

## Volunteers and Pressed Men

How Britain and its Empire Raised its Forces in Two World Wars

Roger Broad

### The British Commonwealth and Empire's contribution in the First World War and Second World War

- Britain did not 'stand-alone' in 1940 after the fall of France
- Men and women from around the world fought in British Empire forces in two global wars
- Unpublished personal memoirs and other sources now record their experience and achievements
- The first overall recognition of their contribution

The great heroic myth of 20th century British history is that after the fall of France in June 1940, Britain 'stood alone'. This does a great disservice to the millions of men and women from around the world who rallied to the British cause. As in 1914-1918, Britain in 1939-1945 could call on the human and material resources of the world's greatest empire, and without them could not have held off Germany and Italy, and later Japan. In the First World War, Britain initially depended on volunteers to form Kitchener's 'New Army', but from 1916, it had to resort to conscription. The imperial forces were mainly raised voluntarily although, as in Britain, various forms of social and economic pressure were applied to get men into uniform. In both wars, some Commonwealth and Empire territories applied formal conscription. In 1939-1945, these countries doubled the military manpower available from Britain itself. *Volunteers and Pressed Men: How Britain and its Empire Raised its Forces in Two World Wars* draws on official documents, diaries, memoirs and other sources to describe how, alongside Britain's own forces, men and women drawn from the Americas to the Pacific served, fought and suffered injury and death in Britain's cause.

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