The Lasting Effects of Bygone Battles on Europe

by

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Part One – Introduction, Overview, Thesis

Devastating wars have raged across Europe since its settlement by humans. Most recently, World War II saw cities destroyed in a single night and witnessed the catastrophic effects of modern weaponry across the entire continent. The fighting of World War I was contained in a generally smaller area; however, the fighting in those battles could last months at a time and left gorgeous fields as mud pits and graves. Before that, Napoleon swept back and forth across the continent for twelve years, leaving millions dead in his wake. However, even Napoleon's twelve years pales in comparison to the Thirty Years War, which saw towns razed and populations wiped out to the point that hundreds of towns completely ceased to exist. Although World War II ended only 60 years ago and the Thirty Years War ended a full 367 years ago, both continue to affect the present day. The wars of the past still influence the culture of European countries, as ongoing remembrances of the battles continually remind Europe of the horrors in its past. Additionally, the wars still affect the geography and physical landscape of Europe, as the ground still displays the scars wrought during the battles.

This thesis studies the effects of four specific battles during the wars mentioned above. In the Thirty Years War lasting from 1618-1648, the Sack of Magdeburg in 1631 culminated in an inferno which ultimately killed 20,000 of the city's inhabitants and left Magdeburg in ruins for over 100 years. In 1813, the Battle of Nations in Leipzig was one of Napoleon's greatest losses and was the result of four great powers acting together to fight the French. World War I's bloodiest battle, the Battle of the Somme, lasted four and a half months in 1916, from July to November. It resulted in 1.5 million casualties. June 6, 1944, the "longest day" of World War II, ushered in the invasion of Nazi-controlled Europe when the combined Allied forces landed in France and began the two-month-long Battle of Normandy.

Part two of the paper will have a brief overview of my research methodology before examining the current state of the cities and battlefields. Section one will discuss the current efforts to remember those who died by looking at cemeteries and memorials near the former battlefields. Section two will describe the educational efforts to keep the battles relevant by describing the museums and landmarks maintained in the surrounding areas.

Part three will then discuss how the memorials, museums, and cemeteries from part one influence the culture in the areas around the battlefields. The tourism brought about by the battle sites has also changed the culture of the area, and this section will examine that influence. It will also dissect ongoing efforts to remember the battles in events such as reenactments and international humanities projects. The thesis will then analyze the geographical and environmental impact the battles still have on the landscape of Europe today, including the prevalence of craters in the landscape, fortifications interspersed throughout the countryside, and thousands of tons of live munitions still buried just under the surface of the earth.

Part four will contain suggestions for further research such as the role of liberators compared to conquerors in remembering the battle, the effects of a victory compared to a defeat in remembrances, and the effects of time on the impact the battles still have today. The conclusion will then round out the paper.

*Citations for photographs are found on the “Pictures Cited” page. They are listed in order using the numbers in their captions.

Part Two – Describing the current situation

Research Methodology

To fulfill honors contracts in two German history classes, I wrote papers which described the four battles discussed in this paper. Doing the research and learning about the battles gave me the foundation with which to visit the battlefields. Thus, I knew many of the important areas within the battlefields and what might be beneficial to visit. When determining which museums and other landmarks to visit, I researched online and used tourist books before visiting the sites. In the case of Magdeburg, there was nothing online and only one lead in a tourist book. As such, I also visited a tourist information office to find any locations that might be more obscure and not online. At Leipzig, the Somme, and Normandy, I chose highly reviewed sites to visit, but also went out of my way to find sites that may not receive as much tourist recognition, such as the German cemetery at Normandy or the Apelsteine in Leipzig. The French sites I travelled to with my father and family friends, Leipzig and Magdeburg were just with my father. He also occasionally recommended other areas that may be beneficial to visit, such as the Breitenfeld memorial.

At all of the sites I took pictures for reference, and while writing the paper I supplemented my knowledge from visiting the battlefields with other sources. Thus, assertions such as "there were no memorials in Magdeburg" are based on personal experience travelling through the key areas in the city where memorials would be likely to stand, as well as extensive preparatory work. However, I admit there may be additional details which I was unable to find. At each site I spent at least a full day in the area, with the Somme and Normandy warranting several days.

Section One – Memorials and Cemeteries

Thirty Years War – Memorials and Cemeteries

The Thirty Years War, being the farthest removed from the present day, logically should have the fewest memorials. While even most small villages have WWI and WWII memorials, I only saw two memorials to the Thirty Years War while traveling around Germany. The first is in a small village outside of Heidelberg called Dilsberg. There, a small memorial commemorates the besieging of the town by General Tilly in 1622. The second memorial can be found in a field outside of Leipzig, Germany, where the Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus had won the Battle of Breitenfeld. The memorial has the name and date of the battle, "Gustavus Adolphus, Christ und Held" (Christian and Hero) and "Glaubens-Freiheit für die Welt" (Freedom of Religion for the World) inscribed on it. Both memorials are maintained, but are essentially rocks with inscriptions on them. Because both are also in small rural villages, one would not expect large memorials.

1 A memorial to Gustavus Adolphus outside of Leipzig

Magdeburg, on the other hand, was a city of 25,000 people when it was overtaken by Tilly's forces. Now, the city has ten times that population. Thus, one would expect a large memorial. However, although there exist memorials to both World Wars, a beautiful memorial to the Napoleonic Wars, and an additional memorial to the Franco-Prussian War, there is not a single memorial to the Thirty Years War that I could find. I searched online, in tourist books, and asked the tourist information bureau, but the only remembrances of the battle I found are those listed below. There are only three indications that a huge battle, resulting in the city being burned

to the ground and killing over 20,000 inhabitants, actually took place in the city that long ago. A work of art in the form of a relief in a free standing art piece depicted major events in the city's history. It was split up into five sections, with those sections subdivided into a large image on top and a smaller one on bottom. The large sections show the flourishing trade in the city, the upper class of the Victorian Era, the industrial proletariat, and more. The lower ones seem to depict physical events in the history of the city. A corner of one of the reliefs depicts the burning of the city. The flames are overtaking the city and the date of the battle was off to the side. In total, the destruction of the entire city was relegated to around 1/25th of the total surface area of the carving.

2 The Sack of Magdeburg is shown in the bottom right corner of this relief.

The next mention that anything may have happened in the city are two plaques on the ground close to the cathedral. Inscribed on the plaques are "Kirchhofmauer vor 1631" (Churchyard wall before 1631) and "Alexius-hospital vor 1631". There is no explanation of why those buildings do not still exist or why the date 1631 was important. The only significant mention of the battle is in the city museum. That will be covered in the next section of the thesis.

The absence of anything in or near the cathedral is also worth mentioning. Although the majority of the town was destroyed in the conflagration, the cathedral somehow escaped unscathed (Schiller 158). This is especially important due to the circumstances of the Sack of

Magdeburg. During the course of the battle, it was practically impossible for people to find shelter against both the fire and the invading army. In one churchyard, for instance, 53 women who had taken shelter in a church were found beheaded (Schiller 158). The cathedral was the only safe place in the entire town. 600 people were sheltered by the priests, and the conquering general had his command post outside of the cathedral, not allowing anybody to hurt those inside (Schiller 159). After the battle was over, the last act of the conquerors was to hold a Te Deum inside the cathedral, restoring it to its Catholic status, which had been rejected by the city's Protestant inhabitants. Inside the cathedral today, there is not a single indication that any of this had happened there. While there were murals depicting other events in its history, the sheltering of some of the city's only survivors did not warrant even a plaque.

Napoleonic War – Memorials and Cemeteries

In Leipzig, the situation was very different. The largest memorial in Europe is dedicated to the battle (Moon), and at 300 feet tall, the *Völkerschlachtdenkmal* (called the Memorial to the Battle of the Nations in English) towers over the surrounding landscape (Moon). Although people started discussing creating a memorial to the battle one year after it took place, the actual construction did not begin until 1898, 70 years after the battle. It took 15 years to finish the memorial at a cost of 6,000,000 German Goldmarks (Pohlsander 170), equivalent to nearly 55 billion euro now. Surrounded by a park and a

3 Visitors stand at the base of the Völkerschlachtdenkmal

reflecting pool, the memorial itself is constructed out of concrete with a granite façade and features dozens of relief sculptures of warriors. At the base of the memorial, just under the second story entrance, is a sculpture of the Archangel Michael, the symbol of German virility (Symbole). A dozen figures ringing the top of the memorial symbolize the guardians of freedom. The interior of the memorial is made up of three stories. In the bottom, an open rotunda represents a crypt, with 16 figures engraved into columns. They encircle the area as "protectors of the dead." One story up, those columns support a balcony; four colossi representing bravery, strength of belief, the power of the people, and willingness to make sacrifices stand there (Symbole).

4 The interior of the memorial features a crypt ringed by soldiers.

The interior is covered by a dome adorned with 324 mounted soldiers who represent the troops coming home. After climbing 500 stairs, visitors reach the very top of the memorial, which provides a view of the whole city. The entire memorial is surrounded by a park with a 42,000 square foot reflecting pool called the Sea of Tears (Brekle). Lastly, the base of the memorial holds a museum, to be discussed in the next section.

While the *Völkerschlachtdenkmal* is by far the biggest reminder of the battle, it is not the only memorial. From 1861 through 1864, a man named Dr. Theodor Apel installed what have become known as "Apelsteine" (Apel stones) around the city in key areas of the battle (Loh-

5 An Apelstein sits in the middle of a residential area.

Kliesch). There are 48 of these four-foot stones scattered throughout Leipzig; each one has a short description of who fought in that area and on what day of the battle. Because the city has continued to expand, some of these stones are now on street corners in crowded neighborhoods or on the side of highways in and out of town.

One can also find monolithic memorials in various parks around town. While looking for some of the Apelsteine, I found one memorial dedicated to General Schwarzenberg and another which simply had the date of the battle. Both were roughly three feet tall, three feet wide, and six feet in length and dominated their surroundings. One had cloth flowers at its base that seemed relatively new.

World War I – Memorials and Cemeteries

The memorials were different for World War I than those in Leipzig. Instead of giant granite figures representing virtues of the fallen, the majority of the World War I memorials are more personal, with the names of the fallen inscribed on them or depictions of war rather than ornate granite warriors. In practically every village in Germany and France, one can find a memorial to the men who fought in World War I with their names and ranks on display. In the Somme and Verdun, there were two large memorials: one an ossuary, and the other a gateway to a cemetery. The World War I memorials I visited in France are much more personal and less abstract, which seems rather at odds with the alienation World War I soldiers felt on the battlefield. Additionally, scattered throughout the Somme are cemeteries ranging in size from a few dozen to thousands of fallen men.

The Douaumont Ossuary in Verdun is one of the largest memorials in the area. The building stands less than a mile away from Fort Douaumont in the heart of the former battlefield. In front of the building is the largest French military cemetery from the war with 15,000 graves ("The Central Area"). The most notable feature of the building is its 150 foot tall tower ("The Tower") that overlooks the cemetery. Extending in two directions out from the tower are hallways adorned with the names of those who died in the battle. Just beyond the entryway, there is a small chapel for private prayer and remembrance. Surrounding the building at ground level are windows through which one can see the bones of more than 130,000 unidentified soldiers from the war ("In the Cloister"). In addition to the cemetery, there is a small area with Islamic architecture built for the Muslim soldiers who fought for France and a memorial, made to look like Moses' tablets, for Jewish soldiers.

6 The Douaumont Ossuary overlooks the graves of French soldiers.

7 The heavily cratered remains of Fleury-devant-Douaumont.

The town Fleury-devant-Douaumont, which was destroyed during the course of the battle at Verdun, is the site of a memorial today. Scattered among the craters, markers denote where

buildings once stood. A ceremonial mayor is still elected by neighboring towns, and the only building in the area is a chapel built to commemorate the fallen. There are two additional memorials in the town: one an abstract sculpture of a soldier blinded by tear gas, and the other dedicated to the men from the village who died in the war. When I visited the village in mid-May (not a significant date to the village), that memorial had two fresh bouquets resting at its base.

One of the hotly disputed points during the course of the battle of Verdun was a hill overlooking the battlefield, which contained the town of Vauquois. Both French and German troops dug mines deep into the hill and detonated them, destroying the majority of both the town and the hill. At the top of what is left of the hill, a granite memorial stands roughly 20 feet tall and overlooks the craters. While it does not hold the names of the men who died there, its base—a sculpture of a trench in cross-section, a soldier standing guard with a rifle in one hand and a grenade in the other, his comrade sleeping in a tunnel behind him—serves as a grim reminder of the cost of war.

8 The Thiepval Memorial features both British (left) and French (right) graves in addition to the names of the missing.

As at Verdun, the largest memorial in the Somme overlooks a cemetery. The memorial at Thiepval, constructed in 1929 and finished in 1932, contains the names of 73,357 missing soldiers and serves as the entrance to the graves of 300 French and 300 British soldiers (Thiepval Memorial). The memorial stands at the top of a hill and is visible from several miles out in any

direction. Men were buried in the tradition befitting their own country: French soldiers were usually buried in large military cemeteries such as the one at Douaumont; British soldiers were buried close to where they fell. This tradition left dozens of small British cemeteries, usually with fewer than 100 men, scattered across the entire battlefield. The ground where these cemeteries are located was donated to England by France and the cemeteries are maintained by the Imperial War Graves Commission, a British governmental department. German cemeteries, on the other hand, are vastly different. Soldiers were buried where they fell and those places were rarely marked with names. After the Second World War, these graves were excavated and the bodies—three to seven at a time—were buried in a single grave. As a result, only 20% of the fallen have a known grave (Thiepval Museum). However, Fricourt German Military Cemetery in the Somme contains 17,027 soldiers ("Fricourt"). The graves are marked by thin black crosses which bear the name of the soldier, along with the day they died. Unlike the British memorial at Thiepval or the French at Douaumont, there are no German memorials to the missing.

Across France, there are 1,000 war cemeteries and an additional 20 memorials (Delville Wood Memorial) dedicated to those who have no known grave, along with an additional six memorials in Belgium. Each of the smaller British cemeteries has a similar structure. Near the front, a guestbook and registry are tucked away in a waterproof alcove. A marble gravestone, engraved with each man's name, their unit's insignia and name, the date of their demise, and a symbol of their religion, stands

9 One of the many British cemeteries in the Somme

above each grave. In the back of the cemetery, a ten-foot cross overlooks the grave and is overlaid by a metal sword. The few Canadian cemeteries found at the battlefield have the same design. French graves are similar, except the gravestones are crosses rather than rectangles.

The guest books from the memorials spoke volumes about the people that visit the graves. Each guest book contains hundreds of names and messages of thanks, hope, or remembrance. They feature people from England, France, Belgium, New Zealand, South Africa, Australia, the United States, and more. Some of the guests were looking for specific relatives; others were simply visiting the graves. At every cemetery in the Somme, British visitors leave small crosses with cloth poppies attached. This symbolism harkens back to poppies growing near battlefields during the early days of the war ("The Story"). In the years after the war, plastic or fabric poppies were sold as a fundraiser to help injured veterans; this tradition continues in full force today.

Because of the way the British buried their dead, most of the cemeteries are near important areas in the battlefield, and as such the cemeteries are adjacent to other memorials commemorating specific areas of the battle. For instance, men from South Africa and Britain captured Delville Wood during the second month of the battle. A cemetery stands in the battlefield for the British and South African soldiers, and a South African memorial, in which inscriptions are written on a marble tomb in both Afrikaans and English, lies just across the road.

10 The South African Memorial in Delville Wood.

11 The Canadian memorial features a cratered landscape along with a Caribou statue overlooking the battlefield.

The Canadian memorial for the Newfoundland Regiment is one of the best examples of the cemeteries being interwoven with the memorial. Where the Canadians did the majority of their fighting, the landscape has not been converted back into fields like most of the Somme battlefield. Instead, the Canadians removed the materials from the trenches but left the ground unleveled so one can get a feel of how the lines were set up. A bronze caribou stands on the Canadian trench line and looks toward the German line. There are three cemeteries spread throughout the trench line, made during the battle as the Canadians reached further into German territory. The memorial gives a good indication of what the battlefield looked like, while also drawing attention with the Canadian caribou and the cemeteries to those who fought there.

Some memorials, however, are independent of cemeteries. The best example of this is found in the town of Mont St Quentin, which was liberated by the Australians in September 1918. The town built a memorial after the war to commemorate its liberation. It depicted an Australian soldier bayoneting the German eagle. When the town was recaptured in 1940, the German garrison destroyed the statue. A second statue was subsequently unveiled in 1971, this time of an Australian soldier looking into the distance.

World War II – Memorials and Cemeteries

The battlefields of Normandy are similarly interspersed with small British cemeteries. If one did not know that the First World War never reached as far as Normandy, one could easily mistake them for World War I cemeteries. Poppies adorn the graves, as they have evolved from their initial tribute to World War I veterans to be a symbol of all British veterans. The gravestones look identical, except the year of death has moved 25 years forward. Even the French government's inscription at the front of the cemetery, proclaiming that the land belongs to the British people, is the same. However, there are fewer cemeteries in Normandy compared to the Somme, and the cemeteries in Normandy are much smaller. This difference highlights the tremendously greater loss of life by the British during World War I.

While British cemeteries in Normandy are similar to their World War I counterparts, French war cemeteries are practically non-existent. Because France was forced to surrender so quickly in the war, there are not the preponderance of French cemeteries as in the Somme and Verdun. There are a few memorials to French participants in the war, such as an area dedicated to the Rochambelles, a group of French women who served as medics following closely behind the front line during the invasion. However, such memorials honoring the French are few in number.

American soldiers, on the other hand, are remembered across their two beaches and throughout much of Normandy. Over 1 million people visit the Normandy American Cemetery yearly, the most visited American cemetery abroad. It is the final resting place of almost 10,000 Americans and recognizes 1,557 more MIA

12 The Normandy American Cemetery and Omaha Beach.

("Normandy American Cemetery"). It has a visitor's center and museum, a pathway down to Omaha beach, a semicircular garden and wall containing the names of the missing, and a chapel with a stunning mosaic dome. The mosaic depicts angels sending men off to battle and cradling their dead bodies and parallels an angel in flight to a World War II fighter plane. The graves are laid out in a perfectly manicured lawn, each grave stone a marble cross, crescent, or Star of David, correlating to the religion of the deceased.

13 Inside the chapel, a mosaic on the ceiling depicts angels sending men off to fight and caring for the dead.

Out of all of the areas to which I travelled during the course of the research, this cemetery was the best attended site. However, it is the only American cemetery within 100 miles ("Cemeteries & Memorials Map"), so people would be more likely to visit it compared to the dozens of British cemeteries. Again, unlike the frequency of British memorials in the Somme, there are only two official American memorials in Normandy, although there are dozens of French memorials celebrating the Americans ("Cemeteries & Memorials Map").

14 A traditional Germanic burial mound contains the remains of unidentified German soldiers.

Lastly, the Germans have a memorial in Normandy. Proportional to its size, it was the least visited memorial I

attended. There were five people at the memorial, none of whom were German, in a cemetery containing 21,000 German dead ("At D-Day Commemoration"), as compared to several thousand visitors at the American cemetery half as big. The cemetery is significantly different than the American and British cemeteries in the area. Coming in through the entrance, one looks towards a burial mound modeled after those used by the Germanic Tribes, where unidentified remains are buried. The headstones are flush with the ground and made of dark brown stones with a thick cross shape. However, scattered throughout the cemetery are sets of five stout crosses seemingly distributed at random between the rows.

The biggest difference between World War I and World War II memorials is that while World War I memorials mainly focus on remembering the human losses, the World War II memorials largely celebrate the military victories. Directly in front of the Battle of Normandy Museum in Caen stands a 25 foot tall statue depicting the famous image of the American Sailor kissing the nurse in New York City on V-J day (V-J day because it is a well-recognized picture which symbolizes the end of the war). In practically every coastal town and village, a marker stands on the shore with inscriptions such as "Here on the 6th June 1944 Europe was liberated by the heroism of the Allied Forces." Additionally, almost all areas have descriptions of the specific events that occurred in the area, with titles such as "The Merville Battery: An Exploit Achieved Against All the Odds" ("Merville"). Granted, there are still frequent reminders of the death and sacrifice by the men who fought in the battle, but the tone is certainly different between the World War I and the World War II battle sites.

Section Three – Museums and maintained landmarks

Magdeburg – Museums and maintained landmarks

In Magdeburg, the tourist office was confused when I asked about memorials or museums about the battle. They seemed not to know that the city was destroyed during the Thirty Years War, and the only museum they could point me to was a museum about the history of the city. The only landmark still in existence since the time of the war is the cathedral, and as mentioned earlier, it does not have any special marker stating that it was of historical importance in the context of the war. Thankfully, the city's museum does have information about the battle. The museum is split into thirteen sections, each covering eras in the city's history. One of them is about the battle. It contains weapons used in the battle such as early muskets and cannon as well as a variety of pikes and halberds. There is a 5 foot tall by 7 foot wide painting depicting the fire, people drowning in the river, and Tilly's forces killing babies and carrying women off to be raped. Across the hall from the painting is a touchscreen with an interactive version of the painting on its screen. Visitors can click on various areas in the painting and it describes in German what was happening. At the museum, there are also audio and visual presentations describing the battle, some of which are recordings of people reading descriptions of the battle. Capping off the exhibit is a large diorama depicting the city before its destruction, highlighting where the walls used to exist and the cathedral. Overall, it is a quality exhibit, but makes up just a small section of the museum. Additionally, nobody was there and it did not seem like the museum expected many visitors that day.

Leipzig – Museums and maintained landmarks

As mentioned earlier, the *Völkerschlachtdenkmal* features a museum to the battle at its base. Partly due to the colossal nature of the memorial, the museum itself is underwhelming. Two large rooms are spread across two floors, containing memorabilia from the battle such as uniforms and weapons used in the battle. It also contains a large diorama of the battle with

hundreds of soldiers, burning houses, and rooftop snipers. The museum's exhibits are captioned only in German.

145 Informational banners hang from the ceiling in the museum Leipzig 1813.

In contrast to the lackluster museum at the base of the memorial, the most impressive museum of the trip I found is also in Leipzig. Leipzig 1813 is a panorama style museum, which guides visitors from the entrance around the circular building that discusses the city before the battle. It looks at Leipzig's important role in European trade and the cultural achievements of its citizens like Johann Sebastian Bach. The information is displayed in both English and German on pillars extending from the floor up three stories (with information displayed on the bottom six feet). Banners hang from the ceiling and when the information starts referring to the battle, the words are written on destroyed walls that look like they survived the battle. After traveling through the initial museum, visitors enter into a circular room and the heart of the building. At the center is a three story scaffold for them to ascend and on the wall is an extremely detailed panorama. When one climbs to the top of the scaffold, it appears as though one is on a church top overlooking the city during the height of the battle. In the distance, fires rage and soldiers retreat and advance. Upon close observation, one can make out individual faces of the fighters while they are arguing with one another, attending to the wounded, or hiding from the battle. Music in the room reflects both the mood of the battle and contains sounds that one might hear in the area, while the lighting makes the fires flicker and changes the scene from daytime to nighttime. After standing in awe of the panorama for upwards of half an hour looking at different details, visitors leave the room to a "making of" documentary.

This documentary shows that the buildings in the panorama are modeled after maps showing the city layout. They were each created by a team of artists using 3D modeling software on computers and given specific details such as bullet ridden walls or caved in roofs. Then, they were set into a full model of the city. Using a different software, the artists adjusted the buildings in height and angle to where they were the right size and perspective for the viewer. Hundreds of reenactors answered a call for help with populating the fake city. Over the course of several days, photographers took thousands of pictures of the reenactors doing all kinds of different activities. They then added the people to the model of the city and again adjusted the perspective so those in the distance were shorter than those in front. Once everything was completed on the computer, they used one of the highest quality printers in the world on a fabric similar to Under Armour to print the three story tall work of art. The

16 Actors digitally added to the panorama add to the realism.

17 Reenactors are digitally added to the panorama. The detail of each person makes the city come alive.

detail put into the picture is fantastic, and gives a tremendous sense of scope to the size of the battle while also humanizing it by being of such high quality you could make out individual faces of soldiers.

World War I – Museums and maintained landmarks

The fortress at Douaumont is one of Verdun's well preserved landmarks. The building stands much as it stood at the end of the war, with huge sections of cement and reinforcing metal bars blown out of the walls. Its metal domes which protected artillery and machine gunners still poke out of the ground and artillery pieces sticking out of the walls menace the parking lot. Inside the fortress a museum and gift shop have been established displaying what life would have looked like inside the fortress. Underneath the Ossuary, a similar museum tells the story of the battle, but it will soon be dwarfed by a renovated monument and museum situated a mile from the Ossuary ("Centenary").

18 Hundreds of bullet holes still scar the church in Péronne.

Unlike the cathedral of Magdeburg, the oldest church in Péronne, France, openly displays its scars. The outside is still chipped from shells and bullets with holes ranging from slight flecks to three inch diameter excavations. It is one of the many maintained landmarks in the Somme, but it is notable for being relatively removed from what we may picture today as the battlefield. Clearly, the war was fought in the towns and cities of the region, not just in the trench lines.

While the region is spotted with memorials and cemeteries, there are fewer museums; however, the museums that are there excellently teach about the battle. The first museum we visited, the Museum of the Great War in Péronne, is situated inside the town's château. In addition to having hundreds of well-preserved artifacts from the battle, the museum also has dozens of propaganda posters for the war from all sides of the conflict. It prominently features an exhibit that discusses the children of the war, how they survived and what their lives were like. The museum also displays artwork by Otto Dix, a German survivor of the war who continued drawing haunting charcoal depictions of the war decades after its end. One area of the museum has tables stacked high with rusty objects recovered from the battlefield including helmets, shovel heads, pots, and gas masks. The displays at the museum contain areas for German, French, and English descriptions of the objects however many of the German descriptions are blank. The day I visited there were around 100 people in the museum, including two large school groups.

19 The Museum of the Great War contains hundreds of artifacts from the war.

The second museum is at the memorial at Thiepval, previously discussed as the memorial with the names of the British MIA from the battle. While the museum itself is not overly large, the displays are well made and conveyed an excellent timeline of the war and the battle. The most touching display, however, was of a metal fork. A young woman from the area had found a fork in her field and always wondered to whom it belonged. Decades later her children and the Somme Remembrance Association found records of the fork's owner. Unfortunately, the man

was among the missing. The 86 year old woman tearfully handed over the fork to the visitor center where his name was inscribed during a celebration to those who were lost, and the fork has been displayed there since as another personal effect from a war that usually forgets the individuals.

World War II – Museums and maintained landmarks

The World War II museums and maintained landmarks are large and numerous. The Mémorial de Caen is a giant museum describing the war, the invasion, the Cold War, and continuing peace efforts, such as Nobel Peace Prize winners. The museum is expansive and attracted 400,000 visitors in the year 2007, making it the most frequented museum in France outside of Paris ("France"). At 150,000 square feet, with 60,000 of those dedicated to the permanent World War II and Normandy exhibits, the museum is just under half the size of the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in D.C. ("About the Museum"). The exhibits feature a variety of objects from the civilian side of the war, including propaganda posters, speeches from various leaders, letters and other documents from civilians, ration cards, and much more. The military side of the war contains both replicas of equipment used during the war and actual equipment. There are shells, jeeps, aircraft, uniforms, and hundreds of other objects from the war. Capping off the museum is a 20 minute long film of footage from the battle, with one side of the screen dedicated to the German footage and the other half made up of the Allies' footage.

Museums dot the entire Normandy coast, so deciding which to visit is a difficult decision. Some, like the Merville Gun Battery, are built inside former bunkers, while others are simply located at convenient locations, such as the museum in the visitor's center of the Normandy American Cemetery. The Merville Gun Battery is one of the more highly rated museums on the coast, so we made a point to visit it. It is an open air museum located at the site of a major

German artillery emplacement along the far eastern side of the battlefield. The German bunkers have been restored into small museums, each featuring one aspect of the battle. One is made to look like Germans lived there, one was dedicated to the attacking British soldiers, and one is set up to replicate the fighting conditions during the battle, including a video screen showing what was happening in the front of the bunker, smoke and audio displays, and odor diffusers to recreate the smells. The museum also has a restored "gooney bird" airplane which dropped paratroopers during the invasion and has restored artillery pieces ("Sound and Light Show").

20 Each bunker contains different exhibits on the men who fought at the Merville battery.

Down the road from the Merville battery is the Pegasus Bridge memorial, which is a two part memorial/museum. In the location of the original bridge (which has been replaced due to age) we found memorials to the men who fought there. A short distance away is the museum with the original bridge, the glider that landed in the area during the night of the invasion and some other memorabilia ("Le Pont Bailey"). The museum tells the story of the bridge and its place in a pivotal battle early in the invasion.

Overlooking the Mulberries on cliffs outside of Arromanches is Arromanches 360 ("Normandy's 100 Days"), a film that encircles the audience and tells the story of the first 100 days of the invasion using speeches from leaders at the time and video footage from the invasion. While this museum has little in the way of war memorabilia or information, it is one of the more interesting museums, as the video is so well done. Outside the museum is a short walking trail

which leads visitors past several German blockhouses in disrepair. On the random weekday in May when I visited, there were around ten tour busses in addition to dozens of cars at the museum, and the line for the movie would occasionally stretch several hundred feet.

Unlike the bunkers at Merville, the majority of blockhouses along the coast sit abandoned and relatively forgotten. Very few have been maintained or restored and the majority are seldom visited by tourists. The reason is simple: there are so many of them, that tourists tend to go to a select few like Merville and ignore the rest. Occasionally, it is possible to see a building created using the walls of a blockhouse, or some other architectural oddity made using large concrete walls, but the majority of blockhouses are unmaintained.

Part Three – Long term effects of the battles

Obviously, most of the battles discussed in the thesis are still widely remembered and talked about today. Museums, memorials, and maintained landmarks help keep battles relevant, even after hundreds of years. Additionally, people celebrate the battles through art, reenactments, and dozens of other ways. This creates an interesting loop within the culture of the areas around the battlefields. People strive to remember the battles by maintaining museums or holding anniversary ceremonies which makes the battles more ingrained in the culture of the area. This then manifests itself in more ceremonies and tourists coming to the area, which changes the culture of the cities. For instance, the memorials and museums scattered across Normandy draw hundreds of thousands of people every year. Cities and towns seek to accommodate these (largly American and British) tourists, and as such locals learn English, cities hold annual ceremonies, and hotel owners become battlefield enthusiasts so they can be more helpful to their customers. In addition to permanent displays like the museums and other factors mentioned above, cities also remember battles on a punctuated basis with war reenactments, municipal art projects, and

anniversary ceremonies. The first section of part three of the thesis examines how these ongoing remembrances of the battles continue to affect the culture of the areas around the battlefields.

The second section of part three looks at the current locations of the battlefields and analyzes how they continue to be affected by the past wars. Scars from the two World Wars in particular are still visible across much of the landscape where the battles took place. Not only that, but munitions, equipment, and even humans remain buried where they fell are still being uncovered today. These environmental factors from the battles have a huge impact on the surrounding area, shaping the world we live in decades after the last bombs fell.

Section One – Ongoing Remembrances and How Culture is Still Affected by the Battles

Thirty Years War – Ongoing Remembrances

As alluded to before, the Sack of Magdeburg is not well remembered or recognized by the city. As such, it seems to have no current impact on the cultural and social climate of the city. The employees at the tourist information bureau did not know about the Sack or of any places where it might be commemorated. Most people visiting the Cathedral do so because it is the oldest Gothic cathedral in Germany and it is the resting place of Otto I (Magdeburg Cathedral), rather than for its ties to the Thirty Years War. The city is careful to remember other events in its history, including having large dioramas and excavated walls to show what the city's defenses looked like for the Napoleonic period. It celebrates its soldiers in all the wars since the Thirty Years War with monuments around the city, but that war seems to have been completely forgotten by the city and its inhabitants.

Leipzig – Ongoing Remembrances

Leipzig, on the other hand, has not forgotten its roots. Two years ago the city celebrated the 200 year anniversary of the battle with celebrations fitting of the gargantuan memorial. 6000 war reenactors from 26 different countries descended upon the city over the course of a weekend for the largest Napoleonic War Reenactment in Europe ("35.000 Zuschauer"). Bringing historically accurate clothing and weapons, participants lived in tents as the soldiers would have, rode horses and wheeled out artillery to various areas around the city. Some reenactors get extremely into their characters. Franck Samson, who portrayed Napoleon, not only learned horseback riding for the part but also learned to speak Napoleon's native language of Corsican ("Battle of Nations"). This reenactment is actually completed yearly, but the 2013 reenactment was obviously one of the largest renditions of the battle. Nearly 35,000 people came to watch the reenactment, although some estimates put that number at 70,000 with people turned away due to insufficient room around the battlefield ("35.000 Zuschauer").

21 Thousands of reenactors came in 2013 for the 200 year anniversary of the battle.

With the size of the celebration came its fair share of problems. Many people were unable to see the battle due to the number of people surrounding it; the people who had the best view were in their spots over four hours before the battle began. One attendee talked about waiting in a traffic jam for two hours with his toddler only to be told at the gates that they ran out of tickets. Additionally, the reenactment started a full two hours behind schedule, meaning that many people were sitting in cramped conditions on the side of the battlefield for upwards of 6 hours.

The reenactment of the battle left something to be desired, with one attendee afterwards joking that if Napoleon had fought with the same organization of the reenactment, the battle would have taken years ("35.000 Zuschauer").

While many people wanted to go and remember the battle, teach their children about it, or learn about it themselves, they were essentially rebuffed by the organizers, due to the lack of sufficient space and planning. While in the long run this will probably not deter celebration of the battle, people who wanted to take part in the city's celebration in 2013 said they would not in the future due to the organization of this event. Thus, while a well-executed memorial like the *Völkerschlachtdenkmal* can attract visitors and increase the cultural relevance of the battle, a poorly executed event or memorial can cause people who were interested in learning about the battle to lose interest.

However, not all of the celebrations were so poorly executed. The last day of the 200th anniversary of the Napoleonic Wars a ceremony was held at the base of the *Völkerschlachtdenkmal*. At the end of the ceremony, fireworks were launched from the top of the memorial. The reflecting pond contained a barge which was outfitted with a lightshow by French artist Philippe Morvan. The barge had one large sphere in the middle and was surrounded by globes of various heights which would periodically light up. The lights were synchronized to music by German composer Mike Dietrich

22 Fireworks accompanied a lightshow for the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Nations.

(Molliard). This cooperation between a Frenchman and a German was symbolic of the friendship between the two nations and the difference in national attitudes now compared to during the creation of the memorial (Grundmann).

While still a symbol for the battle, the monument has been much more than that in its 100 year history. It was finished and unveiled on the hundred year anniversary of the war, just before the start of World War I. Featuring a dedication by Kaiser Wilhelm II, the unveiling was attended by Russian, Austrian, and Swedish delegates. The French were not invited (Pohlsander 172). During the Nazi era, Hitler would hold speeches and rallies at the Völkerschlachtdenkmal because it conveys a nationalistic image and powerful pro-German message. For that reason, when Leipzig was overseen by the Soviet Union and German Democratic Republic after the war, there was a serious discussion of destroying the monument because of the nationalistic pride that it could promote (Pohlsander 173). However, it was ultimately decided that the monument should stand as a lasting show of solidarity between Russia and Germany. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the monument has been used for political statements from both sides of the German political spectrum. Neo-Nazis look back to its significance in promoting a powerful and nationalistic Germany, while other groups have gone as far as featuring a giant work of art on its facade depicting someone throwing a swastika into a trash can ("The Monument"). Thus, while the monument was erected as a celebration of a battle, its meaning has since evolved throughout the last 100 years of history and has completely different connotations apart from just the war. Not only has it contributed to a change in the culture of Leipzig and Germany, but the changing culture of

23 An anti-Nazi group staged a protest using the Völkerschlachtdenkmal.

Germany has also affected the monument as it has become symbolic for causes never anticipated by its creators.

World War I – Ongoing Remembrances

Leaving Leipzig and moving on to France, we can see that World War I still has an impact on the current cultural climate of the area. Péronne is a city liberated by the Australians during the closing days of the war. A sign in the window of a restaurant reads: "We speak French, English, and Australian." The same restaurant has Aboriginal art on the walls and Australian food on the menu. While surely good for business and to attract tourists, this display of affection towards Australians is not just specific to businesses, it is felt throughout the town. Australian flags fly at bus stops and are draped across building facades. As such, it is obvious that a big part of the town's history is affected by the Australians, and the town's inhabitants make sure to remember that. Many speak English, while in my personal experience, in other areas of France locals will look down on non-French speaking tourists. The city also hosts the Museum to the Great War inside of a medieval castle from the 13th century ("Péronne"). This signifies the belief that it is more important to remember World War I than the town's origins.

24 At the Museum to the Great War, many displays are missing German translations.

Mentioned earlier, this museum is the one which has captions for its items in both English and French, but where the German translation is supposed to be, there is just a blank space. Considering the museum opened in 1992, it is obvious the museum curators are in no great hurry to ensure that the displays are all trilingual.

Because their website claims that the museum is not meant as a monument or a military museum but as a cultural museum ("Presentation"), the lack of German on their displays is significant. It shows that despite being advertised as a museum for French, English and German speakers, they really only will accommodate French and English speakers. While not necessarily hostile towards Germans, the museum is certainly not welcoming to them, and this is indicative of the lingering resentment of the area towards Germans. Whether this resentment is left over from World War I or II is up for debate, but the point remains, it still exists. Thus, the wars of the past still have a noticeable cultural impact on the area in both positive (Australian Flags) and negative (lack of German translations) ways.

However, there has certainly been change in the way the Germans are viewed in this area of France. As mentioned earlier, a nearby town also liberated by the Australians has had two memorials to their liberation. The first was erected shortly after the end of World War I and had the Australian soldier bayoneting the German Eagle. After the Germans destroyed it when they came back through the area in World War II, it was rebuilt to simply be an Australian soldier. This could signify multiple differences in attitudes after the two wars. One interpretation is that after World War I, the French were still very resentful of the German occupation and they wanted a memorial that signified the Germans in a humiliating position. After World War II, however, they felt it was more important to celebrate the Australian victory than the German defeat because the attitude of resentment and lingering hostility is one of the

25 Marshal Ferdinand Foch unveils the original memorial to the Second Australian Memorial.

26 The current memorial no longer features the bayonetted eagle.

factors that led to the Second World War. This interpretation implies that the town realized in order to stop events from happening in the future, it is more important to recognize that they occurred and move on rather than belabor the animosity and foster an environment that makes it conducive to reengage in hostility later on. This, obviously is the optimistic viewpoint of the memorial. Alternatively, it could also be that the town was worried about being invaded a third time and did not want to have a statue which might provoke the Germans. Regardless, there was a shift of thinking from the end of the first and the end of the Second World War, and this shift is reflected in the construction of this memorial.

The remembrance poppies found on graves are also symbols of how the war continues to affect culture, this time within England. One of the most famous poems of World War I, "In Flanders Fields" discusses dead soldiers lying among poppies at the beginning of the war. The poppies became a symbol for the war, which became a symbol for veterans of the war, and later for veterans in general. The tradition of buying poppies to support the Royal British Legion lives on in force today, but it is more than just buying them to put on graves in France. Efforts such as #twominutesilence by the Royal British Legion are bringing the tradition into social media, where people post a picture of a poppy covering their lips to remember veterans. Popular British

27 Poppies rest at the base of the Thiepval Memorial.

celebrities such as singer Olly Murs took part in the campaign, having his tweet favorited over 1100 times, almost twice his normal number of favorites (Murs). The Royal British Legion also sponsors an annual "Silence in the Square" event in Trafalgar Square, with poppies spread across the ground and various musicians taking part before the eventual two minutes of silence at 11 a.m. on Armistice Day (The Royal British Legion).

Arguably the most notable poppy celebration was held over the course of 2014, starting on July 17th and going through Armistice Day. 888,246 ceramic poppies were "planted" by 21,688 volunteers around the Tower of London (Historic Royal Palaces), each poppy representing one of the British war dead during the First World War. The installation seemed to flow out of the tower walls and over the four months filled up the moat, looking exactly like what the title of the piece "Blood Swept Land And Seas Of Red" suggests. After Armistice Day, 11,000 additional volunteers ("Sea of Red") helped remove the poppies from the moat, and each poppy was sold for 25 Pounds to raise money for six veterans' organizations ("Amazing Aerial View"). The poppies were sold out before all of them had even been planted, showing a continued interest by the public in the war.

28 The poppies seemed to be flowing out of the Tower into the moat.

29 Eventually, poppies filled the entire moat.

Visitors from all around the world came to see the installation; by the time it was removed, over 5 million people had travelled to London to see it (Historic Royal Palaces). Some criticized the piece for not being visceral enough, such as art critic Jonathan Jones, who said the art should be "gory, vile and terrible to see. The moat of the Tower should be filled with barbed wire and bones" (McGreevy). Many more, however, loved the visual of the moat slowly filling with poppies. By the end, it appeared as though it was filled with blood and overhead views of the installation as well as its location reinforced that image. With such a significant display at one of the most visited locations in England, this piece of art drove home the magnitude of the losses to millions of people who may not have otherwise had a reason to think of the war. It promoted discussion and commemoration of the battle, redirecting people's attention from the Tower of London to the First World War. For England to have such a high profile building involved in the project, a culture of remembrance must be present and an art project such as this reinforces that culture in a way that normal celebrations and memorials may not.

30 Pegasus Bridge Café is inside the first building liberated during the battle.

World War II – Ongoing Remembrances

In Normandy, the evidence of the battles affecting the culture of the area is even stronger than in the Somme. Signs in Bayeux read "We Welcome our Liberators." Menus across the entire region have English descriptions of the food, along with some items (a sausage made of pig colons, among others) that have warning labels to tourists saying they should

probably not eat them. As with any tourist area, shops are relentless in their efforts to capitalize on tourist money. By Pegasus Bridge, a café (Pegasus Bridge Café) advertises on their signs that they speak English. The café is actually housed inside the first building in France to be liberated and signs outside heavily advertise that fact. The interior of the café is so stuffed with war memorabilia that it could very easily be made into a museum. The owner's entire livelihood is predicated on satisfying tourists, and they will change their culture to match the needs of the tourists. The most obvious example is that they speak fluent English, but there seems to be a genuine appreciation for the British and Americans along the entire north coast of France which is rarely felt elsewhere in the country.

One of the most frequent reminders of the war was found driving around cities. Practically all cities in Normandy have street names such as Rue 505E Airborne, Voie de la Liberté (Road to Liberty), or Rue du 6 Juin. A golf course is named Golf d'Omaha Beach ("Golf Omaha Beach"), and hotels are named Eisenhower or Churchill Hotel. The occupants of the cities and towns along the coast are inundated every single day with reminders of the war. The majority of occupants in the area do not seem resentful towards the constant influx of tourists whose confused driving around their towns is probably one of the biggest reminders of the war. Most waiters and waitresses at restaurants were more than happy to help explain dishes that were difficult to understand, grocers at supermarkets were understanding about the lack of French language knowledge that we had while checking out, and our hotel landlord supplied us with informational videos about the battle and had maps over the walls with locations of various museums and sites to see. For these people, the battle has intertwined their culture with the culture of England and America, putting them in contact with foreigners on a regular basis.

Obviously, their economy depends in a large part on the tourism industry generated by the battles, but one can see this manifested in unexpected ways. In the town Sainte-Mère-Église, a paratrooper's parachute caught on the church steeple and he dangled there for several hours before cutting through the ropes and joining in the battle. The church remembers him now by having a mannequin dressed in full paratrooper uniform hanging where he hung. While an entertaining way to remember the battle, the church gets more out of it than just remembrance. A small church in a small town, it has Bose speakers broadcasting music through the church, expensive pews and an overflowing donations area. They use much of the money to finance mission trips, but it is obvious the historical tie-in brings hundreds of tourists who bypass every other small town church in the region.

31 A mannequin hangs from the church roof where an American paratrooper landed on D-Day.

In the same way the battle influences the culture of the region, the culture of the region affects the remembrances of the battle. In front of the museum to the battle in Caen stands a several story tall statue titled "Unconditional Surrender." It features the iconic image of the nurse being kissed by the sailor in Times Square on V-J day. On loan from a museum in California, it has caused a large outcry from feminist groups in France, as they say it depicts and glorifies sexual assault. Their petition to get it removed was signed by over 700 people (Carvajal), and while ultimately unsuccessful, the bottom of the statue now has a statement by the group

allowing them to express their displeasure with the statue and its connotations. Largely uncontroversial when the picture was first taken, it has now become a contentious image due to the changing culture surrounding women's rights since the war. The feminist group argues that they would be happy with a statue that large in front of the Caen museum that depicted the same exuberance and happiness of the sailor, but they argue that it must speak to as many people as possible and feature a situation where all people were celebrating together, not one where a man was taking advantage of a woman.

32 The statue Unconditional Surrender has caused an outcry due to its depiction of a non-consensual kiss.

World War II is closer to the public conscience than any of the other wars studied for this thesis. Thousands of books, movies, and video games deal with it. The battle for Normandy, especially D-Day, has been immortalized in movies such as *Saving Private Ryan.* That film, for instance, features the American Cemetery at Normandy during the introduction, with a veteran walking through the crosses before showing a 30 minute long attack on Omaha Beach. With so many films, video games, and books about the war, it has become ingrained into our culture, to where people with little knowledge of the war would still recognize phrases such as "bloody Omaha" or could tell you the specific day of the allied landings.

Section Two – Environmental and Geographical impact

Thirty Years War – Environmental and Geographical impact

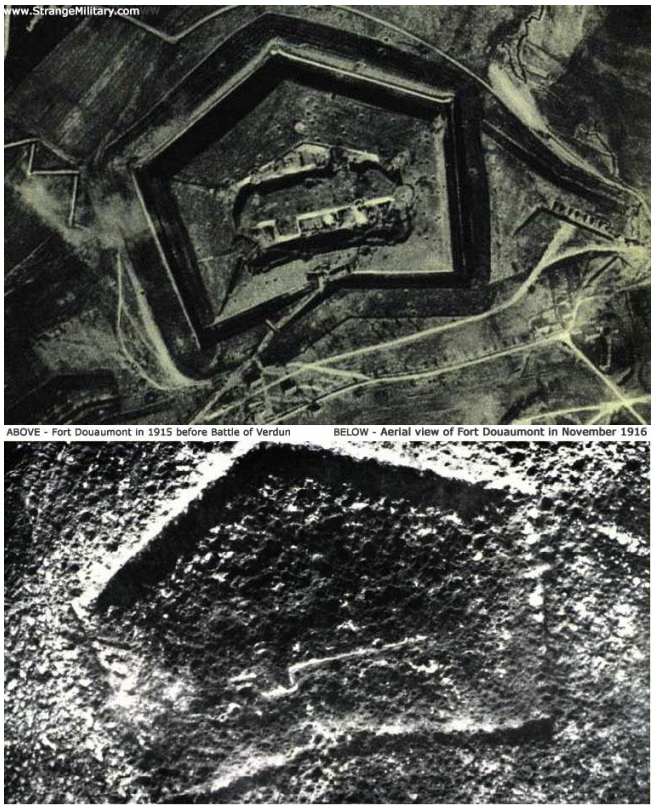
The Siege of Magdeburg, the battle furthest removed from the present, has left no observable and lasting environmental impact on the surrounding area. During the battle, the city was completely burned to the ground and the land around it was sacked by General Tilly's troops. To many citizens of the area it appeared that the land would never recover. In fact, much of the city remained rubble until 1720, nearly 90 years after the city's destruction (Wilson 470). However, since that time, the city has been completely rebuilt. While there are still hints of the old town wall and while the cathedral which survived the conflagration still stands, no obvious visible reminders of the battle remain.

Napoleonic War – Environmental and Geographical impact

In Leipzig, a similar lack of obvious environmental damage exists. However, during this time armies had switched to muskets and cannon. With this in mind, while there may be no obvious craters or burned down buildings left from the war, there are still thousands of rusting musket balls and cannon balls under the ground in Leipzig (Straub). Every year, metal detecting enthusiasts seek out Napoleonic battlefields to find buried currency, buttons, and projectiles (Metal Detecting). While it is impossible to know how much metal remains in the ground from the war and the battle, some metal detector users report finding hundreds of small objects dating back to the war in areas very similar to Leipzig. Additionally, people across Europe continue to discover skeletons left by the war, including several found in Vienna (Police) and 2,000 found in Vilnius, Lithuania (Killgrove).

World War I – Environmental and Geographical impact

Continuing environmental and geographical impacts become apparent in the battlefields of World War I. During my research I stopped in Verdun, the former town of Fleury-devant-Douaumont, the hill of Vauquois, and several areas in the Somme. In each location, the landscape has remained drastically altered by the war. In Verdun the fort Douaumont continues to have a commanding view over the landscape, but more impressive are the defensive trenches and crater marks around the entire fort. While trees have grown around the fort since the war, if one travels into the woods, one can see that the craters and scarred landscape still remains. Fleury-devant-Douaumont was a town right in the middle of the Verdun battlefield, and while it still has a ceremonial mayor today, all that remains of the town are craters, markers where buildings used to be, and a chapel to commemorate the people who died in the war. The craters are up to four feet deep and five feet in diameter and are still so close together that it is often impossible to



33 Fort Douaumont before and after the Battle of Verdun

34 Fort Douaumont today. A forest has grown, but the area is just as cratered as it was after the war.

distinguish where one crater ends and the next begins. The entire forest surrounding Verdun has this characteristic, but it was even more noticeable in this area because there used to be an entire town that has since been wiped off of the map.

La Butte de Vauquois is arguably the most striking reminder of the destruction of the war. With a town spread across the top and side of the largest hill in the area, the town became one of the most disputed areas in the battle. However, the portions of the town on top of the hill did not last long.

35 The town of Vauquois was completely destroyed due to exploded mines during the war.

Here, both French and German troops used the same tactic. They burrowed through the hill and exploded TNT under the enemy lines. This quickly reduced the town to rubble and the hill to a crater. The former towering hill now is scarred by dozens of craters up to 40 feet deep. The town remains on the side of the hill, but at the top just a monument overlooks the vantage point.

At both Verdun and the Somme, remnants of the trench lines also remain. In some cases, all that is left of the trench lines are five foot deep ditches running through the ground. In other areas the old trenches still have all of the wood, metal and barbed wire surrounding them. Throughout Vauquois, old mine shafts still penetrate the hill, and while most are off limits to visitors, some have stayed in good enough shape to lead tours through.

Much of the Somme has been converted back into farmland, but one can find the occasional forest. Driving through the countryside, it is difficult to understand how badly the

area was devastated. However, if you go into an unplowed area, the same craters appear that can be found at Verdun. Additionally, according to the Museum of the Great War, workers remove 50 tons of metal every year from the area (Museum of the Great War). They estimate that it will take over 700 years for the area to be completely debris free. While wandering around in an unplanted field, I was able to find three rusted metal shards and two bone fragments. So while the landscape may seem like it has mostly recovered, farmers still have to pay close attention to what they are tilling. In the area around Ypres, a disposal squad picked up 73 shells and 57 assorted grenades and fuses on one day in 2013 (Fletcher). In 2012, the Belgian military collected 105 tons of munitions. These remnants of the war can still cause environmental -and worse- damage today. From 2009 to 2012, the Belgian government paid almost €140,000 to farmers whose tractors and combine harvesters were damaged by WWI munitions. Around Ypres, over 350 people have died and over 500 have been injured since the end of the war because of unexploded munitions. Multiple hikers have been killed by building a campfire overtop of buried munitions, and disposal units have gas masks as their standard equipment in case mustard or phosgene gas shells finally deteriorate to where they release the deadly poison (Fletcher).

36 Rusty World War I shells were found in a field and rest at the base of this crucifix awaiting removal from a bomb disposal unit.

Some areas in the Somme, such as the Lochnagar crater, are preserved for remembrance. On the first day of the battle, a mine was detonated with so much force that soil reached almost

4,000 feet in the air and its crater remains today. It is almost 300 feet in diameter and 70 feet deep (Dunning). Additionally, some of the trench lines have been preserved, such as those at the Newfoundland Memorial Park. The memorial has former trench lines clearly visible and maps showing what it would have looked like during the war. One of the most striking aspects of the memorial is called the Danger Tree. It is a petrified tree, and was the only tree in the entire area to remain standing during the fighting.

37 The blast that formed the Lochnagar crater could be heard in London (Buchan 40).

World War II – Environmental and Geographical impact

The battle sites in Normandy closely resemble those from World War I, although there are significantly fewer trenches. The craters are preserved in areas such as the hotly contested Pont du Hoc. While there are fewer craters in the area than one would see in the Somme, the craters are much deeper. On average they are around seven feet deep, compared to the Somme's craters which are about two or three feet deep.

38 Some bunkers still contain World War II artillery pieces.

The majority of the coastline, however, is not cratered; the craters are only preserved in a few areas which received heavy bombardment during the war.

The most conspicuous remnants of the war are bunkers created as part of Hitler's Atlantic Wall. Every couple of miles one can find old concrete pillboxes slowly decaying. These pillboxes housed artillery and soldiers during the war and are concrete structures with walls several feet thick. Many of them are cratered and large concrete chucks are scattered in the area around them. While a few have been preserved, the majority are just unobtrusively nestled in the sand dunes. In most of the bunkered areas, the complexes are spread relatively far apart, which means one could be at a bunker and see a concrete hole in the middle of a field that the Germans may have been using to store ammunition. In some cases, in addition to the concrete scattered around the pillboxes, you can also find large metal remnants from the guns or reinforcing bars littering the area.

The Germans were not the only ones to leave large concrete structures behind. Surrounding the town Arromanches, the artificial harbor structures known as "Mulberries" are still visible just off the coast. Dozens of the large concrete structures are decaying in the ocean clearly visible above the water, but dozens more are directly underneath the water. Some become visible and accessible during low tide, but the majority are too far out to visit. In Southern England, where a few of the mulberries were sunk as a test before the invasion and became unrecoverable, divers regularly visit the concrete structures.

39 Mulberries off the coast from Arromanches provide an artificial reef for sea life.

They have become artificial reefs, home of several species of fish, shellfish, and coral (The Far Mulberry). People SCUBA at both the English mulberries and the ones in Normandy to visit the sea life surrounding them (Diving).

In addition to the mulberries, hundreds of men and materials still lie in the channel where they sank during the invasion. Recent efforts have started mapping the submerged army and have found tanks, landing crafts, equipment, and the remains of over 5,000 men (Dobson). These efforts are part of a plan to limit the amount of looting that has been going on in the area, with some divers even taking an entire tank with its crew still inside. There is still "enough material to equip an entire army" according to Professor Brett Phaneuf from Texas University. He argues that we owe it to the men who died to mark their graves properly (Dobson).

The beaches of Normandy also display curious remnants from the war, although most observers would never know it. Samples of sand from Normandy's beaches contain traces of iron, left over from the shrapnel created by exploding bombs. Additionally, some of the sand grains were superheated to the point of turning to glass. As much as 4% of a sample of the beach contained iron and glass, meaning that while it is unnoticeable to most visitors, remnants of the battle continue to exist even at the microscopic level (Parry).

While Normandy only received 60,000 tons of bombs compared to the 1.45 billion shells fired during World War I, unexploded ordinances are still an issue (Fletcher). Between 2008 and 2013, bomb disposal units were called to Normandy 221 times, or just over once a week ("WWII Bombs"). Like the army submerged underwater, it is impossible to get a clear estimate of how much material remains in the Normandy landscape, although it is estimated that 15% of munitions did not explode("WWII Bombs"). However, in the past 70 years since WWII, most of the larger equipment has been removed from the landscape. Metal detectors will still find the

occasional helmet, bayonet or other equipment, but unlike Napoleon's soldiers in Lithuania or soldiers in the Somme, the troops who were missing in action at the end of the battle have since been accounted for, so it is unlikely that people would find any human remains in the area.

Part Four – Areas for further research and conclusion

Obviously, this thesis can only provide a snapshot of the ways the battles have continued to influence the modern day. There are several areas into which I could not delve; however, they are certainly worth studying. Some of the main topics I had to leave out are below.

Magdeburg was the only battle out of the four which resulted in a loss for the country in which the battle took place. Had the Battle of Nations been won by France, I highly doubt there would be the interest in funding a 55 billion Euro memorial. Thus, is the absence of markers commemorating the battle of Magdeburg due to the city losing the battle, or the amount of time that has passed since the end of the battle? Obviously, when people are still alive who fought in the battles like soldiers in World War II, it is comparatively easy to remember the war. The Sack of Magdeburg happened so long ago that not only does it not feel relevant to the city today, but so much has happened since then that drastically changed the city. At the same time, though, the battle was more than a complete loss for the defenders, it was the destruction of the entire city and the death of almost everybody inside. How much would a city want to hold that in its memory? Thus, an interesting comparison would be between other cities where defenders were victorious during the Thirty Years War compared to Magdeburg. If Magdeburg has simply forgotten about the battle due to time, one would expect other cities to similarly have forgotten about their victories. On the other hand, if it is because of the devastation wrought upon the city and a willingness to forget about the battle, one would expect the victorious cities to have many more memorials and signs of remembrance.

An interesting parallel impossible to pursue by today's scholars would be to look at Dresden's memory of its World War II destruction 370 years from now. How does it compare to that of Magdeburg's memory of the Thirty Years War today? During the war, the cities were completely leveled; however, their destructions were relatively minor in the grand scheme of the war, so it would be a good comparison to analyze the effect of losing a battle vs time elapsed since the war.

An additional factor that could sway how battles are remembered is whether the battle was won by foreign liberators or by foreign conquerors. In both World War I and II, France celebrated (and still celebrates) the role of England, America, and other allied countries at its monuments and museums. Battles of liberation are remembered in the monuments. However, in order to be liberated, the areas needed to be taken over in the first place. There are no memorials to the original conquerors of the area, so while the cities remember the losses of some groups of men, they entirely forget others. Some areas do not just lack memorials to the original conquerors, they still harbor a resentment to them. When I was a child growing up in Germany, an American family friend was speaking to her daughters in German while visiting an open air museum in the Netherlands. At the museum, she was initially treated coldly by the docent, until she spoke in English to her son. At that point, the demeanor of the docent completely changed, going from resentment of a German to thankfulness towards an American. There is still lingering resentment towards the conquerors of the Netherlands, but an open friendliness to its liberators.

Conclusion

Despite occurring a minimum of 60 years ago, the wars that raged across Europe since the industrial revolution continue to influence the culture of the areas where the battles took place and the countries who took part in them. Although political tensions are arguably less

strained today than at almost any other point in European history, tensions can still be seen in the reflections and memorials of the battles. However, due to the amount of time that has passed between the Thirty Years War and today, the political tensions that existed during that time are essentially nonexistent. The 400th year anniversary of its beginning is in three years and as such it is so far removed from the present that it is largely forgotten. Whether that will be the case with the two World Wars in 300 years remains to be seen, but many parallels exist between the two. There was large scale destruction of cities and landscape, countries from well outside of the fighting area joined in the war, and tensions between the countries lasted for decades after the war.

Because differences exist between the technology used in the wars, with weapons used in the two World Wars well surpassing the destructive power of any cannon used during the Thirty Years War, the scars wrought by World War I and II bombs will remain present much longer than those from the Thirty Years War. But even despite the difference in weaponry, it is not impossible to imagine a time where the events of the two World Wars will eventually fall away from the collective memory of society. Surely more focus has been made in the post-war years to remember the Napoleonic and World Wars than the Thirty Years War, but eventually the dulling effect of time will ensure that the remembrance of the battles will fade away. Just as nobody expects people to forget about the holocaust, nobody who survived the Thirty Years War expected people to forget about the horrors of the Sack of Magdeburg, with rallying calls making it out to be a martyrdom of an entire city. Nobody knows what our world will look like in several hundred years, but by looking at how we remember events hundreds of years past it is evident that in the long run, even some of the most horrific events from our history will fade from the collective memory. The preservation of these battlefields and an interest in our history are

paramount to ensure events such as the Sack of Magdeburg or the horrors of World War I are not repeated in the coming centuries.

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