PROPORTIONALITY:

LESSONS FROM THE SOMME

by Nigel Biggar

Abstract

In "just war" thinking, proportionality is a criterion both of going to war and of fighting in it. This article uses the Battle of the Somme—a byword for immorally profligate warfare—to consider how proportionality should be understood. Its reaches six conclusions: first, a very large number of casualties is not in itself disproportionate; second, the proportionality of a particular military operation depends on the moral standing of the larger belligerency to which it belongs; third, aptness in the sense of being a fit response to injustice requires an account of what kinds of injustice warrant the costs of war; fourth, strategy or tactics that are inefficient in the spending of lives are disproportionate; fifth, if a strategist or tactician *could* have known that his plans were inefficient, and if we judge that he *should* have known, then the disproportion is culpable; nevertheless, sixth, attrition can be the most efficient way of fighting.

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I. The Somme and the criterion of "proportionality"

"We attacked, I think, about 820 strong. I've no official figures of casualties. A friend, an officer in 'C' Company, which was in support and shelled to pieces before it could start,

told me in hospital that we lost 450 men that day, and that, after being put in again a day or two later, we had 54 left. I suppose it's worth it."[1]

Thus wrote R. H. Tawney—then a sergeant, later the famous Anglican socialist—of the action on the Somme on July 1, 1916 in which he himself was shot in the stomach and lay wounded in no-man's-land for thirty hours. The Battle of the Somme has since become a byword for criminally disproportionate military slaughter. In their assault on the German trenches, the British (which at that time and in that place included the southern Irish and the Newfoundlanders) suffered 57,470 casualties *on the first day*, of which 19,240 were fatalities. The battle, which began in July, carried on for over four months into November. At its end, British losses amounted to 419,654 killed, wounded, missing, and taken prisoner. The French lost an additional 202,567.[2] And the gain for this appalling cost? An advance of about six miles.[3]

The Allied assault on the Somme, in whose centenary we now stand, is commonly regarded as the epitome of warfare that is "disproportionate" and so lacks moral justification. According to the doctrine of "just war," a military decision to launch and continue an operation, and indeed a political decision to embark upon a war and to keep on prosecuting it, are both required to appear proportionate, according to what one may reasonably expect the decision-makers to have perceived at the time. Whether *ad bellum* or *in bello*, *ius*—justice—requires proportionality.

Why is this important? The main purpose of the criterion is to order the violent means to the rightly intended moral ends, and so to have the latter govern the former, in order to limit the evils caused to what is instrumentally necessary. A secondary purpose, however, is to provide a way of measuring the sincerity of intention. If the violence used

is *not* proportionate to one's purported end, then there is *prima facie* reason to doubt what is purported.[4] The criterion of proportionality, therefore, rules against the resort to violence that is less governed by the constructive intention of just peace than driven by the annihilating motives of revenge or hatred. And it also rules against military operations that appear to be imprudently expensive of human lives. Its purpose is to keep declared intention honest and to subject the use of violence to the service of moral ends, thereby reining in its destructiveness.

If the purposes of "proportionality" are coherent, however, what it means is nevertheless diverse. Its most popular meaning operates in terms of consequentialist cost-benefit analysis. Actions are proportionate when their good effects outweigh the bad ones. While this looks like common sense, its problem is that, except in very simple cases, it is unworkable. In most cases, talk about judging proportionality in terms of making an arithmetical "calculation" or a quantitative "weighing" and reaching a precise and certain conclusion is nothing but a modernist technocrat's fantasy. It ignores the obvious fact that the many goods and evils involved—on the one hand, the vindication of the innocent, the maintenance of international order, and freedom from serious oppression; on the other hand, the deaths of individuals, social breakdown, economic destruction, and long-standing resentments—are incommensurable. There is no common currency in terms of which they can all be measured and weighed against each other to produce a plausible answer.

Incommensurability, however, is not the only problem. There is also the unpredictability of the future. Our control over the effects of what we ourselves do is disconcertingly limited. Too often other agents interfere or natural events obstruct.

Sometimes benevolence, meticulous planning, and painstaking execution are all of no avail in preventing the opposite of what we intend. This is not to say that conscientious estimates of the probable consequences of going to war or of a particular military operation should not be made. Of course, they should. But it is to say that we cannot expect of them a high degree of accuracy.[5] Charles Guthrie and Michael Quinlan, both of whom have had experience of manning the front-line of military decision-making, agree:

> There underlies all the evaluations [of proportionality] … a difficulty that is uncomfortable but inescapable: they entail taking very serious decisions on the basis of estimates of complex futures, with wide margins of uncertainty and as a result much scope … for different perceptions and judgements about where justice and prudence point.[6]

The most common consequentialist concept of the criterion of proportionality is both implausible and impractical. The costs and the benefits are too diverse in kind to submit to the same metric, and our usually feeble control over the future prevents us from achieving more than a conscientious guesstimate of the goods and evils that our present decisions will actually cause. What, then, is the alternative? In what follows I will return to the historical case of the Battle of the Somme and more broadly Britain"s belligerency in 1914-18, in order to work out a more plausible and practicable concept of "proportionality."

II. *Ius ad bellum* and proportionality *in bello*

The expense of 622,221 Allied casualties seems a grotesquely high price—and in that sense a "disproportionate" one—to pay for an advance of six miles. That description,

however, is loaded. For the "advance of six miles" was about much more than mere territorial gain. The attack on the Somme had been launched in part to relieve the severe pressure to which the French were being subjected at Verdun, by forcing the enemy to re-deploy troops northwards. It had also been undertaken prematurely by the reluctant British at the urgent insistence of the French, thus serving to confirm the alliance upon which successful resistance to the German invasion depended. It achieved both these aims. Its main and original aim, however, had been to contribute to a concerted effort on both the Western and Eastern fronts to exhaust Germany's reserves.[7] This it also achieved. If the Somme cost the Allies dearly, it also drained the Germans who, though defending, probably suffered more than 500,000 but less than 600,000 casualties.[8] At the end of 1916, General Erich Ludendorff, effectively the deputy of the Chief of the General Staff, warned the German High Command that if they had to suffer too much more "Somme fighting", "our defeat seemed inevitable."[9] The following February the Germans abandoned their positions on the Somme and retreated up to twenty miles backwards to the Siegfried Stellung or "Hindenburg Line."

Consideration of the larger strategic achievement of the Allied offensive serves to alleviate the immediate impression of a gross mismatch between cost and gain, to which talk of "an advance of six miles" gives rise. However, if that impression is to be lifted further, we will need to be persuaded that the strategic gains served the triumph of a just cause. That is to say, the immediate perception of disproportion is fed by larger doubts about the moral justification of Allied or British belligerency in general. For if the British ought not to have been fighting at all, then any casualties incurred at all were incurred wastefully, and no strategic gains whatsoever could justify them. So the first thing that

our reflection on the Battle of the Somme reveals is that the condition of the very possibility of *in bello* proportionality depends on *ad bellum* just cause, right intention, last resort, and proportionality.

III. *Ius ad bellum:* Did Britain have "just cause" to fight?

Historians disagree about who was to blame most for the escalation of war from its Balkan beginnings in July 1914 into a continental and then global conflagration. Until very recently, a dominant consensus, even among German historians, had settled around a modified version of the 1961 and 1969 thesis of Fritz Fischer. [10] David Stevenson expresses it thus: "It is ultimately in Berlin that we must seek the keys to the destruction of peace…. Germany willed a local war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, deliberately risked a continental war against France and Russia, and finally actually started one."[11] Whereas "[a]ll the European powers contributed to the growth of tension in the pre-1914 decade…. the fundamental contention of the Versailles "war-guilt" article was justified …."[12]

However, in 2013 Christopher Clark's *The Sleepwalkers* challenged this consensus by spreading responsibility beyond Berlin to Vienna and especially St Petersburg. Clark concludes his account of the outbreak and escalation of the war by saying that "[t]here is no smoking gun in this story; or, rather, there is one in the hand of every major character…. the outbreak of war was a tragedy, not a crime."[13] "The crisis that brought war in 1914", he tells us, "was the fruit of a shared political culture," which rendered Europe's leaders "sleepwalkers, watchful but unseeing, haunted by dreams, yet blind to the reality of the horror they were about to bring into the world."[14]

I am not wholly persuaded by Clark"s argument, but on ethical rather than historical grounds. I think he draws too sharp a distinction between tragedy and crime, as if they are always mutually exclusive alternatives. Crime often has a tragic dimension. Human beings do make free moral choices, but our freedom is often somewhat fated by forces beyond our control. In addition, Clark assumes that because blame was widespread, it was shared equally. I disagree: the fact that blame's spread is wide does not make it even.

Still, if Clark is wrong to think that blame cannot be apportioned, he is quite right to think that apportioning blame for the First World War *as a whole* is a hugely complicated task. Fortunately, my task is simpler: to judge whether or not the British government was justified in going to war in August 1914. Crucial to this is reaching a moral judgement about Germany's invasion of Belgium, Luxembourg, and France, because without that invasion Britain would not have fought.

Why did Germany invade? She invaded because she feared that France would attack in support of Russia. The mere threat of attack, however, is no just cause for war. Only if there is substantial evidence that a threat is *actually in the process of being realised* would the launching of *pre-emptive* war be justified. It is not justified to launch a *preventative* war simply because one fears that an enemy *might* attack. One may not launch war on speculative grounds. In August 1914 France was not intending to attack Germany (and nor, of course, was Belgium). Indeed, France deliberately kept one step behind Germany in her military preparations so as to make her defensive posture unmistakeable, and as late as August 1 she reaffirmed the order for her troops to stay ten kilometres back from the Franco-Belgian border. [15] Notwithstanding that, Germany

declared war on France on August 3 "on the basis of trumped-up allegations that French troops had crossed the border and French aircraft had bombed Nuremberg …."[16]

It was the German government, dominated by its military leadership,[17] that launched a preventative war against France and Belgium in August 1914. They did so, because social Darwinism was their "prevailing orthodoxy" [18] and so they took it for granted that war is the natural way of deciding the balance of international power; [19] because they foresaw that the longer the next war was delayed, the longer would be the odds against Germany's victory;[20] and because "the memory of 1870 [the Franco-Prussian War], still nurtured through annual commemorations and the cult of Bismarck, had addicted the German leaders to sabre-rattling and to military gambles, which had paid off before and might do so again."[21]

Clark's metaphor of the "sleepwalker" is a striking one, which picks out important features of the situation in the run-up to the outbreak of world war. But a metaphor is, by definition, always both like and unlike the reality it depicts, and it should not be taken literally. Germany's leaders were not actually sleepwalkers, but fully conscious moral agents, making decisions according to their best lights in a volatile situation of limited visibility. In such circumstances, which are not at all unusual, error was forgivable. Not so forgivable, I think, was their subscription to the creed of a Darwinist *Realpolitik*, whose cynicism about human motives owes more to Thomas Hobbes's anthropology than to Charles Darwin's science, and which robbed their political and military calculating of any moral bottom line beyond that of national survival through dominance.[22]

It is perfectly natural for a nation not to want to see diminished its power to realize its intentions in the world. But if social Darwinism thinks it natural for a nation to launch a preventative war simply to forestall the loss of its dominance, "just war" reasoning does not think it right. Just cause must consist of an injury, and Germany had suffered none. Nor was it about to: as David Stevenson writes, "no evidence exists that Russia, France, or Britain intended to attack …."[23]

IV. *Ius ad bellum:* Did Britain have "right intention" in fighting?

So much for the issue of just cause. In sending troops to the continent to aid France against Germany in August 1914, what were Britain's intentions and were they right? In Britain a majority of the government's cabinet was against entering the fray until August 2. The Entente Cordiale formally committed the British only to consult with the French in case of a threat to European peace, and not automatically to activate their joint military contingency plans[24]—although the Foreign Secretary, Edward Grey, argued strongly that Britain was morally obliged to come to France's aid. What eventually decided the cabinet in favour of war on August 4 was Germany's violation of Belgian neutrality. In British minds "Belgium" conjured up a variety of just causes: vindicating a treaty to guarantee Belgian independence and defending the rights of small nations against unwarranted aggression.

However, in his painstaking analysis of the cabinet's deliberations, Douglas Newton, has challenged the conventional view, arguing that Grey was absolutely committed to the Entente with France and Russia and manipulated the cabinet and

parliament to support it.[25] To his credit Newton is entirely candid about his prejudices, and this allows the reader, I think, to track the tendentiousness of his argument.

Crucially, while affirming Grey's commitment to France, Newton never considers whether or not this was unconditional. He therefore leaves the reader with the impression that Grey would have taken Britain to war, even if Russia or France had precipitated the conflict by attacking Germany. Newton's view appears to be that of John Dillon, a leading Irish nationalist and supporter of "Home Rule" for Ireland, whom he quotes. In a letter of August 12, 1914, Dillon wrote:

> The violation of Belgium gives only a very convenient excuse … to solidify the Party and the Country. I never had any doubt that Grey's policy would end in a great European war. And that whenever it suited Russia to advance—then we would sink and would inevitably go in …. The blame is hard to apportion—no doubt—the German war party must bear a good share. But I cannot resist the conviction the greater share of the guilt lies with the new English foreign policy identified with … Grey.[26]

But Dillon was wrong, and so is Newton. Grey's commitment was to France, rather than Russia. France was not planning to attack. And Grey envisaged Britain's entering the war only to defend France against a German attack, which he did his very best to discourage.

Of course, national interest was also involved in Britain's motivation to help fend off a German attack. The Belgian coast faced London and the Thames estuary, and it had therefore long been British policy to keep that coastline free from hostile control, to prevent invasion and preserve command of the sea.[27] It is true, therefore, that, in rising to

the defense of France and Belgium, the British also sought to forestall German domination of north-western Europe, which menaced their security. Not all national interests are immoral, however, and this one seems to me unobjectionable. What is morally crucial is that Britain did not *initiate* a *preventative* war to maintain a favourable balance of power; nor did she support France in launching such a war.

Germany had suffered no actual injury, nor was she under any actually emergent threat of suffering one. Unprovoked and on a fabricated pretext, she launched a preventative invasion of France and Belgium to assert and establish her own dominance. In response, Britain went to war to repel an unjustified attack on a neighbouring ally, to maintain international order by vindicating the treaty guaranteeing Belgian independence, and to forestall a serious *and actualised* threat to its own national security, in which it had a legitimate interest. In so doing, she had just cause and right intention.

V. *Ius ad bellum:* Was Britain's going to war in 1914 "proportionate"?

This brings us to the issue of proportionality *ad bellum*. The best way to think of proportionality here is, I think, in terms of aptness. Was British belligerency an apt response to German invasion? Insofar as there were no other available ways to stop and reverse the invasion, we can say that it was apt. However, we also need to make some judgement about the gravity of the evil that would have been suffered by *not resisting* the invasion, since some kinds of injustices and the evils to which they give rise are better tolerated than removed by war, with its dreadful costs and risks. Maybe German invasion would have been better suffered than countered, in which case British belligerency was imprudent and in that sense "disproportionate."

I know of no precise way to think about this. On the one hand, we can say that German domination under Wilhelm II would not have been as bad as under Hitler. There would have been no death camps. On the other hand, judging by the "Peace Programme" of war aims framed by the German Chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, in September 1914, and by the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1917, German domination would have been seriously oppressive. According to the Programme, Germany would annex Luxembourg; Liège and Antwerp in Belgium; and the Briey-Longwy iron ore field, the fortresses of the Hauts-de-Meuse, the western Vosges mountains, and possibly the Channel coast from Dunkirk to Boulogne in France. In addition, France was to be subjected to a crippling indemnity that would prevent rearmament for twenty years, and to a commercial treaty that would make it "economically dependent on Germany." Belgium was to become a "vassal state" under military occupation and "economically a German province."[28] Although the Programme of September 1914 was not an authoritative policy statement, David Stevenson implies that it was moderate in comparison with the "more extreme annexationism" of the military and the circles around the Kaiser;[29] and he says that "[s]imilar (if less sweeping) proposals for western Europe appeared in war documents for the rest of the conflict, and planning for … the Belgian "vassal state" began without delay."[30]

In addition, we may take the atrocious behaviour of the German military toward civilians in 1914-18 as expressive of a brutal ruthlessness that would have characterized post-war German domination, especially in those regions subjected to military occupation. William Philpott provides an example: on August 27, 1914 "[w]hen the mayor [of Péronne] refused to take down the tricolour flying over the *mairie* it was torn

down by the furious enemy. In pique, and to deter resistance, the passing Prussians burned fifty-eight houses to the ground and looted the rest of the town, casually shooting passers-by who got in the way."[31] As John Horne and Alan Kramer have recently confirmed, it was German military policy to use civilians as human shields in combat, to burn villages in collective reprisal for resistance, and to shoot local irregulars who were caught bearing arms.[32] Between August and October 1914 six thousand four hundred and twenty-seven civilians were deliberately killed by German troops in Belgium and France;[33] and a further ten thousand French civilians and thirteen thousand Belgians were forcibly deported to prison camps across Germany.[34] This ruthlessness was not always unprincipled: it was sometimes generated by the moral outrage naturally felt by regular troops who believe themselves to be under attack by "partisans" who, eschewing military uniforms, exploit their indistinguishability from the civilian population. Nevertheless, paranoia reigned here too: the fear of partisan warfare in 1914 far outstripped the fact of it. Indeed, Horne and Kramer go so far as to describe the German belief that enemy civilians were engaged in large-scale *franc-tireur* resistance as "a collective delusion."[35] "We can state categorically," they write, "that there was neither collective civilian resistance nor military action by franc-tireur units as in 1870-1. There were a few isolated cases of individual civilians firing on Germans, but none of these incidents provoked mass executions such as those of Dinant, Louvain, or Liège in Belgium, and Nomény, Longuyon, and Haybes in France."[36] In addition to those deliberately murdered in 1914, according to Adrian Gregory, we should take into account a further 250,000 or so Belgian civilians, who died from malnutrition and disease as a result of "brutal military occupation policies."[37]

The ruthless character of post-war German domination may also be foreseen in the plans that Ludendorff and others drafted for the German colonization of a large strip of Poland and the forcible resettlement of Polish and Jewish populations further east. Since the plans were never implemented, Alan Kramer is quite correct to say that "for all the harshness of the occupation of 1914-18, the German state did not carry out brutal mass population expulsions which were the order of the day from 1939 to 1945."[38] Nevertheless, Ludendorff's proposals were entertained by the highest level of government and by the German High Command; and the reason for their eventual rejection was not moral scruple, but military concern about the disadvantageous consequences of offending international public opinion.[39]

Had Russia, France, and Britain not resisted in 1914, therefore, there is good reason to suppose that Germany would have dominated Western and Eastern Europe in such a rapacious and ruthless manner as to have stoked widespread resentment among its newly subject peoples and high alarm among the newly menaced British. Domination of this kind would have ushered in an era of civil unrest and even more acute international tension. Moreover, given the cult of Bismarck and the crushing success of the victories of 1866 (against Austro-Hungary) and 1870 (against France), "if Germany had again won quickly [in 1914] (as it probably would have done if Britain had stayed out) the temptation for further gambles would have been stronger than ever."[40] In short, non-resistance in 1914 would have produced a peace built on rapacity and brutality, which encouraged international lawlessness and was consequently unstable. To that extent, we can say that British military resistance was proportionate.

It is true, of course, that had Britain stayed out of the war—as Niall Fergusson argues it should[41]—she would not have suffered German occupation or domination in the way that France and Belgium would have. She would only have suffered a heightened threat to her security. Arguably, that would have been tolerable and preferable to the horrendous costs of belligerency. What this reading fails to take into account, however, is Britain's responsibility as the still pre-eminent Great Power for maintaining international law and order, and for the vindication of the unjustly invaded and grievously exploited. Hobbesian *Realpolitik* might sanction Britain's abandoning the Belgians and French to their fate; "just war" morality does not.

VI. *Ius ad bellum:* Was Britain continuing to fight until 1918 proportionate?

A good case can be made, then, that Britain was right to go to war against Germany in 1914. However, if Britain's belligerency was an apt means in 1914, did it remain so throughout the following four years? Could she not have sought and secured decent peace terms long before November 1918? In 1917 Siegfried Sassoon famously protested that the war was being unnecessarily prolonged and that Britain's original war aims of self-defense and Belgian and French liberation could have been achieved by negotiation?[42] Was he correct?

The answer appears to be "No". Germany showed no sign of being willing to return Belgium (or France) to the status quo ante until October 1918. In the winter of 1915-16, when it was clear that the war was not going to end any time soon, there was an informal diplomatic exchange between Germany and Belgium, in which Germany demanded Belgian alignment with German foreign policy, Belgian disarmament, German

occupation and transit rights, a coastal naval base, and German majority shareholding in Belgian railways. As David Stevenson comments, "The consensus among Germany's leaders was more or less as the September programme envisaged."[43] By late 1916 "[b]oth unofficial opinion and governmental planning were becoming harsher. The military emergency of summer 1916 might have been expected to cause a reconsideration, as had the defeat on the Marne, but in fact German aims became more draconian than ever."[44] By the end of December 1916, "with Germany's armies under unprecedented pressure and the economy beginning a downward spiral, Hindenburg and Ludendorff sought more sweeping annexationist claims, not fewer …."[45] In April 1917 the Kaiser and the German High Command endorsed the secret statement of German war aims known as the Kreuznach Programme, according to which Germany "would annex Longwy-Briey and Luxembourg, hold Liège and the Flanders coast for at least a century, and run Belgium's railways."[46] When in August 1917 Pope Benedict XV published proposals for a return to pre-1914 European boundaries without annexations and indemnities, and for the full independence of Belgium (with an eye to meeting German objections to British or French predominance there), "the Germans and Austrians tried to kill the initiative by delaying their response."[47] While Woodrow Wilson rejected a return to the status quo ante, Britain decided to feel the Germans out by inviting them to spell out their intentions regarding Belgium. In preparing their response Hindenburg and Ludendorff, who now dominated Germany's government, aimed to divide Paris and London by making concessions to Britain and suspending the German navy's demand for bases on the Flanders coast. Nevertheless, they continued to insist upon strategic control of Belgium by annexing Liège and through military guarantees.[48] However, when Britain eventually replied that

she would only consider the German proposals in consultation with her Allies, "[t]he Germans never responded."[49] Even as late as September 1918, judging by the speech of vice-chancellor Payer, Germany still resisted abandoning Belgium. "[T]he turn of military fortunes had failed to soften the Germans" war aims."[50] Only on the night of the 4th and 5th October 1918 did Germany offer to enter peace negotiations on the basis of Woodrow Wilson"s Fourteen Points,[51] Point VII of which required Belgium to be evacuated and restored.[52]

In sum, then, there is no evidence that Britain could have secured satisfactory peace terms before November 1918. In 1945 Siegfried Sassoon himself admitted as much, when he wrote that "in the light of subsequent events it is difficult to believe that a Peace negotiated in 1917 would have been permanent."[53] It is even more difficult to believe that acceptable peace terms were actually on offer. Therefore, Britain's prosecution of war until November 1918 was apt, and in that sense, proportionate.

VII. *Ius in bello:* disproportion as profligate attrition

Whether or not we think that the dreadful losses on the Somme were proportionate depends fundamentally on whether the cause in whose name they were suffered was a just one; whether that cause was the basis of rightly intended belligerency; and whether that belligerency was proportionate in the sense of being an apt and necessary means. In my judgement, the cause was just, the intention right, and belligerency an apt and necessary means up until November 1918. Notwithstanding that, the assault on the Somme could still have been disproportionate in a narrower sense: that the casualties suffered were greater than necessary.

This brings us to the issue of attrition. For C.A.J. Coady it is precisely its attritional character that makes the First World War so morally revolting.[54] What he finds so repulsive is its expression of a dullness of strategic imagination that only a criminal indifference to the loss of human life could allow: "Had the general staff viewed the wastage of life as the moral enormity it has subsequently come to seem, they would have exercised more imagination in trying to find other ways of fighting," he writes; and in a footnote he adds that "[i]n fact, there were other strategies and tactics available, most notably tank warfare, which was introduced at Cambrai but used inappropriately."[55]

If contemporary historiography is to be believed, however, Coady is almost wholly wrong here. For example, William Philpott, author of a highly praised history of the Battle of the Somme, writes that "[i]t is overly simplistic to judge that the British army was too rigid or conservative in its tactics and command. It was keen to learn, engaging with its task thoughtfully and professionally …."[56] Generals and government ministers were shocked by the numbers of casualties, and strove to find ways of breaking the stalemate on the Western front and avoiding the need for attritional warfare. That is mainly why the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign was launched in 1915—to try and open up a new, more mobile front in south-east Europe. That is why Haig was so quick to champion the development of the tank.[57] And that was also why Haig persisted in planning for a dramatic breakthrough on the Western front in July 1916, long after others had concluded that it could not be achieved. It was not lack of human feeling or military imagination that led the British (and the French) to adopt an attritional strategy; it was the lack of alternatives during a fateful period of history that favored defense by coming after the mass production of machine-guns but before the mass production of tanks and, more

importantly, the development of the "creeping barrage," of sound-ranging techniques in counter-battery fire,[58] and of wireless communications.[59] According to Philpott, strategic attrition "made sense in the dead-locked circumstances of 1916",[60] was necessary for any decisive defeat of the German army,[61] came very close to success [in September 1916],[62] and in the end "it worked."[63]

In addition, those who damn the generalship of the First World War for waging attritional war, and accepting casualties on a massive scale, must reckon with the fact that the undisputed turning-point in the later war against Hitler—the Battle of Stalingrad—was horrifically attritional, its human cost rivalling that of the Great War battles.[64] They must also take on board the fact that on the mercifully few occasions in the Second World War when British troops found themselves bogged-down in near-static fighting—hill-to-hill in Italy and hedge-to-hedge in Normandy—they reverted to the attritional tactics of 1917,[65] and that casualty rates in the 1944-5 campaign in north-west Europe equalled, and sometimes exceeded, those on the Western Front in 1914-18.[66]

The argument here, then, is that attrition, dreadful though it is, can sometimes be the only effective way of prosecuting a war; and that that was the case for much of 1914-18. This undermines Jack Sheldon's view that the only possible justification of the strategy of attrition is that the lessons it taught the British army helped it achieve victory in 1918. Sheldon is correct to judge this *ex post facto* rationalization to be morally bankrupt:

> Any gains in military efficiency were a consequence of the battle and not the reason for fighting it. It was never a stated, or implied, aim beforehand… The Battle of the Somme had to be fought, but to attempt to justify it on the grounds

> that the British army was all the better for it and that that somehow makes the cost in blood and treasure a price worth paying, is to stretch a point, to put it no more strongly.

If it was just a matter of gaining experience, then there are other ways to obtain it than to commit all available forces to a long series of bludgeoning frontal attacks, which cause your army over 400,000 casualties. The cemeteries of the Somme stand in silent reproach.[67]

It is quite true that not every beneficial effect of a course of action may serve to augment its proportionality, as Thomas Hurka has argued.[68] If we take this principle and apply it to the justice of prosecuting a war at all—*ius ad bellum*—then, for example, the fact that fighting in 1941-45 lifted the U.S.A. out of the economic depression of the 1930s may not be used to contribute to its justification. This is because economic depression, though an evil, is not (usually) an injustice, and so cannot count as a just cause for embarking on war against a non-culpable people. For the same reason, the achievement of economic prosperity out of depression, though a good, cannot be set in the scales to weigh against a war's evils. Implicit here is a refusal of utilitarian justification in terms of an overall, objective predominance of benefits over costs. We refuse it, because the calculation of an overall "utility" cannot be done rationally, the relevant goods and evils being too diverse in kind to be commensurable. What we attempt instead is the more modest and practicable judgement of the decisions of responsible human beings, asking whether they were justified in embarking upon certain voluntary courses of action and in persisting with them, given what we can reasonably expect them to have known. According to just war theory, war may not be waged simply

in order to achieve a good, but only to rectify an injustice. The relevant goods and evils, therefore, are those that are foreseeable and either intended or accepted or wilfully ignored in the course of striving to rectify the injustice that constitutes a war's just cause.

When this principle of the specification of relevant effects is applied to the *in bello* circumstances of the battle of the Somme, what judgement does it produce? The fact that the Somme taught the British army some war-winning lessons was, of course, good. So why can this, by itself, not serve to justify its awful costs? Sheldon gestures toward the answer: not merely that this was not in fact the reason that Haig and his colleagues launched the battle of the Somme in 1916, but more generally that military education as such is never a sufficient reason to send troops into battle. Why not? Because it is profligate. To intend to teach a set of lessons presumes that one already knows what they are. If military commanders are morally responsible, they will strive to not to waste the lives of their troops. If they know what the latter need to learn, they will incorporate the necessary lessons into military training, in which battlefield conditions are *simulated*, not replicated. Simulated conditions are not risk-free—soldiers regularly lose their lives in training, sometimes in large numbers[69]—but they are designed at most to threaten, not to kill, the trainees. To send troops into battle primarily for the sake of their military education is—at least as a rule—insanely profligate. Sheldon, therefore, is entirely correct to reject the British army's steep learning-curve as a stand-alone justification for the carnage of the Somme. He is wrong, however, to assume that no more sufficient justification is available, for, if Philpott and others are correct, there was no alternative to a strategy of attrition in 1916. Attrition on the Somme was a necessary military means toward the goal of reversing unjust aggression—as it would later prove at

Stalingrad and in Normandy. If this is indeed the case, then the fact that the British army chose to learn war-winning lessons *in the course of waging unavoidably attritional warfare* may be permitted to supplement goods that are directly relevant to deliberation about proportionality. What it may not do is serve as a sufficient reason in itself.

IX: *Ius in bello:* disproportion as instrumental inefficiency

It seems that the enormous number of casualties suffered by the British on the Somme cannot be blamed on Haig's lack of compassion for his men, or on his carelessness in spending their lives, or on his disdain for technical innovation. Can it nevertheless be attributed to his failure to adopt a more efficient strategy? This was Winston Churchill's view (on August 1, 1916):

> We could have held the Germans on our front just as well by threatening an offensive as by making one. By cutting the enemy's wire, by bombardments, raiding and general activity at many unexpected points begun earlier and kept up later we could have made it impossible for him to withdraw any appreciable force. If the French were pressed at Verdun we could have taken over more line and thus liberated reinforcements.[70]

The main aim of British action on the Somme, however, was not just to take pressure off the French at Verdun, but also to help wear down the German army. This a mere threat of attack would not have achieved. Nevertheless, some contemporary historians claim that alternative, more efficient means of waging war were indeed available to Haig, and that he declined to use them. J.P. Harris, for example, argues that by mid-1916 "a substantial proportion" of the British army's most senior officers had come to favour a cautious,

step-by-step approach—"a series of limited attacks backed by concentrated artillery fire, designed to inflict loss on the enemy rather than to gain ground."[71] Haig, however, "became fixated on the achievement of dramatic breakthrough and achieving serious strategic results"[72] and he therefore "proceeded with an approach that practically all the sources of advice available to him indicated to be dangerously overambitious."[73]

It seems, then, that Haig's planning for the battle of the Somme suffered, not from a lack of ingenuity or imagination, but from a measure of impatience and over-optimism. The irony—the dreadful irony—is that it was not his boneheaded commitment to a long attritional slogging match that made his battle-strategy wasteful, but rather his refusal to settle for it. His eagerness for a breakthrough, while not just wishful thinking, nevertheless led him to compromise his attritional operations. Therefore on the first day of battle the British artillery bombardment was spread too deeply into enemy territory, with the result that its firepower was dissipated and too much of the German front-line survived to entangle the attacking British infantry in barbed wire and mow them down with machine-guns. And what was the alternative to this terribly wasteful, because over-ambitious plan? Even more prolonged attrition.

In the light of this, what are we to make of A.J. Coates' critique of the attritional character of the battle of the Somme,[74] and of attritional warfare as essentially disproportionate? He writes thus:

> The moral permissibility of the war of attrition (not merely a war with an attritional element, but a war in which attrition defines the entire strategy) must be in grave doubt. Here is a method of warfare that has as its deliberate aim the mass expenditure of men and material. It is a dehumanized view of war according to

> which war is seen as an industrial and mechanical process in which the distinction between the human and the material element is systematically suppressed. The problem with a war of attrition is that it is difficult to see how such a war can ever engage the criterion of proportionate *conduct* or means. The policy of attrition serves as a blank cheque, allowing commanders to prosecute the war without regard to those considerations that the principle of proportionality is meant to uphold: the policy is profligate and disproportionate by design. What the policy of attrition does is to throw the weight of the moral argument on to the proportionality of *ends* rather than means: is the cause grave enough to warrant the war of attrition?[75]

The first thing to say in response is that the distinction between a war with an attritional element and a war with an attritional strategy is not clear. Presumably any strategy of attrition will aim at breakthrough, for which plans will be made. In other words, attrition can never be anything but one element in a more complex plan. Second, the Somme seems not to fall within range of Coates' critical guns, since Haig's plan was designed to break the stalemate on the Western front and abbreviate prolonged attrition. Third, a policy of attrition does necessarily express a dehumanized view of war, in which human beings are regarded merely as resources to be spent like artillery shells. It is a necessary part of high military command in the field that a commander should callous himself against the human cost of his plans and orders—otherwise it would be emotionally impossible for him to do his job. This need not make him deficient in care before battle or in compassion after it, however. It need not make him inhumane, and in the case of Douglas Haig it did not.[76] Fourth, a military strategy of attrition does not hand field-

commanders a blank cheque, allowing them to cast off all constraint by the principle of proportion. Some attritional operations and tactics are more efficient than others—either because they are more likely to be successful and so less likely to waste lives, or because they are equally likely to reach the desired goals but less costly in getting there.

Let us grant that no sane commander would ever opt for attritional operations or tactics that he knew to be inefficient. Nonetheless, he might choose them because he was avoidably ignorant; and he might be avoidably ignorant because was culpably stubborn. In one sense, of course, military commanders are paid to be stubborn. They are expected to keep their nerve when everyone else is losing theirs, and to be resolute in the face of terrible adversity and fierce criticism. Nevertheless, a wise commander will not be so stubborn as to make himself impervious to cogent criticism. Rather he will seek out colleagues whose advice he can respect and he will listen to that advice even when its import is not welcome. Paul Harris argues that Haig was not so wise:

> [t]he evidence is overwhelming that Haig did not engender at GHQ [General Headquarters] an intellectually stimulating environment in which force structure, policy, plans and operational methods could be frankly debated in his presence…. [H]e did not want some of his fundamental ideas and preconceptions disturbed… He seems to have chosen the staff officers with whom he had the most regular contact from people who would implement his will without trying fundamentally to change his thinking.[77]

It seems that it was not the attritional character of the battle that Haig waged on the Somme that made it disproportionate. It was the fact that his attritional operations were weakened by his eagerness to achieve a breakthrough, resulting in a greater number of

British casualties than a less ambitious plan would have entailed. There is some reason to suppose that, had he heeded the advice of his senior colleagues, he could have avoided this.

X. What does the Somme teach about "proportionality"?

In sum, our reflections on the Battle of the Somme have revealed six things about the just war criterion of proportionality. First of all, a very large number of casualties is not in itself disproportionate. Whether or not it is disproportionate depends on the reasons for it.

Second, the proportionality of a particular military operation depends on the moral standing of the larger belligerency of which it is a part. Belligerency that lacks just cause and right intention, and is neither a last resort nor an apt (and in that sense proportionate) means, cannot justify any casualties whatsoever.

Third, aptness in the sense of being a fit response to injustice does require an account of what kinds of injustice are so intolerable as to warrant the costs and risks of war. A leading measure of the intolerability of injustice will be its incompatibility with sustainable peace.

Fourth, strategy or tactics that are inefficient in the spending of lives are disproportionate.

Fifth, if a strategist or tactician *could* have known that his plans were inefficient, and if we judge that, lacking the benefit of our hindsight, he *should* have known, then the disproportion is culpable.

Nevertheless, finally, attrition can sometimes be the most efficient way of fighting.

Author biography

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NOTES

[1] R. H. Tawney, "The Attack", in *The Attack and Other Papers* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953), 20. "The Attack" was originally published in *The Westminster Gazette* in August 1916.

[2] Consensus about the numbers of British and French casualties in the battle of the Somme settles around those given by Captain Wilfrid Miles in his contribution to the British official history of the war, which are the ones cited here (William Philpott, *Bloody Victory: The Sacrifice on the Somme and the Making of the 20th Century* [London: Little Brown, 2009], 600). Estimates of the German figures, however, range from 400,000 to 680,000 killed and are the subject of vigorous dispute, since what is at stake is the identity of the victor in the battle of attrition (Philpott, *Bloody Victory*, 600-1; Gary Sheffield, *The Somme* [London: Cassell, 2003], 68, 151).

[3] Martin Gilbert reckons that during the whole of the battle "the deepest Anglo-French penetration of the German lines was less than six miles" (*Somme: The Heroism and Horror of War* [London: John Murray, 2006]), 243.

[4] The reasonable doubt, however, is only *prima facie*, since further examination might reveal that the disproportion was due to culpable negligence rather than culpable intention.

[5] Thomas Hurka's oscillation on this matter is instructive. On the one hand, he writes of "calculations" yielding "net good or bad effects" ("Proportionality and Necessity", in Larry May, *War: Essays in Political*

Philosophy [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 129; and "Proportionality in the Morality of War", *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 33/1 [2005], 38). On the other, he admits that "the task of weighing is complex" and concludes that the irreducible diversity of goods "leaves their comparison to direct intuition" ("Proportionality in the Morality of War", 51, 57). "Calculation" is too precise; "direct intuition" too vague. What we need, at least, is intuition that is tacitly informed by a hierarchy of goods and by moral rules that can resolve conflicts between goods of the same kind.

[6] Charles Guthrie and Michael Quinlan, *Just War. The Just War Tradition: Ethics in Modern Warfare* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 23. General Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank was the UK's Chief of the Defence Staff, 1997-2001; and Sir Michael Quinlan was for thirty years a British civil servant in posts concerned with defense, including those of Policy Director in the Ministry of Defence, 1977-81, and of Permanent Under-Secretary of State, 1988-92.

[7] Hew Strachan, "The Battle of the Somme and British Strategy", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 21/1 (1998), 91: "The Allies' conference at Chantilly in December 1915 set as the target for their strategy of 1916 the exhaustion of Germany's reserves by the mounting of simultaneous attacks on all fronts."

[8] J. P. Harris tells us that "[t]he best German sources" estimate their casualties at 500,000 (*Douglas Haig and the First World War* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 271). Gary Sheffield notes that this figure does not include the losses incurred in the seven-day preliminary bombardment, and he quotes Richard Holmes as saying that "it is hard to lace them lower than 600,000" (*The Somme*, 151). Hew Strachan, however, has observed that the figure of 600,000 "is a fiction as it puts the lightly wounded back in" (personal communication). See note 2 above.

[9] E. Ludendorff, *My War Memories, 1914-1918*, 2 vols. (London: Hutchinson, n.d.), vol. 1, 307.

[10] Jay Winter and Antoine Prost describe this as "an interpretation of great moral power, unsurprising in a man who had trained in theology" (*Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 47). Nevertheless, Winter and Prost (ibid., 38) see the contemporary consensus as a return to the position taken by the French historian, Pierre Renouvin, when he wrote in 1925 that "[Germany and Austria] did not agree to accept any solution other than the resort to force; they decided on their plan deliberately and after coolly considering all the possible consequences. With regard to the *immediate* origins of the conflict, this is the fact that dominates all the others" (*Les*

origines immédiates de la guerre [28 juin - 4 août 1914] [Paris: A. Costes, 1925]: 268: "Mais elles n'ont pas consenti á accepter d'autre solution que l'acte de force; elles ont fixé le programme en leine conscience, après avoir envisagé de sang-froid toute [sic] les conséquences possibles de leur décision. Dans le cadre des origins *immédiates* du conflit, voilà le fait qui domine tous les autres"). "[S]eventy years after Renouvin examined this question," comment Winter and Prost, "we have come full circle back to his position, published only five years after the end of the conflict. One can only admire how scholarly and cautious he was, and how well his conclusions have stood the test of time" (*Great War in History*, 40).

[11] David Stevenson, *1914-1918* (London: Penguin, 2012), 16, 590. According to Keir Lieber, this is also the current consensus among scholars in the field of international security: "[T]he current consensus among international security scholars is that a simple "blind blunder" explanation for the origins of World War I is incorrect. Most scholars acknowledge Germany's key role in the outbreak of the war and assign Germany a greater share of the blame, though almost always in qualified terms" (Keir A. Lieber, "The New History of World War I and What It Means for International Relations Theory", *International Security*, 32/2 [Fall 2007], 155-6).

[12] Stevenson, *1914-1918*, 596. See Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), and *War of Illusions: German Policies from 1911 to 1914* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975. The contemporary consensus modifies Fischer's position in two respects: first, Germany did not actually make decision to go to war in 1914 at the so called "War Council" of 8 December 1912; and second, her motive for going to war in the summer of 1914 was not imperial expansion and world-domination—as the original, German title of Fischer's earlier book implies: *Griff nach der Weltmacht: die Kriegszielpolitik der kaiserlichen Deutschland 1914/18* ("Grasp for World Power: the War Aims Policy of Imperial Germany, 1914-18")—but rather the maintenance of her leading position in Europe. Stevenson claims that the consensus is shared by the majority of German historians: "Even though [Fischer's] first book has better withstood criticism, it overstated the unanimity within the Berlin elite and understated the resemblances between Germany's war aims and those of the Allies. None the less, most German historians came round to its more nuanced assessment of Germany's role in the July crisis, and (despite some important qualifications by subsequent writers) much of its analysis of German wartime ambitions has survived unchallenged" (Stevenson, *1914-1918*, 591).

[13] Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin, 2013), 561.

[14] Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, 562.

[15] Strachan, *The First World War*, vol. 1: "To Arms" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 91. See also Stevenson, *1914-1918*, 30.

[16] Stevenson, *1914-1918*, 29.

[17] Strachan, *First World War: To Arms*, 21.

[18] Ibid., 54. One expression of social Darwinism that was "widely celebrated" at its publication in 1912 (Winter and rost, *Great War in History*, 54) was Friedrich von Bernhardi's *Deutschland und der nächste Krieg*. In it Bernhardi writes thus: "War is a biological necessity of the first importance …. Without war, inferior or decaying races would easily choke the growth of healthy budding elements, and a universal decadence would follow…. Might is at once the sureme right, and the disute as to what is right is decided by the arbitrament of war. War gives a biologically just decision, since its decisions rest on the very nature of things" (*Germany and the Next War*, trans. A. H. owles [London: Edward Arnold, 1912], 10, 12, 15).

[19] It seems that Bethmann Hollweg was an indeendent convert to Darwinist fatalism. As a young man his reading of Ernst Haeckel, Charles Darwin, and David Strauss had undermined his religious-humanist, Aristotelian confidence in basic cosmic harmony and relaced it with a vision of the universe as subject to the eternal struggle of blind forces (Thomas Lindemann, *Les doctrines darwiniennes et la guerre de 1914*, Hautes Études Militaire [aris: Institut de stratégie comarée & Economica, 2001], 203-4).

[20] At the "War Council" of 8 December 1912 von Moltke ressed the view that a Euroean war was inevitable and that, as far as Germany was concerned, the sooner it haened the better (Strachan, *First World War: To Arms*, 52). His advocacy of reventive war revailed, with the result that "the decision for eace or war was made conditional not on the objectives of olicy but on the state of military readiness" (Ibid., 54).

[21] Stevenson, *1914-1918*, 596.

[22] Incidentally, one of the dangers of Christopher Clark's deliberate withdrawal from moral judgement is exosed in an article that aeared in *Die Welt* in January 2014, where three German historians and a journalist invoke Clark's historiograhy of 1914 as a reason for renouncing the "moralisation" of war and returning to national *Realolitik* (Dominik Geert, Sönke Neitzel, Cora Stehan, and Thomas Weber, "Warum Deutschland

nicht allein schuld ist", *Die Welt*, 4 January 2014: htt://www.welt.de/debatte/kommentare/article123516387/Warum-Deutschland-nicht-allein-schuld-ist.html The fact that Social Darwinist *Realolitik* gave us the Western Front seems to have escaed them. For critical German commentary on both Clark and Geert et al., see Heinrich August Winkler, "Und erlöse uns von der Kriegsschuld", *Die Zeit*, August 18, 2014: htt://www.zeit.de/2014/32/erster-weltkrieg-christopher-clark).

[23] Stevenson, *1914-1918*, 596. Lest this reading seem like the familiar fruit of traditional British chauvinism, let me invoke one of today's leading German historians of the First World War, Gerd Krumreich. A critic of Christopher Clark's thesis, Krumreich wrote in *Le Monde* in March 2014 that, while both sides had piled up the gunpowder in the years receding 1914, it "is incontestable that it was the Germans who set it alight" (Gerd Krumreich, "Les deux camps ont rempli la poudrière", Le Journal du Centenaire, *Le Monde*, 11 March 2014, iii).

[24] Stevenson, *1914-1918*, 35.

[25] Douglas Newton, *The Darkest Days: The Truth behind Britain's Rush to War* (London: Verso, 2014). For a critical review of Newton's book, see Nigel Biggar, "Cards on the Table: A Flawed, Candid History of Britain and the Great War", *Australian Book Review*, March 2015.

[26] Newton, *Darkest Days*, 290-1.

[27] British anxiety about the Belgian coast was not paranoid: during the Great War the Germans used Belgium as a U-boat base (Stevenson, *1914-1918*, 147).

[28] Ibid., *1914-1918*, 130.

[29] Ibid., 130.

[30] Ibid., 130. Jay Winter and Antoine Prost confirm Stevenson's estimation of the significance of the September Programme: "As a whole, despite some adjustments according to circumstances, this programme corresponded to the desires of the Ruhr magnates and the Prussian Junkers. It was supported by the General Staff and informed German policy until 1918" (*Great War in History*, 47).

[31] Philpott, *Bloody Victory*, 15.

[32] John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale, 2001), 424 and 76-7: "[F]or whatever motive … the Germans from start to finish used civilians for cover when

attacking and … this measure was not the result of maverick orders. Hostage-taking and deportation were equally integral to German behaviour."

[33] Ibid., 74, 420.

[34] Ibid., 166.

[35] Ibid., 419.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 45. Gregory makes a telling comparison of German and British military norms: "The mere suspicion of armed resistance in Belgium in 1914 led to thousands of executions, even amongst those the German Army knew had not taken up arms. By contrast [during the 1916 "Easter Rising" in Dublin] after a week of street-fighting against almost a thousand armed rebels, who were unquestionably liable to execution both under the Hague Convention and ordinary criminal law, the British confined themselves to executing sixteen ringleaders. Whilst it is clearly the case that public opinion, in both Ireland and the United States, influenced this "clemency", the crucial difference is that the British cared about this public opinion" (*The Last Great War*, 45-6).

[38] Alan Kramer, *Dynamics of Destruction. Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 336. However, the Germans did forcibly deport 120,000 Belgian workers to Germany in the summer of 1916 (Stevenson, *1914-1918*, 133; Strachan, *The First World War* [Pocket Books], 322).

[39] Kramer, *Dynamics of Destruction*, 335-6.

[40] Stevenson, *1914-1918*, 596.

[41] Niall Fergusson, *The pity of War*, new ed. (London: Penguin, 2009).

[42] Max Egremont, *Siegfried Sassoon. A Biography* (London: Picador, 2005), 143.

[43] Stevenson, *1914-1918*, 131.

[44] Ibid., 136.

[45] Ibid., 137.

[46] Ibid., 345. While Bethmann Hollweg initialed the Programme only under protest, "he accepted it as a guideline in the event of Germany's being able to dictate peace" (ibid.).

[47] Ibid., 355.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., 357.

[50] Ibid., 467.

[51] Ibid., 471.

[52] Ibid., 391.

[53] Siegfried Sassoon, *Siegfried's Journey* (London: Faber & Faber, 1945), 57.

[54] C.A.J. Coady, *Morality and olitical Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 181.

[55] Ibid., 185 and n.8.

[56]Philpott, *Bloody Victory*, 151.

[57] Harris, *Haig*, 197, 259; Philpott, *Bloody Victory*, 361-3.

[58] According to Hew Strachan, artillery was "the true artisan of victory" (*The First World War* [London: Pocket Books, 2006], 307).

[59] Jeremy Black, *Warfare in the Western World, 1882-1975* (Chesham: Acumen, 2002), 47; Philpott, *Bloody Victory*, 156, 606.

[60] Philpott, *Bloody Victory*, 130.

[61] Ibid., 129.

[62] Ibid., 346.

[63] Ibid., 597.

[64] Ibid., 628.

[65] G. D. Sheffield, "The Shadow of the Somme: The Influence of the First World War on British Soldiers' Perceptions and Behaviour in the Second World War", in Paul Addison and Angus Calder, (ed.), *Time to Kill: the Soldier's Experience of War in the West 1939-1945* (London: Pimlico, 1997), 36.

[66] Ibid., 35: "British and Canadian battalions suffered about 100 casualties per month on average on the Western Front in the First World War. In the 1944-5 north-west European campaign, battalions suffered a minimum of 100 per month but 175 per month was not uncommon. The daily casualty rate of Allied ground forces in Normandy actually exceeded that of the BEF, including the RFC, at Passchendaele in 1917."

[67] Jack Sheldon, *The German Army on the Somme, 1914-1916* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2005), 397, 398.

[68] Thomas Hurka, "Proportionality and Necessity", 130-5; and "Proportionality in the Morality of War", 39-45.

[69] For example, according to Richard Holmes, "German SS units took Part in particularly realistic training with live ammunition, in which 5 per cent casualties were tolerated" (*Acts of War: The Behaviour of Men in Battle* [London: Cassell, 2003], 54).

[70] In Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, Volume III, Companion, art 2, Documents, May 1915 – December 1916 (London: Heinemann, 1972), 1538.

[71] Harris, *Haig*, 537.

[72] Harris, *Haig*, 537.

[73] Ibid., 539-40, 545-6. While Gary Sheffield qualifies Harris's judgement, he does not disagree with it (*The Chief*, 163, 174, 175, 369, 374).

[74] A.J. Coates, *The Ethics of War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 217.

[75] Ibid., 220. The emphasis is Coates'.

[76] For a fuller discussion of the professional virtue of "callousness" and its bearing on Haig's conduct, see Nigel Biggar, *In Defence of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 117-19.

[77] Harris, *Haig*, 538-9. Again, Sheffield qualifies, rather than refutes, Harris's argument (*The Chief*, 180, 375).