C. also writes, "I think I said that Walter had been killed. He was utterly reckless from the start"⁷⁵ and, "a bullet came between our faces, which were about a foot apart."⁷⁶ There was only one occasion in his writing where he did provide any emotion or vulnerability from his experience of war, and this is where he writes: "I think what I had was really a sort of collapse as the strain has been pretty heavy with all my staff gone."⁷⁷ However, even this one example seems to describe a more physical stress, rather than an emotional one.

The absence of emotion in the descriptions of trauma in soldiers' personal accounts can be viewed either as an avoidance of emotion or a lack of emotion. The accounts of A.C., however, offer very little information on determining whether he was suffering from emotional strain towards trauma and simply avoiding discussing it, or whether he simply had no emotional reactions to these deaths and near-death experiences. Most likely, it was a combination of the two. In his writing, particularly in his letters to his spouse, A.C. obviously would have attempted

⁷⁴ Crookenden, 20 August 1915.

⁷⁵ Crookenden, 20 August 1915.

⁷⁶ Crookenden, 25 August 1915.

⁷⁷ Captain Arthur Crookenden to Mrs. Dorothy Crookenden, (unpublished, 30 August 1915).

to avoid graphic descriptions of his emotional suffering in the face of trauma; however, in his day-to-day war experience, he, as most other soldiers did, must have developed some amount of desensitivity to death and trauma.

In the historiography, researchers have often attributed this desensitivity to cognitive dissonance. Rouzeau and Becker, as well as Fussell, attribute this desensitivity to the gross dichotomy of war. They attribute it to a lack of self-awareness and perspective, which is caused by the nature of conflict and a hatred of the enemy.⁷⁸ However, as previously discussed, no such intense hatred of an enemy, nor lack of perspective was prevalent in A.C.'s letters. Thus, his desensitivity most likely was less a result of cognitive dissonance and a psychology estranged from reality, but more a simple coping mechanism. This could also be due to the fact that, as his career was in the military, A.C. would have naturally been more desensitized than, say, a young man for whom this military experience is both unwanted and unusual. The absence of emotion when A.C. writes about emotion and the reasons for it revealed through the analysis differ significantly from the historiography. This brings into question, as does the differences between the prevalent ideas in the historiography and the analysis on soldiers consenting to war, whether career military men had different psychological responses to war than drafted or temporary enlisted soldiers.

The last phenomenon that appeared from the analysis of the accounts was censorship, of which is important in gaging the rest of the analysis' discoveries; for example, censorship poses significance to understanding the reasons behind A.C.'s avoidance of emotion and the significance of his criticisms of operations. Censorship in wartime diaries and letters came from

⁷⁸ Rouzeau and Becker, 97-145.
Fussell, 58-72.

several areas. Firstly, there was censorship that came from the Allied authorities, this involved superior officers reading, censoring, and then approving all letters sent by troops. However, due to A.C.'s position as Brigade Major, it is very unlikely he would have received such censorship; though, it should be noted that it was still a possibility A.C. would have been aware of. Though based on the frequent criticisms and insults towards superior officers, it seems even more unlikely that they ever read his letters. Thus, the most important type of censorship that would have prevailed throughout the writing of A.C.'s accounts would have been self-censorship.

A.C. would have practiced self-censorship for several reasons. First off, as mentioned previously, on the off chance that a superior officer would take the time to read through his letters. But also, secondly, because he was writing with an audience in mind. A man at war would most likely be doing his best to avoid describing trauma and pain to his, already worried spouse. Tradition would also have most likely played a part. As seen in the analysis, and also what can also be assumed from his socio-economic status, A.C. must have felt as someone who needed to avoid showing any fragility or describing any emotion. As Jones claims, "In an age when heroism was valued and the stiff upper-lip was the cultural norm in the U.K, there was little mileage to be achieved from writing about fear and the failure to achieve military objectives".⁷⁹ This self-censorship can be very much attributed as a factor to the appearance of such phenomenons in the accounts, such as A.C.'s avoidance towards describing trauma and emotion. It can also be attributed as a factor towards the lengthy amount of content in the accounts that is spent describing meals, walks, and reading. Yet, while this concept of self-censorship can explain why certain areas of discussion and emotion are absent in A.C.'s

⁷⁹ Jones, 245.

letters, and perhaps why certain areas of content are more prevalent, it reminds that, even from analyzing his letters, one is still left with an inconclusive, and only speculative, concept of what A.C.'s real emotions and experiences were like.

V. Implications

The significance and size of the implications of this research is incredibly limited, as the research itself is limited. As this paper's research focused on one account of a soldier's experience, the findings of the analysis of the accounts can offer little to understanding the experience of an English soldier in Gallipoli, or in World War One in general, as it is merely one, unique experience out of millions. Yet, while the comparative analysis still only features a comparison of the historiography with one experience, it still offers a slightly larger significance to the research. In discussing the contrasts seen in the comparative analysis, it became possible to understand what parts of A.C.'s experience were unique to him, and what weren't. It was this comparative analysis that revealed how A.C.'s position as an officer often was the factor in differing his experience from the experiences discussed in the historiography. This brings into question the extent to which the historiography has focused on the working class, common soldier compared to say mid-ranked or high-ranked officers. While this still is only a distinction seen between one analysis of one person's account of the war and the analysis featured in the historiography, this distinction still provides a possibility of where further research could be conducted: into analyses of the experiences of officers.

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