



# Forgotten Lunatics of the Great War

*Peter Barham*

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## **Forgotten Lunatics of the Great War** Peter Barham

Although the shell-shocked British soldier of World War I has been a favored subject in both fiction and nonfiction, focus has been on the stories of officers, and the history of the rank-and-file servicemen who were psychiatric casualties has never been told. This profoundly moving book recounts the poignant, sometimes ribald histories of this neglected group for the first time.

Peter Barham draws on reports from the front lines, case histories, personal letters, and war pensions files to trace the lives and fortunes of a large cast of ex-servicemen who suffered mental breakdowns. He describes their confinements to asylums, the reactions of families to their relatives' plight, the turmoil of the soldiers when they returned home—and the uphill struggle they faced trying to secure justice from the bureaucratic labyrinth that was the Ministry of Pensions. His book gives a new perspective to the impact of the Great War and to current controversies about disputed postwar maladies.

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