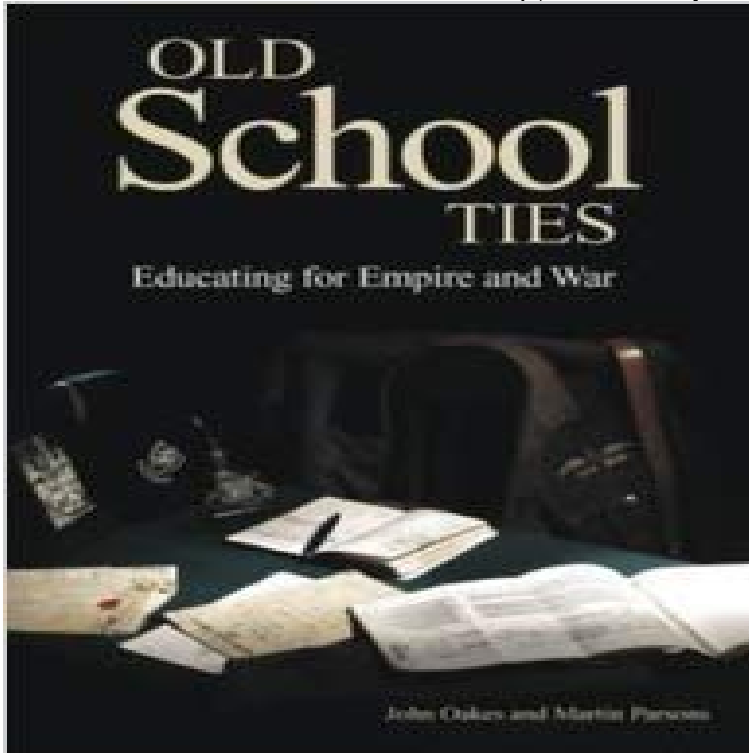


Old School Ties: Educating for Empire and War



On May 8th 1915, 2nd Lieutenant Giles Frederick Ayres of the 3rd Battalion, the Dorset Regiment closed a letter to his parents with the words, I am going over the top of the parapet with the shout of School on my lips and then pray that Gods will be done. He was killed leading his men in an attack on the German trenches the following day. What made men like this? What gave them the strength of character to offer their lives for King and Country? What sort of person would become a District Commissioner and rule alone in a remote fort in Uganda? Who could build a road in the Himalayas whilst being shot at by determined Afridis? Why should someone wish to build canals in the Sind or guard a penal colony on a remote island in the Indian Ocean? What motivated men to grow tea in the hills of Assam or train camels to pull artillery pieces in Somalia or to become a Subaltern on the Western Front? This book tells the incredible story of the Reading School Old Boys who became the leaders and driving force behind the British Empire and of those who were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice in the 1914-18 war. Using a compilation of tales of adventure and heroism from the archives of Reading School, John Oakes and Martin Parsons explain how the British Public School system developed the male Imperial Elite that ruled the British Empire. The letters and articles from the Old Redingensians featured throughout the book provide an insight into the Empire at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries and show the true spirit of adventure, loyalty and courage these young men had.

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